THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA
DE SEINGALT

IN TWELVE VOLUMES
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
ARTHUR MACHEN

INTRODUCTION BY ARTHUR SYMONS
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INTRODUCTION

I

There is something tricky, audacious, shameless, violent, Venetian, fascinating—apart from the quaint inhibitions that are so commonly associated with him—in Casanova's genius, and his mental activity, up to the age of seventy-three, was as prodigious as the activity which he had expended in living a multiform and incalculable life; creating, as he did in Dux during the intervals of fourteen years, his *Memoirs*, in which he reveals his naked soul, in which truth is deftly blended with what is obviously imaginary in the interminable descriptions of his amours—the amours of an insatiable lover.

And yet these *Memoirs* are perhaps the most valuable document which we possess on the society of the eighteenth century; they are the history of a unique life, a unique personality, one of the greatest of autobiographies; as a record of adventures, they are more entertaining than *Gil Blas* or *Monte Cristo,* or any of the purely imaginary travels, and escapes, and masquerades in life, which have been done into books. They tell the story of a man who loved life passionately for its own sake; one to whom woman was, indeed, the most important thing in the world, but to whom nothing in the world was indifferent.

"The man's own portrait," writes Charles Whibley, "offers a partial explanation of the enterprise of the eighteenth century. The hungry eye, the hawk-like nose, the savagely determined chin, indicate the selfish necessity of acquisition and enjoyment. On the other hand, the high receding forehead bears witness at once to intellect and fatuity." In this extraordinary and emaciated face all the fury and rage and disquietude of the man's temperament seem to be in a kind of eternal conflict. Pride, unvanquished pride, glitters in the hawk's eyes; the cheeks are ravaged with ravines of wrinkles; that lust which means always to him as much as life itself pervades the entire huge face; there is, you might say, something of the ferocity of the wolf, and something of the cruel craft of the serpent. Surely his portraits as well as his writings prove that he was vividly alive, full of fiery energy and calm resource. He was a thinker and a fighter in one; a scholar, an adventurer, perhaps a Cabalist, a busy stirrer in politics, a gamester, one "born for the fairer sex," as he tells us, and born also to be a vagabond; this man, who is remembered now for his written account of his own life, was that rarest kind of autobiographer, one who did not live to write, but wrote because he had lived, and when he could live no longer.

Our Casanova, impenitent courtier of all the hazards that exist, is the supreme protagonist of the unmoral will; his code of conduct, if he may be said to have had one, was written in the white-hot moment of action to suit the directions of his energy; and because these directions were many, there is no apparent consistency between the generous action and lofty imagination that are so often revealed in the *Memoirs*, and the rogueries of which he was not incapable. He is frank; he writes down in a most incongruous fashion his vices and his virtues, sparing himself not at all in his meanest moments; and if Casanova was, as he proclaimed himself, a philosopher, it may be said of him that he was not afraid to put his philosophy to the test of experience.

Never was there such an eager traveller! He mixed himself up in vast enterprises, he jostled with curious crowds in every important city of the continent; and as for following his wanderings, it is not only to lose oneself in a desert, but almost utterly to exhaust the map of Europe. His *Memoirs* give us sidelights, all the more valuable in being almost accidental, upon many of the affairs and people most interesting to us during two-thirds of the eighteenth century. Giacomo Casanova was born in Venice, of Spanish and Italian parentage, on April 2nd, 1725; he died at the Château of Dux, in Bohemia, on June 4th, 1798. In that lifetime of seventy-three years he travelled, as his *Memoirs* show us, in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, England, Switzerland, Belgium, Russia, Poland, Spain, Holland, Turkey; he met Voltaire at Ferney, Rousseau at Montmorenci, Fontenelle, d'Alembert and Crébillon at Paris, George III in London, Louis XV at Fontainebleau, Catherine the Great at St. Petersburg, Benedict XII at Rome, Joseph II at Vienna, Frederick the Great at Sans-Souci.

Casanova—a mass of tangled nerves which he generally managed to control—has striven, at his finest, not only to excite our senses with his most intimate confessions, but to touch our nerves to the quick. His narrative is vivid and image-provoking; his dialogue is spirited and witty; his characters are worthy of a great dramatist. Hundreds of persons are sketched in by his swift pen to stand out distinct as individual and living beings. As Uzanne says, he relates to us more than a hundred adventures conducted to some delectable end because they are deliciously alive and because they have an infinite variety, and all this with the aid of *"une verve éroto-comique, parfois tragico-phallique."* So our phallic Hermes pursues his adventures, which land him either in the island of Cythera or on that of Paphos.

II

The *Memoirs*, as we have them, break off abruptly at the moment when Casanova is expecting a safe conduct and the permission to return to Venice after twenty years' wanderings. In 1774, at the age of forty-nine, he wrote in the last volume: "I returned to Trieste, determined to do my best for the Tribunal, for I longed to return to Venice after nineteen years' wanderings. I expected no more of Fortune's gifts, for the Deity despises those of ripe age. I thought, however, that I might live comfortably and independently at Venice. I had talents and experience, and I hoped to make use of them, and I thought the Inquisitors would feel bound to give me sufficient employment." This they did; he received permission from them on the 3rd of September, 1774, to return to Venice; he was their Secret Agent from that year until 1782. At the end of 1782 he left Venice; and it was in the spring of 1783 (not in the spring of 1784 as it was generally supposed) that Casanova was presented, at a banquet in Paris at the Venetian Ambassador's, by Abbate Eusebio della Luna, to Count Joseph Waldstein; he was invited by him to become his librarian at Dux; this he accepted, and for the fourteen remaining years of his life he lived at Dux, where he wrote his *Memoirs.*

It is impossible to conjecture when he commenced that prodigious task, as prodigious as his mental activity, as his vitality up to the age of seventy-three. The first reference to them occurs in *Histoire de ma Fuite des Prisons de la République de Venise, qu'on appelle les Plombs,* finished in 1787, printed at Leipzig in 1788. "Whenever I am seized by the desire of writing the story of all that has happened to me in the course of twenty-eight years that I have spent in wandering over the whole of Europe, up to that moment when it pleased the Inquisitors of State to give me permission to return to Venice in an honourable fashion (on the 3rd of September, 1774), I shall begin it at this point, and my readers will find it written with the same style, for there is no writer who has more than one."

There are some references to the *Memoirs* in his letters to Opiz; in one written in 1791, he says: "I write thirteen hours a day and these thirteen hours seem as if they were thirteen minutes. I amuse myself because I do not invent. What pains me most is that I am in duty bound to disguise certain names, for I have no authority to publish the affairs of others. I have written two-thirds of my *Life,* which will make six volumes. I say everything, I never spare myself, and yet I cannot as a man of honour give the name of *Confessions* to my *Memoirs,* for I make no repentance, and without repentance one cannot be absolved. Do you suppose I praise myself? Not at all." He writes on the 27th of July, 1792: "I have arrived at the end of my twelfth volume at the age of forty-seven. I must assure you that my *cynisme* is so outrageous in all the details of my too vivid adventures up to the age of fifty that my life would be a work, and such a work that the reading of it would be prohibited in every land where one loves good morals. I am a detestable man, and I don't care who knows it. Besides that, my instructed readers would divine the names of all the women and would cry out against my soul's perfidy." On the 20th of July, 1796, he writes: "*Pour ce qui regarde mes Mémoires, je crois que je les laisserai là, car depuis l'âge de cinquante ans je ne peux débiter que du triste, et cela me rend triste. Je ne les ai écrits que pour m'égaier avec mes lecteurs; actuellement je les affligerois, et cela ne vaut pas la peine.*"

There, evidently, he rings down the curtain, and for reasons known to himself alone. And yet he writes, near the end of his life, in reference to the year 1768: "If these *Memoirs,* written only to console myself in the dreadful weariness which is slowly killing me in Bohemia—and which, perhaps, would kill me anywhere else, since, though my body is old, my spirit and my desires are as young as ever—if these *Memoirs* are ever read, they will be read only when I am gone, and all censure will be lost on me. Why should I not be veracious? A man can have no object in deceiving himself, and it is chiefly for myself that I write."

III

Casanova died in 1798, but nothing was heard of the *Memoirs* (which the Prince de Ligne in his own *Memoirs* tells us Casanova had read to him, and in which he found *"du dramatique, de la rapidité, du comique, de la philosophie, des choses neuves, sublimes, inimitables même"*) until the year 1820, when a certain Carlo Angiolini brought to the publishing house of Brockhaus, in Leipzig, a manuscript entitled *Histoire de ma vie jusqu'à l'an 1797,* in the handwriting of Casanova.

This manuscript, in its original state, has never been printed. Herr Brockhaus, on obtaining possession of the manuscript, had it translated into German by Wilhelm Schutz, but with many omissions and alterations, and published this translation, volume by volume, from 1822 to 1828, under the title, *Aus den Memoiren des Venetianers Jacob Casanova de Seingalt.* While the German edition was in course of publication, Herr Brockhaus employed a certain Jean Laforgue, a professor of the French language at Dresden, to revise the original manuscript, correcting Casanova's vigorous, but at times incorrect and often somewhat Italian French according to his own notions of elegant writing, suppressing passages which seemed too free-spoken from the point of view of morals and of politics, and altering the names of some of the persons referred to, or replacing those names by initials. This revised text was published in twelve volumes, the first two in 1826, the third and fourth in 1828, the fifth to the eighth in 1832, and the ninth to the twelfth in 1838; the first four bearing the imprint of Brockhaus at Leipzig and Ponthieu et Cie. at Paris, the next four the imprint of Heideloff et Campé at Paris, and the last four nothing but *"A Bruxelles."* The volumes are all uniform and were all really printed for the firm of Brockhaus.

IV

Casanova's *Memoirs* were proved to have been written by himself by Armand Baschet in his *Preuves curieuses de l'authenticité des Mémoires de Jacques Casanova de Seingalt* in *Le Livre,* 1881; these were corroborated by two articles of Alessandro d'Ancona in 1882. After these, the singular good fortune was reserved for me of being the first to discover the most interesting things contained in masses of Casanova's manuscripts preserved in Dux, done up in six large cardboard cases, the very existence of which was known only to a few, and to most of these only on hearsay. Beyond the publication of a few fragments, nothing at that time, in 1899, had been done with these manuscripts, nor had an account of them ever been given by anyone who had been allowed to examine them, except myself. Baschet had never himself seen the manuscript of the *Memoirs,* but he had learnt all the facts about it from Messrs. Brockhaus, and he had himself examined the numerous papers relating to Casanova in the Venetian archives. A similar examination was made at the Frari at about the same time by the Abbé Fulin; and I myself, in 1894, not knowing at the time that the discovery had been already made, made it over again for myself. There the arrest of Casanova, his imprisonment in the *Piombi,* the exact date of his escape, the name of the monk who accompanied him, are all authenticated by documents contained in the *Riferte* of the Inquisitors of State; there are the bills for the repairs of the roof and walls of the cell from which he escaped; there are the reports of the spies on whose information he was arrested for his too dangerous free-spokenness in matters of religion and morality. The same archives contain forty-eight letters of Casanova to the Inquisitors of State, dating from 1763 to 1782, among the *Riferte dei Confidenti,* or reports of secret agents; the earliest asking permission to return to Venice, the rest giving information in regard to the immoralities of the city, after his return there; all in the same handwriting as the *Memoirs.*

In September, 1899, I was shown at Leipzig the actual manuscript *Histoire de ma Vie jusqu'à l'an 1797,* in Casanova's handwriting. The manuscript I examined is written on foolscap paper, rather rough and yellow; it is written on both sides of the page and in sheets or quires; here and there the paging shows that some pages have been omitted, and in their place are smaller sheets of thinner and whiter paper, all in Casanova's handsome, unmistakable handwriting. The manuscript is done up in twelve bundles, corresponding with the twelve volumes of the original edition, and in only one place is there a gap. The fourth and fifth chapters of the twelfth volume are missing, as the editor of the original edition points out, adding: "It is not probable that these two chapters have been withdrawn from the manuscript of Casanova by a strange hand; everything leads us to believe that the author himself suppressed them, with the intention, no doubt, of re-writing them, but without having found time to do so." And, as I have said, the manuscript ends with the year 1774.

Just here I may mention my own most important discovery at Dux; that is to say, a manuscript entitled *Extrait du Chapitre 4 et 5.* It is written on paper similar to that on which the *Memoirs* are written; the pages are numbered 104-108; and though it is described as *Extract,* it seems to contain, at all events, the greater part of the missing chapters in Volume Twelve. It is curious that this very important document, which supplies the one missing link in the *Memoirs,* should never have been discovered by any of the few people who have had the opportunity of looking over the Dux manuscripts. I am inclined to explain it by the fact that the case in which I found this manuscript contains some papers not relating to Casanova.

There is a mass of evidence in letters, still extant, written during Casanova's lifetime, proving the genuineness of the *Memoirs*. For instance, on April 8th, 1791, Casanova writes to Carlo Grimani, saying, "I have written the story of my life." He goes on to say that the MSS. will remain in the possession of Waldstein, who, he supposes, will print them after his death; supposing also that they would be printed in six or seven volumes in octavo. They were, as we know, printed in twelve volumes.

On January 17th, 1792, Waldstein writes to Casanova: "The story of your life will certainly give me pleasure, but I do not know how to have it brought to me, as there are no conveyances that come from Prague unless they come from Vienna." On August 1st, 1797, Cecilia Roggendorff writes: "You say in one of your letters that before you die you will bequeath to me the fifteen volumes of your *Memoirs*." In answer to this he sent her a copy of his *Précis de ma Vie*, dated September 17th, 1792, the original of which is in Dux.

It seems to me that there are many and good reasons for believing that Casanova actually and deliberately ended his *Memoirs* in 1774, in which year at the age of forty-nine he returned to Venice. References to the work in his later letter, already quoted (cf. Opiz above) seem to bear out this point. In his *Histoire de ma Fuite des Prisons* he definitely states that the proposed *Memoirs* will deal with his adventures "up to the moment when it pleased the State Inquisitors to give me permission to return to Venice in an honourable fashion." It ought to be remembered that Casanova wrote the *Memoirs* to kill the ennui of those last fourteen years at Dux when his bodily energy could no longer keep pace with the eagerness of his desires. In his narrative he lived over again those years when his youth and personal magnetism had carried everything before them. But, as he complains again and again, Fortune plays traitor to old age, so what could be more natural than to suppose that Casanova concluded his story when it ceased to stimulate him, and that his zest for autobiography stopped when he had come to a point in his confessions when the glamorous vagabond became the inglorious and somewhat despised secret agent?

In turning over the manuscripts in Leipzig, I read some of the suppressed passages and regretted their omission, for, having compared many of the pages, I found scarcely three consecutive sentences untouched; the damage done to the original text by Laforgue, who was employed to deform it, is incalculable. I therefore give here for the first time verbatim the passage that was copied out for me, which I have checked word for word.

"Page 58. La première fois que le curé me fit l'honneur de me présenter à Son Excellence, je me suis très respectueusement opposé (page 59) à cette raison que tout le monde trouvoit sans réplique. Je lui ai dit qu'il n'avoit qu'à inviter à sa table ceux qui nature man-

geoient comme deux.—Où sont-ils?—L'affaire est délicate. V. E. doit essayer des convives, et après les avoir trouvés tels que vous les désirez, savoir aussi vous les conserver sans leur en dire la raison; car il n'y a au monde personne de bien élevé qui voulût qu'on dise qu'il n'a l'honneur de manger avec V. E. que parce qu'il mange le double (de vous) d'un autre.

"Comprenant toute la force de mes paroles S. E. dit au curé de me conduire à dîner le lendemain. Ayant trouvé que si je donnois le précepte bien, je donnois l'exemple encore mieux, il me fit son commensal quotidien.

"Le sénateur, qui avoit renoncé à tout excepté qu'à lui-même, nourissoit malgré son âge et sa goutte un penchant amoureux. Il aimait Thérèse, fille du comédien Imer, qui demeuroit dans une maison voisine de son palais, dont les fenêtres étoient vis-à-vis de l'appartement où il couchoit. Cette fille, âgée alors de dix-sept ans, jolie, bizarre, coquette, qui apprenoit (alors) la musique pour aller l'exercer sur les Théâtres, qui se laissoit continuellement voir à ses fenêtres, et dont les charmes avoient déjà enivré le vieillard lui étoit cruelle. Elle venoit presque tous les jours lui faire une belle visite, mais toujours accompagnée de sa mère, vieille actrice qui s'était retirée du théâtre pour faire le salut de son âme, et qui avoit, comme de raison, formé le projet d'allier Dieu avec le diable. Elle conduisoit sa fille à la messe tous les jours, elle vouloit qu'elle allât à confesse tous les dimanches; mais l'après-dîner elle la menoit chez le vieillard amoureux, dont la fureur dans laquelle il tomboit s'épouvantait quand elle lui refusoit un baiser, lui alléguant en raison qu'ayant fait ses dévotions le matin, elle ne pouvoit pas condescendre à offenser ce même Dieu qu'elle avoit mangé, et qu'elle avoit peut-être (page 60) encore dans son estomac. Quel tableau pour moi, âgé alors de quinze ans, que le vieillard admettoit uniquement à être témoin silencieux de ces scènes! La scélérate mère applaudissoit la résistance de sa fille et osoit sermonner le voluptueux, qui à son tour n'osoit point réfuter ses maximes trop ou pas du tout chrétiennes, et qui devoit (détenir) résister à la tentation de lui jeter à la figure ce qui seroit tombé entre les mains (pour la faire jeter par la fenêtre). Il ne savoit que lui dire. La colère prenoit la place de la concupiscence; et après qu'elles étoient parties, il se soulageoit avec moi par des réflexions philosophiques. Obligé à lui répondre et ne sachant que lui dire, je lui ai un jour suggéré le mariage. Il m'a étonné, me répondant qu'elle ne vouloit pas devenir sa femme.—Pourquoi?—Parce qu'elle ne veut pas encourir la haine de (la) ma famille.—Offrez-lui une grosse somme, un état.—Elle ne voudroit pas, à ce qu'elle dit, commettre un péché mortel pour devenir reine du monde.—Il faut la violer, ou la chasser, la bannir de chez vous.—Je ne peux l'un; et je ne peux pas me déterminer à l'autre.—Tuez-la.—Cela arrivera si je ne meurs (moeurs) pas auparavant.—Votre Excellence est à plaindre.—Vas-tu jamais chez elle?—Non, car je pourrois en devenir amoureux; et si elle étoit vis-à-vis de moi telle que . . . je la vois ici, je deviendroit malheureux. —Tu as raison."

In 1906 and 1914 Octave Uzanne examined this same manuscript in Brockhaus' room, in order to verify the variants in the texts: "I can only say that the graphic clearness of this manuscript is admirable and gives one none of the sad sentiments one feels when one turns over old yellow-coloured papers—waste papers as it were—which exhale the odour of shrivelled sheets of paper, worm-eaten, decomposed by damp. One might imagine that those pages had been written but yesterday. The ink only varies somewhat in its firm black pressure, as if Casanova had pressed hard on the pen he used. The Holland is milk-white, it is in perfect preservation, and it is a pleasure to admire the fine penmanship of the Venetian writer. It is not the writing of an old man whose hand trembles, it is an original handwriting, *jeune d'allure,* perfectly legible, supple, a curious running handwriting, with very few erasures, 29 to 30 lines on each page, with lines that contain about ten or twelve words. To have obtained so wonderful a result, certainly Casanova must have copied this final text after numerous revisions and a definite judgment. In all his works he was a methodical and regular writer. The paging, besides, has a variety of numerals that bear witness to his suppressions and revisions."

VI

Among the innumerable exploits chronicled by Casanova there is one, to take an example out of many, the exact veracity of which I am inclined to dispute: the episode of the Jewish Esther in Holland; for Ravà, who also disbelieved in it, mentions among other facts that Casanova misleads us in regard to the dates of his two visits, misleads us in every possible manner, and adds to this the recent discovery that Thomas Hope, the famous banker, mentioned with the initials D— O—, *had no daughters!* Rather a Biblical statement. When I discovered Manon Baletti's letters in Dux—there were more than forty of them carefully tied together—I took it for granted that Casanova was correct in saying that she had returned him his own letters—at Amsterdam on Christmas Day, 1759—begging him to return hers or to burn them and, besides this, announcing her marriage; and that he had allowed Esther to read them, meaning to burn them afterwards, and that Esther begged to be allowed to keep them.

It now seems quite certain that, if Casanova has not misled us in regard to the entire Esther episode, he is not very near the truth as to the date of the rupture with Manon, for instead of in December, 1759, Manon's actual letters to Casanova come to an end the 7th of February, 1760, and Manon was married, as we know from the marriage register, on July 20th of the same year. There was certainly no rupture with the Balettis at this time, for Casanova was still on friendly terms and in correspondence with Manon's brother, who was in Paris, which is proved by several documents recently discovered at Dux; notably, a certain letter written to Casanova on the 24th of May, dated Paris, which says: *"Votre lettre, que m'a remise notre ami Baletti, m'a consolé."*

This is what Casanova lets us suppose was Manon's last letter to him:

"Be wise and receive the news I give you calmly. The packet contains your portrait and all the letters you have written to me. Return me my portrait, and, if you have kept my letters, be kind enough to burn them. I rely on your honour. Think of me no more. Duty bids me do all I can to forget you, for at this time to-morrow I shall become the wife of M. Blondel of the Royal Academy, architect to the King. Please do not seem as if you knew me if we chance to meet on your return to Paris."

But it seems evident Manon herself either gave back to Casanova all her letters and his portrait or had them conveyed to him privately, and the reason of this must have been her fury of resentment against his ingratitude, his infidelities and his indifference. I can imagine that the terms of the letter she would have enclosed in the sealed packet would have been similar to those she uses in a letter dated July, 1750, in which she foresees, with a clear vision, the inevitable end of their relationship:

"Je vous demande, Monsieur, pour votre dernière preuve d'amitié, que vous me rendiez mes lettres, qui doivent avoir très peu de prix pour vous et qui sont pour moi de la dernière importance. A quoi vous seraient-elles bonnes, sinon qu'à vous reprocher un peu de dureté et à vous faire voir combien peu je la mérite? Vous aurez donc la bonté de me les rendre. Il vous sera plus facile alors d'oublier totalement la pauvre faible créature qui les a écrites. Si vous avez encore quelque ménagement pour moi, vous me les donnerez dans un moment où nous ne serons pas aperçus; je crois que ce soir après souper sera le moment le plus favorable."

It would be unfair to Casanova, if we did not make allowances for certain divergences from the original in the various editions. For instance, Casanova met in London Ange Gondar, a clever but unprincipled publicist, who introduced him to Sarah, an Irish barmaid. In my Rozez edition, 1863, Giacomo boasts that he seduced the girl while his rival tried in vain to open the locked door. Mr. Bleackley says in regard to the Rozez, which differs so widely from the others in the last two volumes, "that one would imagine that its editor had used another manuscript." That is not the fact. When I was in Leipzig in 1899, I examined the entire manuscript in the handwriting of Casanova; it is done up in twelve bundles, corresponding with the twelve volumes of the original edition. Last year I wrote to Brockhaus, asking him if the pages in the Rozez edition, 202-206 of the last volume, which relate a tragic adventure that happened to Casanova, were to be found in the original manuscript. He replied: "As to your inquiry, I beg to inform you that I have looked through the original manuscript, but I could not trace anywhere the tragic adventure that happened to Casanova in Madrid. I am unable to explain this divergence, but I think I am right in supposing that Rozez made additions of his own."

VII

Made in his own likeness Casanova's women were not, nor were they creatures of his imagination; they were veritably creatures of flesh and blood; they were most often openly his mistresses. In fact, I had only to turn over, when I was in Dux, several hundred letters from women addressed to Casanova—which I was the first to discover—to realize that all these letters are written with fervour or with passion; and that Casanova should have so carefully preserved all these letters proves that his own fervour had not entirely abated.

Those letters! With what actuality they bring Casanova before us! One still sees the seals on the backs of many of them, on paper which has slightly yellowed with age, leaving the ink, however, almost always fresh. They come from Venice, Paris, Rome, Prague, Bayreuth, The Hague, Genoa, Fiume, Trieste, etc., and are addressed to as many places, often *Poste restante.* Some are in beautiful handwriting, on thick paper; others on scraps of paper, in painful hands, ill-spelt. A countess writes pitifully, imploring help; one protests her love, in spite of the "many chagrins" he has caused her; another asks "how they are to live together"; another laments that a report has gone about that she is secretly living with him, which may harm *his* reputation. Some are in French, more in Italian. *"Mon cher Giacometto,"* writes one woman, in French; *"Carissimo e Amatissimo,"* writes another, in Italian. These letters from women were in great confusion when I discovered them. Thus I found letters in the same handwriting separated by letters in other handwritings; many were undated, or dated only with the day of the week or month. There were a great many letters, dating from 1779 to 1786, signed "Francesca Buschini," a name which I cannot identify; they are written in Italian, and one of them begins: *"Unico Mio vero Amico"* (my only true friend). Others are signed Virginia B.; one of these is dated "Forli, October 15, 1773." There is also a Theresa B., who writes from Genoa. I was the first to identify Manon Baletti as the writer of a whole series of letters in French, very affectionate and intimate, usually unsigned, occasionally signed "B." She calls herself *"votre petite amie";* or she ends with a half smiling, half reproachful "good-night, and sleep better than I." In one letter, sent from Paris in 1759, she writes: "Never believe me but when I tell you that I love you and that I shall love you always." In another letter, ill-spelt, as her letters often are, she writes: "Be assured that evil tongues, vapors, calumny, nothing can change my heart, which is yours entirely and has no will to change its master."

In turning over another manuscript, I was caught by the name Charpillon, which every reader of the *Memoirs* will remember as the name of the harpy by whom Casanova suffered so much in London, in 1763-4. This manuscript begins by saying: "I have been in London for six months and have been to see them (that is, the mother and daughter) in their own house," where he finds nothing but "swindlers, who cause all who go there to lose their money in gambling." This manuscript adds some details to the story told in the ninth and tenth volumes of the *Memoirs,* and refers to the meeting with the Charpillons four and a half years before, described in volume five. It is written in a tone of great indignation. Elsewhere, I found a letter written by Casanova, but not signed, referring to an anonymous letter which he had received in reference to the Charpillons, and ending: "My handwriting is known."

VIII

But, though the letters from women naturally interested me the most, they were only a certain proportion of the great mass of correspondence which I turned over on my visit to Dux. There were letters from Carlo Angiolini, who was afterwards to bring the manuscript of the *Memoirs* to Brockhaus; from Balbi, the monk with whom Casanova escaped from the Piombi; from the Marquis Albergati, playwright, actor and eccentric, of whom there is some account in the *Memoirs;* from the Marquis Mosca, "a distinguished man of letters whom I was anxious to see," as Casanova tells us in the same volume in which he describes his visit to the Moscas at Pesaro; from Zulian, brother of the Duchess of Fiano; from Richard Lorrain, *"bel homme, ayant de l'esprit, le ton et le goût de la bonne société,"* who came to settle at Gorizia in 1773, while Casanova was there; from the Procurator Morosini, whom he speaks of in the *Memoirs* as his "protector," and as one of those through whom he obtained permission to return to Venice. His other "protector," the Avogador Zaguri, had, says Casanova, "since the affair of the Marquis Albergati, carried on a most interesting correspondence with me"; and in fact I found a bundle of no less than a hundred and thirty-eight letters from him, dating from 1784 to 1798. Another bundle contains one hundred and seventy-two letters from Count Lamberg, mentioned in the *Memoirs.*

Among other documents directly relating to the *Memoirs* which I read at Dux are several attempts at a preface, written in Casanova's unmistakable hand, in which we see the actual preface coming gradually into form. One is entitled *Casanova au Lecteur;* another, *Histoire de mon Existence;* and a third *Préface.* There is also a brief and characteristic *Précis de ma Vie,* dated November 17, 1797. Some of these have been printed in *Le Livre,* 1887.

One manuscript I found tells with great piquancy the whole story of the Abbé de Brosses' ointment, the curing of the Princesse de Conti's pimples, and the birth of the Duc de Montpensier, which is told very briefly, and with much less point, in the *Memoirs.* There is an account of the duel at Warsaw with Count Branicki in 1766, mentioned in the *Memoirs,* an affair which attracted a good deal of attention at the time, in a letter from the Abbé Taruffi to the dramatist, Francesco Albergati, dated Warsaw, March 19, 1766, quoted in Ernesto Masi's *Life of Albergati,* Bologna, 1878. A manuscript at Dux in Casanova's handwriting gives an account of this duel in the third person; it is entitled: *"Description de l'affaire arrivée à Varsovie le 5 Mars, 1766."* D'Ancona, in the "Nuova Antalogia," referring to the Abbé Taruffi's account, mentions what he considers to be a slight discrepancy: that Taruffi refers to the *danseuse* about whom the duel was fought as La Casacci, while Casanova refers to her as La Catai. In this manuscript Casanova always refers to her as La Casacci; La Catai is evidently one of M. Laforgue's arbitrary alterations of the text.

One of the most amusing papers was an anecdote and its commentary, perhaps jotted down for use in that latter part of the *Memoirs* which was never to be written. Here is a single sheet, dated "this 2nd September, 1791," and headed *Souvenir:*

"The Prince de Rosenberg said to me, as we went down stairs, that Madame de Rosenberg was dead, and asked me if the Comte de Waldstein had in the library the illustration of the Villa d'Altichiero, which the Emperor had asked for in vain at the city library of Prague, and when I answered 'yes,' he gave an equivocal laugh. A moment afterwards, he asked me if he might tell the Emperor. 'Why not, monsigneur? It is not a secret. Is His Majesty coming to Dux?' 'If he goes to Oberlaitensdorff (*sic*) he will go to Dux, too; and he may ask you for it, for there is a monument there which relates to him when he was Grand Duke.' 'In that case, His Majesty can also see my critical remarks on the Egyptian prints.'

"The Emperor asked me this morning, 6th October, how I employed my time at Dux, and I told him I was making an Italian anthology. 'You have all the Italians, then?' 'All, sire.' See what a lie leads to. If I had not lied in saying that I was making an anthology I should not have found myself obliged to lie again in saying that we have all the Italian poets.

"If the Emperor comes to Dux, I shall kill myself."

In the *Memoirs* Casanova tells how he quarrelled with Voltaire because Voltaire had told him frankly that his translation of *L'Ecossaise* was a bad translation. It is piquant to read another note written in this style of righteous indignation:

"Voltaire, the hardy Voltaire, whose pen is without bit or bridle; Voltaire, who devoured the *Bible*, and ridiculed our dogmas, doubts, and, after having made proselytes to impiety, is not ashamed, being reduced to the extremity of life, to ask for the sacraments and to cover his body with more relics than St. Louis had at Amboise."

Here is an argument also very much in keeping with the tone of the *Memoirs:*

"A girl who is pretty and good, and as virtuous as you please, ought not to take it ill that a man, carried away by her charms, should set himself to the task of making their conquest. If this man cannot please her by any means, even if his passion be criminal, she ought never to take offence at it nor treat him unkindly; she ought to be gentle and pity him, if she does not love him, and think it enough to keep invincible hold upon her own duty."

Occasionally he touches upon æsthetical matters, as in a fragment which begins with this liberal definition of beauty:

"'Harmony makes beauty,' says M. de S. P. (Bernardin de St. Pierre), but the definition is too short, if he thinks he has said everything. Here is mine. Remember that the subject is metaphysical. 'An object really beautiful ought to seem beautiful to all whose eyes fall upon it.' That is all; there is nothing more to be said."

"They say that this Dux is a delightful spot," says Casanova in one of the most personal of his notes, "and I see that it might be for many, but not for me, for what delights me in my old age is independent of the place which I inhabit. When I do not sleep, I dream, and, when I am tired of dreaming, I blacken paper; then I read, and most often reject all that my pen has vomited." Here we see him blackening paper on every occasion and for every purpose. In one bundle I found an unfinished story about Roland and some adventures with women in a cave; then a *Meditation on Arising from Sleep, 19th May, 1789;* then a *Short Reflection of a Philosopher Who Finds Himself Thinking of Procuring His Own Death;* again, *At Dux, on getting out of bed on the 13th October, 1793—a day dedicated to St. Lucy, memorable in my too long life.* A big budget, containing cryptograms, is headed *Grammatical Lottery;* and there is the title page of a treatise on *The Duplication of the Hexahedron, demonstrated geometrically to all the Universities and all the Academies of Europe.* There are innumerable verses, French and Italian, in all stages, occasionally attaining the finality of these lines, which appear in half a dozen tentative forms:

Sans mystère point de plaisirs,
Sans silence point de mystère.
Charme divin de mes loisirs,
Solitude! que tu m'es chère!

Then there are a number of more or less complete manuscripts of some extent. There is the manuscript of the translation of Homer's *Iliad* in *ottava rima* (published in Venice, 1775-78); of the *Histoire de Venise,* of the *Icosameron,* a curious book published in 1787, purporting to be "translated from English," but really an original work of Casanova; *Philocalies sur les Sottises des Mortels,* a long manuscript never published; the sketch and beginning of *Le Polémarque, ou la Calomnie démasquée par la présence d'esprit, Tragicomédie en trois actes, composée à Dux dans le mois le Juin de l'Année, 1791,* which recurs again under the form of the *Polémoscope: La Lorgnette menteuse, ou la Calomnie démasquée,* acted before the Princesse de Ligne at her château at Teplitz, 1791. There is a treatise in Italian, *Delle Passioni;* there are long dialogues, such as *Le Philosophe et le Théologien,* and *Rêve: Dieu-Moi;* there is the *Songe d'un Quart d'Heure,* divided into minutes; there is the very lengthy criticism of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre; there is the *Confutation d'une Censure indiscrète qu'on lit dans la Gazette de Jéna, 19 Juin, 1789;* with another large manuscript, unfortunately imperfect, first called *L'Insulte,* and then *Placet au Public,* dated "Dux, this 2nd March, 1790," referring to the same criticism on the *Icosameron* and the *Fuite des Prisons. L'Histoire de ma Fuite des Prisons de la République* *de Venise, qu'on appelle les Plombs,* which is the first draft of the most famous part of the *Memoirs,* was published at Leipzig in 1788; and, having read it in the Marcian Library at Venice, I am not surprised to learn from this indignant document that it was printed "under the care of a young Swiss, who had the talent to commit a hundred faults of orthography."

I came upon a variety of small papers, among which were jumbled together on the same and on separate scraps of paper washing-bills, accounts, hotel bills, lists of letters written, first drafts of letters with many erasures, notes on books, theological and mathematical notes, Latin quotations, French and Italian verses, with variants, a long list of classical names which have and have not been *"francisés,"* with reasons for and against; "what I must wear at Dresden"; headings without anything to follow, such as: *Reflexions on respiration, on the true cause of youth—the crows;* a new method of winning the lottery at Rome; recipes, among which is a long printed list of perfumes sold at Spa; a newspaper cutting, dated Prague, 25 October, 1790, on the thirty-seventh balloon ascent of Blanchard; thanks to some "noble donor" for the gift of a dog called Finette; a passport for *"Monsieur de Casanova, Vénétien, allant d'ici en Hollande,"* October 13, 1758 (*"Ce passeport bon pour quinze jours"*), together with an order for post-horses, gratis, from Paris to Bordeaux and Bayonne.

Occasionally, from these papers I obtained a glimpse into his daily life at Dux, as in this note, scribbled on a fragment of paper (here and always I translate the French literally): "I beg you to tell my servant what the biscuits are that I like to eat, dipped in wine, to fortify my stomach. I believe that they can all be found at Roman's." Usually, however, these notes, though often suggested by something closely personal, branch off into more general considerations; or else begin with general considerations, and end with a case in point. Thus, for instance, a fragment of three pages begins: "A compliment which is made only to gild the pill is a positive impertinence, and Monsieur Bailli is nothing but a charlatan; the monarch ought to have spat in his face, but the monarch trembled with fear." A manuscript entitled *Essai d'Egoisme,* dated "Dux, this 27th June, 1769," contains, in the midst of various reflections, an offer to let his *appartement* in return for enough money to "tranquillise for six months two Jew creditors at Prague." Another manuscript is headed *Pride and Folly,* and begins with a long series of antitheses, such as: "All fools are not proud, and all proud men are fools. Many fools are happy, all proud men are unhappy."

Here, as so often in these manuscripts, we seem to see Casanova thinking on paper. He uses scraps of paper (sometimes the blank page of a letter, on the other side of which we see the address) as a kind of informal diary; and it is characteristic of him, of the infinitely curious mind which this adventurer possessed, that there are so few merely personal notes among these casual jottings found among his remains.

IX

The world of his *Memoirs* is not a world of his invention, as these papers eloquently prove; yet, when he warmed up to the theme of his exploits, he sometimes invented enormously and lied prodigiously, albeit entertainingly and delightfully. Our Venetian, like any true vagabond, could not resist what he called *sa folie vagabonde*. Wherever he went, adventures fell his way, and, incredible or not, there is a spark illumines his telling of them. He belonged to an age when the human animal exalted the satisfaction of the senses, and he was, above all, a man of his age.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

LONDON, *September*, 1924.

Arthur Symons

INTRODUCTION

La Piste Casanovérienne, as it is fondly called, has long held a quite reasonable fascination for all students of social history and psychology. These famous *Mémoires* furnish an unique tableau of the eighteenth century, painted for us by a man whose personality was itself unique. The trail has been carefully followed by Englishmen and Frenchmen alike. Mr. Arthur Symons and Mr. Havelock Ellis in our own country have displayed a passionate interest in the wonderful Venetian; while Messieurs Armand Baschet and Octave Uzanne have foraged in the lockers of the Maison Brockhaus at Leipzig, in the Archives of the Venetian Senate, and have given us the results of their researches. Mr. Symons has in person turned over the papers lying mouldering in the white library at Dux, where the restless old adventurer spent the last tame years of his life, and relieved his solitude *en broyant du noir sur le papier*. Thus does he, in a fit of depression, deprecatingly characterise his own excellent piece of work. It is to these writers that we owe the discovery that Casanova was not a mere retailer of impossibly indelicate stories, but a memoirist of the first order, and the author of one of the most vivacious and artistically faithful pictures of the romantic age in which he moved, that we are lucky enough to possess. This 'passionist,' as the French love to call him, this prince of adventurers, was a man of action, who cared to analyse the springs of that action, and posed to himself, and to all his friends, as a philosopher. The list of his philosophical and metaphysical works would startle and weary. The *Mémoires* alone survive. Here he was his own subject, and he gloated on it! *Les choses vues* were with him also *les choses vécues*. He was an author-actor who actually lived the scenes he described, and his strong histrionic instinct points and modifies every incident. That is how he saw life—not steadily, not whole, but dramatically. In one of the many unused prefaces to the *Mémoires* found among his papers, he tells us that 'life is a stage, where the great author, God, sets the piece, in whose presentment audience and company change places, and a man is now actor, and now spectator.' Casanova may be said to have been both at one and the same time, so deeply developed always was his dual consciousness.

The stage of Casanova—the field of his vital operations—has been razed and abolished by the tremendous upheaval and alteration worked by the Revolution, but the world before the flood, of Madame de Pompadour's lurid prediction, lives again in the Venetian's pages. Though he survived the Revolution, watching its wild progress from his lonely home in Bohemia, his day was over before it broke out. From the circumstances of his life and training, he was an aristocrat at heart, a monarchist indeed, as his wordy contention with Voltaire shows, and the narrow spirit of his generation and the short-sighted political outlook of those with whom he ranged himself are evidenced by his absurd view of the causes of 'the outbreak.' We come across these views in the *Mémoires* and in a short essay of his entitled *Causes of the French Revolution*. He attributes the fall of the monarchy to the untoward existence of the Duc d'Orléans—Egalité—whose presence on this planet was the unfortunate result of cabbalistic experiments on the complexion of Egalité's mother, the Duchesse de Chartres!

But indeed the abuses of the old *régime* prevalent in all countries did not affect Casanova's welfare in the least. On the contrary, the careless, reckless whirlpool of society, the survival of the feudal instinct, made the world, as it was then, a happy hunting-ground for the adventurer. For fully half a century did he range at will over Europe; a *débonnaire* free-lance, taking to himself a most unfair proportion of the good things of this world, interviewing Popes and Sovereigns on equal terms, cheating men and betraying women. Only one woman, according to his own showing, betrayed him, and, curiously enough, the self-assigned date of the reflux of his fortunes, and the failure and decay of his wonderful vitality, is coincident with his English visit, and his acquaintance with the London lady who led him literally through the Maze, and befooled him as he had befooled others. Here the *Mémoires* do indeed begin to drag a little and he to write regretfully of the period —*nel mestro camin nostra vita.* He practically gave up the game. Yet, according to contemporary accounts, he seems to have reversed the process of the modern man: he looked young and felt old, or said he did. As to his youthful appearance there is no doubt; at no time did he look within ten years of his age. Here is a description of him as he appeared at the age of forty-seven, after his disgrace, drawn up by the official pen of the Venetian agent at Ancona:—

'I saw him with my own eyes. Some one told me it was he, for I had never seen the man before. He comes and goes freely, holds his head high, and looks every man in the face. He is received in several good houses. He does not look more than forty. He is tall and handsome and well made, his skin is very dark, and his eyes very bright. He wears a short chestnut *perruque.* From what they tell me, I gather him to be of a bold disposition and a disdainful. He has plenty to say for himself, and he says it well too.'

He was forty-seven then, and considered that he had already lived his life and was longing to be received into the favour of the mighty potentates who had banished him from his beloved native city, for he was a Venetian born, with a dash of Spanish blood in him. The details of his parentage and childhood as retailed by himself are interesting. 'I was an idiot till I was eight and a half,' he says somewhere, and a medical diagnosis founded on his own account of his symptoms would suggest that the boy suffered from the now fashionable childish complaint of adenoids. But at that age his health became established, and he was able to start on his career with a perfect physical equipment—a veritable constitution of iron. His wonderfully executed and planned escape from prison proves him a man of prodigious nervous strength and staying power. But, like the lilies of the field, he toiled not, neither did he spin, but lived freely at the world's expense. His attitude towards gambling-tables, and the amount of support and sustenance to be fairly derived thence, is sufficiently indicated in a casual remark of his. He called his successes there 'getting the better of fortune.' This feat 'was to be accomplished by some happy stroke of calculation, some touch of dexterity *independent of* luck.' 'I consider,' he continued, 'that a prudent player can make use of either or both of these means, without incurring blame or being taxed with cheating.' But all Casanova's lucky *coups* were not made at the tables, for instance the treasure of gold and silver and jewels wrung from poor old *Semiramis*, whose leaden substitutes were thrown into the sea near Marseilles, to propitiate *Selenis*, the cabbalistic spirit he had evoked for her ruin.

Though Casanova is 'damned to everlasting fame' for his treatment of the crack-brained 'Egeria' of the Regent, he shares the obloquy of exploitation with two other adventurers, Saint Germain and Cagliostro. The memoirs of the time are full of the tragi-comic history of the doting old marquise —her alembics, her retorts, and absurd processes of the science of alchemy, the fashionable sport of a superstitious age. Casanova is credited with dragging in the mire one of the noblest names in France; but we may point out that the marquise was only the widow of the last of the d'Urfés, and that only by the insistence of the Regent, who wished to establish Mlle. Jeanne Camus de Pontcarré, a member of his '*plus étroit intrinsèque*,' creditably. In the scene where the old lady of seventy-three flings her lace cap up to the ceiling on receipt of some good occult news from Casanova, we are irresistibly reminded of Barnave's cynical saying, when her like went in scores to the scaffold, '*Le sang qui coule, est-il donc si pur?*' and there is a ribald French song current still in Paris, '*Ah, quel malheur, Madame Camus!*'

These volumes show Casanova to us a great lover, a great eater, a great talker; he was not a coward, but he disliked fighting according to the rules, and a diplomatic evasion of the laws of 'honour' often stood him in stead. He was a normal rather than an abnormal subject; the healthy materialism of these pages prove it. He would have us believe him a metaphysician and even an idealist, but he only used metaphysics to justify his actions, and idealism to add poignancy to his amours. He had no heart, according to the modern acceptation of the word, but he was benevolent and liked to see people happy about him. Greedy as he was in pursuit of the gratification of all his senses, and remorseless when thwarted in that pursuit, he was not actually averse to the sight of the enjoyment of others.

In one of the several prefaces he wrote for the *Mémoires*, of which that one definitely selected by him or his literary executors is the least characteristic, he enters into a very subtle form of *apologia pro vita sua*. He wishes to 'demonstrate in these very *Mémoires* the fact that the chain of events is independent of method, *i.e.* conduct.' If, as he owns, he has 'sometimes been led into altruistic courses, the result unfortunately has not always been for the best,' as, for instance, in the case of the moderation shown to Lucy of Paséan, whose grey, ruined ghost appears three times in the *Mémoires*, with a sort of rhythmical reminder. On the other hand, good has often been the result of evil, so far as he has been concerned. To sum up, he attributes all his vices and follies to the *survenance* of a 'moment of madness, an oscillation of the pulses, when a man is not himself,' but the blind puppet of 'something not himself' that makes for evil. 'Virtue,' he declares, 'consists, practically, in a man's keeping control of himself, and being able to suspend action till the vibration is over-past.'

This useful philosophy, so well adapted to the degree of moral stress suffered by a man like Casanova, though it would not cover the deliberate and long-sustained trickery of poor old Madame d'Urfé, which eventually led to her death, in a state of mind that would have made her a fit inmate of the Paris Bedlam, might account for his other actual crime—the cold-blooded murder of the lay sister, in furtherance of his amour with the artless nun of Chambéry.

His betrayal of the Spaniard, Manucci, caused him some actual remorse, but that was because it implied a public reflection on his honour. His sins of omission, such as the neglect of his old benefactor, M. de Bragadin, his ingratitude to the kind little actress, La Binetti, who saved his life at Stuttgart, to be cruelly insulted by him at Petersburg, did not distress him. Jules Sandeau has called him 'the most moral of Don Juans.' That must have been because, though he loved many women, he broke few hearts or none. He loved and he rode away indeed, but he always paid the bill. He found a husband for Cristina, and though Mlle. de La Meure was fascinated by him, he allowed her to see clearly the kind of man with whom she was dealing, so that although she flirted outrageously with the brilliant Casanova, she took care to secure the plain, complaisant merchant from Dunkirk. C. C. consoled herself with the Cardinal de Bernis, and the prudent Dubois (who 'read and enjoyed Locke,' and who reminds one a little of George Sand) took as a *pis aller* the *maître d'hôtel*, Lebel.

His relations with the freethinking nun and her weaker sister in religion—that *partie carrée* in the Venetian casino—form at once the blot and the curiosity, psychologically speaking, of the *Mémoires*. To abate the pure cynicism of the episode is to coarsen it. Love was a game in the eighteenth century, and women played it as skilfully as men. The two nuns of Murano, M. M. and C. C.—Matilda and Caterina—it is easy to reconstruct their names from the hints which their lover lets slip—are the best pair of portraits in the book, the blue ribbon of his gallantries. Matilda with her philosophy and her wicked books, and the sweet, weakly imitative Caterina, would make a novel by themselves. But what a gallery of charming persons he gives us! His early love Bettina; and the ill-fated Lucy of Paséan; Cristina, the naïve peasant girl of Mestre; Esther Hope, the banker's daughter of Cologne, who loved him, but who would only admit an honourable courtship; the sagacious Marcolina; Clementina, the dreamy *bas bleu*; the naïve English Miss and the sprightly housekeeper; the fair Amazon lady to whom he played butler at Zurich; the ladylike Pauline; the astute Madam Cornelys; the proud little Spanish countess who studies revenge; and last, sweetest and most complete portrait of all, Henriette, the French spy, for whom Casanova really cared, if he ever cared for any one.

With male portraits Casanova is naturally not so happy. He was not interested in men, they were mostly merely husbands to deceive, or victims to defraud. His descriptions of Voltaire and of the great Frederick are perfunctory and marred by the intrusion of his own vanity. The only man that really dominated him was the Cardinal de Bernis, who, though a fribble and a courtier, was his equal in brains and perversity. The 'flower of abbés'—*Suzon la Bouquetière*, as Madame de Pompadour called him—from whose breviary, scurrilous *vers de société* used to fall as he fared, powdered and scented, and pink as a girl, to Mass—was a match for the Venetian, and adroitly contrived to leave his deserted mistress on the hands of the latter when summoned home from Venice. Oddly enough, he chose to give a very different colour to his life there from that suggested by Casanova. He says in his own memoirs that 'the air of Venice did not suit' him. He was bored there—'*Je n'avais pas de maitresses, et les soirées étaient longues.*' He left Venice in 1755. Casanova's date differs as usual.

This wonderful processional novel, to give it its lowest claim to consideration, was conceived and written by the worn-out old *roué* to combat the deadly *ennui* that must necessarily overtake a whilom man of action, self-condemned to vegetate in inactivity. By its means he fondly hoped to 'cheat his grief' and 'cheer his old soul' in those dreary last ten years of his life, spent in the castle of Dux in Bohemia, where he fulfilled the nominal post of librarian to Count Waldstein at a thousand florins a year. His master, *ce grand moderne*, understood him and loved him, but he was a continual prey to indigestion, and the stupid malice of stolid German servants, unable to sympathise with his hasty Italian temperament.

Waldstein, who had come across Casanova in Paris, during a period of dejection, took a violent fancy to him, and carried him off to Bohemia. Count Waldstein's *esprit Cabalon* was obviously the link between the adventurer and himself. Casanova never dropped his mystic pretensions, of which he had made so much use in his days of action. Cabbalism was the social weapon of the day, and alchemy its serious amusement. The old Prince de Ligne, the count's father-in-law, living at his neighbouring castle of Toeplitz with his daughter, the Princess Clary d'Aldringhen, was captivated by the fascinating adventurer on more literary grounds, and 'believed him as he did the Credo.' 'Amiable, celebrated man, and profound thinker!' he says in one of his letters, 'you are logical as an iceberg and hot as a volcano.' 'You are finer than Montaigne.' 'I am Atticus to your Cicero.' The prince himself was an author, but is not particular about the laws of composition and spelling. He advises his friend not to try to 'eliminate his Italianisms, or to trouble over the stupid French grammar.' He was heart and soul interested in the progress of the *Mémoires*, which were sent to him volume by volume, and pored over—'eagerly devoured'—by himself and General Souvaroff and Count Salmond and others. Moreover they were read aloud by the foolish, vain old man to the family circles at Dux and at Toeplitz in the evenings. It is plain that Casanova reaped the harvest of vanity in his lifetime.

The prince is anxious that the *Mémoires* should be given to the world in their entirety. He would not have posterity lose a word of *ces caractères de feu.* 'All the people you write about will be dead by the time you are published,' he says. Casanova appears, in an access of prudery, to have proposed to burn the *Mémoires.* 'Nothing of the kind,' says the prince. 'Follow my example, go to my publisher, Walter, and stipulate for a hundred ducats' annuity on the book. Then go to bed, send for a priest, and let him throw a few reams of paper on to the fire, to represent your works, which you offer as a sacrifice to the Holy Virgin. Walter will not tell. He will give you two hundred copies for yourself, and the rest to be printed after your death. This is my own arrangement with him; perhaps in the place where we shall be by then, we can afford to laugh at the faces of the people on earth who are reading us!'

A further piece of advice bears on the lost last volume.

'Don't talk of dying. Reserve a volume for the account of what may yet befall you of an agreeable nature.'

Perhaps the wily Italian himself demurred at the publication of details which would doubtless concern the persons in whose company he was then living, and though he declared his intention of carrying the *Mémoires* on to 1797, they stop abruptly in 1774. That he actually wrote at least a volume more is proved by the *Mémoires* of this very Prince de Ligne, who gives a *résumé*, careless and inaccurate, of some of the more salient facts in that volume, including certain incidents that do not appear in the *Mémoires* so far as we have them.

It is impossible to doubt the fact that Giacomo Casanova, or Jacques as he preferred to be styled, with the territorial addition of Seingalt, which self-applied name held a vague reminiscence of the canton of St. Gall, where he once made a long stay, did himself compose a manuscript of six hundred in-folio pages, which he entitled *Histoire de ma vie, jusqu'à l'an* 1797. He declares, in the preface to a little volume, *The Flight*, written and published in his lifetime (because he got so tired of telling the story!), that he would not call his book

'Confessions' because '*un extravagant* had sullied the glory of the title.' This was Rousseau, the man of thought, whom, for obvious reasons, the man of action detested.

The fact that Casanova wrote his own *Mémoires* has actually been questioned! M. Paul Lacroix (*Le Bibliophile Jacob*) says that 'Casanova was incapable of writing French, or of producing a work of any imagination of style whatever. . . . It is certain the celebrated Chevalier d'Industrie left notes, and a clever man, no less a personage than Beyle himself, put them together.'

The style of Casanova is at times intensely dramatic and always flowing; his imaginative power is undeniable. That he was quite aware that he could not write good French is evidenced by the Prince of Ligne's advice to him, but this goes to prove the authenticity of the *Mémoires*. And let the reader turn to a paragraph in the original work, quoted by M. Baschet, before it was shaped by M. Laforgue at the instance of M. Brockhaus of the publishing house of Leipzig, and he will see that though Casanova's French was by no means perfect, a very slight 'derangement' of the turn of the sentences gives us a practically unaltered version of the *Mémoires* as originally written.

His veracity is very much more difficult to establish, though in the collation of his arrangement of public events with the actual happening of them, as shown by dates and the testimony of contemporary chronicles, Casanova does not come off badly. It has been contended, with regard to his escape from the Venetian State prison, that the State Inquisitors were in the habit of opening doors to certain prisoners and winking at their escape. This is to make Casanova truly ridiculous, as a person of so little account politically that his treason was a negligible quantity. But as a matter of fact, his minute description of the various stages of his flight and the material checks he met with tallies exactly with the *locale*. An ardent Casanoverian even went carefully over the scene of the flight *backwards*, beginning at the *Scala d'oro*, and ending in the attics of the Chancellery, and the cell whose ceiling the fugitive spoiled. The bill for its reparation, amounting to six hundred and eighty-nine livres, is still extant. To disbelieve Casanova is to believe in the ridiculous collaboration of the terrible Three in his flight, and their theatrical arrangement of its details!

On the other hand, an exhaustive search has failed to discover the famous paragraph in the *St. James's Chronicle* mocking the placard which appeared in the window of Casanova's house in Pall Mall, and which resulted in his acquaintance with the mysterious and dignified Pauline, whose own history, reported by Casanova to be absolutely consonant with contemporary events in Portugal, is not to be collated therewith. The tale of the Talking Parrot receives no confirmation, as Casanova says it does, in the pages of *The Daily Advertizer*. The memoirs of the time are strikingly innocent of allusion to this man, who, by his own showing, made such a hole in the world. Sir Horace Mann, with whom he dined in Florence, never advises Sir Horace Walpole of the fact; and the record of the famous Madam Cornelys is clear of any mention of that old lover of her salad days whom she exploited so heartily in London.

The fact is that Casanova was by nature extremely untidy and inaccurate. But a quality inherent to a superb memory like his is that accuracy in detail often predominates over the recollection of the broader facts of time and space. He remembers, for instance, that the candles were of tallow, not wax, at the hotel at Chambéry, and that there were four at the cardinal's *petite maison* at Murano; he forgets to tell us what became of that famous blue diamond, commonly supposed to have been the 'Regent,' that his partner in *escroquerie*, the Count of Saint Germain, was sent into Holland to pawn, and which came into the hands of Casanova's friend, M. d'O—— (otherwise Hope). The name suggests a connection with another famous diamond, whose late possessors bear that of the diamond merchant of Amsterdam. Casanova could perhaps have told us something about it, but here he allows his usual vagueness to prevail and obscure history.

As Mr. Havelock Ellis says somewhere, 'There is reason to believe that an organisation like Casanova's, for whom the external world is so vivid, is associated with memory power of a high order,' and the presumption is that the actor-author did as well as he could. He wrote a rough synopsis of every chapter, as his papers found at Dux prove, and filled in the details afterwards. He had no wish to throw dust in the eyes of posterity. He is candid enough about the many checks incidental to the adventurous life. Indeed, the latter half of the *Mémoires* is more or less a record of the snubs the *Chevalier d'industrie* received in the exercise of his profession from different governments. His relations with the authorities were always pleasant enough, on condition that he 'moved on' when asked to do so. He describes the scenes fully. We seem to see the smile of Prince Kaunitz, as he shows the amusing, garrulous fellow the door. 'Go and sin the more—but not in Vienna!' The great Frederick toyed with his pretty wit, and praised him for his true qualification. 'You are a very fine-looking man!' The great Catherine flirted with him a little, but Panin was always watching. With regard to his relations with women he was not so sincere. His dramatic instinct led him to 'arrange' life pictorially and sympathetically, to trim off the raw edges of reality, to bring his best characters 'on' again, as, for instance, Henriette's several effective and pointed re-appearances. The same may be said of the story of the renewal of his relations with Teresa at Florence, with the addition of her accommodating husband, which is so amusing. We may or may not believe the stories of that sleep in the very jaws of danger which arrested the Flight for two hours, the three meetings with Lucy of Paséan, the episode of Mlle. de Roman-Couppier, and his cabbalistic influence in her fortunes, which is not borne out, nay, is contradicted, by contemporary accounts, but they certainly add intensely to the *rondeur* and pointedness of his narrative.

There are actually no contemporary records to corroborate the statements of Casanova, till we come to the causes of his condemnation in 1755, when his *dossier* begins to form part of the Venetian archives. With the Flight, and his own verbal account of it, Casanova became a famous man; before this he was, in the eyes of the State at least, a mere commonplace roysterer, a dangerous subverter of authority, a plausible dabbler in forbidden arts of necromancy. He was actually bred up for the Church, and was made Doctor of Civil Law at the age of sixteen. The *Mémoires* tell how he filled the part with cleverness and *aplomb*, till his natural bent came uppermost, and he made a fool of himself. We realise the vanity which bore him up, and admire the *bonhomie* with which he explained the dangers and advantages of his temperament to the good Bishop of Martorano—all the future Casanova lies revealed in these first few flippant pages. Vanity, which impelled him as an abbé to bestride a horse for the first time in his life, made him fling away his cassock and don the uniform. As a soldier he meets Teresa, and sets the note of all his dealings with women in his treatment of her. Fully disillusioned as she must have been, she meets him again with open arms at Florence. So did all Casanova's loves, in response to his indestructible charm. On his return to Venice, the loosely poised pendulum of an adventurer's life has swung to the other extreme—he is a humble fiddler in the orchestra of a Venetian theatre.

It is in this capacity, when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb, that the great opportunity of his life comes to him. He is able to be of use to the noble senator, de Bragadin, and the cabbalistic leaning of the fond old man is the basis of the *entente* between them, as it is later in his friendship with Waldstein.

Casanova gives his own version of his relations with the credulous senator, the evolution of the spirit *Paralis*, whom he makes responsible for the devilish suggestions that he does not like to father on himself. *Paralis* and de Bragadin find a husband for Cristina. Enriched by the old man, whose gondola he uses and whose liveried servants he orders about, Casanova leaves him to visit Italy, France, Germany and

Witnesses were called—the landlord of a certain café, La Malvasia, in the Frezzeria—and Casanova got his five years. In fifteen months he made his escape.

From 1756 to 1763 his name disappears from the State records.

He went to Paris and lived on the reputation of his marvellous adventure, writing and publishing a long account of it, at the instance of de Bernis, to save himself the pleasant annoyance of retailing the incidents of his escape. The minister's version does not appear. The edition we have was published in 1787 at Prague, where he himself presided over the printing. He makes several attempts to fleece the confiding Parisians. His memorandum concerning his famous lottery bureau is said to exist; there is among the Papers of France an unsigned document of that description. His shop in the quarter of the Temple for the production of stamped patterned material was another business undertaking of his, not quite so happy. His master-stroke was his getting hold of the Marquise d'Urfé. He combined all these industries with the trade of espionage, in which he was never very proficient. He went to Dunkirk, at the instance of the Abbé de la Ville, to reconnoitre the English Fleet at a fee of five hundred louis. He went twice to Holland to try to raise a loan for the French king. The second visit was not so successful, socially, as the first. The members of the various embassies had had time to make inquiries and examine his letters of introduction more carefully. Private official letters preserved in the Paris archives enable us to collate Casanova's own story with the facts. It is amusing reading. He was never in quite such good odour as he fancied, and gives us to understand. For instance, M. D'Affry, the French minister to Holland, notifies de Choiseul of the advent of M. de Casanova, and hints at some discreditable incidents of his previous visit to The Hague. He will be civil to M. de Casanova, but would like to know how far the duke would like him to go, and wonders if the letter of introduction was not obtained by an intermediary while the

Venetian remained unknown to the duke? He complains of Casanova's notable indiscretion. 'He seemed to me terribly irresponsible, with no sense of the seriousness of his mission, or else *he has great powers of dissimulation.*' He has heard that 'the man is the son of an actress,' and is distressed 'to hear him abuse his own countrymen.'

The duke, in reply, informs M. D'Affry that his surmises are correct, that the introduction was obtained second-hand through the duke's brother, and he advises the minister to have nothing to do with the Venetian. Casanova, who at all times seems to have had a secret sense that warned him when it was time to decamp, left for Bonn and Cologne, and tells us so, but nothing more.

The minister at Bonn notifies to his Government that an unknown Venetian has arrived, who spends money, flaunts diamonds, and plays high, speaks of Versailles as if he were an intimate there; a banker of Cologne [the credulous, upright Hope?] answers for him.' Later on he got into trouble again. The minister, who has by now discovered his name, mentions his having 'an adventure which made some noise.' Casanova relates this adventure, but from his own point of view. The minister's curt relation is that Casanova owed a certain Baron de Vidau some money, and was arrested as he was coming away from the Comte de Torcy's house, where he had dined. He disclaimed the debt, but he paid in a ring, a box, and watch and some money, 'to avoid prison.'

This differs somewhat from the spirited, dashing account vouchsafed us by the man himself. In these official documents we come across the good Baron Kettler, whom Casanova plagued so adroitly. Kettler submits that Casanova is a traitor, a plotter, and bears about with him the proofs of his treason in a certain casket. But, as usual, the Duc de Choiseul takes a lenient and uncomplimentary view of the extent of the peril, and bids Kettler to ignore the harmless spendthrift. He had probably learned from Madame de Rumain that her gallant friend was not politically dangerous. Casanova, as usual, departs appositely, and hies him to Switzerland, to incur the idyllic adventure of Soleure, to argue literature and politics with Voltaire, and to trifle with an abortive conversion at the altar of our Lady of Einsiedel.

Three years later he is at Marseilles preparing for the comic martyrdom of that fine old piece of credulity and folly, Madame d'Urfé, whose dignity survives all the affronts which the adventurer puts on her, and who is most truly *grande dame* when most grotesque.

The adventurer all through these his wanderings is swayed by what we may call most intense love of country. He leaves no stone unturned to induce the inquisitors to grant him a safe-conduct, and eventually a pardon. From London, in 1763, he unfolds to them a commercial scheme. It is his own secret of dyeing cotton Turkey red, which he offers to the Government, and will test his method in the presence of Zucatto, the Venetian ambassador in London. Patterns he will send from London, and, for ten sous, he can make a handsome bandanna handkerchief, that Venetians buy for ten livres (ten shillings), and—here is the thin end of the wedge—he offers to escort a company of workmen to Venice!

To this proposal he probably received no reply.

The London visit is of extreme interest to English people. He sees our customs with his naïve, foreign eyes, and describes them in his frank, outspoken, Italian fashion. *Le boxe* and its eccentric laws impressed him deeply. Madam Cornelys takes care that her old admirer purchases a seven-guinea ticket for her series of balls in Soho Square. London taverns, *Le Canon* and *Le Star*, knew him. He treated a new conquest in true British fashion to cakes and ale at Marylebone Gardens. He infests the British Museum, and Milady Harrington's card-parties. He joins in a queer dance called the *rhompaipe* [hornpipe ?], and a queer game called a *rober* [rubber ?]. He sees a disturbance at Drury Lane Theatre, and Garrick on his knees to the audience; he hobnobs with 'Kety' Fisher and 'Miss' Charpillon and Lady Betty 'Germen,' Sir Augustus Hervey, and Lord Pembroke. Miss 'Chodeleig,' from the window of her house at Kingston, sees him fall from his horse, and succours him. He abuses the puritanical British Sunday, but indemnifies himself for its dulness by driving out to 'Harwich' [Hackney?] and 'Bames' [Barnes?] after dinner.

Then he forged a bill of exchange—backed a friend's bill, he says—and had to leave the country. He had, he admits, been living at the rate of four hundred guineas a fortnight.

Belgium, Brunswick, Berlin, Warsaw, and Petersburg are next on his list. At Petersburg he met the Empress Catherine walking in the Summer Gardens. She asked 'who the tall, remarkable man was?' At Moscow he fought a duel with that heroic personage Branecki—not the famous marshal of that name. Dresden, Prague, and Vienna next had the honour of his sojourn. At Aix he came across Cagliostro, 'sewing cockles on to his cloak.' He and his wife were pilgrims to Turin and the relic of St. Veronica. (Cagliostro, says a contemporary, had been included by the heirs of Madame d'Urfé, long since dead, with Casanova in their prosecution of her betrayers.)

In Spain, where he passed the greater part of the year 1768, he behaved disloyally, and has the grace to admit it. He betrayed the confidence of a certain Manucci. A foolish intrigue with the mistress of one in power—Casanova was always colliding with the authorities in this way—resulted in his close acquaintance with the donjon of Barcelona, where he was shut up forty-three days. From these prison shades he wrote his refutation of Amelot de la Houssaye's indictment of the Venetian Republic. This was another attempt to conciliate the Most Serene Prince, which was the polite way of addressing the ruling body of Venice. Casanova knew all the forms of diplomacy. He went to Turin to get the *Refutation* printed, and presented himself to Giovanni Berlendis, the Venetian minister at Sardinia, who harboured him pending the result of his application to the Three. The result was not what Casanova anticipated. Flamineo Corner, Barbarigo, and Alvise Renier recommended Berlendis to have an eye on the author of the *Refutation*, and to show him no special courtesy, as one still under the ban of the Tribunal.

Presently Berlendis informed the Three that his subject has gone to Leghorn to join the Russian Fleet there, and to solicit the good offices of his friend Orloff. Casanova had actually offered his services to the Russians, with the reservation that in the event of a Russian incursion on Venetian territory, he was to be 'counted out.' The *entente* between the Russian and the Venetian was, however, not complete—Orloff would not give Casanova an official position, but treated him as an amusing guest—and the disappointed adventurer went to Rome, where he met his old friend, de Bernis.

De Bernis was fifty-five, and in disgrace. The Pompadour had ruined him. Like his friend Casanova, he had been obliged to *subir du temps l'irréparable outrage*, and he was sad and lack-lustre. 'I look all right,' he said, 'but the truth is, I am not what I was. I am still the slave of the ladies, but the humblest slave of all!'

Casanova was then only forty-seven, and counted his life over. The *Mémoires* are not carried far beyond this date, 1774; but the history of this period of his life is continued in his other book, *The Flight.*

'On the 12th September of the year 1774, Signor de Monti, Consul of the Venetian Republic at Trieste, gave me a note from the State Inquisitors, in which they ordered me to present myself within a month to the *circospetto*, Marc Antonio Businello, their secretary, to learn their good will and pleasure. I went within the twenty-four hours!'

After nineteen years of exile, he was permitted to re-enter Venice, 'and I began to enjoy the pleasure of showing myself openly in the great city, where I had become the talk of the day. I went to thank the Three. They received me graciously, and invited me to dinner, eager to hear from my own lips the story of my escape. This I told them, keeping nothing back.'

Had Casanova only realised the insulting indifference, so like De Choiseul's and Maria Theresa's, as to his capabilities for good or evil, implied by the good-humoured tolerance of these gentlemen! But he had all the obtuseness of vanity, and considered himself a very big man indeed. 'Whether it was self-love, or love of my country,' he says ingenuously, 'I do not know, but the first moments of my return were the happiest of my life. . . . The extraordinary plenitude of my pardon proclaimed me innocent in the eyes of all Europe. . . . Every one expected to see me provided with some suitable employment which would enable me to live at my ease. Every one was mistaken, except myself.'

A post was given him: it was that of a spy in the service of the Government, and he did not prove a very good spy. He has even been accused of treason to Venice, and took, it was said, pay from both sides. But it is a fact that the inquisitors had to complain that his reports contained too much philosophy, and too little information. There are even contemptuous marginal annotations in their own hand discoverable. 'Read, and judged of no importance,' or else 'Wait for better and more practical information.' In a very short while he was virtually dismissed, but continued to send in unofficial communications. Socially his facile and libellous pen got him into more trouble: he perpetrated an insulting satire on a patrician, Grimani, and was 'advised to leave Venice.'

He did so in 1782. We have his own reasons for the step—

'"I am not made for Venice," I said, "or Venice is not made for me, either one or the other!" . . . I left my country as one leaves a house which one likes, but which has grown insupportable because of an unpleasant fellow-visitor. . . . At the age of forty-seven, which was mine then, I realised thoroughly that Fortune had no more to say to me. She is merciless towards men of a certain age.'

From Vienna, where he took refuge, an anonymous letter, predicting an earthquake, threw all Venice into a panic, and is confidently attributed to the firebrand Venetian. At Spa he met Pachiarotti, Browning's famous musician, and in Paris

Count Waldstein. His last fourteen years were spent at Dux, whence he dated his other serious production, the *Iocosameron*, a 'strange and indigestible' work of the nature of *Gulliver's Travels*, and of which the scene is laid in England. He also published *The Dream, a metaphysical Dialogue between God and Me*, in which we recognise our Casanova, whose more salient characteristics, indeed, survived his living death at Dux.

The Italian Da Ponte, Mozart's librettist, several times mentions Casanova in his memoirs. Finding himself one day in the neighbourhood of Dresden and Dux, he remembered that the count's librarian owed him some hundred florins. So he visits Casanova and received, naturally, a warm welcome but no money. Casanova was always poor, in spite of his salary of a thousand florins. He moreover offered to accompany Da Ponte as far as Toeplitz, where the latter sold his chaise and horse for sixty piastres, considering it, for some reason or other, unsafe for travelling. Casanova kindly conducted the negotiations, and two sequins were retained by him for his homeward journey.

'As I can never repay you these, any more than the others I owe you, I will give you three pieces of advice which will be of more use to you than all the treasures of this earth. My dear Da Ponte, if you want to make a fortune, don't go to Paris but to London. But when you are there, never enter the doors of the *Café des Italiens* in that city, and, lastly, never give your signature.'

Da Ponte admits that the advice was good, and that he had cause to rue his infringement of the two last prohibitions. That he did not grudge his lost money is a proof of the influence exerted over every one by the extraordinary old man. It is the wife of Da Ponte who speaks for Casanova and extols 'his sincerity, eloquence, and knowledge of the world.'

The reader will remember Costa, Casanova's rascally secretary, who ran off with the diamonds, jewels, and money, with which Madame d'Urfé had charged him for Casanova, who did not, in this case, secure the wages of sin. In the *Mémoires* is the phrase with regard to this Costa, 'I met the rogue again at Vienna in 1785,' and Da Ponte actually gives an account of the meeting, the assurance of the one thief, and the delightful *bonhomie* of the other:

> 'I was one day walking on the Graben with Casanova, when I suddenly saw him knit his brows, grind his teeth, and twist himself about. Flinging his hands into the air, he rushed up to a man, and catching hold of him, cried out, "Assassin! I have got you at last!" A crowd gathered. I took Casanova by the hand and led him away. He then told me with many ejaculations and gestures the story of the old lady and this man. Costa was then valet to the Comte de Hardegg. While I was walking about with Casanova, Costa went into a café, and wrote these lines in Italian and sent them to him by a small boy. Their significance is as follows:—
>
> "Casanova, don't make a scene!
> We are both rogues together,
> Thou the master, I the man.
> I learned the trade from thee.
> Thou hast given me bread, I gave thee cake.[1]
> Thy best course is to keep silence."
>
> 'Casanova began to laugh, and whispered in my ear. "The scoundrel is right." He went into the café, and I made a sign to Costa, who came out, and they walked up and down together as if nothing had happened, and parted after shaking hands several times. When Casanova came back he showed me a ring, a cameo cut in the likeness of Mercury, the protecting god of thieves. This was all that remained of the immense plunder of the poor old dead marquise.'

The admiring Da Ponte gives another instance of the mother-wit that inspired Casanova to repartees that either made or marred him in the minds of his hearers. His retort to the swashbuckler at La Haye in defence of the Venetian Republic, his really dignified rebuke of De la Tour d'Auvergne, who pays his debts with a non-negotiable security—his word of honour—are all instances of the little gems of verbal *riposte* scattered through his book.

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[1] Italian proverb.

The object of his blunt impertinence was as often as not a crowned head, if we are to believe his version of his famous retort to Joseph II. 'I have no opinion of those who are ready to buy honours,' says the king. 'And what about those who are willing to sell them, sire?' Da Ponte says this retort could never in the nature of things have been made. But the monarch was not averse from trifling amiably with the witty conversationalist. On one occasion, when the emperor was in immediate need of money, Casanova suggested an expedient analogous to that which he had proposed with success to the advisers of the French king—a Lottery. This project was a Chinese fête, which was to amuse the Viennese and profit the promoter. His memorandum on the subject ended with the phrase: *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando?*

'After the presentation of this memorandum,' says Da Ponte, 'he paid me a visit, and putting a pen in my hand, said—

'"Da Ponte, are we friends?"

'"Certainly."

'"I admit your strict sense of honour, you admit mine."

'Here I was discreetly silent, and he continued—

'"I have done everything in the world except deceive a friend."

'I smiled. The Abbé Della Lena and young Foscari were great friends of Casanova, and yet——

'"For the execution of my project," he went on, "I only need one thousand piastres. Sign a bill for me for this sum, payable two months from date, and I will see that it is duly met."

'I laid down the pen, excused myself as well as I could, and went out of the room. In the course of a few days I heard that Foscari, who had already lost heavily to him, had given him a bill by which he hoped to raise the money necessary for his Chinese fête.

'One morning when I was with the emperor, Giacomo requested an audience. He came in, bowed low, and presented the memorandum. The emperor took it, but on seeing its length, folded it up again, and asked him what he wanted. He exposed his project, and Joseph asked his name. "Giacomo Casanova [illegible] the humble person who asks this favour from your Majesty," he answered.

'After a moment's silence, the emperor said with his accustomed affability that Vienna did not care for such spectacles, then turning his back he began to write. Casanova withdrew with a crestfallen air, and I should have followed him, but the emperor retained me, and after repeating three times the name "Casanova," he began to talk about the theatre to me.

'I met my friend shortly afterwards; he was perfectly furious; it is impossible to imagine all the things he said of the sovereign!'

Casanova was of a highly irascible, but yet placable, disposition. The grounds of the long quarrel with the steward Faulkircher which embittered his last years is set forth in his letters to that gentleman found among his papers, and never sent or intended to be sent. It was a mere expenditure of gall on paper that gave relief. He was very miserable. He resented affronts where none were intended, and even the sincere regard of the Prince de Ligne and others could not dissipate the clouds of melancholy that came over him latterly. Yet it would seem that some of the glamour cast by dazzled posterity over legendary heroes had gathered round his name, like Holger Dansk or Barbarossa. It is asserted that he lived till 1811. The matter-of-fact reason for this misapprehension is the confusion between him and his more legitimately famous brother, François, the painter. He really expired, as the register of Oberlestendorp, in the diocese of Leineritz, where lies the seignory of Dux, proves, on the 4th of June 1798, at the age of seventy-eight.

He died in the odour of sanctity, in the presence of several witnesses, with, it would seem, a faint attempt at epigram. This characteristic utterance, according to the Prince de Ligne, who was present at this strange deathbed, ran as follows—

'I have lived, a philosopher, and I die, a Christian!'

INTRODUCTION

Every interested reader of the Memoirs of Jacques Casanova, Venetian, must deplore the untimely death which stilled the pen of the great Adventurer before he had reported the events of the last twenty-four years of his life. The Memoirs terminate abruptly with January, 1774.

Certain it is that the memoirs as written cover the most adventurous part of Casanova's life, and the part during which trouble weighted lightest on his shoulders; and that, after 1774, his circumstances were less in harmony with his peculiar talents. He was the more fascinating figure when his purse was full of money.

"My readers shall hear more of my sufferings later on, if I do not die before I write them down," he wrote (II, 10). But it may be assumed that he would not have spoiled the picture with too sombre a tone and that, if death had not intervened, he could have written several more volumes which would have been none the less piquant in the necessary substitution of more sedate subjects for the recital of the amorous exploits of his earlier years. On the other hand, however, we may believe that the story of his renewed acquaintance with Leah and others, his long *liaison* with Francesca Buschini, and his autumnal passion for the unknown "young, thoughtless girl", would not have lacked abundance of high flavor.

Scholars, mainly Continental, interested in Casanova,

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have long since, by patient and exhaustive investigations, satisfied themselves of the truth of his statements and descriptions and have found in the Memoirs, as M. Mayinal remarks, "not the too-faithful portrait of a professional libertine, but one of those vivid, fresh, original documents which help to construct the history of a whole social epoch." These scholars have succeeded also in bringing to light much important material relating to the later years of Casanova's life, from 1774 until his death in 1798.

From this material, in connection with Casanova's anticipatory passages in the Memoirs themselves, we are now able to obtain a satisfactory view of his return to Venice and his relations with the Inquisitors, his later travels, his correspondence with friends of his youth, and his recreations and activities at Dux. To all "good Casanovists", these are matters of absorbing interest.

The essence of these researches may be found, in the chronological list of events prepared by M. J. F. H. Adnesse ("Casanova après ses Mémoires"). With the kind permission of M. Adnesse and of M. Mounastre, the freest use has been made of this work, in connection with the Sources given in the Index, in preparing the present monograph, the intention of which is to set out, briefly and in as "readable" a form as possible under the circumstances, the main points of interest bearing on Casanova's later life, so that this information may be available to readers of English only, who may, nevertheless, know Casanova well through the English translation of the Memoirs

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by Arthur Machen, Esq. As they are not of general interest within these lines, no text references to Sources are given, other than to the Memoirs themselves, references to the English edition of which are given by Volume and Chapter. Readers may rest assured that all facts given are thoroughly substantiated and may, if they wish, refer to the volumes listed in the Bibliographical Index.

Thanks are due to Benjamin Alexander, Esq., for the use of his exhaustive collection of books by, and relating to, Casanova.

It might interest English readers who are unacquainted with the fact, to know that the Memoirs as originally written have never been published. The original Manuscript came into the possession of the publishing house of Brockhaus at Leipzig in 1820. It was translated from the French into German, in a much abridged form, and published in 1822-28. Before the Manuscript was published in French (in twelve volumes, 1826-28-32-38), it was edited by a Jean Laforgue, a French professor at Dresden, who recast Casanova's rather Italian French into more sedate form and who deleted some passages which, to the Publisher or Editor, appeared too outspoken, either from the view-point of morals or of politics. Although scholars plead for the publication of the text exactly as originally written by Casanova, to this day the firm of Brockhaus remains obdurate.

MITCHELL S. BUCK

Philadelphia. New Year's Day, 1924.

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INTRODUCTION

Giacomo Casanova, who liked to be known as Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, was born in Venice, on April 2, 1725, and died at the Château of Dux in Bohemia, on June 4, 1798. The last fourteen years of his life were spent as Count Waldstein's librarian at Dux, and it was in that retreat that he wrote the Memoirs which were to make him famous, in spite of himself, for he seems to have written chiefly to beguile his premature old age rather than with any thought of posterity. The curious and complicated history of the manuscript shows this. There are references to it in the letters and memoirs of his contemporaries, notably the Prince de Ligne, who has left a vivid picture of the author, but its publication was as haphazard and adventurous as the life of the author himself.

In 1820 a certain Carlo Angiolini, who was the son-in-law of Casanova's younger sister, brought a manuscript entitled, "The Story of My Life to the Year 1797," to the firm of Brockhaus in Leipzig. The work was in twelve volumes and ended abruptly with the year 1774. Nobody seems to know how it came into Angiolini's possession, nor what happened to the concluding portion. Even the manuscript as left by Casanova has never been printed. It was first translated from the original faulty French into German and was published, with many omissions and alterations, from 1822 to 1828. At the same time, Herr Brockhaus had the French text revised by a French professor in Dresden, named Jean Laforgue, who polished Casanova's undoubtedly shaky French, but who also made various suppressions and alterations. In this form, the work also appeared in twelve volumes between 1826 and 1837. Meanwhile other editions began to appear, some of them pirated, all presenting variants upon the German and the French editions of Brockhaus, which were and are the nearest thing we have to the authentic Memoirs of Jacques Casanova.

The original manuscript still reposes in the safe of the Brockhaus firm and there is little chance of its being published in its entirety. Casanova used the crudest language in describing his amorous adventures and although certain admirers, such as Stefan Zweig, are most indignant at the withholding of the complete text, other devoted Casanovists are content to accept the German or the French versions as issued by Brockhaus. They argue that it would be a pity if a work of such intense human and historic interest should come to be classified as a mere piece of pornography. For many years poor Monsieur Laforgue and his pruderies were the object of much sarcastic comment, but recently men have risen up and called his name blessed since, but for his caution, the Memoirs would undoubtedly have been suppressed. As it was, they were not allowed to pass unchallenged by the moralists of the period when they were first issued.

"There are people," wrote Casanova, "who will say that I ought to have been ashamed to publish these Memoirs. It is quite possible that I should, but that is not my feeling. They will call me a pig. Should I be any the less so, if I pretended I were not? Moreover, when I look at a real pig I am inclined to congratulate it on not having Man's qualities of mind. I should be infinitely less disposed to pity a man who had the qualities of a pig." Elsewhere Casanova seems less concerned about what people will say, and declares that his sole purpose is to amuse himself with these memories of his gay past, as he sits in the library at Dux, alone, ailing, and cut off from the only activities which really interested him: the pursuit of women and of adventure.

The eighteenth century is peculiarly rich in memoirs of all kinds: Restif de la Bretonne, Rousseau, Madame Roland, Duclos, Hamilton—all are mirrors of an age whose gaiety, freedom and spontaneity made it possible for colorful lives to be related colorfully, without prudish fears. Of those memoir writers none assuredly took life more easily, more carelessly than Casanova, and his reward is immortality. The most diverse commentators have saluted his Memoirs as the most vivid and valuable picture extant of eighteenth-century life. He went everywhere: Rome, Turin, Naples, Genoa, Trieste, Corfu, Constantinople, London, Paris, Madrid, Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw. He encountered every type of person: Frederick II, Catherine the Great, Pope Benedict XIV, George III, the Marquise de Pompadour. He is as interested in seducing an innkeeper's daughter as in discussing Italian literature with Voltaire. Cardinals, statesmen, cardsharpers interest him; he would as soon relate his flight from the Piombi prison in a respectable drawing-room as engage in an amorous intrigue with two nuns simultaneously. The sequel to his conversations with Voltaire is like a chapter from Straparole or Boccaccio.

Havelock Ellis has said: "Casavona has been described as a psychological type of instability. That is to view him superficially. A man who adapts himself so readily and so effectively to any change in his environment or in his desires only exhibits the instability which marks the most intensely vital organisms. The energy and ability which Casanova displayed in gratifying his instincts would have sufficed to make a reputation of the first importance in any department, as a popular statesman, a great judge, a merchant prince, and enabled him to die worn out by the monotonous and feverish toil of the senate, the court, or the counting-house. Casanova chose to *live*. A crude and barbarous choice it seems to us, with our hereditary instinct to spend our lives in wasting the reasons for living."

Nobody has written with more perfect appreciation of Casanova than the author of "The Dance of Life," a title which so aptly describes the spirit of these Memoirs. Casanova was quintessentially of that eighteenth century which was swept away by the French Revolution, whose distant noise scarcely disturbed him in his retirement at Dux; that life was behind him and it mattered little to him that it would never return. The world in which he had lived well, if not wisely, "seemed none the worse," says Havelock Ellis, "for the apparent subsidence of Christianity; in the opinion of many it seemed to be very much better. The tolerant paganism of classic days appeared to be reasserting itself, robustly in England, with a delicate refinement in France,—setting the paganism of Watteau against the paganism of Fielding—while Goethe and the Germans generally were striving to rescue and harmonize the best of Christianity with the best of antiquity. European civilization was fully expanded; for a long time no great disturbing force had arisen, and though on every side the tender buds of coming growths might have been detected, they could not yet reveal their strength. Such a period certainly has its terrible defects; mellowness is not far from rottenness. But then youth also has its defects, and its crude acidity is still further from perfection."

In his delightful portrait of Casanova, whose name he strikingly couples with those of Stendhal and Tolstoy, Stefan Zweig presents the Venetian adventurer as representing the first and most primitive stage of self-portraiture: the naïve and ingenuous delight in life for life's sake, untroubled by psychological or religious introspection. That, in effect, is the singular fascination of these Memoirs, their complete freedom from moral or intellectual inhibitions. The exterior world alone exists for Casanova; he sees it as an adventure, a gamble, and pays the price of his follies with the same unconcern as he accepts his good fortunes. In all his travels he never once notes a landscape, or pauses to admire the effects of Nature. Human nature is his exclusive pleasure; the more people there are about him the happier he feels; the town rather than the country is his hunting ground. A dilettante of the arts and sciences, museums and picture galleries do not detain him, for art, to him, is the servant of life, and exists only in so far as it enhances the charm of living.

This absence in him of introspective scruples coupled with the physical glamour and audacity of the man doubtless explain why recriminations never followed his encounters with women. He treated them all alike, and they all liked him. For this we have the evidence not only of the Memoirs themselves, which might be open to suspicion, but of the letters of the women, and the undeniable fact that he maintained the friendliest relations with so many of them after he had accomplished his purpose with them. He was not a libertine but a skilled lover. To quote Havelock Ellis again: "He sought his pleasure in the pleasure, and not in the complaisance, of the women he loved, and they seemed to have gratefully and tenderly recognized his skill in the art of love-making. Casanova loved many women, but broke few hearts. . . . That he knew himself well enough never to take either wife or mistress must be counted as a virtue, such as it was, in this incomparable lover of so many women. A man of finer moral fiber could scarcely have loved so many women; a man of coarser fiber could never have left so many women happy."

"My story," said Casanova, "is that of a bachelor whose chief business in life was to cultivate the pleasures of the senses," and he added his belief that people would be "curious to see what happened to a man who surrendered to his nature and whose great system consisted in not having any." Amongst his papers in the library at Dux many fragments were found in which he essayed to expound his philosophy of life and to justify his Memoirs. It is evident that, while he wrote primarily for his own amusement, he realized that his life offered a spectacle of universal interest and that it must be judged for what it was rather than what conventional morality would expect it to be. He quite frankly admitted and hoped that his delight in his own sins of the flesh would be shared by his readers. "People will say that a book which offends virtue is bad. I admit it; and I confess that those whose favorite virtue is chastity, who shudder at the thought of the pleasure they had in love when young, who are revolted by amorous ecstasy and believe that it defiles the soul, had better refrain from reading me."

Casanova obviously understood human nature as the fascinating story of his life proves, and the enduring success of his Memoirs.

ERNEST BOYD.

NEW YORK,
May, 1929.

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE *twelve-volume Aventuros edition of Casanova's* MEMOIRS (*New York, 1925*), *which the present editor assisted in preparing for publication, has been used, with due consent of the publishers, as a basis for the present edition. Where clarity or correct rendering required emendation of the English text, the eight-volume French edition* (*Paris, Garnier*) *has been employed. Also, for purposes of general publication, some excisions and paraphrasing have been found necessary, but these slight modifications have not altered the character or the essential content of this uniquely interesting and informative revelation of a life and a social period.*

F. A. B.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In the years 1888-1889 I was very busy indeed. My days and nights were spent in translating from the French; and there was a curious diversity in the books that I was rendering and in the manner of the two operations.

At that time I was employed by a firm of second-hand booksellers, whose shop was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square. They dealt in the more precious and curious books; in books bound by the great masters of the art of bookbinding, in books illustrated by Fragonard and his fellows of the eighteenth century, in books known only to the elder school of collectors. I was the unworthy cataloguer of this firm of Cheeryble Brothers, and in the course of my calling I came upon a queer little duodecimo, bearing (I think) the date 1610. This was the first edition of *Le Moyen de Parvenir,* by Bervalde de Verville; and something queer, bizarre, fantastic in the text enchanted me. I resolved to translate it, and, having bought a modern edition at Nutt's in the Strand, there where the street grew narrow between St. Mary-le-Strand and St. Clement Dane's—all vanished now, alas!—I set about turning the most difficult book in the French language into English; all just for fun and the joy of the adventure. At twenty-six one has the oddest notions of amusement.

This was the business—rather, the pleasure—of the evenings in my rooms—or was it room?—in Great Russell Street. But my serious occupation, that by which I lived, was carried on in the daytime, in a strange place in the bowels of the earth beneath the shop of the Brothers Cheeryble. There I translated Casanova day after day, and lived by these labours for more than a year.

It was, probably, all to the good, both for me and my work, that the two books were in such violent contrast. The one, *Le Moyen de Parvenir,* a very spider-web puzzle and labyrinth both in thought and in language; the other, Casanova's *Memoirs,* lucidity itself. And, accordingly, I attacked the two labours very differently. Casanova's French, as I say, was all clarity. There was no doubt as to the sense of a single phrase; there were no shades of meaning to be considered. It was simply an affair of rendering the clear and lively French into the easiest English that I could summon to my pen. And I found the best way of keeping up the brisk current of language was to put my watch on the table and see how fast I could turn a page of French into a page of English. I think I beat down the record from ten minutes to seven or even to six and a half; and the faster the pen sped the better the task was done. At night, everything was different; painful, slow, laborious schemes and works and contrivances—this giving of the French scholar-clown of the seventeenth century a fitting English dress.

Each labour had its peculiar joys. I need not speak now of Bervalde de Verville; as to Casanova, the parts of him which I recall with the greatest pleasure are the small adventures and the back alley business rather than the meetings with kings and popes and philosophers. I like to hear of little things; of the supper of pork chops that the *scopatore santissimo* provided for his guests; of the ways of Italian strolling players in the eighteenth century "fit-ups"; of that magic figure that the witch was to bathe in blood; of the significant salad prepared in the Casino at Venice; of the Italian scholar correcting proofs of the Decameron in a London coffee-house. There are some people who prefer the small talk in the dressing-room to the larger speech of the stage, and I am one of them. The Cabala of Casanova, which cost Madame d'Urfé so dearly, is, at all events, much more entertaining than the Cabala of Knorr von Rosenroth.

ARTHUR MACHEN.

LONDON, *September*, 1924.

Arthur Machen

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

A SERIES of adventures wilder and more fantastic than the wildest of romances, written down with the exactitude of a business diary; a view of men and cities from Naples to Berlin, from Madrid and London to Constantinople and St. Petersburg; the *vie intime* of the eighteenth century depicted by a man, who to-day sat with cardinals and saluted crowned heads, and to-morrow lurked in dens of profligacy and crime; a book of confessions penned without reticence and without penitence; a record of forty years of "occult" charlatanism; a collection of tales of successful imposture, of *bonnes fortunes,* of marvellous escapes, of transcendent audacity, told with the humour of Smollett and the delicate wit of Voltaire. Who is there interested in men and letters, and in the life of the past, who would not cry, "Where can such a book as this be found?"

Yet the above catalogue is but a brief outline, a bare and meagre summary, of the book known as "THE MEMOIRS OF CASANOVA"; a work absolutely unique in literature. He who opens these wonderful pages is as one who sits in a theatre and looks across the gloom, not on a stage-play, but on another and a vanished world. The curtain draws up, and suddenly a hundred and fifty years are rolled away, and in bright light stands out before us the whole life of the past; the gay dresses, the polished wit, the careless morals, and all the revel and dancing of those merry years before the mighty deluge of the Revolution. The palaces and marble stairs of old Venice are no longer desolate, but thronged with scarlet-robed senators, prisoners with the doom of the Ten upon their heads cross the Bridge of Sighs, at dead of night the nun slips out of the convent gate to the dark canal where a gondola is waiting, we assist at the *parties fines* of cardinals, and we see the bank made at faro. Venice gives place to the assembly rooms of Mrs. Cornely and the fast taverns of the London of 1760; we pass from Versailles to the Winter Palace of St. Petersburg in the days of Catherine, from the policy of the Great Frederick to the lewd mirth of strolling-players, and the presence-chamber of the Vatican is succeeded by an intrigue in a garret. It is indeed a new experience to read this history of a man who, refraining from nothing, has concealed nothing; of one who stood in the courts of Louis the Magnificent before Madame de Pompadour and the nobles of the *Ancien Régime,* and had an affair with an adventuress of Denmark Street, Soho; who was bound over to keep the peace by Fielding, and knew Cagliostro. The friend of popes and kings and noblemen, and of all the male and female ruffians and vagabonds of Europe, abbé, soldier, charlatan, gamester, financier, diplomatist, *viveur,* philosopher, virtuoso, "chemist, fiddler, and buffoon," each of these, and all of these was Giacomo Casanova, Chevalier de Seingalt, Knight of the Golden Spur.

And not only are the Memoirs a literary curiosity; they are almost equally curious from a bibliographical point of view. The manuscript was written in French and came into the possession of the publisher Brockhaus, of Leipzig, who had it translated into German, and printed. From this German edition, M. Aubert de Vitry re-translated the work into French, but omitted about a fourth of the matter, and this mutilated and worthless version is frequently purchased by unwary bibliophiles. In the year 1826, however, Brockhaus, in order presumably to protect his property, printed the entire text of the original MS. in French, for the first time, and in this complete form, containing a large number of anecdotes and incidents not to be found in the spurious version, the work was not acceptable to the authorities, and was consequently rigorously suppressed. Only a few copies sent out for presentation or for review are known to have escaped, and from one of these rare copies the present translation has been made strictly and solely for private circulation.

In conclusion, both translator and *éditeur* have done their utmost to present the English Casanova in a dress worthy of the wonderful and witty original.

I have stated that Wendell Holmes was once heard defending Casanova. When challenged for my authority for that statement by Dr. Tage Bull, the chief of living Casanovists, I had to acknowledge that it was only a second-hand authority, and that I could positively state only that C. G. Leland remarks, in his *Memoirs*, that at one of the weekly dinners of the Atlantic Club in 1861 or 1862, when Emerson, Lowell, Agassiz, and other distinguished men were present, no one (except Leland) knew the *Mémoires* of Casanova save only Holmes. But what Holmes thought of them remains, so far as I am aware, unrevealed.

If I were to enlarge—which would not be to change—this book, it is precisely to the study of Casanova, and to the earlier study of Nietzsche, that my attention would be turned.

During the past ten years Casanova has at last come to his own place. The serious interest of his unique record of his age and of the problem presented by his own unique personality are now undisputed. At the same time, since he has been subjected to microscopical investigation, both the record and the personality are found to possess at various points numerous puzzling difficulties. In this way Casanova's reputation may be said to have entered on its third stage. At first he was a disreputable adventurer who had written a discreditable and probably fictitious narrative of his own unmentionable experiences. Then by a natural reaction from that extreme view, as his significance became clear, he was promoted to a position of undisputed credit. Now he is viewed with more critical discrimination. His essential veracity cannot be questioned, and is at innumerable points demonstrable. But we cannot take for granted that he exerted in the narration of his life a scrupulosity which, on his own showing, he failed to exert in the living of it. Numerous details of the narrative cannot be verified where we should expect to find them verified; various episodes have, rightly or wrongly, been regarded by some critics as imaginary interpolations; and it has been suspected that the creditable motive of protecting persons who were still living induced Casanova to change the character of some incidents. Every future study of Casanova must face these controverted points. It seems right that some mention should be made of this difficulty here, although the discussion of Casanova in the following pages is based on broader ground now scarcely in dispute.

CASANOVA.

THERE are few more delightful books in the world than Casanova's *Mémoires*.—That is a statement I have long vainly sought to see in print. It is true, one learns casually that various eminent literary personages have cherished a high regard for this autobiography, have even considered it the ideal autobiography, that Wendell Holmes was once heard defending Casanova, that Thackeray found him good enough to steal from. But these eminent personages — and how many more we shall never know — locked up the secret of their admiration for this book in some remote casket of their breasts; they never confided it to the cynical world. Every properly constituted "man of letters" has always recognised that any public allusion to Casanova should begin and end with lofty moral reprobation of his unspeakable turpitude.

No doubt whatever—and this apart from the question as to whether his autobiography should be counted as moral or immoral literature—Casanova delivered himself bound into the hands of the moralists. He recognised this; his autobiography, as he himself truly said, was "a confession, if ever there was one." But he wrote at the end of a long and full life, in the friendly seclusion of a lonely Bohemian castle, when all things had become indifferent to him save the vivid memories of the past. It mattered little to him that the whirlwind of 1789 had just swept away the eighteenth century together with the moral maxims that passed current in that century. We have to accept these facts at the outset when we approach Casanova. And if a dweller in the highly respectable nineteenth century may be forgiven a first exclamation of horror at Casanova's wickedness, he has wofully failed in critical insight if he allows that exclamation to be his last word concerning these *Mémoires.*

There are at least three points of view from which Casanova's *Mémoires* are of deep and permanent interest. In the first place they constitute an important psychological document as the full and veracious presentation of a certain human type in its most complete development. In the second place, as a mere story of adventure and without reference to their veracity, the *Mémories* have never been surpassed, and only equalled by books written on a much smaller scale. In the third place, we here possess an unrivalled picture of the eighteenth century in its most characteristic aspects throughout Europe.

I.

Casanova lived in an age which seems to have been favourable to the spontaneous revelation of human nature in literature. It was not only the age in which the novel reached full development; it was the age of diaries and autobiographies. Pepys, indeed, though he died in the eighteenth century, had written his diary long before; but during Casanova's lifetime Boswell was writing that biography which is so wonderful largely because it is so nearly an autobiography. Casanova's communicative countryman, Gozzi, was also his contemporary. Rousseau's *Confessions* only preceded Casanova's *Mémoires* by a few years, and a little later Restif de la Bretonne wrote *Monsieur Nicolas*, and Madame Roland her *Mémoires Particulières.* All these autobiographies are very unlike Casanova's. They mostly seem to present the shady sides of otherwise eminent and respectable lives. The highly-placed government official of versatile intellectual tastes exhibits himself as a monster of petty weaknesses; the eloquent apostle of the return to Nature uncovers the corroding morbidities we should else never suspect; the philanthropic pioneer in social reform exposes himself in a state of almost maniacal eroticism; the austere heroine who was nourished on Plutarch confesses that she is the victim of unhappy passion. We are conscious of no such discords in Casanova's autobiography. Partly it may be because we have no other picture of Casanova before our eyes. Moreover, he had no conventional ideals to fall short of; he was an adventurer from the first. "I am proud because I am nothing," he used to say. He could not boast of his birth; he never held high position; for the greatest part of his active career he was an exile; at every moment of his life he was forced to rely on his own real and personal qualities. But the chief reason why we feel no disturbing discord in Casanova's *Mémoires* lies in the admirable skill with which he has therein exploited his unquestionable sincerity. He is a consummate master in the dignified narration of undignified experiences. Fortified, it is true, by a confessed and excessive *amour propre*, he never loses his fine sense of equilibrium, his power of presenting his own personality broadly and harmoniously. He has done a few dubious things in his time, he seems to say, and now and again found himself in positions that were ridiculous enough; but as he looks back he feels that the like may have happened to any of us. He views these things with complete human tolerance as a necessary part of the whole picture, which it would be idle to slur over or apologise for. He records them simply, not without a sense of humour, but with no undue sense of shame. In his heart, perhaps, he is confident that he has given the world one of its greatest books, and that posterity will require of him no such rhetorical justification as Rousseau placed at the head of his *Confessions.*

In the preface to the *Mémoires*, Casanova is sufficiently frank. He has not scrupled, he tells us, to defraud fools and rascals, "when necessary," and he has never regretted it. But such incidents have been but episodes in his life. He is not a sensualist, he says, for he has never neglected his duty—"when I had any"—for the allurements of sense; yet the main business of his life has ever been in the world of sense; "there is none of greater importance." "I have always loved women and have done my best to make them love me. I have also delighted in good cheer, and I have passionately followed whatever has excited my curiosity." Now in old age he reviews the joys of his life. He has learnt to be content with one meal a day, in spite of a sound digestion, but he recalls the dishes that delighted him: Neapolitan macaroni, Spanish olla podrida, Newfoundland cod, high-flavoured game, old cheese (has he not collected material for a *Dictionnaire des Fromages?*), and without any consciousness of abrupt transition he passes on to speak of the fragrant sweetness of the women he had loved. Then with a smile of pity he turns on those who call such tastes depraved, the poor insensate fools who think the Almighty is only able to enjoy our sorrow and abstinence, and bestows upon us for nought the gift of self-respect, the love of praise, the desire to excel, energy, strength, courage, and the power to kill ourselves when we will. And with the strain of Stoicism which is ever present to give fibre to his Epicureanism, he quotes the maxim which might well belong to both philosophies: "Nemo læditur nisi a seipso."

The fact that Casanova was on one side a Venetian must count for something in any attempt to explain him. Not indeed that Venice ever produced more than one Casanova; I would imply no such disrespect to Venice—or to Casanova—but the racial soil was favourable to such a personality. The Venetians are a branch of a more northern people who long since settled by the southern sea to grow mellow in the sunshine. It suited them well, for they expanded into one of the finest races in Christendom, and certainly one of the least Christian races there, a solid, well-tempered race, self-controlled and self-respecting. The Venetian genius is the genius of sensuous enjoyment, of tolerant humanity, of unashamed earthliness. Whatever was sane and stable in Casanova, and his instinctive distaste for the morbid and perverse, he owes to his Venetian maternal ancestry. If it is true that he was not a mere sensualist, it was by no means because of his devotion to duty—"when I had any,"—but because the genuine sensualist is only alive on the passive side of his nature, and in Casanova's nervous system the development of the sensory fibres is compensated and held in balance by the equal vigour of the motor fibres; what he is quick to enjoy he is strong and alert to achieve. Thus he lived the full and varied life that he created for himself at his own good pleasure out of nothing, by the sole power of his own magnificent wits. And now the self-sufficing Venetian sits down to survey his work and finds that it is good. It has not always been found so since. A "self-made" man, if ever there was one, Casanova is not revered by those who worship self-help. The record of his life will easily outlive the largest fortune ever made in any counting-house, but the life itself remains what we call a "wasted" life. Thrift, prudence, modesty, scrupulous integrity, strict attention to business—it is useless to come to Casanova for any of these virtues. They were not even in his blood; he was only half Venetian.

The Casanova family was originally Spanish. The first Casanova on record was a certain Don Jacobo, of illegitimate birth, who in the middle of the fifteenth century became secretary to King Alfonso. He fell in love with a lady destined to the religious life, and the day after she had pronounced her vows he carried her off from her convent to Rome, where he finally obtained the forgiveness and benediction of the Pope. The son of this union, Don Juan, killed an officer of the King of Naples, fled from Rome, and sought fortune with Columbus, dying on the voyage. Don Juan's son, Marcantonio, secretary to a cardinal, was noted in his day as an epigrammatic poet; but his satire was too keen, and he also had to flee from Rome. His son became a colonel, and, unlike his forefathers, died peacefully, in extreme old age, in France. In this soldier's grandson, Casanova's father, the adventurous impulsiveness of the family again came out; he ran away from home at nineteen with a young actress, and himself became an actor; subsequently he left the actress and then fell in love with a young Venetian beauty of sixteen, Zanetta Farusi, a shoemaker's daughter. But a mere actor could find no favour in a respectable family, so the young couple ran away and were married; the hero of these *Mémoires*, born on the 2nd April, 1725, was their first-born. There is probably no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of this family history, but if one desired to invent an ancestry for Casanova he could scarcely better it.

His race helps to account for Casanova, but the real explanation of the man can only lie in his own congenital organisation. That he was a radically abnormal person is fairly clear. Not that he was morbid either in body or mind. On the contrary, he was a man of fine presence, of abounding health—always looking ten years younger than his age—of the most robust appetites, a great eater, who delighted to see others, especially women, eat heartily also, a man of indubitable sexual vigour; however great the demands he made upon his physical energy it seldom failed to respond, and his capacity for rest was equally great; he could sleep nineteen hours at a stretch. His mental health was not less sound. The most punctilious alienist, with this frank and copious history before him, could not commit Casanova to an asylum. Whatever offences against social codes he may have committed, Casanova can scarcely be said to have sinned against natural laws. He was only abnormal because so natural a person within the gates of civilisation is necessarily abnormal and at war with his environment. Far from being the victim of morbidities and perversities, Casanova presents to us the natural man *in excelsis.* He was a man for whom the external world existed, and who reacted to all the stimuli it presents to the healthy normal organism. His intelligence was immensely keen and alert, his resourcefulness, his sagacious audacity, his presence of mind, were all of the first order. He was equally swift to feel, to conceive, and to act. His mental organisation was thus singularly harmonious, and hence his success in gratifying his eager and immense appetite for the world, an appetite unsatiated and insatiable even to the last, or he would have found no pleasure in writing these *Mémoires.* Casanova has been described as a psychological type of instability. That is to view him superficially. A man who adapts himself so readily and so effectively to any change in his environment or in his desires only exhibits the instability which marks the most intensely vital organisms. The energy and ability which Casanova displayed in gratifying his instincts would have sufficed to make a reputation of the first importance in any department, as a popular statesman, a great judge, a merchant prince, and enabled him to die worn out by the monotonous and feverish toil of the senate, the court, or the counting-house. Casanova chose to *live.* A crude and barbarous choice it seems to us, with our hereditary instinct to spend our lives in wasting the reasons for living. But it is certain that Casanova never repented his choice. Assuredly we need not, for few judges, statesmen, or merchants have ever left for the joy of humanity any legacy of their toil equal to these *Mémoires.*

But such swift energy of vital action and reaction, such ardour of deed in keeping pace with desire, are in themselves scarcely normal. Casanova's abnormality is suggested by the tendency to abnormality which we find in his family. We have seen what men his ancestors were; in reading the *Mémoires* we gather incidentally that one of his brothers had married, though impotent, and another brother is described as a somewhat feeble-minded ne'er-do-well. All the physical and mental potency of the family was intensely concentrated in Casanova. Yet he himself in early childhood seems to have been little better than an idiot either in body or mind. He could recall nothing that happened before he was eight years of age. He was not expected to live; he suffered from prolonged hæmorrhages from the nose, and the vision of blood was his earliest memory. As a child he habitually kept his mouth open, and his face was stupid. "Thickness of the blood," said the physicians of those days; it seems probable that he suffered from growths in the nose which, as we now know, produce such physical and mental inferiority as Casanova describes. The cure was spontaneous. He was taken to Padua, and shortly afterwards began to develop wonderfully both in stature and intelligence. In after years he had little cause to complain either of health or intellect. It is notable, however, that when, still a boy, he commenced his ecclesiastical training (against his wishes, for he had chosen to be a doctor), he failed miserably as a preacher, and broke down in the pulpit; thus the Church lost a strange ornament. Moreover, with all his swift sensation and alert response, there was in Casanova an anomalous dulness of moral sensibility. The insults to Holy Religion which seem to have brought him to that prison from which he effected his marvellous escape, were scarcely the serious protests of a convinced heretic; his deliberate trickery of Mme. d'Urfé was not only criminal but cruel. His sense of the bonds of society was always somewhat veiled, and although the veil never became thick, and might be called the natural result of an adventurer's life, one might also, perhaps, maintain that it was a certain degree of what is sometimes called moral imbecility that made Casanova an adventurer. But while we thus have to recognise that he was a man of dulled moral sensibility, we must also recognise that he possessed a vigorous moral consciousness of his own, or we misunderstand him altogether.

The point to be remembered is that the threshold of his moral sensibility was not easily reached. There are some people whose tactile sensibility is so obtuse that it requires a very wide separation of the æsthesiometer to get the right response. It was so with Casanova's moral sensitiveness. But, once aroused, his conscience responded energetically enough. It seems doubtful whether, from his own point of view, he ever fell into grave sin, and therefore he is happily free from remorse. No great credit is thus due to him; the same psychological characteristic is familiar in all criminals. It is not difficult to avoid plucking the apples of shame when so singularly few grow on your tree.

Casanova's moral sensibility and its limits come out, where a man's moral sensibility will come out, in his relations with women. Women played a large part in Casanova's life; he was nearly always in love. We may use the word "love" here in no euphemistic sense, for although Casanova's passions grew and ripened with the rapidity born of long experience in these matters, so fresh is the vitality of the man that there is ever a virginal bloom on every new ardour. He was as far removed from the cold-blooded libertine typified in Laclos's Valmont, unscrupulously using women as the instruments of his own lust, as from Laura's sonneteering lover. He had fully grasped what the latest writer on the scientific psychology of sex calls the secondary law of courting, namely, the development in the male of an imaginative attentiveness to the psychical and bodily states of the female, in place of an exclusive attentiveness to his own gratification. It is not impossible that in these matters Casanova could have given a lesson to many virtuous husbands of our own highly moral century. He never sank to the level of the vulgar maxim that "all's fair in love and war." He sought his pleasure in the pleasure, and not in the complaisance, of the women he loved, and they seem to have gratefully and tenderly recognised his skill in the art of love-making. Casanova loved many women, but broke few hearts. The same women appear again and again through his pages, and for the most part no lapse of years seems to deaden the gladness with which he goes forth to meet them anew. That he knew himself well enough never to take either wife or mistress must be counted as a virtue, such as it was, in this incomparable lover of so many women. A man of finer moral fibre could scarcely have loved so many women; a man of coarser fibre could never have left so many women happy.

This very lack of moral delicacy which shuts Casanova off from the finest human development is an advantage to the autobiographer. It insures his sincerity because he is unconscious of offence; it saves us from any wearisome self-justification, because, for all his amused self-criticism, he sees no real need for justification. In Rousseau's *Confessions* we hear the passionate pleader against men at the tribunal of God; here we are conscious neither of opponent nor tribunal. Casanova is neither a pillar of society nor yet one of the moral Samsons who delight to pull down the pillars of society; he has taken the world as it is, and he has taken himself as he is, and he has enjoyed them both hugely. So he is free to set forth the whole of himself, his achievements, his audacities, his failures, his little weaknesses and superstitions, his amours, his quarrels, his good fortune and his bad fortune in the world that on the whole he has found so interesting and happy a place to dwell in. And his book remains an unending source of delightful study of the man of impulse and action in all his moods. The self-reliant man, immensely apt for enjoyment, who plants himself solidly with his single keen wit before the mighty oyster of the world, has never revealed himself so clearly before.

What manner of man Casanova seemed to his contemporaries has only been discovered of recent years; and while the picture which we obtain of him has been furnished by his enemies, and was not meant to flatter, it admirably supports the *Mémoires.* In 1755 a spy of the Venetian Inquisition reported that Casanova united impiety, imposture, and wantonness to a degree that inspired horror. It was in that same year that he was arrested, chiefly on the charge of contempt for religion, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Fifteen months later he had effected his famous escape, and was able to pursue his career as an assured and accomplished adventurer who had brilliantly completed his apprenticeship. It is not until many years later, in 1772, when his long efforts to obtain pardon from his country still remained unsuccessful, that we obtain an admirable picture of him from the Venetian agent at Ancona. "He comes and goes where he will," the agent reports, "with open face and haughty mien, always well equipped. He is a man of some forty years at most [really about forty-eight, thus confirming Casanova's statement that he was always taken for some ten years younger than his years], of lofty stature, of fine and vigorous aspect, with bright eyes and very brown skin. He wears a short, chestnut-coloured peruke. I am told that his character is bold and disdainful, but especially that he is full of speech, and of witty and well-instructed speech." Two years later Casanova was at last permitted to return to Venice. He there accepted the post of secret agent of the

State Inquisition for service within the city. Like Defoe and Toland, who were also secret political agents, he attempted to justify himself on grounds of public duty. In a few years, however, he was dismissed, perhaps, as Baschet suggests, on account of the fact that his reports contained too much philosophy and not enough espionage; probably it was realised that a man of such powerful individuality and independence was not fitted for servile uses. Finally, in 1782, he was banished from Venice for an offence to which the blood of the Casanovas had always been easily inclined—he published an audacious satire against a patrician. From Venice he went to Trieste, and thence to Vienna. There he met Count Waldstein, a fervent adept of Kabbalistic science, a subject in which Casanova himself claimed to be proficient; he had found it useful in certain dealings with credulous people. In 1784 the count offered him the post of librarian, with a salary of one thousand florins, at his castle of Dux, in Bohemia. It is said to be a fine castle, and is still noted for its charming park. Here this prince of Bohemians spent the remainder of his life, devoting seven years to the *Mémoires*, on which he was still engaged at his death. A terra-cotta bust discovered at the castle (and etched some years ago for *Le Livre*) shows him in mature age, a handsome, energetic, and imposing head, with somewhat deep-set eyes; it is by no means the head of a scamp, but rather that of a philosopher, a philosopher with unusual experience of affairs, a successful statesman, one might say. A medallion portrait, of later date, which has also been reproduced, shows him at the age of sixty-three with lean, eager face, and lofty, though receding forehead, the type of the man of quick perception and swift action, the eagle type of man. The Prince de Ligne has also left a description of him as he appeared in old age, now grown very irritable, ready to flare up at any imagined insult, engaged in perpetual warfare with domestics, but receiving the highest consideration from those who knew how to appreciate the great qualities of the man and his unequalled experiences, and who knew also how to indulge his susceptibilities and smile at his antique fashions. Once he went off in a huff to Weimar, and was graciously received by the Duke, but he soon came back again; all the favours there were showered on a certain court favourite, one Goethe. It is clear, as we read the Prince de Ligne's detailed description, that the restless old adventurer had need, even in the peaceful seclusion of Dux, of all the consolation yielded by Socrates, Horace, Seneca, and Boethius, his favourite philosophers. Here, at Dux, on the 4th of June 1798, Casanova died. "Bear witness that I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian;" that, we are told, was his last utterance after he had received the sacraments.

From that moment Casanova with everything that concerned him was covered by a pall of oblivion. He seems to have been carelessly cast aside, together with the century of which he was so characteristic, and, as it now appears, so memorable a child. The world in which he had lived so joyously and completely had been transformed by the Revolution. The new age of strenuous commercialism and complacent philanthropy was in its vigorous youth, a sword in its right hand and a Bible in its left. The only adventurer who found favour now was he who took the glad news of salvation to the heathen, or mowed them down to make new openings for trade. Had he been born later, we may be well assured, Casanova would have known how to play his part; he would not have fallen short of Borrow, who became an agent of the Bible Society. But as it was, what had the new age to do with Casanova? No one cared, no one even yet has cared, so much as to examine the drawers and cupboards full of papers which he left behind at Dux. Only on the 13th of February, 1820, was the oblivion a little stirred. On that date a certain Carlo Angiolieri appeared at Leipzig in the office of the famous publisher, Brockhaus, carrying a voluminous manuscript in the handwriting (as we now know) of Casanova and bearing the title, *Histoire de ma Vie jusqu'à l'an* 1797.

But even the appearance of Carlo Angiolieri failed to dissipate the gloom. Fifty years more were to pass before the figure of Casanova again became clear. This man, so ardently alive in every fibre, had now become a myth. The sagacious world—which imparts the largest dole of contempt to the pilgrim who brings back to it the largest gifts—refused to take Casanova seriously. The shrewd critic wondered who wrote Casanova, just as he has since wondered who wrote Shakespeare. Paul Lacroix paid Stendhal the huge compliment of suggesting that he had written the *Mémoires*, a sufficiently ingenious suggestion, for in Stendhal's Dauphiny spirit there is something of that love of adventure which is supremely illustrated in Casanova. But we now know that, as Armand Baschet first proved, Casanova himself really wrote his own *Mémoires*. Moreover, so far as investigation has yet been able to go, he wrote with strict regard to truth. Wherever it is possible to test Casanova, his essential veracity has always been vindicated. In the nature of things it is impossible to verify much that he narrates. When, however, we remember that he was telling the story of his life primarily for his own pleasure, it is clear that he had no motive for deception;

and when we consider the surpassingly discreditable episodes which he has recorded, we may recall that he has given not indeed positive proof of sincerity, but certainly the best that can be given in the absence of direct proof. It remains a question how far a man is able to recollect the details of the far past—the conversations he held, the garments he wore, the meals he ate—so precisely as Casanova professes to recollect them. This is a psychological problem which has not yet been experimentally examined. There are, however, great individual differences in memory, and there is reason to believe that an organisation, such as Casanova's, for which the external world is so vivid, is associated with memory-power of high quality. That this history is narrated with absolute precision of detail Casanova himself would probably not have asserted. But there is no reason to doubt his good faith, and there is excellent reason to accept the substantial accuracy of his narrative. It remains a personal document of a value which will increase rather than diminish as time goes by. It is one of the great autobiographical revelations which the ages have left us, with Augustine's, Cellini's, Rousseau's, of its own kind supreme.

II.

The *Mémoires* are authentic; they give us what they profess to give us—the true story of a man who unites (as it has been well said) the characters of Gil Blas and of Figaro. Thus Casanova was the incarnation in real life of the two most typical imaginative figures of his century. Yet even if the *Mémoires* had been the invention of some novelist of surpassing genius they would still possess extraordinary interest. We may forget that the book is an autobiography, and still find it, as a story of adventure, the apotheosis of the picaresque novel.

The picaresque novel—although a Frenchman brought it to perfection in *Gil Blas*—arose and flourished in Spain, Casanova's ancestral country, and its piquancy, variety, and audacity seem to have been very congenial to the Spanish spirit and the Spanish soil. Casanova's *Mémoires* carry this form of story on to a broader and in some respects higher plane. The old *picaro* never dared affront the world; he cringed before it and slunk behind its back to make grimaces. Casanova, too, was an adventurer living by his wits, but he approached the world with the same self-confidence as he approached a beautiful woman, and having won its favours treats it with the same consideration. Unlike the *picaro* whose delight it is to reveal the pettinesses of the men he has duped, Casanova shows his magnificence in adventure by regarding the world as a foeman worthy of all his courtesy; and with incomparable impartiality, as well as skill, he presents to us the narrative of all the perils he encountered or sought. Few old men sitting down in the evening of their days to chatter of old times have been so free as Casanova from the vices of senile literature. He never maunders of the things that are so dear to the aged merely because they are past; he introduces no superfluous reflections or comments. We recognise that the hand which keeps this pen so surely to the point is the hand of a man of action. Casanova's skill in narrative is conspicuously shown in the love-adventures which form so large and important a part of his book, as of his life. (Men usually regard love as a bagatelle, he says somewhere, but, for his own part, he adds, he has found no more important business in life.) There would seem to be nothing so difficult as to tell a long series of amours, unshrinkingly, from first to last, without drawing a curtain at any stage. Nearly every writer in fiction or in autobiography who has attempted this has only produced an effect of weary monotony or else of oppressive closeness. But Casanova succeeds. Partly this is due to the variety and individuality he is able to give, not only to every incident, but to every woman he meets; so that his book is a gallery of delightful women, drawn with an art that almost recalls his great contemporary, Goethe. Partly it seems he was aided by his vivid and sympathetic Venetian temperament; his swift, unliterary style finds time for no voluptuous languors. He was aided even by his immodesty, for in literature as in the plastic arts and in life itself, the nude is nearer to virtue than the *décolleté*. The firm and absolute precision of every episode in these *Mémoires* leaves no room for any undue dallying with the fringes of love's garments. Casanova tells his story swiftly and boldly, with no more delay than is needed to record every essential detail; he is the absolute anti-type to Sterne as a narrator; the most libertine of authors, he is yet free from prurience. Thus the man of action covers the romancer with confusion; this supreme book of adventures is a real man's record of his own real life.

But let us forget that it is an autobiography and take it merely as a story. Its immense range of human interest, its audacious realism, its freedom from perversity, entitle us to regard it as a typical story of adventure. And I ask myself: What is the relation of such a book to life? what is the moral worth of Casanova's *Mémoires?*

A foolish, superfluous question, I know, it seems to many. And I am willing to admit that there may possibly be things in life which it is desirable to do, and yet undesirable to moralise over; I would even assert that the moral worth of many of our actions lies precisely in their unconsciousness of any moral worth. Yet beneath the freest moral movements there must be a solid basis of social law, just as beneath the most gracious movements of the human body there lies the regulated play of mechanical law. When we find it assumed that there are things which are good to do and not good to justify we may strongly suspect that we have come across a mental muddle.

To see the matter rightly we must take it at the beginning. No one can rightly see the moral place of immoral literature—the literature of adventure—in the case of adults unless he sees it in the case of children. Of late years the people who write in newspapers and magazines have loudly abused all stories of the crudely heroic order, the stories of impossible virtue and unheard-of villainy in far-away lands, of marvellously brave bands under extravagantly reckless leaders, who march on through careless bloodshed to incredible victory or incalculable treasure. The hero of the average boy — magnificent sombrero on head, pistols in belt, galloping off on his mighty charger, a villain grasped by the scruff of the neck in each outstretched hand—has been severely mauled. The suggestions offered for the displacement of this literature furnish documents for the psychologist. Let us have cheap lives of Jesus and the Apostle Paul! let us flood the world with the sober romances licensed by religious societies!—say those good people in the newspapers and the magazines. If they have ever themselves been children, and if so, how they came into the world shrouded in an impenetrable caul which will for ever shut them out from insight into the hearts of the young, is not known, and perhaps is no matter. Putting aside these estimable persons, there is in every heart a chamber dedicated to the impossible, and the younger the heart the larger is this golden ventricle. For the child who can just read, Jack the Giant-killer, and the story of those human-souled swans which make the swan a mystic bird for all our lives, are better worth knowing than any fact of the visible world. Some day the Life of Jesus, and even perhaps the Life of Paul, will seem to be among the sweetest and strangest of the world's fairy-tales; but that day will hardly come until every church and chapel has been spiritually razed to the ground. It cannot come to the generation which has had the name of Jesus thrust down its throat in Sunday-schools and board-schools. We English are a practical, common-sense people, and we cure our children of any hearty taste for religion as confectioners are said to cure their assistants of any excessive taste for sweets, by a preliminary surfeit. No doubt we are very wise, but we postpone indefinitely the day when children will come to our religious tales in the pure gladness of their joy in the marvellous.

In the meantime there ought not to be any doubt that children should be fed on fairy-tales as their souls' most natural food. Nothing can make up for the lack of them at the outset, just as no later supply of milk can compensate for the starvation involved in feeding infants on starch. The power of assimilating fairy-tales is soon lost, and unless the child has a rarely powerful creative imagination its spiritual growth on this side at least remains for ever stunted.

If then childhood needs its pure fairy-land, and youth its fairy-land of impossible adventure, what fairy-land is left for adult age? Scarcely the novel. The modern novel in its finest manifestations, however engrossingly interesting, takes us but a little step from the passionate interests of our own lives. If I turn to the two recent novels which have most powerfully interested me—Huysmans' *En Route* and Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*—I find that their interest lies largely in the skill with which they present and concentrate two mighty problems of actual life, the greatest of all problems, religion and sex. In adult life we seek a fairy-land occupied by beings at once as real as ourselves, and yet far removed from the sphere of our own actual interests and the heavy burden of the atmosphere under which we live; only so can it fascinate the imaginations of those who have outgrown the simple imaginative joys of early life. Casanova's *Mémoires* is the perfected type of the books which answer these requirements. It is unflinchingly real, immensely varied, the audaciously truthful narrative of undeniably human impulses. And yet it carries us out of relation with the problems of our actual life; it leads us into the realm of fairy-land.

But—analysing the matter a little more closely—it may still fairly be asked whether a book which, in spite of its remoteness, represents a form of human life, must not have a certain bearing on morals. Is not a part of its attraction, and indeed that of all fairy-lands, the existence of a different code of morals? It seems to me that this is so. But precisely in that lies the moral value of such literature. Indeed the whole question of the moral value of art—that is to say, of æsthetic enjoyment—is really involved here. The matter is worth looking into.

It is one of Schopenhauer's unforgettable sayings, that whatever course of action we take in life there is always some element in our nature which could only find satisfaction in an exactly contrary course; so that, take what road we will, we yet always remain restless and unsatisfied in part. To Schopenhauer that reflection made for pessimism; it need not. The more finely and adequately we adjust ourselves to the actual conditions of our life the larger, no doubt, the unused and unsatisfied region within us. But it is just here that art comes in. Art largely counts for its effects on playing on these unused fibres of our organism, and by so doing it serves to bring them into a state of harmonious satisfaction—moralises them, if you will. Alienists have described a distressing form of insanity peculiar to old maids who have led honourable lives of abstinence and abnegation. After years of seeming content with the conditions of their lot they begin to manifest uncontrollable obsessions and erotic impulses; the unused elements of life, which they had shut down in the cellars of their souls and almost forgotten, have at last arisen in rebellion, clamouring tumultuously for satisfaction. The old orgies—the Saturnalian festival at Christmas and the Midsummer Festival on St. John's Day—bear witness that the ancients in their wisdom recognised that the bonds of the actual daily moral life must sometimes be relaxed lest they break from over-tension. We have lost the orgy, but in its place we have art. Our respectable matrons no longer send out their daughters with torches at midnight into the woods and among the hills, where dancing and wine and blood may lash into their flesh the knowledge of the mysteries of life, but they take them to *Tristan*, and are fortunately unable to see into those carefully brought-up young souls on such occasions. The moralising force of art lies, not in its capacity to present a timid imitation of our experiences, but in its power to go beyond our experience, satisfying and harmonising the unfulfilled activities of our nature. That art should have such an effect on those who contemplate it is not surprising when we remember that, to some extent, art has a similar influence on its creators. "Libertin d'esprit mais sage de mœurs," it was said of Watteau. Mohammed when he wrote so voluptuously of the black-eyed houris of Paradise was still young and the blameless husband of an aged woman.

"Singing is sweet; but be sure of this,
Lips only sing when they cannot kiss."

It has been said of Wagner that he had in him the instincts of an ascetic and of a satyr, and the first is just as necessary as the second to the making of a great artist. It is a very ancient observation that the most unchaste verse has often been written by the chastest poets, and that the writers who have written most purely have found their compensation in living impurely.[1] In the same manner it has always been found in Christendom, both among Catholics and Protestants, that much of the most licentious literature has been written by the clergy, by no means because the clergy are a depraved class, but precisely because the austerity of their lives renders necessary for them these emotional athletics. Of course, from the standpoint of simple nature, such literature is bad, it is merely a form of that obscenity which, as Huysmans has acutely remarked, can only be produced by those who are chaste; in Nature desire passes swiftly into action, leaving little or no trace on the mind. A certain degree of continence—I do not mean merely in the region of sex but in the other fields of human action also—is needed as a breeding-ground for the dreams and images of desire to develop into the perfected visions of art. But the point of view of society is scarcely that of unadulterated nature. In society we have not always room for the swift and free passage of impulse into action; to avoid the evils of repressed impulse this play of the emotions on a higher and serener plane becomes essential. Just as we need athletics to expand and harmonise the coarser unused energies of the organism, so we need art and literature to expand and harmonise its finer energies, emotion being, as it may not be superfluous to point out, itself largely a muscular process, motion in a more or less arrested form, so that there is here more than a mere analogy. Art from this point of view is the athletics of the emotions.

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[1] I take the first example which comes to hand, for whatever it may be worth:—"Luttrell was talking of Moore and Rogers—the poetry of the former so licentious, that of the latter so pure; much of its popularity owing to its being so carefully weeded of everything approaching to indelicacy; and the contrast between the *lives* and the *works* of the two men—the former a pattern of conjugal and domestic regularity, the latter of all the men he had ever known the greatest sensualist" (Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 324).

The adventures of fairy-land—of which for our age I take Casanova's *Mémoires* as the type—constitute an important part of this athletics. It may be abused, just as we have the grosser excesses of the runner and the cyclist; but it is the abuse and not the use which is pernicious, and under the artificial conditions of civilisation the contemplation of the life and adventures of the heroically natural man is an exercise with fine spiritual uses. Such literature thus has a moral value: it helps us to live peacefully within the highly specialised routine of civilisation.

That is the underlying justification for Casanova's *Mémoires* as moral literature. But there is no reason why it should emerge into consciousness when we take up these *Mémoires*, any more than a man need take up a branch of physical athletics with any definite hygienic aim. It is sufficient to be moved by the pure enjoyment of it. And there must be something unwholesome and abnormal—something corrupt at the core—in any civilised man or woman who cannot win some enjoyment from this book.

III.

The more I contemplate the eighteenth century the more interesting I find it. In my youth it seemed to me unworthy of a glance. The books and the men, Shelley above all, who stirred my young blood belonged to the early nineteenth century. I was led to regard the last century as a dull period of stagnation and decay, a tomb into which the spirit of man sank after the slow death which followed the Renaissance. The dawn of the nineteenth century was an Easter Day of the human soul, rising from the sepulchre and flinging aside the old eighteenth century winding-sheet.

I have nothing yet to say against the early nineteenth century, which was indeed only the outcome of the years that went before, but I have gained a new delight in the men of the eighteenth century. It was in that age that the English spirit found its most complete intellectual expression, unaffected by foreign influence. When that spirit, reviving after the wars that lamentably cut short the development of Chaucer's magnificent song, again began its free literary development—no doubt with some stimulus from Humanism—it was suddenly smothered at birth by the Renaissance wave from Italy and France. We may divine how it would have developed independently if we think of John Heywood's dramatic sketches—pale as those are after the Miller's tale in which for the first and last time Chaucer perfectly mated English realism to the lyric grace of English idealism—and to some extent, also, when we turn to the later Heywood's plays, or Dekker's, and especially to the robust and tolerant humanity, the sober artistic breadth of the one play of Porter's which has come down to us. But the intoxicating melodies of Ronsard and his fellows were heard from over sea, and the men of the English Renaissance arose — Lyly and Lodge and Campion with their refinements, Greene and Nash with their gay and brilliant music, Marlowe with his arrogant, irresistible energy—and brought to birth an absolutely new spirit, which may have been English enough in its rich and virginal elements, but received the seminal principle from abroad. It needed a century and more for that magnificent tumult to subside, and for the old English spirit to reappear and reach at last full maturity, by happy chance again in association with France, though this time it is England that chiefly plays the masculine part and impregnates France. Thus the eighteenth century was an age in which the English spirit found complete self-expression, and also an age in which England and France joined hands intellectually, and stood together at the summit of civilisation, with no rivals, unless Goethe and Kant may suffice to stand for a whole people. In the great Englishmen of these days we find the qualities which are truly native to Britain, and which have too often been torn and distracted by insane aberrations. There is a fine sobriety and sagacity in the English spirit, a mellow human solidity, such as the Romans possessed always, but which we in our misty and storm-swept island have often exchanged, perhaps for better, but certainly for other qualities. It was not so in the eighteenth century, and by no accident the historian who has most finely expressed the genius of Rome was an eighteenth century Englishman. All the most typical men of that age possessed in varying degree the same qualities: Locke, Swift, Fielding, Hume, Richardson, Goldsmith, Hogarth, Johnson, God-win. Thus the eighteenth century should undoubtedly be a source of pride to the British heart. England's reputation in the world rests largely on our poetic aptitudes and our political capacity. Eighteenth century England is not obviously pre-eminent in either respect, although it was the great age of our political development and the seed-time of our second great poetic age; it produced scarcely more than a single first-class poet exclusively within its limits, and it lost America. Yet our greatest philosopher, our greatest historian, our greatest biographer, nearly all our greatest novelists, our great initiators in painting, who were indirectly the initiators of the greater art of France, belong wholly to this century, and an unequalled cluster of our greatest poets belongs to its close. And these men were marked by sanity and catholicity, a superb solidity of spirit; they became genuinely cosmopolitan without losing any of their indigenous virtues. Without the eighteenth century we should never have known many of the greatest qualities which are latent, and too often only latent, in our race. Landor and Wordsworth alone were left to carry something of the spirit of the English eighteenth century far on into the literature of our own wholly alien century.

And their brothers of France were their most worthy peers. This spirit, indeed, which we see so conspicuously in the finest men of their age in England and France, was singularly widespread throughout Europe, a cheerful sobriety, a solid humanity, little troubled by any of those "movements" which were to become so prolific and so noisy in the next century. Christianity, it seemed, was decaying. Diderot, well informed on English affairs, wrote to a friend that in a few years it would be extinct, and looking at the state of the English Church at that time, no one could reasonably have surmised that Zinzendorf in Germany, and after him Wesley in England on a lower plane and Law on a higher plane, had already initiated that revival of Christianity which in our own century was destined to work itself out so obstreperously. But the world seemed none the worse for the apparent subsidence of Christianity; in the opinion of many it seemed to be very much the better. The tolerant paganism of classic days appeared to be reasserting itself, robustly in England, with a delicate refinement in France,—setting the paganism of Watteau against the paganism of Fielding—while Goethe and the Germans generally were striving to rescue and harmonise the best of Christianity with the best of antiquity. European civilisation was fully expanded; for a long time no great disturbing force had arisen, and though on every side the tender buds of coming growths might have been detected, they could not yet reveal their strength. Such a period certainly has its terrible defects; mellowness is not far from rottenness. But then youth also has its defects, and its crude acidity is still further from perfection. The nineteenth century has a higher moral standard than the eighteenth, so at least we in our self-righteousness have been accustomed to think. But even if so, the abstract existence of a high moral standard is another thing from the prevalence of high moral living. Whatever the standard may be, it is a question whether the lives are much different. In the one case the standard is much above the practice, in the other only a little above it—that is the chief difference. And the advantages of winding the standard up to the higher pitch are not so unmixed as is sometimes assumed. One need not question these advantages, well recognised in the present century. But the advantages of a lower standard are less often recognised. There is especially the great advantage that we attain a higher degree of sincerity, and sincerity, if not itself the prime virtue, is surely, whatever the virtue may be, its chief accompaniment. A life that is swathed and deformed in much drapery is not so wholesome or so effective as one that can live nearer to the sun. And the unrecognisable villain is most pernicious; the brigand who holds a revolver at your head is better than the sleek and well-dressed thief who opens the proceedings with prayer. The eighteenth has been called a gross and unintelligent century. In the department of criticism, indeed, this century in England (for it was far otherwise in Germany) comes very short of our own century, and it is largely this failure to measure the precise value of things in æsthetic perception which now makes that age seem so shocking. From this point of view every great age—and not least our own greatest Elizabethan age—is equally defective. A period of energetic life cannot afford to spend much time on the solitary contemplation of its own bowels of æsthetic emotion. To produce a Pater is the one exquisite function of a spiritually barren and exhausted age. And still the eighteenth century redeems its critical grossness by making even this later development possible; it lifted the man of letters from the place of a dependent to the place of a free man boldly prophesying in his own right; and, moreover, it was the first century which dared to claim the complete equality of men and women with all which that involves.

If it has required a certain insight for the child of our own century to discover the great qualities of the last century, there cannot be much doubt about the final judgment of the most competent judges. The eighteenth was, as Renouvier has called it, the first century of humanity since Christ, while at the same time, as Lange has said, it was penetrated through by the search for the ideal, or, as a more recent thinker concludes, it was a century dominated by the maxim *Salus populi suprema est lex*, holding in its noble aspirations after general happiness the germs of all modern socialism. In art and literature it saw the fresh spring of those blossoms which opened so splendidly and faded so swiftly in our century; it was the century not only of Hogarth and Fielding and Voltaire, but of Blake and Rousseau, of Diderot, of Swedenborg and Mesmer, of the development of modern music with Mozart and Beethoven, of the unparalleled enthusiasm awakened by the discovery of the Keltic world. And as its crowning glory the eighteenth century claims Goethe. Men will scarcely look back to our own century as so good to live in. One may well say that he would have gladly lived in the thirteenth century, perhaps the most interesting of all since Christ, or in the sixteenth, probably the most alive of all, or the eighteenth, surely the most human. But why have lived in the nineteenth, the golden age of machinery, and of men used as machines?

Eighteenth century Europe, being what it was, formed a perfect stage for Casanova to play his part on. With his Spanish and Italian blood, he was of the race of those who had come so actively to the front in the last days of old classic Rome, and his immediate ancestors had lived in the centre of the pagan Rome of the Renaissance. Thus he carried with him traditions which consorted well with much in the eighteenth century. And he had that in him, moreover, which no tradition can give, the incommunicable vitality in the presence of which all tradition shrivels into nothingness.

Casanova knew not only Italy, France, England, Germany, and Holland; he had visited Spain, Russia, Poland, Greece, Turkey, and Asia Minor. He was received by Benedict XII., by Frederick II. of Prussia, by the Empress Catherine, by Joseph II. He was at home in Paris, in London, in Berlin, in Vienna; he knew Munich, Dresden, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Barcelona. His picture of London is of great interest. He spent much of the year 1763 there, and some of his most interesting experiences, romantic and psychological, occurred during that period. He even dated the close of what he calls the second act in the comedy of his life from that visit to London, the next and concluding act being one of slow declination. So profound was his depression at this time that one day he went towards the Thames at the Tower with the deliberate intention of drowning himself, having first filled his pockets with bullets to ensure sinking. Fortunately an English friend (to whom the world owes thanks) met him on the way, read his resolve in his face, and insisted on carrying him off to a very convivial party, whose indecorous proceedings, although Casanova only remained a passive witness, served to dissipate all thoughts of suicide. He is not, however, prejudiced against England; on the contrary, he finds that no nation offers so many interesting peculiarities to the attentive observer. As usual, in London Casanova mixed indiscriminately with the best and the worst society; his wit, his knowledge, his imperturbable effrontery, his charming conversation, served to open any door that he desired to open. He gives us curious glimpses into the lives of English noblemen of the day, and not less intimate pictures of the *chevaliers d'industrie* who preyed upon them. In the course of one adventure with people of the latter sort he was haled before the eminent blind magistrate Sir John Fielding, whom he seems to have mistaken, though this is not quite clear, for his yet more eminent brother Henry. He also met Kitty Fischer, the most fashionable *cocotte* of her day, whom we may yet see as Reynolds caught her in a well-inspired moment, dilating her sensitive nostrils, radiantly inhaling the joy of life, and he tells us anecdotes of her extravagance, of the jewels she wore, of the thousand guinea bank-note which she ate in a sandwich.[1]

Throughout Europe Casanova knew many of the most celebrated people of his time, though it is clear—as one would expect from a man of his impartial humanity—he seldom went out of his way to meet them. His visit to Voltaire is a distinct contribution to our knowledge of that sage; he admired Helvetius, and wondered how a man of so many virtues could have denied virtue; D'Alembert he thought the most truly modest man he had ever met, an interesting tribute from the most truly immodest man of that period. The value of Casanova's record of the eighteenth century lies, however, by no means in the glimpses he has given us of great personalities: that has been much better done by much more insignificant writers. It is as a picture of the manners and customs of the eighteenth century throughout Europe that the *Mémoires* are invaluable. Casanova saw Europe from the courts of kings to the lowest *bas fonds*. He lived in the castles of French and Italian nobles, in the comfortable homes of Dutch merchants, in his own house in Pall Mall, in taverns and inns and peasants' cottages anywhere. He had no intellectual prejudices, he had an immense versatility in tastes and practical aptitudes, he was genuinely interested in all human things. Thus he approached life with no stereotyped set of opinions, but with all the aloofness of an unclassed adventurer, who was at the same time a scholar and a man of letters. It can scarcely be that there is any record to compare with this as a vivid and impartial picture of the eighteenth century, in its robust solidity, its cheerful and tolerant scepticism, its serene and easy gaiety, its mellow decay. That is our final debt to this unique and immortal book.

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[1] For another side of life we may read his description of the English Sunday:—"On Sunday one dares neither to play at cards nor to perform music. The numerous spies who infest the streets of this capital listen to the sounds which come from the parlours of the houses, and if they suspect any gaming or singing they conceal themselves and slip in at the first opportunity to seize those bad Christians who dare to profane the Lord's Day by amusements which everywhere else are counted innocent. In revenge the English may go with impunity to sanctify the holy day in the taverns and brothels which are so plentiful in this city." One may compare with this Mme. de Staël's almost Dantesque description—so at least it remains in the memory—of the gloom of the Scotch Sabbath in the days of Burns. This statement of the matter remained substantially accurate until almost yesterday. So long it remained for the English spirit to re-conquer Sunday! It must be remembered that Puritanism, while always a part of the English spirit, was not originally its predominant note; it only became so as an inevitable reaction against the exotic Renaissance movement. Mary Stuart made Knox, Charles I. made Cromwell, and both monarchs were intimately associated with the last wave of the Renaissance.

What should be our last word about Casanova? It is true that although—if indeed one should not say because—he was so heroically natural Casanova was not an average normal man. It is scarcely given to the average man to expend such versatile and reckless skill in the field of the world, or to find so large a part wherein to play off that skill. But neither are the saints and philosophers normal; St. Bernard was not normal, nor yet Spinoza. And surely it is a poor picture of the world which would show us St. Bernard and Spinoza and shut out Casanova. "Vous avez l'outil universel," Fabrice said to Gil Blas. Casanova's brain was just such a tool of universal use, and he never failed to use it. For if you would find the supreme type of the human animal in the completest development of his rankness and cunning, in the very plenitude of his most excellent wits, I know not where you may more safely go than to the *Mémoires* of the self-ennobled Jacques Casanova Chevalier de Seingalt.

POSTSCRIPTUM

Until a recent date, Casanova's letters and papers were preserved as he had left them, in the library of the castle at Dux. Referring to this, Mr. Horace Bleackley, the compiler of a work entitled, "Casanova in England" (London. 1923), remarks (page 217, note): "Until the Peace of Versailles, the Casanova MSS were preserved in the castle of Dux, near Teplitz in Bohemia, and, through the generosity of its owner, the Count Waldstein, the valuable library and collection of autograph letters were always accessible to the scholar. After the creation of that pinchbeck republic, Czecho-Slovakia, the castle was confiscated by the State, and its contents have disappeared."

It is unfortunate that Mr. Bleackley was unable to obtain more satisfactory information on this important matter. Official inquiry, instituted through the kindness of the Czechoslovak Legation at Washington, reports the facts as follows: "In the course of the Land Reform which is now being carried on in Czechoslovakia, the Castle of Count Waldstein at Duchcov (known as Dux, in German) was sold to the city of Duchcov. The collection of the Museum of the city was transferred to this castle. Many objects of art were donated to the Museum by (the present) Count Waldstein. The immense hall of the castle, together with its old portraits of the ancestors of Count Waldstein, has remained intact. The Castle is now being used for museum and educational purposes. As to the library of Count Waldstein, this

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library was transferred by the owner, Count Waldstein, in its original book-cases of the 18th Century, to his castle in Dosky (known as Hirschberg, in German), where it has been deposited by the owner and where scientific investigators and *interresants* have free access to the material contained therein, after receiving permission from Count Waldstein. The collection of Casanova autographs is also deposited in this library. It was very shortly after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic that the Czechoslovak Government gave Count Waldstein permission to transfer the Casanova autographs to his castle in Dosky."

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CASANOVA AT DUX

An Unpublished Chapter of History, By Arthur Symons

I

THE *Memoirs* of Casanova, though they have enjoyed the popularity of a bad reputation, have never had justice done to them by serious students of literature, of life, and of history. One English writer, indeed, Mr. Havelock Ellis, has realised that 'there are few more delightful books in the world,' and he has analysed them in an essay on Casanova, published in *Affirmations,* with extreme care and remarkable subtlety. But this essay stands alone, at all events in English, as an attempt to take Casanova seriously, to show him in his relation to his time, and in his relation to human problems. And yet these *Memoirs* are perhaps the most valuable document which we possess on the society of the eighteenth century; they are the history of a unique life, a unique personality, one of the greatest of autobiographies; as a record of adventures, they are more entertaining than *Gil Blas,* or *Monte Cristo,* or any of the imaginary travels, and escapes, and masquerades in life, which have been written in imitation of them. They tell the story of a man who loved life passionately for its own sake: one to whom woman was, indeed, the most important thing in the world, but to whom nothing in the world was indifferent. The bust which gives us the most lively notion of him shows us a great, vivid, intellectual face, full of fiery energy and calm resource, the face of a thinker and a fighter in one. A scholar, an adventurer, perhaps a Cabalist, a busy stirrer in politics, a gamester, one 'born for the fairer sex,' as he tells us, and born also to be a vagabond; this man, who is remembered now for his written account of his own life, was that rarest kind of autobiographer, one who did not live to write, but wrote because he had lived, and when he could live no longer.

And his *Memoirs* take one all over Europe, giving sidelights, all the more valuable in being almost accidental, upon many of the affairs and people most interesting to us during two-thirds of the eighteenth century. Giacomo Casanova was born in Venice, of Spanish and Italian parentage, on April 2, 1725; he died at the Château of Dux, in Bohemia, on June 4, 1798. In that lifetime of seventy-three years he travelled, as his *Memoirs* show us, in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, England, Switzerland, Belgium, Russia, Poland, Spain, Holland, Turkey; he met Voltaire at Ferney, Rousseau at Montmorency, Fontenelle, d'Alembert and Crébillon at Paris, George III. in London, Louis XV. at Fontainebleau, Catherine the Great at St. Petersburg, Benedict XII. at Rome, Joseph II. at Vienna, Frederick the Great at Sans-Souci. Imprisoned by the Inquisitors of State in the *Piombi* at Venice, he made, in 1755, the most famous escape in history. His *Memoirs*, as we have them, break off abruptly at the moment when he is expecting a safe conduct, and the permission to return to Venice after twenty years' wanderings. He did return, as we know from documents in the Venetian archives; he returned as secret agent of the Inquisitors, and remained in their service from 1774 until 1782. At the end of 1782 he left Venice; and next year we find him in Paris, where, in 1784, he met Count Waldstein at the

Venetian Ambassador's, and was invited by him to become his librarian at Dux. He accepted, and for the fourteen remaining years of his life lived at Dux, where he wrote his *Memoirs.*

Casanova died in 1798, but nothing was heard of the *Memoirs* (which the Prince de Ligne, in his own *Memoirs*, tells us that Casanova had read to him, and in which he found *du dramatique, de la rapidité, du comique, de la philosophie, des choses neuves, sublimes, inimitables même*) until the year 1820, when a certain Carlo Angiolini brought to the publishing house of Brockhaus, in Leipzig, a manuscript entitled *Histoire de ma vie jusqu'à l'an* 1797, in the handwriting of Casanova. This manuscript, which I have examined at Leipzig, is written on foolscap paper, rather rough and yellow; it is written on both sides of the page, and in sheets or quires; here and there the paging shows that some pages have been omitted, and in their place are smaller sheets of thinner and whiter paper, all in Casanova's handsome, unmistakable handwriting. The manuscript is done up in twelve bundles, corresponding with the twelve volumes of the original edition; and only in one place is there a gap. The fourth and fifth chapters of the twelfth volume are missing, as the editor of the original edition points out, adding: 'It is not probable that these two chapters have been withdrawn from the manuscript of Casanova by a strange hand; everything leads us to believe that the author himself suppressed them, in the intention, no doubt, of re-writing them, but without having found time to do so.' The manuscript ends abruptly with the year 1774, and not with the year 1797, as the title would lead us to suppose.

This manuscript, in its original state, has never been printed. Herr Brockhaus, on obtaining possession of the manuscript, had it translated into German by Wilhelm Schütz, but with many omissions and alterations, and published this translation, volume by volume, from 1822 to 1828, under the title, *Aus den Memoiren des Venetianers Jacob Casanova de Seingalt.* While the German edition was in course of publication, Herr Brockhaus employed a certain Jean Laforgue, a professor of the French language at Dresden, to revise the original manuscript, correcting Casanova's vigorous, but at times incorrect, and often somewhat Italian, French according to his own notions of elegant writing, suppressing passages which seemed too free-spoken from the point of view of morals and of politics, and altering the names of some of the persons referred to, or replacing those names by initials. This revised text was published in twelve volumes, the first two in 1826, the third and fourth in 1828, the fifth to the eighth in 1832, and the ninth to the twelfth in 1837; the first four bearing the imprint of Brockhaus at Leipzig and Ponthieu et Cie at Paris; the next four the imprint of Heideloff et Campé at Paris; and the last four nothing but *A Bruxelles.* The volumes are all uniform, and were all really printed for the firm of Brockhaus. This, however far from representing the real text, is the only authoritative edition, and my references throughout this article will always be to this edition.

In turning over the manuscript at Leipzig, I read some of the suppressed passages, and regretted their suppression; but Herr Brockhaus, the present head of the firm, assured me that they are not really very considerable in number. The damage, however, to the vivacity of the whole narrative, by the persistent alterations of M. Laforgue, is incalculable. I compared many passages, and found scarcely three consecutive sentences untouched. Herr Brockhaus (whose courtesy I cannot sufficiently acknowledge) was kind enough to have a passage copied out for me, which I afterwards read over, and checked word by word. In this passage Casanova says, for instance: *Elle venoit presque tous les jours lui faire une belle visite.* This is altered into: *Cependant chaque jour Thérèse venait lui faire une visite.* Casanova says that some one *avoit, comme de raison, formé le projet d'allier Dieu avec le diable.* This is made to read: *Qui, comme de raison, avait saintement formé le projet d'allier les intérêts du ciel aux œuvres de ce monde.* Casanova tells us that Thérèse would not commit a mortal sin *pour devenir reine du monde; pour une couronne,* corrects the indefatigable Laforgue. *Il ne savoit que lui dire* becomes *Dans cet état de perplexité;* and so forth. It must, therefore, be realized that the *Memoirs,* as we have them, are only a kind of pale tracing of the vivid colours of the original.

When Casanova's *Memoirs* were first published, doubts were expressed as to their authenticity, first by Ugo Foscolo (in the *Westminster Review,* 1827), then by Quérard, supposed to be an authority in regard to anonymous and pseudonymous writings, finally by Paul Lacroix, *le bibliophile Jacob,* who suggested, or rather expressed his 'certainty,' that the real author of the *Memoirs* was Stendhal, whose 'mind, character, ideas and style' he seemed to recognise on every page. This theory, as foolish and as unsupported as the Baconian theory of Shakespeare, has been carelessly accepted, or at all events accepted as possible, by many good scholars who have never taken the trouble to look into the matter for themselves. It was finally disproved by a series of articles of Armand Baschet, entitled *Preuves curieuses de l'authenticité des Mémoires de Jacques Casanova de*

Seingalt, in *Le Livre*, January, February, April and May, 1881; and these proofs were further corroborated by two articles of Alessandro d'Ancona, entitled *Un Avventuriere del Secolo XVIII.*, in the *Nuova Antologia*, February 1 and August 1, 1882. Baschet had never himself seen the manuscript of the *Memoirs*, but he had learnt all the facts about it from Messrs. Brockhaus, and he had himself examined the numerous papers relating to Casanova in the Venetian archives. A similar examination was made at the Frari at about the same time by the Abbé Fulin; and I myself, in 1894, not knowing at the time that the discovery had been already made, made it over again for myself. There the arrest of Casanova, his imprisonment in the *Piombi*, the exact date of his escape, the name of the monk who accompanied him, are all authenticated by documents contained in the *riferte* of the Inquisition of State; there are the bills for the repairs of the roof and walls of the cell from which he escaped; there are the reports of the spies on whose information he was arrested, for his too dangerous free-spokenness in matters of religion and morality. The same archives contain forty-eight letters of Casanova to the Inquisitors of State, dating from 1763 to 1782, among the *Riferte dei Confidenti*, or reports of secret agents; the earliest asking permission to return to Venice, the rest giving information in regard to the immoralities of the city, after his return there; all in the same handwriting as the *Memoirs*. Further proof could scarcely be needed, but Baschet has done more than prove the authenticity, he has proved the extraordinary veracity, of the *Memoirs*. F. W. Barthold, in *Die Geschichtlichen Persönlichkeiten in J. Casanova's Memoiren*, 2 vols., 1846, had already examined about a hundred of Casanova's allusions to well-known people, showing the perfect exactitude of all but six or seven, and out of these six or seven inexactitudes ascribing only a single one to the author's intention. Baschet and d'Ancona both carry on what Barthold had begun; other investigators, in France, Italy and Germany, have followed them; and two things are now certain, first, that Casanova himself wrote the *Memoirs* published under his name, though not textually in the precise form in which we have them; and, second, that as their veracity becomes more and more evident as they are confronted with more and more independent witnesses, it is only fair to suppose that they are equally truthful where the facts are such as could only have been known to Casanova himself.

II

For more than two-thirds of a century it has been known that Casanova spent the last fourteen years of his life at Dux, that he wrote his *Memoirs* there, and that he died there. During all this time people have been discussing the authenticity and the truthfulness of the *Memoirs*, they have been searching for information about Casanova in various directions, and yet hardly any one has ever taken the trouble, or obtained the permission, to make a careful examination in precisely the one place where information was most likely to be found. The very existence of the manuscripts at Dux was known only to a few, and to most of these only on hearsay; and thus the singular good fortune was reserved for me, on my visit to Count Waldstein in September 1899, to be the first to discover the most interesting things contained in these manuscripts. M. Octave Uzanne, though he had not himself visited Dux, had indeed procured copies of some of the manuscripts, a few of which were published by him in *Le Livre*, in 1887 and 1889. But with the death of *Le Livre* in 1889 the *Casanova inédit* came to an end, and has never, so far as I know, been continued elsewhere. Beyond the publication of these fragments, nothing has been done with the manuscripts at Dux, nor has an account of them ever been given by any one who has been allowed to examine them.

For five years, ever since I had discovered the documents in the Venetian archives, I had wanted to go to Dux; and in 1899, when I was staying with Count Lützow at Zampach, in Bohemia, I found the way kindly opened for me. Count Waldstein, the present head of the family, with extreme courtesy, put all his manuscripts at my disposal, and invited me to stay with him. Unluckily, he was called away on the morning of the day that I reached Dux. He had left everything ready for me, and I was shown over the castle by a friend of his, Dr. Kittel, whose courtesy I should like also to acknowledge. After a hurried visit to the castle we started on the long drive to Oberleutensdorf, a smaller Schloss near Komotau, where the Waldstein family was then staying. The air was sharp and bracing; the two Russian horses flew like the wind; I was whirled along in an unfamiliar darkness, through a strange country, black with coal mines, through dark pine woods, where a wild peasantry dwelt in little mining towns. Here and there, a few men and women passed us on the road, in their Sunday finery; then a long space of silence, and we were in the open country, galloping between broad fields; and always in a haze of lovely hills, which I saw more distinctly as we drove back next morning.

The return to Dux was like a triumphal entry, as we dashed through the market-place filled with people come for the Monday market, pots and pans and vegetables strewn in heaps all over the ground, on the rough paving stones, up to the great gateway of the castle, leaving but just room for us to drive through their midst. I had the sensation of an enormous building: all Bohemian castles are big, but this one was like a royal palace. Set there in the midst of the town, after the Bohemian fashion, it opens at the back upon great gardens, as if it were in the midst of the country. I walked through room after room, along corridor after corridor; everywhere there were pictures, everywhere portraits of Wallenstein, and battle-scenes in which he led on his troops. The library, which was formed, or at least arranged, by Casanova, and which remains as he left it, contains some 25,000 volumes, some of them of considerable value; one of the most famous books in Bohemian literature, Skála's *History of the Church,* exists in manuscript at Dux, and it is from this manuscript that the two published volumes of it were printed. The library forms part of the Museum, which occupies a ground-floor wing of the castle. The first room is an armoury, in which all kinds of arms are arranged, in a decorative way, covering the ceiling and the walls with strange patterns. The second room contains pottery, collected by Casanova's Waldstein on his Eastern travels. The third room is full of curious mechanical toys, and cabinets, and carvings in ivory. Finally, we come to the library, contained in the two innermost rooms. The book-shelves are painted white, and reach to the low-vaulted ceilings, which are whitewashed. At the end of a bookcase, in the corner of one of the windows, hangs a fine engraved portrait of Casanova.

After I had been all over the castle, so long Casanova's home, I was taken to Count Waldstein's study, and left there with the manuscripts. I found six huge cardboard cases, large enough to contain foolscap paper, lettered on the back: *Gräfl.. Waldstein-Wartenberg'sches Real Fideicommiss. Dux-Oberleutensdorf: Handschriftlicher Nachlass Casanova.* The cases were arranged so as to stand like books; they opened at the side; and on opening them, one after another, I found series after series of manuscripts roughly thrown together, after some pretence at arrangement, and lettered with a very generalised description of contents. The greater part of the manuscripts were in Casanova's handwriting, which I could see gradually beginning to get shaky with years. Most were written in French, a certain number in Italian. The beginning of a catalogue in the library, though said to be by him, was not in his handwriting. Perhaps it was taken down at his dictation. There were also some copies of Italian and Latin poems not written by him. Then there were many big bundles of letters addressed to him, dating over more than thirty years. Almost all the rest was in his own handwriting.

I came first upon the smaller manuscripts, among which I found, jumbled together on the same and on separate scraps of paper, washing-bills, accounts, hotel bills, lists of letters written, first drafts of letters with many erasures, notes on books, theological and mathematical notes, sums, Latin quotations, French and Italian verses, with variants, a long list of classical names which have and have not been *francisés,* with reasons for and against; 'what I must wear at Dresden'; headings without anything to follow, such as: 'Reflexions on respiration, on the true cause of youth—the crows'; a new method of winning the lottery at Rome; recipes, among which is a long printed list of perfumes sold at Spa; a newspaper cutting, dated Prague, 25th October 1790, on the thirty-seventh balloon ascent of Blanchard; thanks to some 'noble donor' for the gift of a dog called

'Finette'; a passport for *Monsieur de Casanova, Vénitien, allant d'ici en Hollande, October* 13, 1758 (*Ce Passeport bon pour quinze jours*), together with an *order* for post-horses, gratis, from Paris to Bordeaux and Bayonne.[1]

Occasionally, one gets a glimpse into his daily life at Dux, as in this note, scribbled on a fragment of paper (here and always I translate the French literally): 'I beg you to tell my servant what the biscuits are that I like to eat, dipped in wine, to fortify my stomach. I believe that they can all be found at Roman's.' Usually, however, these notes, though often suggested by something closely personal, branch off into more general considerations; or else begin with general considerations, and end with a case in point. Thus, for instance, a fragment of three pages begins: 'A compliment which is only made to gild the pill is a positive impertinence, and Monsieur Bailli is nothing but a charlatan; the monarch ought to have spit in his face, but the monarch trembled with fear.' A manuscript entitled *Essai d'Égoïsme*, dated, 'Dux, this 27th June, 1769,' contains, in the midst of various reflections, an offer to let his *appartement* in return for enough money to 'tranquillise for six months two Jew creditors at Prague.' Another manuscript is headed 'Pride and Folly,' and begins with a long series of antitheses, such as: 'All fools are not proud, and all proud men are fools. Many fools are happy, all proud men are unhappy.' On the same sheet follows this instance or application:

> Whether it is possible to compose a Latin distich of the greatest beauty without knowing either the Latin language or prosody. We must examine the possibility and the impossibility, and afterwards see who is the man who says he is the author of the dis-

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[1] See the account of this visit to Holland, and the reference to taking a passport, *Memoirs*, v. 238.

> tich, for there are extraordinary people in the world. My brother, in short, ought to have composed the distich, because he says so, and because he confided it to me tête-à-tête. I had, it is true, difficulty in believing him; but what is one to do? Either one must believe, or suppose him capable of telling a lie which could only be told by a fool; and that is impossible, for all Europe knows that my brother is not a fool.

Here, as so often in these manuscripts, we seem to see Casanova thinking on paper. He uses scraps of paper (sometimes the blank page of a letter, on the other side of which we see the address) as a kind of informal diary; and it is characteristic of him, of the man of infinitely curious mind, which this adventurer really was, that there are so few merely personal notes among these casual jottings. Often, they are purely abstract; at times, metaphysical *jeux d'esprit,* like the sheet of fourteen 'Different Wagers,' which begins:

> I wager that it is not true that a man who weighs a hundred pounds will weigh more if you kill him. I wager that if there is any difference, he will weigh less. I wager that diamond powder has not sufficient force to kill a man.

Side by side with these fanciful excursions into science, come more serious ones, as in the note on Algebra, which traces its progress since the year 1494, before which 'it had only arrived at the solution of problems of the second degree, inclusive.' A scrap of paper tells us that Casanova 'did not like regular towns.' 'I like,' he says, 'Venice, Rome, Florence, Milan, Constantinople, Genoa.' Then he becomes abstract and inquisitive again, and writes two pages, full of curious, out-of-the-way learning, on the name of Paradise:

> The name of Paradise is a name in Genesis which indicates a place of pleasure (*lieu voluptueux*): this term is Persian. This place of pleasure was made by God before he had created man.

It may be remembered that Casanova quarrelled with Voltaire, because Voltaire had told him frankly that his translation of *L'Écossaise* was a bad translation. It is piquant to read another note written in this style of righteous indignation:

> Voltaire, the hardy Voltaire, whose pen is without bit or bridle; Voltaire, who devoured the Bible, and ridiculed our dogmas, doubts, and after having made proselytes to impiety, is not ashamed, being reduced to the extremity of life, to ask for the sacraments, and to cover his body with more relics than St. Louis had at Amboise.

Here is an argument more in keeping with the tone of the *Memoirs:*

> A girl who is pretty and good, and as virtuous as you please, ought not to take it ill that a man, carried away by her charms, should set himself to the task of making their conquest. If this man cannot please her by any means, even if his passion be criminal, she ought never to take offence at it, nor treat him unkindly; she ought to be gentle, and pity him, if she does not love him, and think it enough to keep invincibly hold upon her own duty.

Occasionally he touches upon æsthetical matters, as in a fragment which begins with this liberal definition of beauty:

> Harmony makes beauty, says M. de S. P. (Bernardin de St. Pierre), but the definition is too short, if he thinks he has said everything. Here is mine. Remember that the subject is metaphysical. An object really beautiful ought to seem beautiful to all whose eyes fall upon it. That is all; there is nothing more to be said.

At times we have an anecdote and its commentary, perhaps jotted down for use in that latter part of the *Memoirs* which was never written, or which has been lost. Here is a single sheet, dated 'this 2nd September, 1791,' and headed *Souvenir:*

> The Prince de Rosenberg said to me, as we went down stairs, that Madame de Rosenberg was dead, and asked me if the Comte de Waldstein had in the library the illustration of the Villa d'Altichiero, which the Emperor had asked for in vain at the city library of Prague, and when I answered 'yes,' he gave an equivocal laugh. A moment afterwards, he asked me if he might tell the Emperor. 'Why not, monseigneur? It is not a secret.' 'Is His Majesty coming to Dux?' 'If he goes to Oberlaitensdorf (*sic*) he will go to Dux, too; and he may ask you for it, for there is a monument there which relates to him when he was Grand Duke.' 'In that case,

His Majesty can also see my critical remarks on the Egyptian prints.'

The Emperor asked me this morning, 6th October, how I employed my time at Dux, and I told him that I was making an Italian anthology. 'You have all the Italians, then?' 'All, sire.' See what a lie leads to. If I had not lied in saying that I was making an anthology, I should not have found myself obliged to lie again in saying that we have all the Italian poets. If the Emperor comes to Dux, I shall kill myself.

'They say that this Dux is a delightful spot,' says Casanova in one of the most personal of his notes, 'and I see that it might be for many; but not for me, for what delights me in my old age is independent of the place which I inhabit. When I do not sleep I dream, and when I am tired of dreaming I blacken paper, then I read, and most often reject all that my pen has vomited.' Here we see him blackening paper, on every occasion, and for every purpose. In one bundle I found an unfinished story about Roland, and some adventure with women in a cave; then a 'Meditation on arising from sleep, 19th May 1789'; then a 'Short Reflection of a Philosopher who finds himself thinking of procuring his own death. At Dux, on getting out of bed on 13th October 1793, day dedicated to St. Lucy, memorable in my too long life.' A big budget, containing cryptograms, is headed 'Grammatical Lottery'; and there is the title-page of a treatise on *The Duplication of the Hexahedron, demonstrated geometrically to all the Universities and all the Academies of Europe.*[1] There are innumerable verses, French and Italian, in all stages, occasionally attaining the finality of these lines, which appear in half a dozen tentative forms:

Sans mystère point de plaisirs,
Sans silence point de mystère.
Charme divin de mes loisirs,
Solitude! que tu m'es chère!

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[1] See Charles Henry, *Les Connaissances Mathématiques de Casanova.* Rome, 1883.

Then there are a number of more or less complete manuscripts of some extent. There is the manuscript of the translation of Homer's *Iliad, in ottava rima* (published in Venice, 1775-8); of the *Histoire de Venise,* of the *Icosameron,* a curious book published in 1787, purporting to be 'translated from English,' but really an original work of Casanova; *Philocalies sur les Sottises des Mortels,* a long manuscript never published; the sketch and beginning of *Le Polémarque, ou la Calomnie démasquée par la présence d'esprit. Tragicomédie en trois actes, composée à Dux dans le mois de Juin de l'Année,* 1791, which recurs again under the form of the *Polémoscopé: La Lorgnette menteuse ou la Calomnie démasquée,* acted before the Princess de Ligne, at her château at Teplitz, 1791. There is a treatise in Italian, *Delle Passioni;* there are long dialogues, such as *Le Philosophe et le Théologien,* and *Rêve: Dieu-Moi;* there is the *Songe d'un Quart d'Heure,* divided into minutes; there is the very lengthy criticism of *Bernardin de Saint-Pierre;* there is the *Confutation d'une Censure indiscrète qu'on lit dans la Gazette de Iéna,* 19 *Juin* 1789; with another large manuscript, unfortunately imperfect, first called *L'Insulte,* and then *Placet au Public,* dated 'Dux, this 2nd March, 1790,' referring to the same criticism on the *Icosameron* and the *Fuite des Prisons. L'Histoire de ma Fuite des Prisons de la République de Venise, qu'on appelle les Plombs,* which is the first draft of the most famous part of the *Memoirs,* was published at Leipzig in 1788; and, having read it in the Marcian Library at Venice, I am not surprised to learn from this indignant document that it was printed 'under the care of a young Swiss, who had the talent to commit a hundred faults of orthography.'

III

We come now to the documents directly relating to the *Memoirs*, and among these are several attempts at a preface, in which we see the actual preface coming gradually into form. One is entitled *Casanova au Lecteur*, another *Histoire de mon Existence*, and a third *Preface*. There is also a brief and characteristic *Précis de ma vie*, dated November 17, 1797. Some of these have been printed in *Le Livre*, 1887. But by far the most important manuscript that I discovered, one which, apparently, I am the first to discover, is a manuscript entitled *Extrait du Chapitre 4 et 5*. It is written on paper similar to that on which the *Memoirs* are written; the pages are numbered 104-148; and though it is described as *Extrait*, it seems to contain, at all events, the greater part of the missing chapters to which I have already referred, Chapters IV. and V. of the last volume of the *Memoirs*. In this manuscript we find Armelline and Scolastica, whose story is interrupted by the abrupt ending of Chapter III.; we find Mariuccia of Vol. VII., Chapter IX., who married a hairdresser; and we find also Jaconine, whom Casanova recognises as his daughter, 'much prettier than Sophia, the daughter of Thérèse Pompeati, whom I had left at London.'[1] It is curious that this very important manuscript, which supplies the one missing link in the *Memoirs*, should never have been discovered by any of the few people who have had the opportunity of looking over the Dux manuscripts. I am inclined to explain it by the fact that the case in which I found this manuscript contains some papers not relating to Casanova. Probably, those who looked into this case looked no further. I have told Herr Brockhaus of my discovery, and I hope to see Chapters IV. and V. in their places when the long-looked-for edition of the complete text is at length given to the world.

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[1] See *memoirs*, ix. 272, *et seq.*

Another manuscript which I found tells with great piquancy the whole story of the Abbé de Brosses' ointment, the curing of the Princess de Conti's pimples, and the birth of the Duc de Montpensier, which is told very briefly, and with much less point, in the *Memoirs* (vol. iii., p. 327). Readers of the *Memoirs* will remember the duel at Warsaw with Count Branicki in 1766 (vol. x., pp. 274-320), an affair which attracted a good deal of attention at the time, and of which there is an account in a letter from the Abbé Taruffi to the dramatist, Francesco Albergati, dated Warsaw, March 19, 1766, quoted in Ernesto Masi's *Life of Albergati,* Bologna, 1878. A manuscript at Dux in Casanova's handwriting gives an account of this duel in the third person; it is entitled, *Description de l'affaire arrivée à Varsovie le 5 Mars, 1766.* D'Ancona, in the *Nuova Antologia* (vol. lxvii., p. 412), referring to the Abbé Taruffi's account, mentions what he considers to be a slight discrepancy: that Taruffi refers to the *danseuse,* about whom the duel was fought, as La Casacci, while Casanova refers to her as La Catai. In this manuscript Casanova always refers to her as La Casacci; La Catai is evidently one of M. Laforgue's arbitrary alterations of the text.

In turning over another manuscript, I was caught by the name Charpillon, which every reader of the *Memoirs* will remember as the name of the harpy by whom Casanova suffered so much in London, in 1763-4. This manuscript begins by saying: 'I have been in London for six months and have been to see them (that is, the mother and daughter) in their own house,' where he finds nothing but 'swindlers, who cause all who go there to lose their money in gambling.' This manuscript adds some details to the story told in the ninth and tenth volumes of the *Memoirs,* and refers to the meeting with the Charpillons four and a half years before, described in Volume V., pages 428-485. It is written in a tone of great indignation. Elsewhere, I found a letter written by Casanova, but not signed, referring to an anonymous letter which he had received in reference to the Charpillons, and ending: 'My handwriting is known.' It was not until the last that I came upon great bundles of letters addressed to Casanova, and so carefully preserved that little scraps of paper, on which postscripts are written, are still in their places. One still sees the seals on the backs of many of the letters, on paper which has slightly yellowed with age, leaving the ink, however, almost always fresh. They come from Venice, Paris, Rome, Prague, Bayreuth, The Hague, Genoa, Fiume, Trieste, etc., and are addressed to as many places, often *poste restante.* Many are letters from women, some in beautiful handwriting, on thick paper; others on scraps of paper, in painful hands, ill-spelt. A Countess writes pitifully, imploring help; one protests her love, in spite of the 'many chagrins' he has caused her; another asks 'how they are to live together'; another laments that a report has gone about that she is secretly living with him, which may harm *his* reputation. Some are in French, more in Italian. *Mon cher Giacometto,* writes one woman, in French; *Carissimo e Amatissimo,* writes another, in Italian. These letters from women are in some confusion, and are in need of a good deal of sorting over and rearranging before their full extent can be realised. Thus I found letters in the same handwriting separated by letters in other handwritings; many are unsigned, or signed only by a single initial; many are undated, or dated only with the day of the week or month. There are a great many letters, dating from 1779 to 1786, signed 'Francesca Buschini,' a name which I cannot identify; they are written in Italian, and one of them begins: *Unico Mio vero Amico* ('my only true friend'). Others are signed 'Virginia B.'; one of these is dated, 'Forli, October 15, 1773.' There is also a 'Theresa B.,' who writes from Genoa. I was at first unable to identify the writer of a whole series of letters in French, very affectionate and intimate letters, usually unsigned, occasionally signed 'B.' She calls herself *votre petite amie;* or she ends with a half-smiling, half-reproachful 'good-night, and sleep better than I.' In one letter, sent from Paris in 1759, she writes: 'Never believe me, but when I tell you that I love you, and that I shall love you always.' In another letter, ill-spelt, as her letters often are, she writes: 'Be assured that evil tongues, vapours, calumny, nothing can change my heart, which is yours entirely, and has no will to change its master.' Now, it seems to me that these letters must be from Manon Baletti, and that they are the letters referred to in the sixth volume of the *Memoirs*. We read there (page 60) how on Christmas Day, 1759, Casanova receives a letter from Manon in Paris, announcing her marriage with 'M. Blondel, architect to the King, and member of his Academy'; she returns him his letters, and begs him to return hers, or burn them. Instead of doing so he allows Esther to read them, intending to burn them afterwards. Esther begs to be allowed to keep the letters, promising to 'preserve them religiously all her life.' 'These letters,' he says, 'numbered more than two hundred, and the shortest were of four pages.' Certainly there are not two hundred of them at Dux, but it seems to me highly probable that Casanova made a final selection from Manon's letters, and that it is these which I have found.

But, however this may be, I was fortunate enough to find the set of letters which I was most anxious to find: the letters from Henriette, whose loss every writer on Casanova has lamented. Henriette, it will be remembered, makes her first appearance at Cesena, in the year 1748; after their meeting at Geneva, she reappears, romantically *à propos,* twenty-two years later, at Aix in Provence; and she writes to Casanova proposing *un commerce épistolaire,* asking him what he has done since his escape from prison, and promising to do her best to tell him all that has happened to her during the long interval. After quoting her letter, he adds: 'I replied to her, accepting the correspondence that she offered me, and telling her briefly all my vicissitudes. She related to me in turn, in some forty letters, all the history of her life. If she dies before me, I shall add these letters to these *Memoirs;* but to-day she is still alive, and always happy, though now old.' It has never been known what became of these letters, and why they were not added to the *Memoirs.* I have found a great quantity of them, some signed with her married name in full, 'Henriette de Schnetzmann,' and I am inclined to think that she survived Casanova, for one of the letters is dated Bayreuth, 1798, the year of Casanova's death. They are remarkably charming, written with a mixture of piquancy and distinction; and I will quote the characteristic beginning and end of the last letter I was able to find. It begins: 'No, it is impossible to be sulky with you!' and ends: 'If I become vicious, it is you, my Mentor, who make me so, and I cast my sins upon you. Even if I were damned I should still be your most devoted friend, Henriette de Schnetzmann.' Casanova was twenty-three when he met Henriette; now, herself an old woman, she writes to him when he is seventy-three, as if the fifty years that had passed were blotted out in the faithful affection of her memory. How many more discreet and less changing lovers have had the quality of constancy in change, to which this life-long correspondence bears witness? Does it not suggest a view of Casanova not quite the view of all the world? To me it shows the real man, who perhaps of all others best understood what Shelley meant when he said:

> True love in this differs from gold or clay,
> That to divide is not to take away.

But, though the letters from women naturally interested me the most, they were only a certain proportion of the great mass of correspondence which I turned over. There were letters from Carlo Angiolini, who was afterwards to bring the manuscript of the *Memoirs* to Brockhaus; from Balbi, the monk with whom Casanova escaped from the *Piombi;* from the Marquis Albergati, playwright, actor, and eccentric, of whom there is some account in the *Memoirs;* from the Marquis Mosca, 'a distinguished man of letters whom I was anxious to see,' Casanova tells us in the same volume in which he describes his visit to the Moscas at Pesaro; from Zulian, brother of the Duchess of Fiano; from Richard Lorrain, *bel homme, ayant de l'esprit, le ton et le goût de la bonne société,* who came to settle at Gorizia in 1773, while Casanova was there; from the Procurator Morosini, whom he speaks of in the *Memoirs* as his 'protector,' and as one of those through whom he obtained permission to return to Venice. His other 'protector,' the *avogador* Zaguri, had, says Casanova, 'since the affair of the Marquis Albergati, carried on a most interesting correspondence with me'; and in fact I found a bundle of no less than a hundred and thirty-eight letters from him, dating from 1784 to 1798. Another bundle contains one hundred and seventy-two letters from Count Lamberg. In the *Memoirs* Casanova says, referring to his visit to Augsburg at the end of 1761:

> I used to spend my evenings in a very agreeable manner at the house of Count Max de Lamberg, who resided at the court of the Prince-Bishop with the title of Grand Marshal. What particularly attached me to Count Lamberg was his literary talent. A first-rate scholar, learned to a degree, he has published several much esteemed works. I carried on an exchange of letters with him which ended only with his death four years ago in 1792.

Casanova tells us that, at his second visit to Augsburg in the early part of 1767, he 'supped with Count Lamberg two or three times a week,' during the four months he was there. It is with this year that the letters I have found begin: they end with the year of his death, 1792. In his *Mémorial d'un Mondain* Lamberg refers to Casanova as 'a man known in literature, a man of profound knowledge.' In the first edition of 1774, he laments that 'a man such as M. de S. Galt' should not yet have been taken back into favour by the Venetian government, and in the second edition, 1775, rejoices over Casanova's return to Venice. Then there are letters from Da Ponte, who tells the story of Casanova's curious relations with Mme. d'Urfé, in his *Memorie scritte da esso,* 1829; from Pittoni, Bono, and others mentioned in different parts of the *Memoirs,* and from some dozen others who are not mentioned in them. The only letters in the whole collection that have been published are those from the Prince de Ligne and from Count Koenig.

IV

Casanova tells us in his *Memoirs* that, during his later years at Dux, he had only been able to 'hinder black melancholy from devouring his poor existence, or sending him out of his mind,' by writing ten or twelve hours a day. The copious manuscripts at Dux show us how persistently he was at work on a singular variety of subjects, in addition to the *Memoirs*, and to the various books which he published during those years. We see him jotting down everything that comes into his head, for his own amusement, and certainly without any thought of publication; engaging in learned controversies, writing treatises on abstruse mathematical problems, composing comedies to be acted before Count Waldstein's neighbours, practising verse-writing in two languages, indeed with more patience than success, writing philosophical dialogues in which God and himself are the speakers, and keeping up an extensive correspondence, both with distinguished men and with delightful women. His mental activity, up to the age of seventy-three, is as prodigious as the activity which he had expended in living a multiform and incalculable life. As in life everything living had interested him, so in his retirement from life every idea makes its separate appeal to him; and he welcomes ideas with the same impartiality with which he had welcomed adventures. Passion has intellectualised itself, and remains not less passionate. He wishes to do everything, to compete with every one; and it is only after having spent seven years in heaping up miscellaneous learning, and exercising his faculties in many directions, that he turns to look back over his own past life, and to live it over again in memory, as he writes down the narrative of what had interested him most in it. 'I write in the hope that my history will never see the broad daylight of publication,' he tells us, scarcely meaning it, we may be sure, even in the moment of hesitancy which may naturally come to him. But if ever a book was written for the pleasure of writing it, it was this one; and an autobiography written for oneself is not likely to be anything but frank.

'Truth is the only God I have ever adored,' he tells us: and we now know how truthful he was in saying so. I have only summarised in this article the most important confirmations of his exact accuracy in facts and dates; the number could be extended indefinitely. In the manuscripts we find innumerable further confirmations; and their chief value as testimony is that they tell us nothing which we should not have already known, if we had merely taken Casanova at his word. But it is not always easy to take people at their own word, when they are writing about themselves; and the world has been very loth to believe in Casanova as he represents himself. It has been specially loth to believe that he is telling the truth when he tells us about his adventures with women. But the letters contained among these manuscripts shows us the women of Casanova writing to him with all the fervour and all the fidelity which he attributes to them; and they show him to us in the character of as fervid and faithful a lover. In every fact, every detail, and in the whole mental impression which they convey, these manuscripts bring before us the Casanova of the *Memoirs*. As I seemed to come upon Casanova at home, it was as if I came upon old friend, already perfectly known to me, before I had made my pilgrimage to Dux.

1902.

1894

The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova| written by himself now for| the first time completely and| literally translated [by Arthur Machen] into English| in twelve volumes| privately printed [H. S. Nichols, 3 Soho Square, London.]| MDCCCXCIV|
12 volumes, post 8vo.

This is the editio princeps *in the English language, of which 1050 sets were printed on antique paper, with deckled edges.*

The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova . . . London, MDCCCXCIV. 12 volumes, demy 8vo.

The same text and type as the above-described, of which 50 sets were printed on Van Gelder's *handmade paper, demy 8 vo. size.*

The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova . . . London, MDCCCXCIV. 12 volumes, demy 8vo.

The same text and type as the above-described, of which 5 sets were printed on Japanese Vellum, *demy 8vo. size.*

1920

The Memoires of Jacques Casanova| written by himself now for| the first time completely and| literally translated [by Arthur Machen] into English| in twelve volumes| privately printed for| the Society of Bibliopoles| MCMXX|

12 volumes, 8vo.

This is an American reprint of the English editio princeps *of 1894. It was an edition limited to 1000 numbered sets.*

1922

The Memoirs| of Giacomo| Casanova| di Seingalt| translated into| English by| Arthur Machen| pen flourish| privately printed| for subscribers only.| The Casanova Socy.| London 1922|

12 volumes, square demy 8vo.

This is an English reprint of the English editio princeps *of 1894. It contains a Preface by the translator, Arthur Machen, which is divided into sixteen sections; it also contains the two additional chapters of the twelfth volume discovered by Arthur Symons, and an index. It has a reproduction of a fictitious old portrait of Casanova as frontispiece in the first volume. The edition was limited to 1000 numbered sets.*

The Memoirs of| Jacques Casanova| de Seingalt,| Prince of Adventurers| and the most indomitable of Lovers.| A new edition with introduction,| notes and appendices,| with two portraits and ten photogravures| from original drawings by| Antoine Gaymard.| London: MCMXXII.| Privately printed for the Navarre Society, Limited.| 2 volumes, 8vo.

Another and different English translation, condensed and abridged.

1925

The Memoirs of| Jacques Casanova| de Seingalt| complete in twelve volumes as translated into| English by Arthur Machen with an introduc-| tion by Arthur Symons a new preface by the| translator and twelve drawings [reproductions] by Rockwell Kent| Privately printed for subscribers only| Aventuros| 1925| 12 volumes, square demy 8vo.

This is another American reprint of the English editio princeps *of 1894, and of The Casanova Society's [London] edition of 1922. It also was an edition limited to 1000 numbered sets.*

COMMENTARIES, ESSAYS AND CRITICISMS

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THE MEMOIRS OF
Jacques Casanova de Seingalt, Venetian,
written by himself at
Dux in Bohemia
*History of my life to the year 1797.**

PREFACE

> *Nequicquam sapit qui sibi non sapit. Cic. ad Treb.*
>
> ("He knows nothing who does not draw profit from what he knows.")[1]

I BEGIN by declaring to my reader that, by everything good or bad that I have done throughout my life, I am sure that I have earned merit or incurred guilt, and that hence I must consider myself a free agent. The doctrine of the Stoics,[2] and of any other sect, on the power of Destiny is a figment of the imagination which smacks of atheism. I am not only a monotheist but a Christian whose faith is strengthened by philosophy, which has never injured anything.

I believe in the existence of an immaterial God, creator and lord of all forms; and what proves to me that I have never doubted it is that I have always counted upon his providence, turning to him through prayer in all my tribulations and always finding my prayer granted. Despair kills; prayer dissipates it; and after praying man trusts and acts. What means the Being of Beings employs to avert the evils which hang over those who implore his aid is a question above the power of human intelligence, which, even as it contemplates the incomprehensibility of Divine Providence, cannot but adore it. Our ignorance becomes our only resource; and the truly happy are they who cherish it. So we must pray to God and believe that we have obtained grace even when appearances tell us that we have not. As for the bodily position we should assume when we address our requests to the Creator, a line of Petrarch's[3] instructs us:

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* Casanova was prevented by death from fulfilling this promise. His memoirs end with the summer of 1774.

Con le ginocchia della mente inchine.

("With the knees of the mind bent.")[4]

Man is a free agent; but he is not free if he does not believe it, for the more power he attributes to Destiny, the more he deprives himself of the power which God granted him when he gave him *reason.*

Reason is a particle of the Creator's divinity. If we use it to make ourselves humble and just, we cannot but please him who gave it to us. God does not cease to be God except for those who consider his nonexistence possible. They cannot suffer a greater punishment.

Though man is free, he must not believe that he is free to do whatever he pleases. He becomes a slave as soon as he decides to act when he is moved by some passion. *Nisi paret imperat* ("Unless it obeys, it commands").[5] He who has the strength to defer acting until he is calm again is the wise man. Such a being is rare.

The reader who likes to think will see in these memoirs that, since I never aimed at a set goal, the only system I followed, if system it may be called, was to let myself go wherever the wind which was blowing drove me. What vicissitudes in this independence from method and system! My ill fortune no less than my good proved to me that both in this physical world and in the moral world good comes from evil as evil comes from good. My errors will show thoughtful readers these opposite roads or will teach them the great art of straddling the ditch. The one thing necessary is courage, for strength without confidence is useless. I have often seen good fortune fall in my lap as the result of some incautious step which should have cast me into the abyss; and, though I blamed myself, I thanked God. On the other hand, I have also seen an overwhelming misfortune follow upon a course of conduct duly weighed by prudence; I was humiliated; but, sure that I had been right, I soon consoled myself.

Despite an excellent moral foundation, the inevitable fruit of the divine principles which were rooted in my heart, I was all my life the victim of my senses; I have delighted in going astray and I have constantly lived in error, with no other consolation than that of knowing I had erred. For this reason I hope, dear reader, that, far from finding my history mere impudent boasting, you will find that it has the tone suited to a general confession, though in the style of my narratives you will find neither a show of repentance nor the constraint of one who blushes to confess his escapades. My follies are the follies of youth. You will see that I laugh at them, and if you are kind you will laugh at them with me.

You will laugh when you discover that I often had no scruples about deceiving nitwits and scoundrels and fools when I found it necessary. As for women, this sort of reciprocal deceit cancels itself out, for when love enters in, both parties are usually dupes. But fools are a very different matter. I always congratulate myself when I remember catching them in my snares, for they are insolent and presumptuous to the point of challenging intelligence. We avenge intelligence when we deceive a fool, and the victory is worth the effort, for a fool is encased in armor and we do not know where to attack him. In short, deceiving a fool is an exploit worthy of an intelligent man. What has infused my very blood with an unconquerable hatred of the whole tribe of fools from the day of my birth is that I become a fool myself whenever I am in their company. They are, however, to be distinguished from the class of men whom we term stupid, for since the stupidity of the latter is due only to their lack of education, I rather like them. I have found some of them who were very decent and whose stupidity was almost a kind of wit. They are like eyes which, but for a cataract, would be extremely beautiful.

If you, my dear reader, will consider the nature of this preface, you will find it easy to see my purpose in it. I have written it because I want you to know me before you read me. It is only at coffeehouses and inns that we converse with strangers.

I have written my story, and no one can object to that. But am I wise to give it to a public of which I know nothing but what is to its discredit? No! I know that I am being unwise. But I need something to occupy me, something to make me laugh; so why should I deny myself?

> *Expulit elleboro morbum, bilemque meraco.*
>
> ("He drove out the disease and the bile with
> pure hellebore.")[6]

An ancient author tells me, in lecture-hall tones: "If thou hast not done things worthy to be written, at least write things worthy to be read."[7] It is a precept as brilliant as a diamond of the first water cut in England,[8] but it does not apply to me, for I am writing neither the biography of a famous man nor a romance. Worthy or unworthy, my life is my subject, my subject is my life. Having lived it without ever thinking that I should take a fancy to write it, it may have an interest which it might not have if I had lived it intending to write it in my old age and, what is more, to publish it.

In this year 1797, at the age of seventy-two, when, though I am still breathing, I can say *vixi* ("I have lived"), I can find no pleasanter pastime than to converse with myself about my own affairs and to provide a most worthy subject for laughter to my well-bred audience, for such is the society which has always shown its friendship for me and which I have always frequented.

To write well, I have but to imagine that my readers will belong to it: *Quaecumque dixi, si placuerint, dictavit auditor* ("If what I have said has been pleasing, it is the reader who will have dictated it").[9] As for the uninitiated whom I cannot prevent from reading me, it will be enough for me to know that it was not for them that I wrote.

Remembering the pleasures I enjoyed, I renew them, and I laugh at the pains which I have endured and which I no longer feel. A member of the universe, I speak to the air and I imagine I am rendering an account of my stewardship as the majordomo does to his master, before vanishing. So far as my future is concerned, as a philosopher I have never thought it worth worrying over since I know nothing about it, and as a Christian, I know that faith must believe without arguing and that the purest faith keeps the deepest silence. I know that I have existed, and since I am sure of that because I have felt, I also know that I shall no longer exist when I have ceased to feel. If by any chance I continue to feel after my death, I shall have no more doubts; but I will give the lie to anyone who comes to tell me that I am dead.

Since my history should begin with the earliest fact which my memory can recall to me, it will begin when I had reached the age of eight years and four months. Before then, if it is true that *vivere cogitare est* ("to live is to think"),[10] I did not live, I vegetated. Since human thought consists only in comparisons drawn in order to examine relationships, it cannot precede the existence of memory. The organ of memory did not develop in my head until eight years and four months after my birth; it was only then that my soul began to be capable of receiving impressions. How an immaterial substance which can *nec tangere nec tangi* ("neither touch nor be touched")[11] can receive impressions no man on earth can explain.

A consoling philosophy maintains, in harmony with religion, that the dependence of the soul upon the senses and organs is only fortuitous and temporary and that the soul will be free and happy when the death of the body liberates it from their tyranny. This is all very fine but, religion apart, it is not certain. So, since I cannot be perfectly sure that I am immortal until after I have ceased to live, I may be forgiven if I am in no hurry to learn this truth. A knowledge purchased at the price of life is bought too dearly. Meanwhile, I worship God, I refrain from committing any injustice and shun those who are unjust, though I do nothing to harm them. I am content to abstain from doing them good. Snakes are not to be cherished.

I must also say something about my temperament and my character. Here the most indulgent among my readers will not be those who are least endowed with honesty and intelligence.

I have been of all the four temperaments: the phlegmatic in my childhood, the sanguine in my youth, then the bilious, and finally the melancholic, which would seem to be with me to remain. By adapting my diet to my constitution, I have always enjoyed good health, and having once learned that what impairs it is always excess, either in eating or in abstaining, I have never had any physician but myself. But I have found that abstinence is the more dangerous by far. Too much brings on indigestion, *too little* kills. At my present advanced age I find that, despite an excellent stomach, I should eat but once a day, but what makes up to me for this privation is sweet sleep and the ease with which I set down my thoughts on paper without any need to indulge in paradoxes or to weave a tissue of sophisms more apt to deceive me than my readers, for I could never bring myself to give them counterfeit coin if I knew it was counterfeit.

The sanguine temperament made me extremely susceptible to the seduction of any pleasurable sensation, always cheerful, eager to pass from one enjoyment to another and ingenious in inventing them. From it came my inclination to make new acquaintances as well as my readiness to break them off, though always for some good reason and never from mere fickleness. Defects arising from a temperament cannot be corrected, because our temperament is independent of our powers; but character is another matter. It is constituted by heart and mind and, since temperament has very little influence here, it follows that character depends on upbringing and that it can be altered and reformed.

I leave it to others to decide if my character is good or bad, but such as it is, anyone versed in physiognomy can easily read it in my face. It is only there that a man's character becomes visible, for the physiognomy is its seat. It is worth noting that men who have no physiognomy, and there are a great many such, are equally lacking in what is called a character. Hence the diversity of physiognomies will be equal to the diversity of characters.

Having observed that I have all my life acted more from the force of feeling than from my reflections, I have concluded that my conduct has depended more on my character than on my mind, after a long struggle between them in which I have alternately found myself with too little intelligence for my character and too little character for my intelligence. But enough of this, for it is a matter on which *si brevis esse volo obscurus fio* ("when I try to be brief, I become obscure").[12] I believe that, without offending against modesty, I can apply to myself these words from my beloved Vergil:

> *Nec sum adeo informis: nuper me in litore vidi*
> *Cum placidum ventis staret mare.*[13]
>
> ("I am not such a monster; lately I saw my reflection
> by the shore when the sea was calm.")

Cultivating whatever gave pleasure to my senses was always the chief business of my life; I have never found any occupation more important. Feeling that I was born for the sex opposite to mine, I have always loved it and done all that I could to make myself loved by it. I have also been extravagantly fond of good food and irresistibly drawn by anything which could excite curiosity.

I had friends who did me good turns, and I was so fortunate on all such occasions as to have it in my power to show them my gratitude; and I had execrable enemies who persecuted me and whom I did not destroy only because I could not. I would never have forgiven them if I had not forgotten the wrongs they did me. The man who forgets a wrong has not forgiven it, he has simply forgotten it; for forgiveness comes from a heroic sentiment in a noble heart and a magnanimous mind, whereas forgetting comes from weakness of memory or from an easy apathy natural to a pacific soul, and often from a need for peace and quiet; for hatred, in the end, kills the unfortunate man who fosters it.

If anyone calls me a sensualist he will be wrong, for the power of my senses never drew me from my duty when I had one. For the same reason Homer should never have been taxed with drunkenness: *Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus* ("Homer's praise of wine convicts him of having been given to wine").[14]

I have always liked highly seasoned dishes: macaroni prepared by a good Neapolitan cook, *olla podrida,*[15] good sticky salt cod from Newfoundland, high game on the very edge, and cheeses whose perfection is reached when the little creatures which inhabit them become visible. As for women, I have always found that the one I was in love with smelled good, and the more copious her sweat the sweeter I found it.

What a depraved taste! How disgraceful to admit it and not blush for it! This sort of criticism makes me laugh. It is precisely by virtue of my coarse tastes, I have the temerity to believe, that I am happier than other men, since I am convinced that my tastes make me capable of more pleasure. Happy they who know how to obtain pleasure without harming anyone; they are madmen who imagine that the Great Being can enjoy the griefs, the sufferings, the abstinences which they offer him in sacrifice, and that he loves none but fanatics who inflict them on themselves. God can demand of his creatures only that they practice the virtues whose seed he has sown in their souls, and he has given us nothing which is not meant to make us happy: self-esteem, desire for praise, emulation, vigor, courage, and a power which no tyranny can take from us: the power to kill ourselves if, after calculating, be it rightly or wrongly, we are unfortunate enough to find it our best recourse. It is the strongest proof of that moral freedom in us which sophism has so often argued against. Yet nature rightly holds it in abhorrence; and all religions cannot but forbid it.

A would-be freethinker told me one day that I could not call myself a philosopher and at the same time accept revelation.

If we do not doubt it in the physical world, why should we not accept it in religion? It is only a question of the form which it takes. Spirit speaks to spirit, not to the ears. The principles of all that we know must have been revealed to those who handed them down to us by the great and supreme principle which contains all principles. The bee making its hive, the swallow building its nest, the ant digging its hole, the spider weaving its web would never have done anything without a previous eternal revelation. We must either believe that this is so, or admit that matter thinks. Why not, Locke[16] would say, if God so willed? But we dare not do such honor to matter. So let us hold to revelation.

The great philosopher who, after studying nature, thought he could cry "Victory!" when he concluded that nature was God, died too soon. If he had lived a few more years he would have gone much further and his journey would not have been a long one. Finding himself in his author, he could no longer have denied him: *in eo movemur, et sumus* ("in him we move and have our being").[17] He would have found him inconceivable; and it would not have troubled him. Could God, the great principle of principles, and who never had a principle—could even he conceive himself if to conceive himself he had to know his own principle? O happy ignorance! Spinoza, the virtuous Spinoza, died without having attained to it. He would have died a wise man, with the right to expect the reward of his virtues, if he had supposed that his soul was immortal.

It is not true that an expectation of reward is unworthy of true virtue and impairs its purity, for, on the contrary, it helps to sustain virtue, since man is too weak to wish to be virtuous only for his own satisfaction. I believe that Amphiaraus,[18] who *vir bonus esse quam videri malebat* ("chose to be good rather than to seem good"),[19] is sheer fable. In short, I believe that there is not an honest man in the world without some sort of expectation. And now I will set forth mine.

I expect the friendship, the esteem, and the gratitude of my readers. Their gratitude, if reading my memoirs will have given them instruction and pleasure. Their esteem if, doing me justice, they will have found that I have more virtues than faults; and their friendship as soon as they come to find me deserving of it by the frankness and good faith with which I submit myself to their judgment without in any way disguising what I am.

They will find that I have always loved truth so passionately that I have often resorted to lying as a way of first introducing it into minds which were ignorant of its charms. They will not condemn me when they see me emptying my friends' purses to satisfy my whims. They were possessed by chimerical projects, and by making them hope for their success I at the same time hoped to cure them of their folly by opening their eyes. I deceived them to make them wise; and I did not consider myself guilty, because what I did was not prompted by avarice. I was simply paying for my pleasures with money allotted to acquiring possessions which nature makes it impossible to obtain. I should consider myself guilty if I were a rich man today. I have nothing; whatever I had, I have squandered; and this consoles and justifies me. It was money which was to be spent on follies; I merely changed its application by making it pay for mine.

If I am deceived in my hope of pleasing, I admit that I should be sorry, but not sorry enough to make me repent of having written, for nothing can change the fact that I have found it a pastime. The cruelty of boredom! It can only be because they had forgotten it that the inventors of the pains of hell did not include it among them.

Yet I will confess that I cannot rid myself of the fear of being hissed. It is too natural a fear for me to dare boast that I am above it; and I am far from consoling myself by hoping that when my memoirs are published I shall be no more. It horrifies me even to imagine myself contracting the slightest obligation to death, which I loathe. Happy or unhappy, life is the only treasure which man possesses, and they who do not love it do not deserve it. Honor is set above it only because dishonor blasts it. If a man faced with this choice kills himself, philosophy can have nothing to say. O death! cruel law of nature which reason cannot but condemn, for it operates only to destroy reason. Cicero[20] says that it frees us from our ills. That great philosopher records the expenditure, but does not include the receipts in his accounting. I do not remember if, when he wrote his Tusculans, his Tulliola was dead. Death is a monster which drives an attentive spectator from the great theater before the play in which he is infinitely interested is over. This alone is reason enough to hate it.

In these memoirs the reader will not find all my adventures. I have left out those which would have offended the people who played a part in them, for they would cut a sorry figure in them. Even so, there are those who will sometimes think me only too indiscreet; I am sorry for it. If I become wise before I die, and if I have time, I will burn my whole manuscript. At the moment I have not the strength of mind for that.

Those who think that I lay on too much color when I describe certain amorous adventures in detail will be wrong, unless, that is, they consider me a bad painter altogether. I beg them to forgive me if, in my old age, my soul is reduced to feeling no joys but those of memory. Virtue will skip all the pictures which may affright it; and I am glad to give it this warning in my preface. So much the worse for those who do not read it. The preface stands to the work as the bill does to the play. It is to be read. I have not written these memoirs for those young people who can only save themselves from falling by spending their youth in ignorance, but for those whom experience of life has rendered proof against being seduced, whom living in the fire has transformed into salamanders. Since true virtues are only habits, I can say that the truly virtuous are those happy people who practice them without any effort. Such people have no notion of intolerance. It is for them that I have written. I have written in French instead of in Italian because the French language is more widely known than mine. The purists who, finding turns of expression proper to my native country in my style, will criticize me on that score will be right if they are prevented from understanding me. The Greeks relished Theophrastus[21] despite his Eresian expressions, as the Romans did their Livy[22] despite his "Patavinity." If I succeed in interesting, I hope I may benefit by the same indulgence. All Italy relishes Algarotti[23] although his style is full of Gallicisms.

Yet it is worth observing that among all the living languages in the republic of letters,[24] French is the only one which its presiding judges[25] have sentenced not to enrich itself at the expense of the other languages, whereas these, though all richer than French, pillaged it not only of its words but also of its mannerisms as soon as they realized that these little thefts beautified them. Yet those who subjected it to this law at the same time admitted its poverty. They said that since it had reached the point of possessing all the beauties of which it was capable, the slightest foreign admixture would disfigure it. This judgment may have been handed down by prejudice. In Lully's[26] day the whole nation thought the same of its music, until Rameau[27] came to teach it better. Today, under the Republican government, eloquent orators and learned writers have already convinced all Europe that they will raise French to a pitch of beauty and power which the world has not yet seen in any other language. In the short space of five years it has already acquired some hundred words which are amazing either for their sweetness or their majesty or their noble harmony. Is it possible, for example, to invent anything more beautiful in the realm of language than *ambulance, Franciade,*[28] *monarchien, sansculottisme?* Long live the Republic! A body without a head cannot possibly commit follies.

The motto which I have flaunted justifies my digressions and the commentaries in which I indulge, perhaps too often, on my exploits of various kinds: *nequicquam sapit qui sibi non sapit.*[29] For the same reason I always felt a need to hear myself praised in good company:

Excitat auditor studium, laudataque virtus
crescit, et immensum gloria calcar habet.

("Having an audience makes one try harder, virtue
grows by praise, and fame is a powerful spur.")[30]

I should have liked to display the proud axiom *Nemo* *leditur nisi a seipso* ("No one suffers except by his own doing"),[31] had I not feared to offend the vast number of those who, whenever anything goes wrong for them, cry "It is not my fault." It is best to leave them this small consolation, for without it they would hate themselves; and self-hatred is soon followed by the thought of suicide.

For my part, since I have always admitted that I was the chief cause of all the misfortunes which have befallen me, I have rejoiced in my ability to be my own pupil, and in my duty to love my teacher.

CHAPTER I

IN THE year 1428 Don Jacobe Casanova, born at Saragossa, the capital of Aragon, natural son of Don Francisco, abducted Donna Anna Palafox from a convent on the day after she had taken her vows. He was secretary to King Alfonso.[2] He fled with her to Rome, where, after a year of imprisonment, Pope Martin III[3] gave Donna Anna a dispensation from her vows and the nuptial blessing, at the instance of Don Juan Casanova,[4] master of the sacred palace and uncle to Don Jacobe. All the offspring of this marriage died in infancy except Don Juan, who in 1475 married Eleonora Albini, by whom he had a son named Marcantonio.[5]

In the year 1481 Don Juan was obliged to leave Rome because he had killed an officer of the King of Naples.[6] He fled to Como with his wife and son, then he set out to seek his fortune. He died on a voyage with Christopher Columbus in the year 1493.[7]

Marcantonio became a good poet in the manner of

Martial,[8] and was secretary to Cardinal Pompeo Colonna.[9] The satire against Giulio de' Medici[10] which can be found among his poems obliged him to leave Rome, and he returned to Como, where he married Abondia Rezzonica.

The same Giulio de' Medici, having become Pope Clement VII, pardoned him and summoned him back to Rome, where, after the city was taken and pillaged by the Imperial troops[11] in the year 1526, he died of the plague. Otherwise he would have died of poverty, for the soldiers of Charles V[12] had robbed him of all he possessed. Piero Valeriano[13] writes of him at some length in his book *De infelicitate litteratorum.*

Three months after his death his wife gave birth to Giacomo Casanova, who died at an advanced age in France as a colonel in the army commanded by Farnese[14] against Henri, King of Navarre,[15] later King of France. He had left a son in Parma, who married Teresa Conti, by whom he had Giacomo, who married Anna Roli in the year 1680. Giacomo had two sons, of whom the elder, Giovanni Battista, left Parma in the year 1712; what became of him is not known. The younger son, Gaetano Giuseppe Giacomo, also forsook his family in the year 1715, at the age of seventeen.

This is all that I have found in a notebook of my father's. What follows I learned from my mother's lips:

Gaetano Giuseppe Giacomo left his family, enamored by the charms of an actress named Fragoletta[16] who played soubrette roles. In love and without means of support, he decided to earn his living by turning his personal advantages to account. He took up dancing and, five years later, turned actor, becoming even more highly regarded for his probity than for his talent.

Whether from fickleness or because she had given him cause for jealousy, he abandoned Fragoletta and went to Venice, where he joined a troop of actors which played at the Teatro San Samuele.[17] Across the way from the house where he lodged there lived a shoemaker named Girolamo Farussi with his wife Marzia and their only daughter Zanetta, a perfect beauty at the age of sixteen. The young actor fell in love with the girl, succeeded in awakening her heart, and persuaded her to elope with him. Being an actor, he could not hope to obtain her by gaining the consent of Marzia her mother, still less that of Girolamo her father, who thought an actor an abomination. Provided with the necessary certificates and accompanied by two witnesses, the young lovers presented themselves before the Patriarch of Venice,[18] who united them in marriage. Marzia, the girl's mother, protested loudly, and the father died of grief. I was born of this marriage[19] nine months later, on April 2 of the year 1725.

The following year my mother left me in the care of hers, who had forgiven her when she learned that my father had promised never to force her to appear on the stage. This is a promise which all actors make to the daughters of bourgeois families whom they marry, and which they never keep because their wives never hold them to it. As it turned out, my mother was very glad that she had learned to act, for, being left a widow with six children nine years later, she could not have brought them up.

I was one year old, then, when my father left me in Venice to go to London to act. It was in that great city that my mother made her first appearance on the stage, and it was there that, in the year 1727, she gave birth[20] to my brother Francesco, the celebrated painter of battle pictures, who has been living at Venice since the year 1783, practicing his profession.

My mother came back to Venice with her husband toward the end of the year 1728 and, having become an actress, she continued in that career. In the year 1730 she gave birth to my brother Giovanni, who died at Dresden toward the end of the year 1795, serving the Elector[21] as director of the Academy of Painting. In the course of the three following years, she gave birth to two girls,[22] of whom one died in infancy and the other was married in Dresden, where, in this year 1798, she is still living. I had another brother, born posthumously,[23] who became a priest and died at Rome fifteen years ago.

And now to come to the beginning of my own existence as a thinking being. In the beginning of August in the year 1733 my organ of memory developed. I was then eight years and four months old. I remember nothing of what may have happened to me before that time. This is the incident:

I was standing in the corner of a room, leaning against the wall, holding my head, and staring at the blood which was streaming to the floor from my nose. My grandmother Marzia, whose pet I was, came to me, washed my face with cold water, and, unknown to anyone in the house, boarded a gondola with me and took me to Murano. This is a densely populated island about half an hour from Venice.

Leaving the gondola, we enter a hovel, where we find an old woman sitting on a pallet, with a black cat in her arms and five or six others around her. She was a witch. The two old women had a long conversation, of which I must have been the subject. At the end of their dialogue in the Friulian language,[24] my grandmother gave the witch a silver ducat,[25] whereupon she opened a chest, took me up in her arms, put me into it, shut it, and locked the lid on me, telling me not to be afraid. *It was just the way to make me afraid,* if I had been able to think; but I was in a stupor. I kept quiet, holding my handkerchief to my nose because I was still bleeding and feeling quite unperturbed by the racket I heard being made outside. I heard alternate laughter and weeping, cries, singing, and sundry thumps on the chest. It was all one to me. Finally they took me out; my blood stops flowing. After giving me numberless caresses, this strange woman undresses me, lays me on the bed, burns simples, collects the smoke from them in a sheet, wraps me in it, recites spells over me, then unwraps me and gives me five very good-tasting sweetmeats. She next rubs my temples and the back of my neck with a sweet-smelling unguent, and dresses me again. She says that my bleeding will gradually diminish, provided I tell no one what she had done to cure me, but solemnly warns me that I will lose all my blood and die if I dare reveal her mysteries to anyone. After impressing this upon me she tells me that a charming lady will visit me the following night, and that my happiness will depend upon her, if I have the strength of mind to tell no one that I received such a visit. We left and returned home.

I had scarcely gone to bed before I fell asleep without even remembering the fine visitor I was to receive. But waking several hours later, I saw, or thought I saw, a dazzlingly beautiful woman come down by the chimney, wearing a huge pannier and a dress of magnificent material, with a crown on her head set with a profusion of stones which seemed to me to be sparkling with fire. She approached slowly, looking at once majestic and kindly, and sat down on my bed. From her pocket she drew several small boxes, which she emptied on my head, at the same time muttering words. After delivering a long discourse, of which I understood nothing, and kissing me, she left as she had entered, and I went back to sleep.

Coming to dress me the next morning, my grandmother was no sooner at my bedside than she commanded me to keep silence. She then impressed it on me that I would die if I dared to tell anyone what must have happened to me during the night. These solemn adjurations from the lips of the only woman whose influence over me was absolute, and who had accustomed me to obey her every command blindly, were why I have remembered this incident; they made me seal it away in the most secret corner of my budding memory. In any case, I felt no temptation to tell the story. I did not know whether anyone would find it interesting, or to whom I might tell it. My disease had made me dull, and very poor company; people felt sorry for me and left me alone; everyone supposed that I would not live long. My father and mother never spoke to me.

After the journey to Murano and my nocturnal visit from the fairy I still bled, but less and less; my memory developed, and in less than a month I learned to read. It would be ridiculous to attribute my cure to these two absurdities, but it would be a mistake to hold that they could not contribute to it. As for the appearance of the beautiful queen, I have always believed that it was a dream, unless it was a masquerade deliberately contrived; but the remedies for the worst diseases are not always found in pharmacy. One phenomenon or another demonstrates our ignorance to us every day. I believe it is for this reason that nothing is harder to find than a learned man whose mind is entirely free from superstition. There have never been wizards on this earth, but their power has always existed for those whom they have been able to cajole into believing them such.

Somnio, nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides ("In dreams you mock at nocturnal phantoms and Thessalian portents").[26] *Many things become real which previously existed only in the imagination; hence many effects attributed to faith may not always be miraculous. They are miraculous for those who hold that the power of faith has no limits.*

The second incident which I remember, and which concerns myself, happened to me three months after my journey to Murano, six weeks before my father's death. I record it in order to give my reader an idea of the way in which my character was developing.

One day about the middle of November I and my brother Francesco, who was two years younger than myself, were in my father's room watching him attentively as he worked at optics.

On the table I noticed a large round crystal cut in facets, and I was enchanted when, holding it before my eyes, I saw everything multiplied. Observing that no one was watching me, I seized the opportunity to slip it into my pocket.

Three or four minutes later my father rose, went to get the crystal, and, not finding it, said that one of us must have taken it. My brother assured him that he knew nothing about it and, though I was the culprit, I said the same. He threatened to search us and promised to give the liar a beating. After pretending to look for it in every corner of the room, I adroitly dropped it into my brother's coat pocket. I was instantly sorry, for I could have pretended to find it somewhere; but the crime was already committed. My father, exasperated by our fruitless efforts, searches us, finds the crystal in my innocent brother's pocket, and inflicts the promised punishment. Three or four years later I was stupid enough to boast to my brother that I had played this trick on him. He has never forgiven me and has taken every opportunity to avenge himself.

When I once related this crime in all its particulars in a general confession, my confessor rewarded me with a bit of recondite learning which I was glad to acquire. He was a Jesuit. He told me that, since I was named Giacomo, I had by this action verified the meaning of my name, for Jacob in Hebrew meant "supplanter." This was why God had changed the name of the ancient patriarch Jacob to Israel, which means "seeing." He had deceived his brother Esau.

Six weeks after this event my father was attacked by an abscess inside his head at the level of the ear, which brought him to the grave in a week. The physician, who had begun by giving the patient oppilative remedies, thought to repair his mistake by castoreum,[27] which brought on death in convulsions. The apostem[28] discharged through his ear one minute after he died; it left after killing him, as if it found nothing further to do in him. He was in the prime of life, at thirty-six years of age. He died regretted by the public, and particularly by the nobility, who conceded that he was superior to his station both by his probity and by his knowledge of mechanics. Two days before his death he sent for us all to appear at his bedside in the presence of his wife and of the Signori Grimani,[29] Venetian noblemen, as he wished to obtain their promise to become our protectors.

After giving us his blessing, he made our mother, who dissolved in tears, swear that she would bring none of his children up for the stage, on which he would never have appeared if he had not been driven to it by an unfortunate passion. She took the oath, and the three patricians gave him their words to see that it was not broken. Circumstances helped her to keep her promise.[30]

My mother, being six months gone with child, was excused from acting until after Easter. Beautiful and young as she was, she refused her hand to all who sued for it. Never losing courage, she believed that she could bring us up without assistance. She considered that her first duty was to me, not so much from any special fondness as because of my disease, which had reduced me to such a state that no one knew what to do with me. I was extremely weak, had no appetite, was unable to apply myself to anything, and looked like an idiot. The doctors argued among themselves over the cause of my disease. "He loses," they said, "two pounds of blood a week, and he can only have from sixteen to eighteen. Then where can such an abundant flow of blood come from?" One said that all my chyle turned to blood; another maintained that the air I breathed must increase the blood in my lungs by a certain amount at each respiration, and that this was why I always kept my mouth open. All this

I learned six years later from Signor Baffo, a great friend of my father's.

It was he who consulted the famous physician Macoppe,[31] of Padua, who gave him his opinion in writing. This document, which I have kept, says that "our blood is an elastic fluid, which can increase and diminish in density, but never in quantity," and that my hemorrhage "could only come from the density of the mass, which relieved itself naturally, in order to facilitate its circulation." He said that I should already be dead, "if Nature, which seeks to live, had not come to her own assistance." He concluded that "since the cause of this density could only be in the air" I breathed, those who were responsible for me must "either give me a change of air or be prepared to lose" me. According to him, the density of my blood was the reason for the stupidity which appeared on my countenance.

It was Signor Baffo,[32] then—a sublime genius, a poet in the most lascivious of all genres, but great and unrivaled—who was the cause of the decision that I should be sent to board in Padua, and to whom, in consequence, I owe my life. He died twenty years later, the last of his ancient patrician family; but his poems, though indecent, will never let his name perish. The State Inquisitors[33] of Venice have contributed to his fame by their piety. By persecuting his works in manuscript, they made them sought after; they should have known that *spreta exolescunt* ("things scorned are forgotten").[34]

Once Professor Macoppe's oracle was approved, it was the Abate Grimani who undertook to find me a decent house to board in at Padua, through a chemist of his acquaintance who lived in that city. His name was Ottaviani and he was also an antiquarian. Within a few days the boardinghouse was found. And on April 2, 1734, the day on which I completed my ninth year, I was taken to Padua in a *burchiello*[35] by way of the Brenta. We went on board two hours before midnight, after supping.

The *burchiello* may be considered a small floating house. It has a saloon with a cabin at either end, and quarters for servants at the bow and stern; it is a long rectangle, roofed by a deck and with glazed windows with shutters along the sides; the short journey is made in eight hours. Those who accompanied me were, besides my mother, the Abate Grimani and Signor Baffo. She took me to bed with her in the saloon, and the two friends slept in the *camerino*.[36]

As soon as it dawned she got up, then opened a window which was across from the bed, so that the rays of the rising sun falling on my face made me open my eyes. The bed was low. I did not see the ground. All that I saw through the same window was the tops of the trees which line the banks of the river. The boat was moving, but so smoothly that I did not know it; hence I was amazed to see the trees passing rapidly out of my sight. "Oh, dear Mother!" I cried, "what does this mean? The trees are walking."

At that moment the two noblemen entered and, seeing my amazement, they ask me what was puzzling me. "How is it," I answered, "that the trees are walking?"

They laughed, but my mother sighed and said in a pitying tone: *"It is the boat that is moving, not the trees. Get dressed."*

I instantly understood the reason for the phenomenon, forging ahead with my budding reason and thoroughly pleased with myself. "Then it is possible, Mother," I said, "that the sun does not move either, and that it is we who turn from West to East." My mother cries out at such stupidity, Signor Grimani pities my lack of intelligence, and I am taken completely aback and on the verge of tears. It is Signor Baffo who restores me to life. He rushes to me, kisses me tenderly, and says: *"You are right, my child. The sun does not move, take courage, always reason logically, and let people laugh."*

My mother asked him if he was out of his mind to give me such lessons; but the philosopher, without even answering her, proceeded to outline a theory adapted to my simple, unspoiled reason. This was the first real pleasure I enjoyed in my life. But for Signor Baffo, that moment would have been enough to corrupt my intelligence: *the baseness of credulity would have taken root in it.* The stupidity of the two others would certainly have blunted the edge of a faculty by which I do not know if I have progressed very far; but I do know that to it alone I owe all the happiness I enjoy when I commune with myself in solitude.

We reached Padua early and were soon at the house of Ottaviani, whose wife gave me many caresses. I saw five or six children, among them a girl of eight years named Maria and another of seven named Rosa, pretty as an angel. Ten years later Maria became the wife of the broker Colonda; and a few years afterward Rosa married the patrician Piero Marcello, who had a son by her and two daughters, one of whom was married to Signor Piero Moncenigo and the other to a nobleman of the Corraro family, whose marriage was later annulled. I shall have occasion to speak of all these persons. Ottaviani at once took us to the house where I was to board.

It was some fifty paces away, near Santa Maria in Vanzo, parish of San Michele, in the house of an old Slavonian woman who let her second floor to Signora Mida, the wife of a Slavonian colonel.[37] My little trunk was opened in her presence and she was given an inventory of all that it contained. That done, she received six zecchini[38] for six months' board for me in advance. For this small sum she was to feed me, keep me clean and neat, and send me to school. Her protestation that it was not enough went unheeded. I was kissed, told always to obey her in everything, and left standing where I was. So they got rid of me.

CHAPTER II

My grandmother comes to put me to board with Doctor Gozzi. My first love.

THE Slavonian woman at once took me up to the attic and showed me my bed, the last in a row with four others, three of which belonged to boys of my own age, who were then at school, and the fourth to the maidservant, who was charged with making us say our prayers and keeping an eye on us to prevent us from indulging in the mischief and lewdness usual among schoolboys. She then took me down to the garden and told me I might walk there until dinnertime. I felt neither happy nor unhappy; I said nothing; I experienced neither hope nor despair nor even curiosity; I was neither cheerful nor sad. The only thing that troubled me was my mistress's person. Though I had no settled notion of beauty or ugliness, her face, her look, her voice, her manner of speech repelled me; her masculine features unnerved me every time I raised my eyes to her face to listen to what she was saying to me. She was tall and as heavy-set as a soldier, with a yellow complexion, black hair, and long, shaggy eyebrows. She had several long hairs on her chin, hideous half-exposed breasts which hung, with a great cleft between them, halfway down her tall body, and her age appeared to be fifty. The maidservant was a peasant who did everything. The so-called garden was an open space measuring thirty or forty paces in either direction, the only pleasant thing about it being its green color.

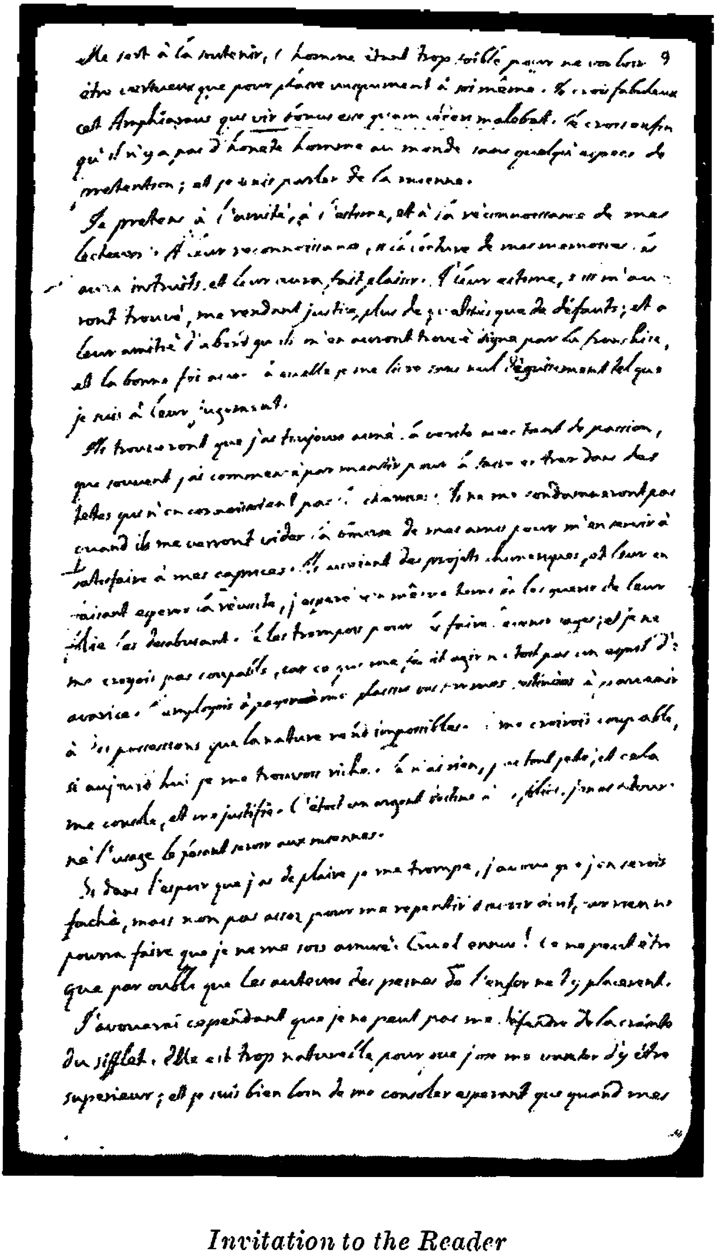
Toward noon I saw three boys approaching me; they chattered away at me as if we were old acquaintances, saying all manner of things which assumed a background of experience I did not possess. I said nothing in reply, but this did not dash them at all; they made me join in their innocent pleasures. These consisted in running, playing horse-and-rider, and turning somersaults. I let them initiate me into all these pastimes without protesting, until we were called in to dinner. I sit down at the table and, seeing a wooden spoon before me, I push it away and demand my silver service, which I cherished as a present from my grandmother. The maid said that since her mistress insisted on equality, I must conform to the customs of the house. This annoyed me, but I submitted. Having learned that there must be equality in everything, I ate my soup from the tureen like the others, without complaining of the speed with which my fellow boarders ate, though I was much surprised that it was sanctioned. After the very bad soup we were given a small portion of dried cod, then an apple, and dinner was over. It was Lent. We had neither glasses nor cups; we all drank from the same earthenware jug, which contained a vile beverage called *graspia.*[1] It was water in which grape-stems stripped of their grapes had been boiled. From then on I drank nothing but water. This fare surprised me, because I did not know if I was allowed to consider it bad.

After dinner the maid took me to school to a young priest named Doctor Gozzi.[2] The Slavonian woman had agreed to pay him forty soldi[3] a month. This is the eleventh part of a zecchino. He was to begin by teaching me to write. I was put with the five-year-olds, who at once fell to jeering at me.

Supper, as might be expected, was even worse than dinner. I was astonished that I was not allowed to complain of it. I was then consigned to a bed, in which the three notorious insects would not let me shut my eyes. In addition, rats ran all over the attic and jumped up on my bed, filling me with fear which froze my blood. Thus did I begin to learn what it is to be unhappy and to bear misfortune patiently. Meanwhile, the insects that were eating me up diminished the terror that the rats inspired in me, and my terror in turn made me less conscious of the bites. My soul profited from the competition between my afflictions. The maidservant remained deaf to my cries.

At the first rays of morning I left the nest of vermin. After complaining a little of all the sufferings I had endured, I asked the maid for a shirt, since the one I had on was hideous with the stains from the lice. She told me that shirts were changed only on Sunday and laughed when I threatened to complain of her to her mistress. For the first time in my life, I wept with vexation and anger when I heard my companions mocking me. They were in the same state as I was; but they were used to it. I need say no more.

Profoundly depressed, I spent the whole morning at school in a heavy doze. One of my fellow boarders told the Doctor the reason, but only to ridicule me. The good priest, whom Eternal Providence had bestowed on me, took me into another room, where, having heard my story and confirmed it with his own eyes, he was distressed to see the welts which covered my innocent skin. He quickly put on his cloak, took me to my boardinghouse, and showed the Laestrygonian[4] giantess the state I was in. Feigning astonishment, she blamed the maid. She had to



elle sert à la maintenir, l'homme étant trop faible pour ne vouloir 9 être vertueux que pour plaire uniquement à soi même. Je crois fabuleux cet Amphiaraus qui vir bonus esse quam videri malebat. Je crois enfin qu'il n'y a pas d'honnête homme au monde sans quelque espèce de prétention; et je vais parler de la mienne.

Je prétends à l'amitié, à l'estime, et à la reconnaissance de mes lecteurs: A leur reconnaissance, si la lecture de mes mémoires les aura instruits et leur aura fait plaisir. A leur estime, s'ils m'auront trouvé, me rendant justice, plus de qualités que de défauts; et à leur amitié d'abord qu'ils m'en auront trouvé digne par la franchise, et la bonne foi avec laquelle je me livre sans nul déguisement tel que je suis à leur jugement.

Ils trouveront que j'ai toujours aimé la vérité avec tant de passion, que souvent j'ai commencé par mentir pour la faire entrer dans des têtes qui n'en connaissaient pas les charmes. Ils ne me condamneront pas quand ils me verront vider la bourse de mes amis pour en servir à satisfaire à mes caprices. Ils avaient des projets chimériques, et leur en faisant espérer la réussite, j'espérais moi même de les guérir de leur folie les désabusant. Je les trompais pour les rendre sages; et je ne me croyais pas coupable, car ce qui me faisait agir n'était pas un esprit d'avarice. J'employais à payer mes plaisirs des sommes destinées à parvenir à des possessions que la nature rend impossibles. Je me croirais coupable, si aujourd'hui je me trouvais riche. Je n'ai rien; j'ai tout jeté, et cela me console, et me justifie. C'était un argent destiné à des folies; j'en ai détourné l'usage le faisant servir aux miennes.

Si dans l'espoir que j'ai de plaire je me trompe, j'avoue que j'en serais fâché, mais non pas assez pour me repentir d'avoir écrit, car rien ne pourra faire que je ne me sois amusé. Cruel ennui! Ce ne peut être que par oubli que les auteurs des peines de l'enfer ne l'y placèrent.

J'avouerai cependant que je ne peux pas me défendre de la crainte du sifflet. Elle est trop naturelle pour que j'ose me vanter d'y être supérieur; et je suis bien loin de me consoler espérant que quand mes

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yield to the priest's insistence upon seeing my bed, and I was as astonished as he to see the filthiness of the sheets between which I had spent that cruel night. The accursed woman, still stoutly laying the blame on the maid, assured him that she would discharge her; but the maid, entering just then and unable to stomach the reprimand, told her to her face that the fault was hers, at the same time uncovering the beds of my three fellow boarders, which were just as dirty as mine. The mistress then gave her a slap on the face, to which the maid replied with a more vigorous one, and instantly took to her heels. The Doctor then departed, leaving me there and telling the Slavonian woman that he could not admit me to his school again until she should send me there as clean as the other pupils. I was then treated to a violent scolding, which she ended by telling me that if ever I made such a fuss over nothing again, she would turn me out of the house.

I felt completely bewildered; I was scarcely entering on conscious existence, I knew only the house in which I had been born and brought up, where cleanliness and a decent sufficiency were the rule; I found myself being ill-treated and scolded; I could not conceive that I was guilty. She flung a shirt in my face; and an hour later I saw a new maid changing the sheets, and we ate dinner.

My schoolmaster took particular pains to teach me. He had me sit at his own table, where, to convince him that I deserved the distinction, I applied myself to studying with all my power. At the end of a month I was writing so well that he set me to grammar.

The new life I was leading, the hunger I was forced to endure, and, above all, the air of Padua brought me such health as I had never conceived of before; but this very health made my hunger even more unendurable; I was as ravenous as a dog. I was growing visibly taller; I slept nine hours of the deepest sleep untroubled by any dream, except one in which I always seemed to be seated at a big table satisfying my cruel appetite. Pleasing dreams are worse than nightmares.

This ravenous hunger would finally have wasted me away if I had not made up my mind to steal and swallow anything edible I could lay my hands on when I was sure I was not observed. In a few days I ate some fifty smoked herring I found stored in a cupboard in the kitchen, to which I made my way in the dark of night, and all the sausages which were hanging in the chimney, raw and utterly indigestible as they were; while all the eggs I could find in the poultry-yard, scarcely laid and still warm, provided me with exquisite food. I even went so far as to steal food from the kitchen of my schoolmaster the Doctor. The Slavonian woman, in despair because she could not catch the thieves, discharged maid after maid. However, since I could not always find a chance to steal I was thin as a skeleton, mere skin and bones.

In five or six months I had made such rapid progress that the Doctor appointed me proctor of the school. My duties were to examine the written lessons of my thirty schoolmates, correct their mistakes, and report on them to the master with whatever comments in praise or blame they deserved. But my strictness did not last long. The lazy boys easily discovered how to mollify me. When their Latin was full of mistakes they won me over with roast cutlets and chickens and often gave me money. But I was not content with imposing a tax on the ignorant; I let my greed turn me into a tyrant. I refused my approval even to those who deserved it, when they tried to escape paying the levy I demanded. No longer able to stomach my injustice, they accused me to the master. Seeing me convicted of extortion, he dismissed me from my office. But my destiny was already about to end my cruel apprenticeship.

Taking me into his private room with him one day, the Doctor asked me if I was willing to do as he would suggest in order to leave the Slavonian woman and come to board with him. Finding me delighted by his proposal, he had me copy out three letters, of which I sent one to the Abate Grimani, the second to my friend Signor Baffo, and the third to my good grandmother. My mother was not in Venice at this period, and since my half year was about to end, there was no time to lose. In these letters I described all my sufferings, and prophesied my death if I were not rescued from the clutches of the Slavonian woman and put to board with my schoolmaster, who was willing to take me but who asked two zecchini a month.

Signor Grimani, instead of answering me, sent his friend Ottaviani to reprimand me for having let myself be inveigled. But Signor Baffo talked with my grandmother, who did not know how to write, and wrote me that in a few days I would find myself better off.

A week later that excellent woman, who loved me unfailingly to the day of her death, appeared just when I had sat down to dinner. She came in with the mistress. As soon as I saw her, I flung myself on her neck, unable to hold back my tears, in which she instantly joined. She sat down and took me on her lap. Thus encouraged, I gave her a detailed account of all my sufferings, in the presence of the Slavonian woman. Then, first showing her the beggarly table at which I was expected to find adequate nourishment, I took her to see my bed. I ended by imploring her to take me to dine with her, after six months of hunger and weakness. Undaunted, the Slavonian woman said only that she could not do more for the money she received. It was true. But who obliged her to keep a boardinghouse and so become the murderess of boys whom avarice put in her care and who needed to be properly fed?

My grandmother calmly told her to pack all my clothes in my trunk, for she was going to take me away. Delighted to see my silver table-service again, I quickly put it in my pocket. My joy was beyond words. For the first time I felt that contentment *which obliges the heart of him who feels it to forgive, and his mind to forget, all the vexations which have led to it.*

My grandmother took me to the inn where she was lodging, and where she ate almost nothing in her astonishment at the voracity with which I ate. Doctor Gozzi, to whom she sent word, appeared, and his presence prepossessed her in his favor. He was a handsome priest twenty-six years of age, plump, modest, and ceremoniously polite. Within a quarter of an hour they agreed on everything and, after paying over twenty-four zecchini, she was given a receipt for a year in advance; but she kept me with her for three days in order to outfit me as an abate[5] and have a wig made for me, since the filthy state of my hair made it necessary to cut it off.

The three days over, she insisted on herself settling me in the Doctor's house, so that she could entrust me to the good offices of his mother, who at once told her to send me, or buy me, a bed; but the Doctor saying that I could sleep with him in his, which was very wide, my grandmother thanked him profusely for his kind condescension. She left, and we saw her off as far as the *burchiello* in which she returned to Venice.

Doctor Gozzi's family consisted of his mother, who deeply respected him because, being born a peasant, she did not think herself worthy of having a son who was a priest, let alone a Doctor. She was ugly, old, and ill-tempered. The father was a shoemaker who worked all day and never spoke to anyone, even at table. He grew sociable only on holidays, which he spent in a tavern with his friends, returning home at midnight so drunk that he could not stand up and singing Tasso;[6] in this condition he could not bear to go to bed and became savage when anyone tried to make him. He had no discernment and no reasoning power except what wine gave him, to such a point that when fasting he was incapable of dealing with the simplest family matter. His wife said that he would never have married her if he had not been given a good breakfast before he went to the church.

Doctor Gozzi also had a sister thirteen years of age named Bettina,[7] who was pretty, lighthearted, and a great reader of romances. Her father and mother were forever scolding her for showing herself at the window too much, and the Doctor because of her fondness for reading. The girl pleased me at once, though I had no idea why. It was she who little by little kindled in my heart the first sparks of a feeling which later became my ruling passion.

Six months after I entered his house, the Doctor found himself without pupils. They all left because I was the sole object of his attentions. In consequence he resolved to establish a small boarding school for young boys; but two years went by before it became possible. During those two years he taught me all that he knew, which, to tell the truth, was very little, but enough to initiate me into all the branches of learning. He also taught me to play the violin, an art which I was able to turn to advantage on an occasion of which the reader will learn in its proper place. Without even a smattering of philosophy himself, he taught me the logic of the Peripatetics,[8] as well as cosmography according to the ancient system of Ptolemy,[9] at which I did nothing but scoff, challenging him with theories to which he could find no answers. His conduct, however, was irreproachable and, though no bigot, he was extremely strict in matters of religion; since everything was an article of faith for him, nothing presented any difficulties to his understanding. The Flood had been universal; before the disaster men had lived for a thousand years, God talked with them, Noah had built the ark in a hundred years, and the earth, suspended in air, remained motionless at the center of the universe, which God had created out of nothing. When I said, and proved to him, that the existence of nothing was absurd, he cut me short by telling me I was a fool. He liked a good bed, a pint of wine, and a cheerful household. He disliked wits and epigrams, and criticism because it easily turned to slander, and he laughed at the stupidity of people who spent time over newspapers, which, according to him, never told the truth and always said the same thing. He would say that nothing was as uncomfortable as uncertainty, and so he condemned thinking because it bred doubt.

His great passion was preaching, for which he was well qualified both by his figure and his voice. Hence his audience was composed entirely of women, though he was their sworn enemy. He did not look them in the face when he had to speak with them. According to him, the sin of the flesh was the greatest of all sins, and he became very angry when I told him it could only be the least. His sermons were stuffed with passages drawn from Greek authors, whom he quoted in Latin, and I one day told him that he should quote them in Italian, for Latin was no more comprehensible than Greek to the women who listened to him, telling their beads. My objection angered him, and from then on I did not dare remonstrate with him. He praised me to his friends as a prodigy because I had learned to read Greek all by myself without any other help than a grammar.

In Lent of the year 1736 my mother wrote to him that he would do her a favor if he would bring me to Venice for three or four days, since she had to go to Petersburg and wanted to see me before she left. This invitation gave him cause for thought, for he had never seen Venice nor good society, and he did not want to appear a novice in any respect. So we set out from Padua by the *burchiello,* accompanied by his whole family.

My mother received him with the ease of perfect good breeding, but as she was marvelously beautiful my poor master found himself in the very uncomfortable situation of having to converse with her yet not daring to look her in the face. As soon as she noticed this, she thought she would have a little fun with him. For my part, I attracted the attention of the entire company, who, having seen me almost an imbecile, were astonished to find that I had become more than presentable in the short space of two years. The Doctor was elated to see that all the credit was given to him. The first thing that shocked my mother was my blond wig, which stood out against my dark complexion and made the most crying contrast with my eyebrows and my black eyes. Upon her asking the Doctor why he did not let me wear my own hair, he answered that it was far easier for his sister to keep me clean this way. This provoked a laugh, after which he was asked if his sister was married. The laughter redoubled when, answering for him, I said that Bettina was the prettiest girl in our street, though she was only fourteen. My mother told the Doctor that she wanted to give his sister a very fine present, but on condition that she would take care of my own hair for me, and he gave her his promise. She immediately sent for a wigmaker, who brought me a wig which matched my coloring.

Everyone having sat down to cards, with the Doctor looking on, I went to see my brothers in my grandmother's room. Francesco showed me some architectural drawings, which I pretended to consider passable, and Giovanni showed me nothing; he struck me as stupid. The others were still in frocks.

At supper the Doctor, who was seated next to my mother, was extremely awkward. He would not have said a word if an English man of letters had not addressed him in Latin. He modestly replied that he did not understand English, whereupon there was a great burst of laughter. Signor Baffo saved the situation by telling us that the English read Latin in accordance with the rules for reading English. I made bold to say that they were as wrong as we should be if we read English as if we were reading Latin. The Englishman, having declared that my reasoning was prodigious, wrote down the following ancient distich and gave it to me to read:

Discite grammatici cur mascula nomina cunnus
Et cur femineum mentula nomen habet.

("Teach us, grammarians, why *cunnus* [vagina] is a masculine noun
And why *mentula* [penis] is feminine.")[10]

After reading it aloud, I said that this time it was Latin. "We know that," said my mother, "but you must construe it." I answered that, instead of construing it, I would answer the question it put. After thinking for a little time, I wrote this pentameter: *Disce quod a domino nomina servus habet* ("It is because the slave takes his name from his master"). It was my first literary exploit, and I can say that it was at this moment that the seeds of my desire for the fame which comes from literature were sown in my soul, for the applause of the company set me on the pinnacle of happiness. The astonished Englishman, after remarking that no boy of eleven years had ever done as much, first embraced me several times and then made me a present of his watch. My mother's curiosity was aroused and she asked Signor Grimani what the verses meant; but since he understood them no better than she did, it was Signor Baffo who whispered a translation of them to her. Surprised at my knowledge, she could not resist an impulse to go and fetch a gold watch and give it to my master, whose inability to express the extremity of his gratitude to her turned the scene into high comedy. My mother, to save him from searching for a compliment to pay her, offered him her cheek. All that was now required was two kisses, than which nothing is simpler and means less in good society; but the poor man was so embarrassed that he would rather have died than give them to her. He retired with his head hanging, and was left in peace until we went to bed.

He waited until we were alone in our room before pouring forth his heart. He said it was a pity that he could not publish either the couplet or my answer in Padua.

"Why?"

"Because they are obscene. But your answer is magnificent. Let us go to bed and say no more about it. Your answer is a miracle, for it is impossible that you should have any knowledge of the subject matter, to say nothing of composing verses."

So far as the subject matter was concerned, I knew it in theory from having already read Meursius[11] in secret, precisely because the Doctor had forbidden me to; but he was right to be astonished that I could compose a verse, for he himself, though he had taught me prosody, had never been able to compose one. *Nemo dat quod non habet* ("No one can give what he does not possess") is a false axiom in moral science.[12] When we left four days later my mother gave me a package containing a present for Bettina, and the Abate Grimani gave me four zecchini to buy books. A week later my mother left for Petersburg.

At Padua my good master did nothing but talk of my mother, in season and out of season, for three or four months. But Bettina became extraordinarily attached to me when she found that the package contained five ells of black sendal [13] of the sort known as "lustring," and twelve pairs of gloves. She took care of my hair so well that in less than six months I was able to leave off wearing my wig. She came to comb my hair every day, and often when I was still in bed, saying that she did not have time to wait for me to dress. She washed my face and neck and chest, and gave me childish caresses which, since I was bound to consider them innocent, made me chide myself for letting them trouble me. As I was three years her junior, it seemed to me that she could not love me with any evil intent, and this made me angry at the evil which I felt in myself. When, sitting on my bed, she told me that I was putting on flesh and, to convince me, convinced herself of it with her own hands, she roused the most intense emotion in me. I did not stop her, for fear she would become aware of my susceptibility. When she told me that I had a soft skin, the tickling made me draw away, and I was put out with myself for not daring to do as much to her, but delighted that she could not guess that I wanted to. After washing me, she gave me the sweetest kisses, all the while calling me her dear child; but despite my wanting to, I did not dare to return them. When, finally, she started making fun of my timidity, I began to return them, and even to better purpose; but I stopped as soon as I felt stimulated to go to greater lengths; I would turn my head away, pretending to look for something, and she would leave. After she left I was in despair over not having followed my natural inclination, and astonished that Bettina could do all that she did to me without producing any effect upon herself, whereas only by the utmost effort could I keep from going further. I kept promising myself that I would change my way of behaving.

At the beginning of that autumn the Doctor took three boarding pupils, one of whom was fifteen years of age and named Candiani. In less than a month he seemed to me to be on the best of terms with Bettina. This discovery caused me a feeling of which until then I had had no idea, and which I did not analyze until some years later. It was neither jealousy nor indignation but a noble disdain, which I saw no reason to condemn. For as the coarse, ignorant, stupid, ill-mannered son of a farmer that he was, unable to compete with me in anything and having the advantage of me only in having reached the age of puberty, Candiani did not seem to me to deserve being favored over me; my budding self-esteem told me that I was his superior. I was possessed by a mingled feeling of scorn and pride, directed against Bettina, whom I loved without knowing it. She divined it from the manner in which I received her caresses when she came to my bed to comb my hair; I pushed away her hands, I did not respond to her kisses, and one day, piqued because I would not answer when she asked me why I had changed, she said, as if pitying me, that I was jealous of Candiani. The reproach seemed to me an insulting calumny; I told her that I thought Candiani worthy of her as she was of him; she departed smiling, but already hatching the only plan which could secure her revenge: she must make me jealous; but since to do that, she had to make me fall in love with her, this is how she set about it.

One morning she came to my bed bringing me a pair of white stockings she had knitted herself; after dressing my hair, she told me that she had to try them on me to see if she had made any mistakes and so guide herself in knitting me more. The Doctor had gone to say his mass. Putting on the stockings, she said that my thighs were dirty and at once began washing them without asking my leave.

I was ashamed to let her see me ashamed, though I never imagined that what happened would happen. Seated on my bed, Bettina carried her zeal for cleanliness too far, and her curiosity aroused a voluptuous feeling in me which did not cease until it could not become greater. Thus calmed, it occurred to me that I had committed a crime and I felt that I should ask her forgiveness. Expecting nothing of the sort, Bettina thought for a moment and then said that the fault was entirely hers, but that she would make sure it would not happen again. With that she left me to my own reflections.

They were cruel. It seemed to me that I had dishonored her, had betrayed the trust of her family, had violated the law of hospitality, and had committed the most hideous of crimes, a crime for which I could not atone except by marrying her, always provided that she could bring herself to marry such a shameless creature, who was utterly unworthy of her.

These reflections were followed by the blackest melancholy, which became more intense with every passing day, for Bettina had entirely ceased to visit my bed. For the first week I thought this decision of hers perfectly justified; and in a few more days my melancholy would have become perfect love, if her behavior toward Candiani had not infected my soul with the poison of jealousy, though I was very far from believing her guilty of the same crime she had committed with me.

Some of my reflections having convinced me that what she had done with me had been deliberate, I imagined that an access of repentance was preventing her from returning to my bed; this idea was flattering to me, for it led me to conclude that she was in love. Sick of all this reasoning, I decided to encourage her by writing. I wrote her a short letter calculated to set her mind at rest, whether she believed herself guilty, or suspected me of feelings the opposite of those demanded by her self-esteem. I thought my letter a masterpiece, and more than enough to make her adore me and give me the preference over Candiani, whom I considered a brute beast unworthy of making her hesitate between him and myself for a single instant. She answered me by word of mouth a half hour later, saying that she would come to my bed the next morning, but she did not come. I was furious, but that noon at the dinner table she astonished me by asking me if I would like to have her dress me up as a girl and go with her to a ball which our neighbor the physician Olivo was giving five or six days later. The entire table applauded the idea, and I consented. I foresaw the moment when a mutual explanation would make us the closest of friends, safe from being waylaid by any sensual weakness. But Fate had decided otherwise: here is what happened to prevent the ball from taking place and to turn the occasion into a veritable tragicomedy.

One of Doctor Gozzi's godfathers, an elderly man of means who resided in the country, had suffered a long illness; believing that his end was near, he sent a carriage, with a message begging him to come at once, together with his father, to be present at his deathbed and commend his soul to God. The old shoemaker instantly emptied a bottle, dressed, and set off with his son.

The moment I saw that they had gone, not having the patience to wait until the night of the ball, I found an opportunity to tell Bettina that I would leave the door from my bedroom to the hall open and would expect her as soon as the household had gone to bed. She answered that she would not fail to come. She slept on the ground floor in a small room divided from her father's bedroom only by a partition; since the Doctor was away, I was sleeping alone in the large bedroom. The three boarding pupils lived in a room near the cellar. So I had no fear that anything would go amiss. I was very happy to be so close to the moment for which I had longed.

No sooner had I retired to my room than I bolted my door, then opened the one giving on to the hall, so that Bettina had only to push it to come in. That done, I put out my candle without undressing.

We think situations of this sort are exaggerated when we read them in romances, but such is not the case. What Ariosto[14] says of Ruggiero waiting for Alcina is a masterly depiction from nature.

I waited until midnight more or less patiently; but when I saw two and three and four hours pass without her appearing, I became furious. The snow was falling in great flakes, but I was more nearly dead from anger than from the cold. An hour before dawn I decided to go downstairs without shoes, for fear of waking the dog, and post myself at the foot of the stairway four paces from the door which should have been unlocked if Bettina had gone out by it. I found it locked. It could only be locked from inside; I thought she might have fallen asleep, but to wake her I should have had to knock loudly and the dog would have barked. From this door to the door of her room was another ten or twelve paces. Overwhelmed by disappointment and unable to settle on any course, I sat down on the bottom step. A little before dawn, chilled to the bone, numb, and shivering, I decided to go back to my room, for if the maid had found me there she would have concluded that I had gone mad.

I stand up; but at the same instant I hear a noise inside. Sure that Bettina would appear, I go to the door; it opens; but instead of Bettina I see Candiani, who gives me such a kick in the belly that I find myself stretched out flat, half buried in the snow. After which he goes and shuts himself up in the room in which his bed stood beside those of his Feltrinian[15] schoolmates.

I spring up and start off to strangle Bettina, for at that moment nothing could have saved her from my fury; but I find the door locked. I give it a great kick, the dog starts barking, and I go back upstairs to my room, shut myself in, and lie down to restore my soul and my body, for I was worse than dead.

Deceived, humiliated, wronged, become an object of scorn to the happy and triumphant Candiani, I spent three hours ruminating the direst schemes of vengeance. Poisoning them both seemed to me nothing in this moment of misery. I conceived the base plan of going to the country and telling the Doctor everything. As I was only twelve years old my mind had not yet acquired the cold ability to lay heroic plans of vengeance fathered by the factitious sentiment of honor. I was only just beginning my apprenticeship in matters of this sort.

In this state of mind, I hear at the inner door to my room the hoarse voice of Bettina's mother imploring me to come down because her daughter is dying.

Aggrieved that she should die before I killed her, I rise, go downstairs, and find her in her father's bed in frightful convulsions, surrounded by the whole family, partly undressed, and rolling from side to side. She twisted, she writhed, hitting out at random with fists and feet, and escaping by violent jerks first from one then from another of those who were trying to hold her still.

With this scene before me, and full of the events of the night, I did not know what to think. I knew neither nature nor artifices, and I was astonished to find myself a cold spectator able to maintain my self-possession in the presence of two persons one of whom I intended to kill and the other to dishonor. At the end of an hour Bettina fell asleep. A midwife and the physician Olivo arrived at the same moment. The woman said that the seizure was hysterical; the doctor that the womb had nothing to do with it. He prescribed rest and cold baths. I laughed up my sleeve at them both, but said nothing; I knew that the girl's illness could only be the result of her nocturnal labors or of the fright that my meeting with Candiani must have given her. I determined to put off my revenge until Doctor Gozzi should arrive. I was far from believing that Bettina's illness was feigned, for I thought it impossible that she could possess so much strength.

Passing through Bettina's room to return to my own and seeing her pockets on the bed there, I was suddenly tempted to secure their contents. I find a letter, I see Candiani's handwriting, I go to my room to read it, astonished at the girl's imprudence, for her mother might have found it and, being unable to read, have given it to her son the Doctor. I was now persuaded that she had gone out of her mind. But what did I not feel when I read the following words! "As your father is away, there is no need for you to leave your door open as you did the other times. When I leave the table I will go to your room; you will find me there." After reflecting for a little, I was moved to laugh and, realizing that I had been made a perfect dupe, I believed I was cured of my love. I thought Candiani deserved my forgiveness and Bettina my scorn. I congratulated myself on having learned an excellent lesson for my life to come. I even admitted that Bettina had good reason to prefer Candiani, who was fifteen whereas I was still a child. But when I remembered the kick he had given me, I continued to bear him a grudge.

At noon we were dining in the kitchen because of the cold when Bettina fell into convulsions again. Everyone went running to her except myself. I quietly finished my dinner, then returned to my studies. At suppertime I found Bettina's bed in the kitchen beside her mother's, but I paid no attention to it, any more than I did to the noise which went on all night and the confusion next morning when she went into convulsions again.

Toward evening the Doctor returned with his father. Candiani, who feared that I would take vengeance, came to ask me what I intended to do, but he fled when he saw me coming toward him knife in hand. It did not occur to me for an instant to tell the Doctor the sordid story; such a project could take shape in my nature only during a moment of wrath. *Irasci celerem tamen ut placabilis essem* ("I become angry quickly, even as I am quickly appeased").[16]

The following morning the Doctor's mother interrupted our schooling to tell her son, after much beating around the bush, that she believed Bettina's illness was the result of a spell which a witch whom she knew must have put on her.

"That may well be; but we must be sure we are not mistaken. Who is this witch?"

"It is our old maidservant; and I have just made certain."

"How?"

"I barred my door with two broomsticks in a cross so that she had to uncross them if she wanted to come in; but when she saw them she turned back and came in by another door. It is obvious that if she were not a witch she would have uncrossed them."

"It is not so obvious, my dear Mother. Have the woman come here."

"Why," he asked her, "did you not go into the room this morning by the usual door?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Did you not see the St. Andrew's cross[17] on the door?"

"What kind of a cross?"

"It is no use your pretending not to know," said his mother. "Where did you spend last Thursday night?"

"With my niece, who has just had a baby."

"No, no. You went to the witches' Sabbath, for you are a witch. And you have bewitched my daughter."

At that the poor woman spat in her face, and the Doctor came running to hold his mother, who had raised her cane to give her a beating. But he had to run after the maid, who went down the stairs shouting to rouse the neighbors. He calmed her by giving her some money, then got together his ecclesiastical paraphernalia to exorcise his sister and find out if she was really possessed by a devil. The newness of these mysteries captured all my attention. I thought all these people either insane or idiots. I could not picture devils in Bettina's body without laughing. When we approached her bed, her breath seemed to fail, and her brother's exorcisms did not restore it. The physician Olivo appeared and asked if he was in the way; the Doctor answered that he was not if he had faith. The physician then departed, saying that he had faith only in the miracles of the Gospels. The Doctor returned to his room and when I was alone with Bettina, I whispered these words into her ear: "Take courage, get well, and count on my silence." She turned her head away without answering me, and spent the rest of the day without convulsions. I thought that I had cured her, but the next day the convulsions went to her brain. In her delirium she uttered words in Greek and Latin, after which no one doubted the nature of her illness. Her mother went out and returned an hour later with the most celebrated exorcist in Padua. He was an extremely ugly Capuchin[18] monk, named Fra Prospero da Bovolenta.

When he appeared, Bettina burst out laughing and assailed him with the most deadly insults, which delighted everyone present, since only the devil was bold enough to address a Capuchin in this fashion; but the Capuchin, hearing himself called an ignorant, stinking impostor, fell to hitting Bettina with a great crucifix, saying that he was beating the devil. He only stopped when he saw her ready to throw a chamberpot at his head, a thing which I would greatly have liked to see. "If he who has offended you with words," she said to him, "is the devil, strike him with yours, you donkey; and if it is I, learn to respect me, you clod; and be gone." At this I saw Doctor Gozzi blush.

But the Capuchin, armed from head to foot, after reading a terrible exorcism, commanded the evil spirit to tell him its name.

"My name is Bettina."

"No, for that is the name of a baptized girl."

"So you think a devil must have a masculine name? Know, ignorant Capuchin, that a devil is an angel without sex. But since you believe that he who speaks to you through my lips is a devil, promise to tell me the truth and I promise to yield to your exorcisms."

"Very well, I promise to tell you the truth."

"Do you think you are wiser than I am?"

"No; but I believe I am stronger in the name of the most holy Trinity and by the power of my sacred office."

"Then if you are stronger, stop me from telling the truth about you. You are vain of your beard; you comb it ten times a day and you would not cut half of it off to make me depart from this body. Cut it off and I swear I will depart from it."

"Father of lies, I will double your sufferings."

"I defy you to do that."

Bettina then burst out laughing so hard that I guffawed; but the Capuchin, seeing me, told the Doctor that I had no faith and he must put me out of the room. I left, telling him that he had guessed right; but I still had time to see Bettina spit on his hand when he held it out to her and told her to kiss it.

Here was this incredibly talented girl, confounding the Capuchin, yet no one was surprised because all her words were ascribed to the devil! I could not imagine what her purpose was.

After dining with us and uttering a hundred imbecilities, the Capuchin went back to the room to bestow his blessing on the possessed girl, who greeted him with a glass of some black liquid given her by the apothecary, which she flung in his face, and Candiani, who was standing beside the monk, received his share, which pleased me immensely. Bettina was right to take advantage of this moment when all that she did was attributed to the devil. As he left, Father Prospero told the Doctor that the girl was undoubtedly possessed, but that he must find another exorcist, since God did not see fit to grant him the grace of delivering her.

After he was gone Bettina spent four hours in perfect quiet and surprised us all by coming to the table to sup with us. After assuring her father, her mother, and her brother that she felt perfectly well, she told me that the ball was to take place the next day and that she would come in the morning to dress my hair like a girl's. I thanked her and told her that she had been very ill and ought to take great care of herself. She went off to bed, and we remained at table, talking of nothing but her.

When I went to my room I found the following note in my nightcap, which I answered when I saw that the Doctor was asleep. "Either come to the ball with me dressed as a girl, or I will show you a sight that will make you cry."

Here is my answer: "I will not go to the ball, for I have firmly resolved to avoid every chance of being alone with you. As for the unhappy sight with which you threaten me, I believe you have wits enough to keep your word; but I implore you to spare my heart, for I love you as if you were my sister. I have forgiven you, dear Bettina, and I wish to forget everything. Here is a note which you should be delighted to have in your hands again. You see what a risk you ran by leaving it in your pocket on your bed. My returning it to you must convince you of my friendship."

CHAPTER III

Bettina believed mad. Father Mancia. The smallpox. I leave Padua.

NOT knowing into whose hands her note had fallen, Bettina must have been in despair, so that I could not give her a surer proof of my friendship than to allay her anxiety; but my generosity, though it delivered her from one distress, was only to cause her a greater. She knew that her secret was out. Candiani's note showed that she received him every night: so her lying story, which she had perhaps invented to deceive me, was now useless. I wanted to free her from this embarrassing situation. In the morning I went to her bed; and I gave her Candiani's note with my answer.

The girl's intelligence had won her my esteem; I could no longer despise her. I regarded her as a creature led astray by her own temperament. She loved the male sex; the only harm in it was the consequences for her. Believing that I saw the matter in its true light, I had decided to act as a youth who could reason, not as a lover. It was her part to blush, not mine. The only thing I was still curious about was whether the Feltrinians had slept with her too. These were Candiani's two schoolmates.

Bettina pretended all day to be in the happiest frame of mind. In the evening she dressed for the ball; but suddenly an indisposition, whether feigned or real, made her take to her bed. The whole household was alarmed. For my part, since I knew everything, I expected new and even more lamentable scenes. I had gained an advantage over her which her self-esteem could not tolerate. Yet despite such excellent schooling before I reached adolescence, I continued to be the dupe of women until I was sixty years of age. Twelve years ago, if my guardian Genius had not intervened to help me, I would have married a silly girl with whom I had fallen in love in Vienna. Today I believe I am safe from such follies; but alas! I regret it.

The next morning the whole household was grief-stricken because the demon that possessed Bettina had conquered her reason. The Doctor told me that among her ravings were blasphemies, from which it followed that she must be possessed, for it was impossible that a girl who was merely insane would have attacked Father Prospero as she had. He resolved to put her in the hands of Father Mancia. This was a celebrated Jacobin,[1] or Dominican,[2] exorcist, who was said never to have failed with a bewitched girl.

It was a Sunday. Bettina had eaten a good dinner, and had been out of her head all day. Toward midnight her father arrived at the house, singing Tasso and so drunk that he could not stand. He went to his daughter's bedside and, after kissing her fondly, told her that she was not mad. She answered that he was not drunk.

"You are possessed, my dear daughter."

"Yes, Father; and only you can cure me."

"Very well! I am ready."

And he becomes the theologian; he reasons on the power of faith, and on the power of the paternal blessing; he throws off his cloak; he takes a crucifix in one hand, he puts the other on his daughter's head, and begins talking to the devil in such a style that even his stupid, gloomy, ill-tempered wife cannot but shout with laughter for once. Of all who were present, only the two actors in the scene did not laugh, and this was what made it so amusing. I admired Bettina, who, naturally inclined to laugh at anything and everything, managed to maintain the utmost gravity. Doctor Gozzi was laughing too, but trying to put an end to the farce, for he considered that his father's absurdities were so many profanations against the sacredness of exorcisms. The exorcist finally went off to bed, saying that he was sure the demon would leave his daughter in peace all that night.

The next morning, just as we were getting up from table, Father Mancia makes his appearance. The Doctor, followed by the entire family, conducted him to his sister's bedside. As for me, I was so absorbed in watching and studying the monk that I scarcely knew where I was. Here is his portrait.

His stature was tall and majestic, his age about thirty years, his hair was blond, his eyes blue. His features were those of the Apollo Belvedere,[3] except that they expressed neither triumph nor presumption. Dazzlingly white, his pallid complexion intensified the redness of his lips, which disclosed his fine teeth. He was neither thin nor fat, and the sadness of his countenance made it the sweeter. His movements were slow, his manner timid, which suggested an extreme modesty of mind.

When we entered, Bettina was, or was pretending to be, asleep. Father Mancia began by taking an aspergillum and sprinkling her with lustral water. She opened her eyes, looked at the monk, and instantly closed them; then she opened them again, looked at him more closely, turned over on her back, let her arms drop, and with her head prettily inclined, sank into a sleep than which nothing could have appeared sweeter. The exorcist, who was standing, produced his service book, a stole which he put round his neck, and a reliquary which he placed on the sleeping girl's bosom. Then, with a saintly look, he asked us to kneel and pray to God to tell him if the patient was possessed or was suffering from a natural illness. He left us kneeling for half an hour, during which he kept reading in a low voice. Bettina did not stir.

Tired, I suppose, of playing this role, he asked the Doctor to hear him in private. They entered the bedroom, from which they emerged a quarter of an hour later, summoned by a great burst of laughter from the demented girl, who no sooner saw them reappear than she turned her back on them. Father Mancia smiled, dipped the aspergillum in the holy water pot several times, sprinkled us all generously, and departed.

The Doctor said that he would come back the next morning, and that he had undertaken to deliver her within three hours if she was possessed, but that he promised nothing if she was insane. Her mother said she was sure he would deliver her, and she thanked God for having granted her the grace of seeing a saint before she died. Nothing was more charming than Bettina's madness the next morning. She began by saying the wildest things a poet could invent, and did not stop upon the appearance of the exorcist, who after enjoying them for a quarter of an hour armed himself from head to foot and asked us to leave the room. He was instantly obeyed. The door was left open, but that made no difference. Who would have dared to go in? For three hours we heard nothing but the most dismal silence. At noon he called us, and we went in. There was Bettina, dejected but perfectly quiet, while the monk picked up his gear. He left, saying that he had hope and asking the Doctor to send him news of her. Bettina dined in bed, ate supper at the table, and was well-behaved the next day; but now for what happened to make me certain that she was neither insane nor possessed.

It was the day before the eve of the Purification of Our Lady.[4] The Doctor always had us receive communion at the parish church; but for confession he took us to Sant'Agostino, a church in which the Jacobins of Padua officiated. At table he told us to prepare ourselves to go to confession there on the next morning but one. His mother said, "You should all go to confess to Father Mancia so that you can be absolved by such a holy man. I shall go to him too." Candiani and the Feltrinians agreed; I said nothing.

I was distressed by the plan; but I dissimulated, determined to prevent its execution. I believed in the secrecy of confession, and I could certainly not have made one that was false; but knowing that I was free to choose my confessor, I would never have been so stupid as to go and tell Father Mancia what had happened to me with a girl whom he would instantly have known could be none other than Bettina. I was certain that Candiani would tell him everything, and for this I was very sorry.

Early the next morning she came to my bed to bring me a neckband, and secretly handed me this letter:

"Hate me for living; but respect my honor, and a shadow of peace for which I hope. None of you must go to confession to Father Mancia tomorrow. You are the only one who can frustrate the plan, and you do not need to have me tell you how. I shall see if it is true that you feel some friendship for me."

It is beyond belief how sorry I felt for the poor girl when I read her note. Nevertheless, I replied as follows: "I understand that despite all the inviolable laws of confession your mother's plan cannot but alarm you; but I cannot see how, in order to frustrate it, you should count on me rather than on Candiani, who has declared his approval of it. All I can promise you is that I will not go with the others; but I have no power over your lover. It is you who must speak to him."

Here is the answer she handed me: "I have not spoken to Candiani again since the fatal night that made me wretched; I will not speak to him again, even if my speaking to him could restore my happiness. It is to you alone that I wish to owe my life and my honor."

I thought the girl more astonishing than any of those whom the romances I had read had portrayed as wonders. It seemed to me that she was deceiving me with unparalleled effrontery. I saw that she was trying to bind me in her chains again; and though I had no wish for them I resolved to perform the generous act of which she thought that I alone was capable. She felt sure she would succeed; but in what school had she learned to know the human heart so well? By reading romances. It may be that reading some romances causes the ruin of many girls; but it is certain that *reading good ones teaches good manners and the practice of the social virtues.*

So, having resolved to show the girl all the kindness of which she believed me capable, when we were about to go to bed I told the Doctor that my conscience obliged me to ask him to excuse me from going to confession to Father Mancia, and that I wished not to do differently from my schoolmates. He answered that he understood my reasons and that he would take us all to Sant' Antonio.[5] I kissed his hand. So the matter was settled, and at noon I saw Bettina come to the table with satisfaction painted on her countenance.

An open chilblain obliging me to stay in bed, and the Doctor having gone to church with all my schoolmates, leaving Bettina alone in the house, she came and sat on my bed. I was expecting this. I saw that the moment for having things out had come, and, all in all, I was not sorry.

She began by asking me if I minded her having seized the opportunity to speak to me. "No," I answered, "for you give me the opportunity to tell you that, since my feeling for you is only one of friendship, you can rest assured that from henceforth nothing I shall do can be of a nature to trouble you. So you may do whatever you please. For me to act otherwise, I should have to be in love with you; and I am that no longer. You stifled the seed of a beautiful passion in an instant. I was scarcely back in my room after the kick Candiani gave me, before I began to hate you, then I despised you, then you became indifferent to me, and finally my indifference vanished when I saw the powers of mind you possess. I have become your friend, I forgive your weaknesses, and having accustomed myself to thinking of you as you are, I have conceived the most extraordinary esteem for your intelligence. I was its dupe, but no matter: it exists, it is amazing, divine, I admire it, I love it, and it seems to me that the homage I owe it is to cherish the purest friendship for her who possesses it. Pay me in the same coin. Truth, sincerity, and no tricks. So put an end to all your nonsense, for you have already won from me all that you could ask. The mere thought of love is repugnant to me, for I can love only if I am sure of being loved without a rival. You are at liberty to attribute my stupid fastidiousness to my age; but it cannot be otherwise. You wrote me that you no longer speak to Candiani, and if I am the cause of your breaking off with him, I am sorry, believe me. Your honor demands that you try to patch things up with him; and in future I must be careful not to give him the slightest grounds for taking offense. Consider, too, that if you made him fall in love with you by seducing him in the same way, you have committed two wrongs, for it is possible that if he loves you, you have made him unhappy."

"All that you have said," Bettina answered, "is founded on a false assumption. I do not love Candiani, and I never loved him. I hated him, and I hate him, because he has deserved my hatred, and I shall convince you of it despite the appearances that speak against me. As for seduction, I beg you to spare me that base reproach. You, too, must consider that if you had not first seduced me I would never have done what I have deeply repented of doing for reasons which you do not know and which I will now explain to you. The sin I committed is great only because I did not foresee the harm it could do me in the inexperienced mind of a creature as ungrateful as yourself, who dares to reproach me with it."

Bettina wept. What she had just told me was plausible, and flattering; but I had seen too much. In addition, what she had shown me her mind was capable of made me sure that she intended to deceive me, and that her maneuver was only the consequence of her self-esteem, which would not allow her unprotestingly to accept a victory on my side which was too humiliating to her.

Not to be shaken from my idea, I answered that I believed all that she had just told me concerning the state of her heart before the little game which had made me fall in love with her; and so I promised that in future I would spare her the name of seducer. "But admit," I said, "that the violence of your flame was only momentary and that only a faint breath sufficed to put it out. Your virtue, which did not leave the path of duty except for a single hour, and which at once regained all its empire over your erring senses, is also worthy of some praise. In an instant you who adored me became insensible to all my sufferings, which I did not fail to communicate to you. It remains for me to learn how this virtue could be so precious to you, when Candiani shipwrecked it every night in his arms."

"You have now come," she said (giving me the triumphant look of one who is confident of victory), "to just the point to which I wanted to bring you. That is what I had no way of communicating to you, and what I could never tell you myself because you refused the meeting I asked of you for no other purpose than to acquaint you with the truth.

"Candiani," she went on, "declared his love to me a week after he entered our house. He asked me to consent to his father's asking my hand in marriage for him as soon as he should have finished his studies. I answered that I did not yet know him well and that I had no inclination in the matter, and I begged him not to speak of it again. He pretended to have calmed down; but soon afterward I saw that he was far from calm one day when he asked me to come and dress his hair sometimes. When I answered that I did not have time, he said that you were luckier than he was. I laughed at the reproach and at his suspicions, for everyone in the house knew that I looked after you.

"It was two weeks after I refused him the pleasure of dressing his hair that I found myself spending an hour with you in the trifling which I need not name and which, as was to be expected, kindled a fire which gave you ideas you had never had before. As for me, I was very happy; I loved you and, having abandoned myself to desires which were natural to my passion, no remorse could trouble me. I could not wait to be with you the next morning; but the same day after supper the first moment of my suffering arrived. Candiani slipped this note into my hands, together with this letter, which I later hid in a hole in the wall, intending to show them to you when occasion served."

Bettina then handed me the letter and the note. Here is the note: "Either let me visit you in your room no later than tonight by leaving the door onto the courtyard ajar, or consider how you can explain things tomorrow to the Doctor, to whom I shall give the letter of which you will find a copy enclosed."

The letter contained the statement of a base and enraged informer, and was such that it could have the most unfortunate consequences. It informed the Doctor that his sister spent the mornings with me in a criminal relationship while he was away saying mass, and promised to give him such details of the matter as would leave him no room for doubt.

"After giving it the consideration," Bettina continued, "which the situation demanded, I decided to grant the monster a hearing. I left the door ajar and waited for him with a stiletto of my father's in my pocket. Since my room is separated from my father's bedroom only by a partition, I waited for him at the door so that he could speak to me there.

"To my first question, concerning the calumny contained in the letter he threatened to give to my brother, he answered that it was not a calumny since he had himself seen our interview that morning through a hole which he had bored, directly above your bed, in the floor of the attic, and at which he stationed himself as soon as I entered your room. He concluded by saying that he would reveal all to my brother and my mother if I persisted in refusing him the same favors which he was sure I had bestowed upon you. After heaping the blackest insults upon him in my righteous anger, and calling him a coward, a spy, and a slanderer, for he could have seen nothing but childish trifling, I ended by swearing that he need not flatter himself that any threats of his could reduce me to showing him the same favor. He then fell to begging my pardon over and over and insisting that my coldness alone was responsible for the step he had taken, which he would never have resolved on except for the passion I had inspired in him, which made him wretched. He admitted that his letter might be slanderous and that he had played the part of a traitor, and he assured me that he would never use force to obtain favors which he wished to owe only to the constancy of his love. I felt obliged to tell him that I might love him later on and to promise him that I would no longer go to your bed when the Doctor was away, and I sent him away satisfied yet not daring to ask me for a single kiss, when I promised him that we could talk from time to time in the same place.

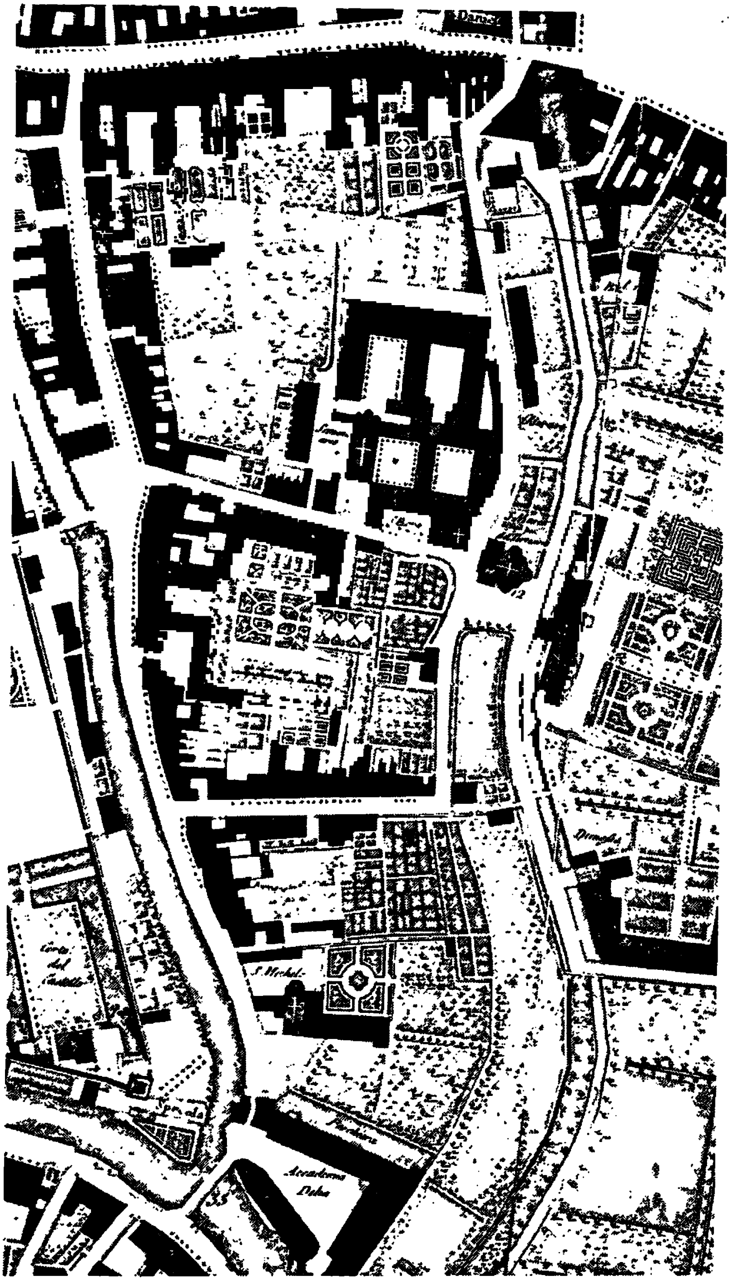
"I went to bed in despair at the thought that I could neither see you when my brother was away, nor explain the reason to you for fear of the consequences. Three weeks went by in this way, and what I suffered is beyond belief. For you kept urging me and I had to keep disappointing you. I even feared the moment when I should find myself alone with you, for I was certain that I could not help telling you the reason for the change in my behavior. Add that at least once a week I had to go to the door into the alley to talk with the scoundrel and calm his impatience with words!

"I finally resolved to end my martyrdom, when I found that you were threatening me too. I asked you to go to the ball dressed as a girl; I was going to reveal the whole intrigue to you and leave you to find a way of setting things right. Going to the ball with you was bound to offend Candiani, but I had made up my mind. You know how my plan miscarried. My brother's departure with my father gave you both the same idea. I had promised to go to your room before I received Candiani's letter in which he did not ask me to meet him but informed me that he would be in my room. I had time neither to tell him that I had reasons for forbidding him to go there, nor to warn you that I would not come to you until after midnight, as I expected to do, for I was sure that after an hour's talk I could send the wretch back to his room; but the plan he had conceived and which he insisted on telling me took much longer. I could not get rid of him. I had to listen and put up with him all night long. His complaints and his exaggerated account of his unhappiness were unending. He complained that I would not consent to a plan which, if I loved him, I should have welcomed. His scheme was that I should run away with him in Holy Week to Ferrara, where he has an uncle who would have taken us in and could easily have made his father listen to reason, whereupon we should be happy all the rest of our lives. My objections, his replies, the details of the plan, his explanations of how all difficulties could be smoothed away, took all night. My heart bled, thinking of you; but I have nothing to reproach myself with; and nothing happened which can make me unworthy of your regard. You can refuse it to me only if you believe that all I have just told you is a lie; but you will be wrong and you will be unjust. If I could have brought myself to make sacrifices which are due only to love, I could have got the traitor out of my room an hour after he entered it; but I would have chosen death rather than that horrible expedient. Could I guess that you were outside, exposed to the wind and the snow? We were both to be pitied, but I more than you. All this was written in the heavens to make me lose both my health and my reason, which I possess only from time to time, without ever being sure when the convulsions will seize me again. They say that I am bewitched and that demons have taken control of me. I know nothing about such things; but if it is true, I am the most wretched girl alive.''

Here she stopped speaking and gave free rein to her tears and moans. The story she had told me was possible, but it was not believable.

> *Forse era vero, ma non, però credibile*
> *A chi del senso suo fosse signore*[6]
>
> ("Perhaps it was true, but it did not seem
> credible to anyone in his right mind")

and I was in my right mind. What caused my emotion was her tears, whose reality left me no room for doubt. I attributed them to the strength of her self-esteem. I needed to be convinced before I would yield; and what conviction requires is not the plausible but the obvious. I could not believe either in Candiani's restraint or in


Corte del Castello
S. Michel
Accademia Delia

The University and Students' Quarter in Padua

Bettina's patience or in its having taken seven hours to discuss a single subject. Nevertheless, I found a kind of pleasure in accepting as good coin all the counterfeit money she had passed off on me.

After drying her tears, she fixed her beautiful eyes on mine, thinking to read in them the visible tokens of her victory; but I surprised her by bringing up a point which she had cleverly glossed over in her defense. *Rhetoric makes use of nature's secrets only as painters do who try to imitate her. Their most beautiful productions are false.*

The girl's quick mind, unrefined by study, sought to have the advantage of being considered pure and artless; it was conscious of this, and it made use of this consciousness to further its ends; but such a mind had given me too strong an impression of its cleverness.

"Come now, my dear Bettina!" I said, "your whole story has touched me; but how can you expect me to believe that your convulsions and your wild ravings are natural, to say nothing of the demoniac symptoms you exhibited only too appropriately during the exorcisms, although you very sensibly admit that on this point you have doubts?"

At these words she remained silent for five or six minutes, during which she stared at me fixedly; then, casting down her eyes, she began to cry, interrupting her sobs from time to time only with the words, "Poor me!" Finding this situation trying, I finally asked her what I could do for her. She answered in a woebegone voice that if my heart did not prompt me she did not know what to ask of me. "I thought," she said, "that I could regain the power over your heart which I have lost. I am no longer an object of concern to you. Continue to treat me harshly and to believe that I am feigning sufferings which are real, of which you are the cause, and which you are now increasing. You will repent of it later, and when you repent you will not be happy."

She was about to leave; but the thought that she was capable of anything frightened me. I called her back and said that the only way in which she could regain my love was to spend a month without convulsions and without needing the ministrations of the handsome Father Mancia. "That does not depend upon me," she answered; "but what do you mean by calling the Jacobin handsome? Could you suppose—" "Not at all, not at all; I suppose nothing, for to suppose anything I should have to be jealous; but I will tell you that the way your devils prefer the handsome monk's exorcisms to those of the ugly Capuchin may well give rise to remarks which do you no honor. But you must act as you think best."

She left, and a quarter of an hour later the whole household returned. After supper the maid, without my questioning her, told me that Bettina had gone to bed with violent chills after having her bedstead moved into the kitchen beside her mother's. This fever might be natural, but I doubted it. I was certain that she would never have made up her mind to recover, for that would give me too good a reason for believing that she was also deceiving me in regard to the supposed innocence of her relations with Candiani. I decided that her having her bedstead taken to the kitchen was another artifice of the same sort.

The next morning the physician Olivo, finding a high fever, told the Doctor that it would bring on incoherence, but that her ravings would come from the fever, not from devils. And in fact Bettina was delirious all day; but the Doctor, having gone over to the physician's opinion, paid no attention to his mother's protests and did not send for the Jacobin. On the third day the fever was even higher, and spots on the skin suggested smallpox, which broke out on the fourth day. Candiani and the two Feltrinians, who had not had it, were immediately sent to lodge elsewhere, so that I, who had no need to fear it, was left alone. Poor Bettina was so covered with the pestilential spots that by the sixth day it was impossible to see her skin anywhere on her body. Her eyes closed, all her hair had to be cut off, and her life was despaired of when her mouth and throat were found to be so full of spots that nothing but a few drops of honey could be introduced into her esophagus. Her only visible movement was now her breathing. Her mother never left her bedside, and I was admired when I brought my table and my notebooks there too. The girl had become a frightful object; her head was bigger by a third; her nose had vanished, and her sight was feared for even if she should recover. What I found extremely unpleasant, but bore with firmness, was her stinking sweat.

On the ninth day the parish priest came and gave her absolution and extreme unction, then he said that he left her in the hands of God. Throughout this sad scene the dialogues between Bettina's mother and the Doctor made me laugh. She wanted to know if the devil that possessed her could even now give her a fit of madness, and what would become of the devil if Bettina should die, for she did not think him fool enough to remain in such a disgusting body. She asked if he could take possession of the poor girl's soul. The poor Doctor, whose theology was Ubiquitarian, answered all her questions by statements in which there was not even a glimmer of common sense and which only confused the poor woman more and more.

The tenth and eleventh days it was feared that she would die at any moment. All her pustules had turned black and were discharging with a stench which made the air unbreathable; no one could bear up under it except myself, who was distressed by the poor creature's condition. It was in this terrible state that she awoke in me all the affection which I showed her after her recovery.

On the thirteenth day, when her fever had completely subsided, she began thrashing about because of an intolerable itching, which no medicine could more effectively have soothed than these potent words, which I repeated to her from minute to minute: "Remember, Bettina, that you are going to get well; but if you dare scratch yourself, you will be so ugly that no one will ever love you again." I challenge all the physicians in the world to find a more powerful deterrent to itching than this in the case of a girl who knows that she has been beautiful and is in danger of becoming ugly through her own fault if she scratches.

At last she opened her beautiful eyes, her bed was changed, and she was carried to her room. An abscess which developed on her neck kept her in bed until Easter. She infected me with eight or ten pustules, three of which have left an indelible mark on my face; they stood me in good stead with Bettina, who now realized that only I deserved her affection. Her skin was left covered with red spots, which did not disappear until a year had passed. She loved me afterwards without any feigning, and I loved her without ever plucking a flower which fate, supported by prejudice, had reserved for marriage. But what a wretched marriage! Two years later she became the wife of a shoemaker named Pigozzo, a base scoundrel who brought her to poverty and misery. Her brother the Doctor had to take care of her. Fifteen years later he took her with him to Val San Giorgio,[7] of which he was appointed archpriest. When I went to see him eighteen years ago I found Bettina old, ill, and dying. She expired before my eyes in the year 1776, twenty-four hours after my arrival. I shall speak of her death in its proper place.

At this same time my mother came back from Petersburg, where the Empress Anna Ivanovna[8] did not find the Italian comedy sufficiently amusing. The whole troop was already back in Italy and my mother had made the journey with Carlino Bertinazzi, Harlequin,[9] who died at Paris in the year 1783. As soon as she reached Padua she sent word of her arrival to Doctor Gozzi, who at once took me to the inn at which she was staying with her traveling companion. We ate dinner there, and before leaving she presented him with a fur and gave me a lynx-skin to give to Bettina. Six months later she had me come to Venice, in order to see me again before she left for Dresden, where she had accepted a lifetime engagement in the service of the Elector of Saxony Augustus III, King of Poland. She took with her my brother Giovanni, who was then eight years old and who wept desperately when they left, which led me to suspect that he was not especially intelligent, for there was nothing tragic about the departure. He was the only one of us who owed all that he became in life to our mother, though he was not her favorite.

After this period I spent another year in Padua studying law, of which I became a Doctor at the age of sixteen,[10] my thesis in civil law having been *"de testamentis"* ("concerning wills") and in canon law *utrum hebrei possint construere novas Synagogas* ("whether Jews may build new synagogues"). My vocation was to study medicine so that I could practice the profession, for which I felt a strong inclination, but my wish was disregarded; I was forced to study law, for which I felt an unconquerable aversion. It was alleged that the only way I could make my fortune was to become an advocate and, still worse, an ecclesiastical advocate, because I was considered to be gifted in speaking. *If the question had been given due consideration I should have been allowed to do as I wished and become a physician, in which profession quackery is even more effective than it is in legal practice.* I practiced neither profession; and it could not be otherwise. Perhaps this is why I have never wished either to employ advocates when I happened to have legal claims to present in court or to call in physicians when I was ill. *Legal squabbling ruins more families than it supports; and those who die killed by physicians are far more numerous than those who are cured. It follows that* *mankind would be far less wretched without these two breeds.*

Having to attend the University—which is called the Bo[11]—to hear the professors lecture had made it necessary for me to go about alone, and I was delighted, for until then I had never considered myself a free man. Wanting to enjoy to the full the freedom of which I found myself in possession, I made as many undesirable acquaintances as possible among the notorious students. The most notorious cannot but be those who are the greatest libertines, gamblers, frequenters of places of ill repute, drunkards, debauchees, seducers of decent girls, given to violence, false, and incapable of entertaining the slightest virtuous feeling. It was in the company of fellows of this kind that I began to know the world by studying it in the harsh book of experience.

The theory of behavior is useful to the life of man only as the index is useful to him who goes through it before reading the book itself; when he has read it, all that he has learned is the subject matter. Such is the moral teaching which we receive from the discourses, the precepts, and the stories we are treated to by those who bring us up. We listen to it all attentively; but when we have an opportunity to profit by the various advice we have been given, we become possessed by a desire to see if the thing will turn out to be what we have been told it will; we do it, and we are punished by repentance. What recompenses us a little is that in such moments we consider ourselves wise and hence entitled to teach others. Those whom we teach do exactly as we did, from which it follows that the world always stands still or goes from bad to worse.

Actas parentum, pejor avis, tulit nos nequiores mox daturos progeniem vitiosiorem ("The generation of our parents, worse than that of our grandparents, has created us worse again and destined soon to bring forth yet more vicious progeny").[12]

So it was that Doctor Gozzi's permission to go out by myself put me in the way of learning several truths of which up to that time I was not only ignorant but of which I did not even suspect the existence. Upon my appearance the old hands descended on me and sounded me out. Finding me inexperienced in everything, they obliged me to learn by making me fall into every trap. They made me play cards, and when they had won the little money I had they made me lose on my word, and then taught me to engage in shady dealings in order to pay up. I began to know what it was to be in trouble. I learned to be wary of all those who praise a man to his face, and never to count on the offers of those who flatter. I learned to live with brawlers, whose company must be avoided if one is not to be forever on the verge of destruction. As for professional prostitutes, I did not fall into their snares because I found none of them as pretty as Bettina; but I could not keep myself from desiring the kind of glory whose source is a courage which contemns life.

In those days the students of Padua enjoyed very large privileges. They were abuses which their antiquity had made legal; this is the original nature of almost all privileges. They differ from prerogatives. The fact is that in order to keep their privileges in force the students committed crimes. The guilty were not punished according to the rigor of the law, for the interest of the State could not allow such severity to diminish the number of students who flocked to this famous University from every part of Europe. The principle of the Venetian government[13] was to pay very high stipends to professors of great renown and to let those who came to hear their lectures live in the utmost freedom. The students were responsible only to a head of the student body called the "Syndic."[14] He was a foreign gentleman who was obliged to maintain a registry and to answer to the government for the behavior of the students. He had to give them up to justice when they broke the laws, and the students accepted his decisions because when they had a shadow of justification he also defended them. They refused, for example, to allow the customs officers to search their luggage, and the ordinary *sbirri*[15] would never have dared to arrest a student; they carried whatever forbidden arms they pleased; they freely seduced girls of decent family whose parents could not keep them under supervision; they frequently disturbed the public peace with nocturnal pranks: in short, they were a set of unbridled youths who asked nothing but to satisfy their whims, amuse themselves, and laugh.

In those days it happened that a *sbirro* entered a coffeehouse where there were two students. One of them ordered him to leave, the *sbirro* disregarded the order, the student fired a pistol at him and missed, but the *sbirro* returned the fire and wounded the student, then took to his heels. The students gathered at the Bo and, dividing up into groups, went hunting for *sbirri* in order to avenge the insult by massacring them; but in one encounter two students were killed. The entire body of students then assembled and swore never to lay down their arms until there were no more *sbirri* in Padua. The government intervened, and the Syndic undertook to persuade the students to lay down their arms if atonement were made, since the *sbirri* were in the wrong. The *sbirro* who had wounded the student was hanged, and peace was made; but during the week before the peace, since all the students were going about Padua divided into patrols, I did not want to be less courageous than the rest, no matter what the Doctor said. Armed with pistols and a carbine I went out with my fellow students every day, searching for the enemy. I was extremely disappointed that the troop of which I was a member never came upon a single *sbirro*. When the war was over the Doctor laughed at me; but Bettina admired my courage.

Reluctant to appear poorer than my new friends in this new life, I began spending more than I could afford. I sold or pawned all that I possessed, and contracted debts which I could not repay. These were my first vexations, and the most painful that a young man can experience.

I wrote to my good grandmother for help; but instead of sending it she came to Padua herself to thank Doctor Gozzi and Bettina, and took me back to Venice on October 1st, 1739.

At the moment of my departure the Doctor wept and presented me with his most cherished treasure. He hung about my neck a relic of some saint whose name I no longer remember, which might still be in my possession if it had not been set in gold. The miracle it performed for me was to be of service to me at a moment of urgent need. Each time I returned to Padua to complete[16] my law studies I lodged in his house; but I was always unhappy to see the scoundrel who was to marry her hanging around Bettina, who seemed to me worthy of a better fate. I was sorry that I had spared her for him. It was a prejudice I had at the time, but of which I soon rid myself.

CHAPTER IV

The Patriarch of Venice confers minor order on me. My acquaintance with Senator Malipiero, with Teresa Imer, with the niece of my parish priest, with Signora Orio, with Nanetta and Marta, with La Cavamacchie. I become a preacher. My adventure at Pasiano with Lucia. Assignation on the fourth floor.

"'HE HAS just come from Padua, where he has been studying at the University,'' was the phrase used to introduce me everywhere, which was no sooner uttered than it gained me the silent observation of my equals in rank and age, the compliments of fathers, and the caresses of old women, among them some who were not really old but were willing to pass as such so that they could embrace me without impropriety. The parish priest of San Samuele,[1] whose name was Tosello, after inducting me into his church, presented me to Monsignor Correr, Patriarch of Venice, who gave me the tonsure and four months later, by special favor, conferred the four minor orders on me.[2] It was the greatest comfort to my grandmother. Good masters were immediately found so that I could continue my studies, and Signor Baffo chose the Abate Schiavo[3] to teach me to write a pure Italian and especially the language of poetry, for which I had a decided bent. I found myself most comfortably lodged with my brother Francesco, who had been set to study theatrical architecture. My sister and my posthumous brother were living with my grandmother in another house, one that belonged to her and in which she wished to die because her husband had died there. The house I lived in was the same one[4] in which I had lost my father and for which my mother continued to pay the rent; it was large and very well furnished.

Though the Abate Grimani was supposed to be my principal patron, I nevertheless saw him very seldom. The person to whom I attached myself was Signor Malipiero, to whom the priest Tosello immediately presented me. He was a Senator[5] who, not wishing to occupy himself with affairs of state at his age, which was seventy, led a pleasant life in his palace, eating well and every evening entertaining a most select company made up of ladies who had all gone the pace and of men of wit and intelligence who were sure to know of the latest happenings in the city. This old nobleman was a bachelor and rich, but subject three or four times a year to extremely painful attacks of gout which at each recurrence left him stiff first in one limb, then in another, so that his entire body was crippled. Only his head, his lungs, and his stomach had been spared. He was handsome, a connoisseur of wine, and an epicure; his mind was keen; with a vast knowledge of the world, he possessed the eloquence of the Venetians and the wisdom which is the portion of a senator who has not retired until he has spent forty years governing the Republic nor ceased to court the fair sex until he has had twenty mistresses and realized that he must give up all hope of pleasing even one. Though he was almost completely crippled, his condition was not apparent when he was seated, or talking, or at table. He ate only once a day, and always alone because, having lost all his teeth, he took twice as long to eat as another would have taken to eat the same meal and he was unwilling either to hurry himself in deference to his guests or to see them waiting while he chewed his food with his sound gums before swallowing it. For this reason alone he put up with the unpleasantness of eating in solitude, much to the displeasure of his excellent cook.

The first time that my parish priest did me the honor of presenting me to His Excellency, I most respectfully impugned this reasoning, which everyone considered unanswerable. I told him that he need only invite to his table those who naturally ate twice as much as other people.

"Where are they to be found?"

"It is a delicate matter. Your Excellency must try out table companions and, when you find them to be such as you want, must have the art to keep them without letting them know the reason. For there is not a well-bred person in the world who would have it said that he has the honor of eating with Your Excellency only because he eats twice as much as another."

Realizing all the cogency of my remarks, His Excellency told the priest to bring me to dinner next day. Having found that, if I was strong in precept, I was even stronger in practice, he had me share his table every day.

Despite his age and his gout this Senator who had renounced everything except himself still nurtured an amorous inclination. He loved Teresa, the daughter of the actor Imer,[6] who lived in a house near[7] his palace, its windows being across the way from the apartment in which he slept. The girl, then aged seventeen, and pretty, willful, and a flirt, who was studying music to make a career of it on the stage, who was forever showing herself at her window, and whose charms had already intoxicated the old man, treated him cruelly. She came almost every day to pay him a visit, but she was always accompanied by her mother, an old actress who had retired from the stage to pursue the salvation of her soul and who, naturally enough, had decided to see if she could not contrive an alliance between the devil and God. She took her daughter to mass every day and insisted on her going to confession every Sunday; but in the afternoon she took her to visit the amorous old man, whose fury terrified me when she refused him a kiss on the excuse that, having performed her devotions that morning, she could not stoop to offend the very God she had eaten and who was perhaps still in her stomach. What a spectacle for me, then aged fifteen, whom the old man allowed to be the only and silent witness of these scenes! The scoundrelly mother applauded her daughter's resistance, and even made bold to lecture the votary of pleasure, who in turn did not dare to refute her maxims, which were either too Christian or not Christian at all, and had to fight down the temptation to throw anything within reach at her head. He could think of nothing to say to her. Anger took the place of concupiscence, and after they were gone he relieved himself with philosophical reflections addressed to me. Compelled to answer him and not knowing what to say, I one day suggested marriage. He astonished me by answering that she refused to become his wife.

"Why?"

"Because she does not want to incur the hatred of my family."

"Offer her a large sum of money, a position."

"She says she would not commit a mortal sin to become queen of the world."

"You must violate her or send her packing, banish her from your house."

"I am incapable of the first, and I cannot make up my mind to the second."

"Kill her."

"That is what it will come to, if I do not die first."

"Your Excellency is to be pitied."

"Do you ever go to visit her?"

"No, because I might fall in love with her; and if she acted toward me as I see her act here, I should be miserable."

"You are right."

After witnessing these scenes and being honored with these conversations, I became the nobleman's favorite. He admitted me to his evening receptions, which, as I have already said, were frequented by superannuated women and by men of wit. He said that they were the place for me to acquire a knowledge far more important than the philosophy of Gassendi,[8] which I was then studying at his behest instead of the Peripatetic philosophy, which he ridiculed. He laid down certain rules of conduct by which, as he showed me, I must abide if I was to attend his receptions, since the company would be astonished to see a boy of my age admitted to them. He ordered me never to speak except in reply to direct questions, and above all never to express my opinion on any subject, for at the age of fifteen I was not entitled to have one. Faithfully obeying his commands, I gained his esteem and within a few days was the pet of all the ladies who visited him. In my character of a young abate of no importance, they insisted on my accompanying them when they went to see their daughters or their nieces in the visiting rooms of the convents in which they were being educated; I went to their houses at all hours, and entered unannounced; I was scolded when I let a week go by without putting in an appearance; and when I entered the young ladies' apartments, I heard them hurrying away; but they said they were silly as soon as they saw that it was only I. I was delighted with their trustfulness.

Signor Malipiero amused himself before dinner by questioning me on the advantages I gained from being received by the respectable ladies whom I had met at his receptions, telling me before I could answer, however, that they were propriety itself and that everyone would consider me a low scoundrel if I said anything about them which reflected on the estimable reputation they enjoyed in society. Thus he inculcated the sound precept of discretion in me. It was at his palace that I met Signora Manzoni, the wife of a notary public,[9] of whom I shall have occasion to speak further on. This worthy lady inspired the greatest devotion in me. She taught me much, and gave me very sound advice; which if I had only followed it my life would not have been stormy, and so I should not today have found it worth recording.

So many fine acquaintanceships among women of fashion, as they are called, gave me a desire to please by my person and by elegance in dress; but my parish priest objected, as did my good grandmother. Taking me aside one day he told me in honeyed words that in the condition which I had embraced I should think of pleasing God by my state of mind, not men by my person: he condemned my elaborate curls and the delicate perfume of my pomade; he told me that the devil had me by the hair and that I would be excommunicated if I continued to devote such care to it, citing the words of an ecumenical council, *Clericus qui nutrit comam anathema sit* ("An ecclesiastic who grows his hair shall be anathema").[10] I replied by citing the example of a hundred abati who were not regarded as excommunicated and were left in peace, though they put on three times as much powder as I who put on only a trace of it and who used a pomade scented with ambergris which would make a woman in childbirth faint, whereas mine, which was scented with jasmine, brought me compliments from every gathering I entered. I ended by telling him that if I had wanted to stink I should have become a Capuchin, and that I was very sorry but I could not obey his commands in this particular.

Three or four days later he persuaded my grandmother to let him into my room so early in the morning that I was still asleep. She swore to me afterward that if she had known what he was going to do she would not have opened the door for him. The presumptuous priest, who loved me, softly approached and, with a pair of good scissors, pitilessly cut off all my front hair from ear to ear. My brother Francesco, who was in the next room, saw him but did nothing to stop him. In fact he was delighted for, wearing a wig himself, he was jealous of the beauty of my hair. He has been envious of me all his life, yet combining, though I know not how, his envy with affection; today this vice of his must have died of old age, like all mine.

When I awoke the work was already done. After his crime the priest departed as if nothing had happened. It was my two hands which made me realize all the horror of this unexampled butchery.

What anger! What indignation! What projects of revenge as soon as, mirror in hand, I saw the state to which the audacious priest had reduced me! My grandmother came running at my cries, my brother laughed. The old woman calmed me somewhat by admitting that the priest had gone beyond the bounds of permissible punishment.

Resolved to take my revenge I dressed, brooding over a hundred dark plans. I considered that I had a right to avenge myself in blood, without fear of the law. Since the theaters were open, I set out masked[11] and went to see the advocate Carrara, whom I had met at Signor Malipiero's, to find out if I could bring a suit against the priest. He told me that a family had recently been ruined because the head of it had cut off a Slavonian merchant's mustache, which is far less than an entire forelock; hence I had but to command him if I wished to serve the priest on the spot with an extrajudiciary[12] which would make him tremble. I told him to do so, and to tell Signor Malipiero that evening why he had not seen me at his dinner table. It was clear that I could no longer go out unmasked so long as my hair had not grown back.

I ate a very bad dinner with my brother. My being obliged by this misfortune to forgo the delicate fare to which Signor Malipiero had accustomed me was not the least of the sufferings I had to bear because of the action of the high-handed priest whose godson I was. The fury that possessed me was so great that I shed tears. I was in despair because the insult I had suffered had a comic aspect and so put me in a ridiculous light, which I considered more prejudicial to my honor than any crime. I went to bed early, and a sound ten hours' sleep cooled my rage somewhat, but it left me no less determined to avenge myself by due legal process.

I was dressing to go to Signor Carrara's to read over the extrajudiciary, when I saw before me a skillful hairdresser whom I had encountered at Signora Contarini's. He told me that Signor Malipiero had sent him to dress my hair so that I could go out, for he wanted me to come and dine with him that same day. After looking over the damage, he laughed and said that I need only leave it to him, assuring me that he would make it possible for me to go out even more elegantly curled than before. This skillful young man made all my front hair the same length as the part which had been cut, and then dressed my hair *en vergette* to such effect that I found myself pleased, satisfied, and avenged.

I instantly forgot the insult, I went to the advocate and told him that I no longer wished for revenge, then I flew to Signor Malipiero's, where chance would have it that I found the priest, whom, despite my joy, I treated to a withering look. Nothing was said of what had happened, Signor Malipiero took in the whole scene, and the priest departed, certainly repenting of his action, for my hair was so elegantly curled that it really did deserve excommunication.

After my cruel godfather left, I did not dissemble with Signor Malipiero: I told him in so many words that I would look for another church, for I absolutely refused to remain connected with one whose priest was a man capable of going to such lengths. The wise old man told me that I was right. *This was precisely the way to bring me to do what was wanted of me.* That evening the entire company, who had already heard the story, complimented me, assuring me that my curls could not be more charming. I was the happiest of lads, and all the happier when two weeks had passed since the occurrence and Signor Malipiero had not said a word to me about going back to the church. Only my grandmother kept bothering me, insisting that I ought to go back.

But when I felt sure that my noble patron would not bring up the subject again, I was greatly surprised to hear him say that an opportunity had arisen which would make it possible for me to go back to the church and at the same time secure full satisfaction from the priest. "As president," he continued, "of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament,[13] it falls to me to choose the orator to deliver the panegyric upon it on the fourth Sunday of this month, which happens to be the day after Christmas. The person I shall recommend to him is you, and I am sure that he will not dare to refuse you. What do you say to such a triumph? Does it please you?"

My surprise at his proposal was extreme, for it had never entered my head to become a preacher, still less that I had the ability to compose a sermon and deliver it. I told him I was certain he was joking; but as soon as he convinced me that he was speaking in earnest, it took him only a minute to persuade me and to make me sure that I was born to be the most famous preacher of the century as soon as I had put on flesh, for in those days I was extremely thin. I had no fear for my voice or my gestures, and so far as composition was concerned, I felt that I had more than ability enough to produce a masterpiece.

I told him that I was ready and that I could not wait to get home and begin writing the panegyric. "Though

I am no theologian," I said, "I am well versed in the subject. I shall say astonishing things, and they will be new." The next day he told me that the priest had been delighted by his choice and even more by my willingness to accept this sacred task, but that he insisted that I show him my composition as soon as I had finished it, because, since the subject lay in the domain of the most exalted theology, he could not permit me to enter the pulpit unless he was certain that I had said nothing heretical. I agreed to this, and during the course of the week composed and copied out my panegyric. I still have it, and, what is more, I consider it excellent.

My poor grandmother could do nothing but weep with satisfaction at seeing her grandson an apostle. She made me read it to her, she told her beads as she listened, and declared that it was beautiful. Signor Malipiero, who did not tell his beads as he listened, told me that the priest would not like it. I had taken my text from Horace: *Ploravere suis non respondere favorem speratum meritis* ("They lamented that their merits did not meet with the gratitude for which they had hoped").[14] I deplored the wickedness and ingratitude of mankind, which had brought to naught the plan the divine wisdom had conceived for its redemption. He did not approve of my having taken my text from a moralist; but he was delighted that my sermon was not stuffed with Latin quotations.

I went to the priest's house to read it to him; he was not at home; having to wait for him, I fell in love with his niece Angela, who was working at the embroidery frame, who told me that she wanted to know me, and who, wanting a good laugh, insisted on my telling her the story of the forelock that her reverend uncle had cut off. This love determined my fate; it was the cause of two others, which were the causes of several other causes which ended by obliging me to renounce being a churchman. But let us not go too fast.

When the priest arrived he did not seem displeased to see me being entertained by his niece, who was my own age. After reading my sermon he told me that it was a very pretty academic diatribe, but that it was not suitable for the pulpit.

"I will give you one," he said, "of my own composition, which no one has seen. You shall learn it by heart, and I give you permission to say that it is yours."

"Thank you, Your Reverence. But I will deliver my own or none at all."

"But you shall not deliver this one in my church."

"You may discuss that with Signor Malipiero. Meanwhile, I shall take my composition to the censors, then to Monsignor the Patriarch, and if it is rejected I will have it printed."

"Come, come, young man! The Patriarch will agree with me."

That evening I repeated my argument with the priest to Signor Malipiero in the presence of all his guests. I was forced to read my panegyric, which was applauded on all hands. I was praised for my modesty in quoting none of the Fathers, whom at my age I could not have read, and the ladies admired me for having included not a word of Latin except my text from Horace, who, though a great libertine, nevertheless said excellent things. One of the Patriarch's nieces, who was present, said that she would speak to her uncle, to whom I was determined to appeal. Signor Malipiero told me to come and discuss the matter with him in the morning before I did anything else.

I obeyed, and he sent for the priest, who came at once. After letting him talk his fill, I convinced him by telling him that either the Patriarch would approve my sermon and I would deliver it without his running any risk; or he would disapprove of it and I would yield.

"Do not go to him," he said, "and I will approve it;

I only ask you to change your text, for Horace was a villain."

"Why do you quote Seneca, Origen, Tertullian, Boethius, whom, since they were all heretics, you must consider more odious than Horace, who after all could not be a Christian?"

But I finally gave in to please Signor Malipiero, and I put in the text the priest wanted, despite the fact that it was out of keeping with my sermon. I then gave it to him, so that I should have an excuse, by calling for it the following morning, to talk to his niece.

But what really amused me was Doctor Gozzi. I sent him my sermon out of vanity. He sent it back to me, condemning it and asking me if I had gone mad. He told me that if I was allowed to deliver it in the pulpit I would bring dishonor not only on myself but also on him, who had educated me.

I delivered my sermon in the Church of San Samuele before a most select audience. I received great praise, after which it was unanimously predicted that I would become the greatest preacher of the century, since no one at the age of fifteen had ever played the role so well.

In the bag in which it is customary for the congregation to put their offerings for the preacher, the sexton who emptied it found nearly fifty zecchini, together with some love letters which scandalized the bigots. One, which was anonymous, though I thought I knew who had written it, led me into an awkward indiscretion which I think it best to spare the reader. This rich harvest when I was greatly in need of money made me think seriously of becoming a preacher, and I announced my vocation to the priest and asked him to help me. I thus gave myself the means of going daily to his house, where I fell more and more in love with Angela, who was willing to let me love her but who, showing herself to be a perfect dragon of virtue, obstinately refused to grant me the slightest favor. She wanted me to renounce my orders and marry her. I could not bring myself to do this. But hoping to make her change her mind, I persisted. Her uncle had commissioned me to compose a panegyric on St. Joseph which I was to recite on the 19th of March 1741. I composed it, and the priest himself spoke of it with enthusiasm; but it was fated that I should not preach more than once on this earth. Here is the story; sorry as it is, it is only too true, though there are those who are cruel enough to find it comic.

I thought I need not take much trouble to learn my sermon by heart. I was the author of it, I knew that I knew it; and the calamity of forgetting it did not seem to me within the realm of possible things. I might forget a sentence; but I must surely be able to substitute another; and just as I never found myself at a loss when I was discoursing to a group of well-bred people, I thought it beyond probability that I could find myself stricken dumb before an audience in which I knew no one who could abash me and make me lose my reasoning powers. So I amused myself as usual, doing no more than read my composition over night and morning in order to fix it in my memory, of which I had never had reason to complain.

So on the 19th of March, the day on which I was to enter the pulpit four hours after noon to deliver my sermon, I did not have the strength of mind to deprive myself of the pleasure of dining with the Count of Montereale,[15] who was staying in my house and who had invited the patrician Barozzi, who was to marry his daughter the Countess Lucia after Easter.

I was still at table with this distinguished company when a clerk came to tell me that I was awaited at the sacristy. With my stomach full and my head the worse for wine, I set out, I hurry to the church, I enter the pulpit.

I speak the exordium perfectly, I draw breath. But after a bare hundred words of the exposition, I no longer know what I am saying or what I have to say. Determined to go on at all costs, I beat around the bush, and what finishes me off completely is a low murmur from the restive audience, only too aware of my plight. I see several people leave the church, I think I hear laughter, I lose my head and all hope of retrieving the situation. I can assure my reader that I have never known whether I pretended to faint or fainted in good earnest. All I know is that I dropped to the floor of the pulpit, at the same time hitting the wall with my head and wishing that I had split my skull. Two clergymen came and led me back to the sacristy, where without a word to anyone I took my cloak and my hat and went home. Shutting myself in my room, I put on a short coat such as abati wear in the country, and after packing what I needed in my portmanteau I went and asked my grandmother for some money, then set out for Padua to obtain my *terzarie.*[16] I arrived there at midnight and immediately went to bed in the house of my good Doctor Gozzi, to whom I took care not to give an account of my disaster. After doing all that was necessary for my doctorate in the following year, I returned to Venice after Easter, to find my misfortune forgotten; but there was no longer any question of my preaching. I was encouraged to try again, but to no purpose. I completely renounced the profession.

On Ascension Eve Signora Manzoni's husband introduced me to a young courtesan who was then causing a great stir in Venice. She was known as La Cavamacchie,[17] which means "the cleaner," because her father had practiced the cleaning trade. She wanted to be called Preato, that being her family name; but her friends called her Giulietta; it was her Christian name, and pretty enough to be recorded in history.

Her celebrity was due to the fact that the Marchese Sanvitale,[18] of Parma, had spent a hundred thousand scudi on her in return for her favors. Her beauty was the talk of Venice. Those who could manage to speak with her considered themselves fortunate, and those who were admitted into her circle more than fortunate. As I shall have occasion to speak of her more than once in these memoirs, the reader may be glad to have her story in a few words.

In the year 1735, Giulietta, then fourteen years of age, took a coat which had been cleaned to a Venetian nobleman named Marco Muazzo. This nobleman, finding her charming despite her rags, went to see her at her father's house with a well-known advocate named Bastiano Uccelli.[19] Uccelli, even more struck by her fervid imagination and gaiety than by her beauty and her fine figure, set her up in a well-furnished apartment, gave her a music master, and made her his mistress. During the Fair[20] he took her walking with him on the Liston,[21] where she amazed all the connoisseurs. Within six months she thought herself musician enough to sign a contract with an impresario, who took her to Vienna to play a castrato role in an opera by Metastasio.[22]

At this point the advocate saw fit to leave her and turned her over to a rich Jew, who gave her some diamonds and then likewise left her. In Vienna her charms won her the applause for which she could not hope from her talents, which were less than mediocre. The crowd of worshipers who went to sacrifice to the idol, and which was renewed from week to week, determined the august Maria Theresa to destroy the new cult. She sent the new goddess a command to leave the capital of Austria instantly. It was Count Bonifazio Spada who brought her back to Venice, which she left to sing in Padua. It was there that her charms won her the love of Count Giacomo Sanvitale; nothing came of it, however, for the Marchesa, who stood very much on her dignity, slapped her face in her own box over a certain remark of the artist's which she considered insolent. The insult so disgusted Giulietta with the theater that she gave it up forever. She returned to her native city. Rejoicing in the reputation of having been *sfrattata*[23] from Vienna, she could not fail to make her fortune. It had become a title. To disparage a singer or a dancer, it was only necessary to say that she had been to Vienna and had been so little acclaimed that the Empress had not thought her worth banishing.

Signor Steffano Querini delle Papozze[24] immediately became her acknowledged lover, and her fancy man three months later when the Marchese Sanvitale made her his mistress in the spring of the year 1740. He began by giving her a hundred thousand ducati correnti.[25] To prevent anyone from attributing the gift of such an extravagant sum to weakness, he said that it was scarcely enough to avenge the artist for a slap his wife had given her. Giulietta, however, would never admit the slap, and she was right: by acknowledging the Marchese's magnanimity, she would have dishonored herself. The slap would have blighted charms of whose intrinsic value she prided herself upon seeing the world convinced.

In the following year, 1741, Signor Manzoni introduced me to this Phryne[26] as a young abate who was beginning to make a name for himself. She was living near San Paterniano,[27] at the foot of the bridge, in a house belonging to Signor Piai. I found her in the company of six or seven seasoned admirers. She was sitting at her ease on a sofa, beside Signor Querini. Her appearance surprised me; in the tone of a princess, and looking at me as if I were for sale, she told me that she was not sorry to have made my acquaintance. As soon as she had asked me to be seated, I began examining her too. I found it easy to do. The room was not large, but there were at least twenty candles.

Giulietta was a tall, beautiful girl of eighteen years; her dazzling whiteness, the crimson of her cheeks, the vermilion of her lips, and the blackness and the very narrow curved line of her eyebrows impressed me as artificial. Two fine rows of teeth made one overlook the fact that her mouth was too large. So she took care always to be smiling. Her bosom was simply a broad, beautiful table, on which a fichu was artfully disposed to make one imagine that the dishes one wishes to find in such a place were indeed there; but I did not admit it. Despite her rings and her bracelets, I observed that her hands were too big and too bony, and for all the care she took not to expose her feet, a slipper which lay at the bottom of her dress made it clear to me that they were as big as she was—a graceless proportion which is displeasing not only to Chinese and Spaniards, but to all connoisseurs. A tall woman should have small feet, and such was the taste of Lord Holofernes, who otherwise would not have found Lady Judith charming. *"Et sandalia eius,"* says the Holy Spirit, *"rapuerunt oculos eius"* ("And her sandals ravished his eyes").[28] Comparing her, in the course of my careful examination, with the hundred thousand ducats which the nobleman from Parma had given her, I was astonished, for I would not myself have given a zecchino to look upon all those other beauties *quas insternebat stola* ("which her dress concealed").

A quarter of an hour after my arrival, the murmur of water struck by the oars of a gondola coming in to the landing announced the prodigal Marchese. We rose, and Signor Querini quickly left his place, blushing a little. Signor Sanvitale, who was old rather than young and who had traveled, sat down near her, but not on the sofa, which obliged the beauty to turn. I was now able to see her in full-face. I found her more beautiful so than in profile. The four or five times I paid court to her sufficed for me to tell the company at Signor Malipiero's that she could be attractive only to exhausted appetites, for she possessed neither the beauties of simple nature nor the sophistication of society nor any particular talent nor easy manners. My opinion pleased everyone present, but Signor Malipiero smiled and whispered in my ear that Giulietta would certainly be informed of the portrait I had just drawn of her and would become my enemy. He proved to be right.

I thought it strange in this notorious girl that she very seldom addressed me and that she never looked at me without peering through a concave lens to assist her myopic vision or squeezing her eyelids together, as if she did not want to give me the honor of a full view of her eyes, which were incontestably beautiful. They were blue, perfectly shaped, prominent, and illuminated by that unimaginable iridescence which nature gives only, and rarely, to youth, and which usually disappears at about the age of forty after having performed miracles. The late King of Prussia kept it until his death.

Giulietta learned of the portrait I had given of her at Signor Malipiero's. The informer was the Ragionato[29] Saverio Costantini. She said to Signor Manzoni in my presence that a great connoisseur had found some annoying faults in her, but she did not specify them. I saw that she was hitting at me indirectly, and I expected to be ostracized. However, she kept me waiting for a full hour. The conversation turned to a concert given by the actor Imer, at which his daughter Teresa had had a brilliant success. She asked me point-blank what Signor Malipiero was doing with her; I answered that he was giving her an education.

"He is quite capable of that," she replied, "for he is highly intelligent; but I should like to know what he is doing with you."

"Whatever he can."

"I am told he finds you a little stupid."

The laugh, of course, was on her side. Not knowing what to answer, I very nearly blushed and a quarter of an hour later I left, certain that I should never set foot in her house again. My account of this breach greatly amused my old Senator the next day at dinner.

I spent the summer going to indulge in Arcadian courtship with Angela at the school where she went to learn embroidering. Her parsimony in granting me favors irritated me, and I already found my love a torment. With my strong temperament, I needed a girl of Bettina's type, one who enjoyed appeasing the flame of love without quenching it. But I soon got rid of my taste for this shallow satisfaction. Having a kind of virginity myself, I felt the greatest reverence for a girl's. I thought it the Palladium[30] of Cecrops.[31] I would have nothing to do with married women. What stupidity! I was fool enough to be jealous of their husbands. Angela was recalcitrant in the highest degree, yet not a flirt. She was drying me up; I was growing thin. The pathetic and plaintive speeches I addressed to her at the embroidery frame at which she worked with two other girls, sisters and friends of hers, produced more effect on them than upon her heart, for that was too much the slave of the precept which was poisoning my life. If I had had eyes for anyone but her I should have realized that the two sisters had more charm than she did; but she had made me obstinate. She told me that she was ready to become my wife, and she believed that I could wish for nothing more. She exasperated me beyond measure when, as a mark of extreme favor, she told me that abstinence made her suffer as much as it did me.

At the beginning of the autumn a letter from the Countess of Montereale summoned me to her country place in Friuli, an estate named Pasiano.[32] She was to be entertaining a brilliant company, including her daughter, who had become a Venetian lady of patrician rank, who was intelligent and beautiful and had one eye so lovely that it made up for the other, rendered hideous by leucoma.

Finding gaiety at Pasiano, I had no difficulty in increasing it and for the time being forgetting the cruel Angela. I was allotted a room on the ground floor, giving on to the garden, where I found myself so comfortable that it did not occur to me to wonder next to whom I might be lodging. Upon my awaking the following morning my eyes were pleasantly surprised by the charming object which approached my bed to serve me my coffee. It was a very young girl, but already formed as city girls are at seventeen; she was only fourteen. White-skinned, with black eyes, her hair hanging loose, and covered only by a shift and a petticoat laced awry which exposed half of her bare leg to view, she looked at me as frankly and calmly as if I had been an old acquaintance. She asked me if I had found my bed comfortable.

"Yes. I'm sure you made it. Who are you?"

"I'm Lucia, the caretaker's daughter, I have neither brothers nor sisters, and I'm fourteen. I'm very glad you haven't a valet, for I will wait on you myself, and I am sure you will be satisfied."

Enchanted by this beginning, I sit up; she hands me my dressing gown, saying a hundred things of which I did not understand a word. I drink my coffee, as disconcerted as she was at ease, and amazed at a beauty to which it was impossible to remain indifferent. She had sat down on the foot of my bed, excusing herself for the liberty she was taking only by a laugh which expressed everything. Her father and her mother came in while I still had the coffee cup to my lips. Lucia does not budge; she looks at them as if pluming herself on the post she had assumed. They chide her gently and ask me to excuse her.

The good people say a hundred civil things to me; and Lucia goes off about her business. They praise her to me: she is their only child, their darling, the consolation of their old age; she obeys them in everything; she fears God; she is as fit as a fiddle; she has only one fault.

"What is that?"

"She's too young."

"A charming fault."

In less than an hour I am convinced that I have been conversing with probity, truth, the social virtues, and genuine honor.

Re-enter Lucia, laughing, freshly washed, with her hair done up in a way of her own, with shoes on her feet, and wearing a dress; after dropping me a rustic curtsy, she gives her mother several kisses, then goes and sits on her father's lap; I tell her to sit on the bed; but she says that such an honor is not for her when she is dressed.

The simple, innocent, and enchanting notion which I find in this answer makes me laugh. I consider if she is prettier now than she was an hour earlier, and I decide in favor of earlier. I put her above not only Angela but Bettina too.

The hairdresser enters, the respectable family departs, I dress, I go upstairs, and spend the day most amusingly, as one spends the day in the country in select company. The next morning I am scarcely awake before I ring, and once more Lucia appears before me, the same as the previous day, as astonishing in her words as in her ways. Everything in her shone under the charming varnish of frankness and innocence. I could not conceive how, being properly brought up and virtuous and not at all stupid, she did not know that she could not show herself to me in this way without risk of setting me on fire. "It must be," I told myself, "that, attaching no importance to certain little freedoms, she is not strait-laced." With this idea in mind, I decide to convince her that I appreciated her. I do not feel guilty toward her parents, for I suppose them to be as easygoing as herself. Nor do I fear to be the first to alarm her lovely innocence and to cast the dark light of evil into her soul. In short, unwilling either to be the dupe of feeling or to act unfeelingly, I decided to find out what was what. Without further ado, I extend a libertine hand toward her, and by what appears to be an involuntary movement she draws back, she blushes, her gaiety vanishes, and she turns, pretending to look for something or other, until she finds herself over her agitation. This took only a minute. She approaches again, delivered from all her uneasiness except the shame of having shown herself ill-natured and the fear of having misinterpreted an action which, on my part, might have been either completely innocent or common politeness. She was already laughing. I saw in her soul all that I have just set down, and I hastened to reassure her. Seeing that I was risking too much by acting, I resolved to devote the following morning to making her talk.

After drinking my coffee I interrupted what she was saying to me by remarking that it was cold and that she would not feel it if she came under the covers with me.

"Shan't I be in your way?"

"No, but it occurs to me that your mother might come in."

"She won't think any harm."

"Come here. But you know the risk we're running."

"Of course—I'm no fool; but you are good and, what's more, a priest."

"Then come, but first shut the door."

"No, no, for people would think I don't know what."

So she came into the place I made for her, telling me some long story of which I understood not a word, for in this position, not wishing to surrender to the movements of nature, I was the most torpid of men. Lucia's fearlessness, which was certainly not feigned, impressed me to such a point that I was ashamed to enlighten her. Finally she told me that it had just struck fifteen o'clock[33] and that if old Count Antonio came down and saw us as we then were, he would make jokes she would find annoying. "He is the kind of man," she said, "that, when I see him, I run away. I shall go now because I am not curious to see you get out of bed."

I stayed there for more than a quarter of an hour, motionless and in a condition to arouse pity for I was really in a state of violent excitement. The conversation into which I led her the next morning, without making her come into my bed, finally convinced me that she rightly deserved to be the idol of her parents, and that her freedom of mind and her uninhibited behavior had no other source than her innocence and the purity of her soul. Her artlessness, her vivacity, her curiosity, her constant blushes when she said things which provoked me to laughter and which, on her part, were wholly guileless —everything about her showed me that she was an angel incarnate who could not fail to become the victim of the first libertine who should take her in hand. I felt certain that it would not be I. The mere thought made me shudder. My own self-esteem answered for Lucia's honor to her respectable parents who, trusting in their good opinion of my morals, thus freely left her in my hands. I thought that I should become the most contemptible of men if I betrayed their confidence in me. So I chose the course of suffering and, certain of gaining the victory under any circumstances, I determined to fight, content that her presence should be the only reward of my desires. I had not yet learned the maxim that *so long as the battle goes on, victory remains uncertain.*

I told her that I should be glad if she would come earlier and wake me even if I was asleep, because the less I slept the better I felt. Thus our two hours of conversation became three, which passed like a flash. When her mother, coming to fetch her, found her sitting on my bed, she no longer scolded her but only exclaimed over my kindness in putting up with her. Lucia gave her a hundred kisses. The kind, innocent woman begged me to teach Lucia good behavior and to cultivate her mind. After her mother left, Lucia did not consider that she was any the more free. The company of this angel made me suffer the pains of hell. Though constantly tempted to deluge her face with kisses when she laughingly brought it within two inches of mine and told me that she wanted to be my sister, I scrupulously avoided taking her hands; for me to have given her a single kiss would have blown my edifice sky-high, for I felt that I had become as inflammable as straw. When she left I was always astonished that I had won the victory; but, my appetite for laurels being insatiable, I could scarcely wait for the next morning to come so that I might renew the sweet and perilous battle. *It is shallow desires which make a young man bold; strong desires confound him.*

After ten or twelve days, at the conclusion of which I felt obliged either to make an end or become a villain, I chose to make an end, since nothing assured me that I should obtain the due reward of my villainy in the consent of the object who would have led me into it. With Lucia turned dragon when I had put her in the position of having to defend herself, the open door of the room would have exposed me to disgrace and to dreary repentance. The thought terrified me. I must make an end, and I did not know how to go about it. I could no longer resist a girl who, at earliest dawn, and wearing only a petticoat over her shift, came running to me in pure gaiety of heart to ask me how I had slept, breathing her words upon my very lips. I drew back my head, and she laughingly reproached me for being afraid when she was not. I fatuously answered that she was wrong if she believed that I was afraid of her, who was no more than a child. She answered that two years' difference meant nothing.

Unable to bear any more, yet growing more amorous every day precisely because of the schoolboy's remedy, which disarms by exhausting potency at the moment but, *irritating nature, provokes her to vengeance, which she takes by redoubling the desires of the tyrant who has subdued her,* I spent the whole night with the phantom of Lucia haunting a mind already saddened by my decision to see her the next morning for the last time. My intention of asking her face to face to return no more seemed to me magnificent, heroic, unique, infallible. I believed that Lucia would not only help me to carry out my plan, but would also hold me in the highest regard all the rest of her life.

With the first light of day she appears, dazzling, radiant, laughing, her hair down, running to me with open arms, but suddenly downcast at seeing me pale, discomposed, wretched.

"Why, what is the matter?" she asks.

"I couldn't sleep."

"Why?"

"Because I have made up my mind to inform you of a plan which, though it will make me miserable, will gain me your highest regard."

"But if it will gain you my regard, it ought to make you happy. But tell me why, having talked to me fondly yesterday, you address me today as formally as if I were a young lady. What have I done to you, Signor Abate? I'm going to fetch your coffee, and you shall tell me everything when you've drunk it. I can hardly wait to hear what you have to say."

She goes, she comes back, I drink the coffee, I am serious, her artless talk sets me laughing, which delights her; she clears away, she goes and shuts the door, for it was a windy day; then, not wanting to lose a word of what I was to tell her, she asks me to make a little room for her. I do so fearing nothing, for I believed that I was like a dead man.

After giving her a true account of the state into which her charms had put me and of all that I had suffered from my determination to resist my inclination to give her unmistakable evidence of my tender feelings, I explain to her that, unable any longer to endure the torment which her presence caused my amorous soul, I am reduced to asking her to keep out of my sight from henceforth. The unbounded truth of my passion, my desire that she should consider the expedient I had adopted to be the utmost effort of a perfect love, lent me a sublime eloquence. I depicted the terrible consequences which could make us wretched if we acted in any other way than that which her virtue and my own had obliged me to propose to her.

At the conclusion of my sermon she wiped away my tears with the front of her shift, never dreaming that by this charitable act she exposed to my view two rocks eminently adapted to make the most skillful of pilots suffer shipwreck.

After this scene in dumb show, she told me sadly that my tears distressed her and that she could never have imagined she could give me cause to shed them. "All that you have told me," she said, "has shown me that you love me very much; but I do not understand how you can be alarmed by it, whereas your love gives me infinite pleasure. *You banish me from your presence because your love makes you afraid. What would you do if you hated me?* Am I guilty because I have made you fall in love? If that is a crime, I assure you that, since I had no intention of committing it, you cannot in conscience punish me for it. Yet it is true that I am rather glad of it. As for the risks people run when they love each other, and which I know perfectly well, we are free to defy them. I am astonished that, though I am ignorant, this does not seem so difficult to me, whereas you who, according to what everyone says, are so intelligent, feel afraid. What surprises me is that, though love is not a sickness, it has made you ill, whereas its effect on me is exactly the contrary. Is it possible that I am wrong and that what I feel for you is not love? You saw me so gay when I arrived, because I dreamed of you all the livelong night; but that didn't keep me from sleeping, except that I woke five or six times to find out if it was really you I was holding in my arms. As soon as I saw it was not you, I went back to sleep to find my dream again, and I succeeded. Didn't I have good reason to be gay this morning? My dear Abate, if love is a torture for you, I am sorry. Could it be that you were born not to love? I will do whatever you tell me to; except that, even if your cure depended on it, I could never stop loving you. Yet if your cure does depend on your no longer loving me, then do all that you can, for I would rather have you alive without love than dead from loving. Only see if you cannot find some other way, for the plan you have told me about makes me wretched. Think. It may be that there is more of a choice than you suppose. Suggest another. Trust in Lucia."

This truthful, artless, natural speech showed me by how much Nature's eloquence is superior to the eloquence of the philosophic mind. For the first time I clasped this heavenly creature in my arms, saying: *"Yes, my dear Lucia; you can apply the most powerful palliative to the sickness which is devouring me; let me give a thousand kisses to that tongue of yours, to the heavenly mouth which has told me that I am happy."*

We then spent a full hour in the most eloquent silence, except that from time to time Lucia cried out, "Oh, my God! Is it true that I am not dreaming?" Even so, I respected her in the matter of essential importance, and precisely because she offered me no resistance. This was my weakness.

"I am uneasy," she says suddenly; "I have a strange feeling." She jumps out of the bed, hurriedly sets it to rights, and sits down on the foot of it. A moment later her mother enters, shutting the door again behind her and remarking that I was right for there was a strong wind. She compliments me on my fine color, and tells her daughter she must go and get dressed to go to mass. Lucia came back an hour later to tell me that the miracle she had performed made her proud, for my present look of health made her a thousand times more certain of my love than the pitiful state in which she had found me that morning. "If your perfect happiness," she said, "depends only on me, be happy! I can refuse you nothing."

She then left me; and despite the fact that my senses were still reeling, I did not fail to reflect that I was on the very edge of the abyss and that only the greatest effort could keep me from falling into it.

After spending the whole month of September there in the country, I found myself in possession of Lucia for eleven successive nights, which, knowing that her mother was a sound sleeper, she came and spent in my arms. What made us insatiable was an abstinence which she did everything in her power to force me to renounce. She could not taste the sweetness of the forbidden fruit except by letting me eat it. She tried a hundred times to deceive me by saying that I had already gathered it, but Bettina had taught me too much for me to be taken in. I took my departure from Pasiano promising her that I would return in the spring, but leaving her in a state of mind which was to be the cause of her unhappy fate—a fate with which I sincerely reproached myself in Holland twenty years later, and with which I shall reproach myself to the day of my death.

Three or four days after my return to Venice I relapsed into all my old ways, falling in love with Angela again and hoping to achieve at least what I had achieved with Lucia. A fear which I no longer find in my nature today, a panic terror of consequences fatal to my future career, held me back from full enjoyment. I do not know if I have ever been a man of perfect probity; but I know that the sentiments I cherished in my early youth were far more delicate than those to which the course of my life has accustomed me. *An evil philosophy too greatly diminishes the number of so-called prejudices.*

The two sisters who worked at the embroidery frame with Angela were her bosom friends and the repositories of all her secrets. I had no idea, until after I had come to know them, that they condemned their friend's excessive severity. Not being conceited enough to suppose that the two girls could fall in love with me from listening to my complaints, not only did I not restrain myself in their presence, I confided my troubles to them when Angela was not there. I often spoke to them with an ardor far greater than that with which I addressed the cruel girl who quelled it in me. *The genuine lover is always afraid that the object of his love will think he is exaggerating; and fear of saying too much makes him say less than is the case.*

The mistress of the school, a sanctimonious old woman, who at first seemed quite indifferent to my unconcealed fondness for Angela, finally looked askance on my frequent visits and informed Angela's uncle, the priest Tosello, of them. In consequence he one day gently warned me that I should not frequent the house so much, since my assiduity might be wrongly interpreted and in a manner prejudicial to his niece's honor. This was a thunderbolt; but, receiving his warning without showing my emotion, I answered that I would find some other place to spend the time I was spending at the embroideress's house.

Three or four days later I paid her a polite visit, without stopping at the embroidery frame for even an instant; however, I managed to slip into the hands of the elder sister, whose name was Nanetta, a letter inside which was another for my dear Angela, in which I explained the reason which had obliged me to suspend my visits. I begged her to think of some means which might procure me the satisfaction of discoursing to her on my passion. I wrote to Nanetta that I would come the next day but one to receive the answer, which she would easily find means to give me.

The girl carried out my instructions to perfection; and on the second day following she handed me the answer as I was leaving the room, and in such way as to escape all notice.

In a brief note (for she disliked writing) Angela promised me eternal constancy and told me to do everything I should find in the letter Nanetta was writing me. Here is the translation of Nanetta's letter, which I have kept, as I have all those which will be found in these memoirs.

"There is nothing in the world, Signor Abate, that I am not prepared to do for my dear friend Angela. She comes to visit us every feast day, sups with us, and spends the night. I suggest a way for you to make the acquaintance of Signora Orio, our aunt; but if you succeed in gaining entrance to our house, I warn you not to show that you have a special liking for Angela, for our aunt would disapprove of your coming to her house to secure the opportunity of speaking to someone who is not in the family. So I suggest the following plan, which I will further as far as in me lies. Signora Orio, though a woman of station, is not rich and hence wishes to be entered in the list of noble widows who can aspire to the bounty of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, of which Signor Malipiero is president. Last Sunday Angela told her that you enjoy the affection of this nobleman, and that the best means of gaining his support would be to obtain your promise to ask him for it. She foolishly told her that you are in love with me and that you only went to our embroidery mistress's house to have an opportunity to talk with me, and that hence I could secure your interest on her behalf. My aunt answered that, since you were a priest, there was nothing to fear and that I might write to you to come to her house; but I refused. The Procuratore[34] Rosa, who is my aunt's very life, told her that I was right and that it was not proper for me to write to you, but that she herself should ask you to come and discuss an important matter with her.

He said that if it was true that you were taken with me, you would be sure to come, and he persuaded her to write you the note which you will find at home. If you wish to find Angela with us, put off your visit until day after tomorrow, Sunday. If you can persuade Signor Malipiero to grant the favor my aunt asks, you will become the pet of the house. You will forgive it if I treat you badly, for I said that I did not like you. You will do well to flirt a little with my aunt, even though she is sixty. Signor Rosa will not be jealous, and you will endear yourself to the whole household. I shall arrange an opportunity for you to speak with Angela alone. I will do everything in my power to convince you of my friendship. Farewell."

I found this plan thoroughly well contrived. I received Signora Orio's note that evening; I went to her house in accordance with Nanetta's instructions; she asked me to act in her interest, and entrusted me with all the certificates of which I might have need. I gave her my promise. I scarcely spoke to Angela; I made up to Nanetta, who treated me very badly; and I won the friendship of the old advocate Rosa, who was useful to me later on.

Considering how I could obtain this favor from Signor Malipiero, I saw that my best course would be to appeal to Teresa Imer, who turned everything to her own advantage and at the same time pleased the old man, who was still in love with her. So I paid her a surprise visit, even entering her room unannounced. I found her alone with the physician Doro,[35] who at once pretended to be there only for professional reasons. He then wrote out a prescription, took her pulse, and left.

This Doro was rumored to be in love with her, and Signor Malipiero, who was jealous of him, had forbidden her to receive him and she had promised not to. Teresa knew that I was not unaware of this, and she must have been annoyed at my discovering that she made light of the promise she had given the old man. She must also fear that I would be indiscreet. It was the moment when I could hope to obtain from her all that I wished.

I told her in a few words the business which brought me to see her, and at the same time assured her that she must never think me capable of a base action. After assuring me that she wanted nothing better than to seize this occasion to convince me of her desire to oblige me, Teresa asked me to give her all the necessary certificates for the lady for whom she was to interest herself. At the same time she showed me those of another lady on whose behalf she had undertaken to speak, but she promised to sacrifice her for me. She kept her word. Only two days later I had the decree, signed by His Excellency as president of the Fraternity of the Poor.[36] Signora Orio's name was immediately included in the list for the bounties which were drawn by lot twice a year.

Nanetta and her sister Marta were the orphan daughters of a sister of Signora Orio, whose entire property consisted in the house in which she lived, of which she rented out the second floor, and a pension from her brother, who was secretary to the Council of Ten.[37] She had living with her only her two charming nieces, of whom one was sixteen, the other fifteen. In place of a servant she had a woman water-carrier who, for four lire[38] a month, came every day to do the chores for the entire house. Her one friend was the advocate Rosa, who, like herself, was sixty and was only awaiting the death of his wife to marry her. Nanetta and Marta slept together on the fourth floor in a wide bed, in which Angela too slept with them every feast day. On weekdays they all went to school to the embroidery mistress.

As soon as I was in possession of the decree which Signora Orio wanted, I made a brief visit to the embroidery mistress to give Nanetta a note in which I told her the good news that I had obtained the favor, adding that I would take the decree to her aunt the next day but one, which was a feast day. I earnestly urged her to arrange a private meeting with Angela for me.

The next day but one Nanetta was on the watch for my arrival and handed me a note, at the same time telling me to find an opportunity to read it before I left the house. I enter, and I see Angela with Signora Orio, the old advocate, and Marta. Anxious to read the note, I decline a chair and give the widow her certificates and the decree of admission to the bounties; the only recompense I ask of her is the honor of saluting her hand.

"Oh, my dearest Abate, you shall kiss me, and no one will take it amiss since I am thirty years older than you."

She should have said forty-five.

I give her the two kisses, and she tells me to go and kiss her nieces as well, who instantly took to flight, only Angela remaining to brave my audacity. The widow asks me to be seated.

"Signora, I cannot."

"Why not? What behavior!"

"Signora, I will come back."

"I won't hear of it!"

"I am under a pressing necessity."

"I understand. Nanetta, go upstairs with the Abate and show him."

"Please excuse me, Aunt."

"What a prude! Marta, you go."

"Aunt, make Nanetta obey you."

"Alas, Signora, the young ladies are right. I am leaving."

"Not a bit of it; my nieces are downright fools. Signor Rosa will show you the way."

He takes me by the hand and leads me to the requisite place on the fourth floor, and leaves me there. Here is Nanetta's note:

"My aunt will ask you to supper but you will decline. You will leave when we sit down at table, and Marta will go to light you to the street door, which she will open; but you will not go out. She will close it and come back. Everyone will believe you gone. You will go up the stairs in the dark, and then up two more flights until you reach the fourth floor. The stairs are good. You will wait there for the three of us. We will come after Signor Rosa leaves and we put our aunt to bed. It will rest with Angela herself to grant you the private interview which you desire, and all night long if she so wishes; and I hope it will be a happy one for you."

What joy! What gratitude for the fortunate chance which brought me to read this note in the very place where I was to wait in darkness for the object of my flame! Sure that I should find my way without the least difficulty, and foreseeing no obstacle, I go downstairs to Signora Orio, rejoicing in my good fortune.

CHAPTER V

An untoward night. I fall in love with the two sisters, I forget Angela. A ball at my house. Giulietta humiliated. My return to Pasiano. Lucia's misfortune. A propitious storm.

AFTER expressing her thanks to me at great length, Signora Orio told me that in future I was to enjoy all the privileges of a friend of the family. We spent four hours laughing and joking. I made such good excuses for not staying to supper that she had to accept them. Marta was going to light the way for me; but a direct command from Signora Orio to Nanetta, whom she believed to be my favorite, obliged her to precede me, candlestick in hand. The sly vixen hurried down the stairs, opened the door, banged it shut, put out the candle and, leaving me there, ran back up to rejoin her aunt, who sharply reprimanded her for treating me so shabbily. I groped my way upstairs to the appointed place, and flung myself on a couch like a man who, having given his enemies the slip, awaits the moment of his happiness.

After spending an hour in the most pleasing reveries, I hear the street door being opened, then closed and double-locked, and ten minutes later I see the two sisters, followed by Angela. I disregard the others completely and spend two whole hours talking only with her. Midnight strikes; I am pitied for having gone supperless; but the tone of commiseration offends me; I answer that, in such happiness, it would be impossible for me to feel any lack. I am told that I am in prison, since the key to the house door is under Signora Orio's bolster, who will not open it until dawn, to go to the first mass. I am astonished that anyone should think I could consider this bad news; on the contrary, I am happy to have five hours before me and to be sure that I shall spend them with the object of my adoration. An hour later Nanetta laughs under her breath. Angela insists on knowing what she is laughing at; she whispers in her ear; Marta laughs too; I ask them to tell me why they are laughing; and finally Nanetta, looking chagrined, tells me that she has no other candle and that when this one burns out we shall be left in darkness. This news fills me with joy, but I hide it. I tell them that I am sorry on their account. I suggest that they go to bed and sleep in peace, assuring them of my respect; but this proposal sets them laughing again.

"What shall we do in the dark?"

"We'll talk."

There were four of us, we had been conversing for three hours, and I was the hero of the play. Love is a great poet: its matter is inexhaustible; but if the end at which it aims never arrives, it sinks like dough at the baker's. My dear Angela listened, but not being fond of talking, answered very little; she was not particularly clever; instead, she prided herself on showing sound common sense. To weaken my arguments she usually only launched a proverb, as the Romans fired a catapult. She drew away, or repulsed my poor hands with the most offensive gentleness, whenever love called them to its aid. Yet I continued to talk and use my hands without losing courage. But I became desperate when I saw that my too subtle arguments confused her instead of convincing her and, instead of softening her heart, troubled it. I was completely astonished to read on Nanetta's and Marta's faces the impression which the shafts I was shooting straight at Angela made on them. This metaphysical curve seemed to me out of the course of nature; it should have been an angle. Unfortunately I was studying geometry at that period. Despite the season, I was sweating great drops. Nanetta got up to carry out the candle, which would have made an unbearable stench if it had guttered out in our presence.

No sooner is it dark than my arms naturally rise to take possession of the object necessary to the state of my soul; yet I cannot but laugh when I find that Angela has seized the previous moment to make sure that she will not be caught. I spent a whole hour saying the most amusing things which love could invent to persuade her to come back and sit on the same seat. I thought it impossible that she could really be in earnest. "This joke," I said at last, "has gone on too long; it is against nature; I can't run after you, and it amazes me to hear you laughing; such strange behavior makes it seem that you are mocking me. So come and sit down. Since I have to talk to you without seeing you, at least my hands should assure me that I am not talking to the air. If you are making a mock of me, you must realize that you are insulting me, and love, I believe, should not be put to the test of insult."

"Very well! Calm yourself. I am listening to you and not losing a single word; but you must realize too that I cannot in decency permit myself to sit close to you in the dark."

"So you want me to stay here like this until dawn?"

"Lie down on the bed and sleep."

"You amaze me—how can you consider that possible, to say nothing of compatible with my passion? Come now! I am going to pretend I'm playing blindman's buff."

Upon that, I get up and vainly seek her all over the room. I catch someone; but it is always Nanetta or Marta, whose pride makes them name themselves at once; whereupon, stupid Don Quixote that I am, I consider it my duty to let them go. Love and prejudice prevent me from realizing the cowardice of such respect. I had not yet read the anecdotes of Louis XIII, King of France; but I had read Boccaccio.[1] I continue to hunt for her. I reproach her with her cruelty, I put it to her that she ought to let herself be found, and she answers that it is as hard for her to find me as it is for me to find her. The room was not large, and I began to be furious at never managing to catch her.

More disgusted than exhausted, I sit down and spend an hour telling the story of Ruggiero when Angelica disappeared from his sight by means of the magic ring which the lovelorn knight had all too guilelessly given her.

Così dicendo, intorno a la fontana
Brancolando n'andava come cieco
O quante volte abbraciò l'aria vana
Sperando la donzella abbracciar seco.[2]

("So saying he went stumbling around the fountain like a blind man. Oh, how often he embraced the empty air, hoping to embrace the damsel!")

Angela did not know Ariosto, but Nanetta had read him several times. She began defending Angelica and putting the blame on the simplicity of Ruggiero, who, if he had been sensible, should never have entrusted the coquette with the ring. Nanetta enchanted me; but I was too stupid in those days to make reflections which would have led me to change my conduct.

I had only an hour before me; nor could I wait for daylight, since Signora Orio would rather be dead than miss her mass. I spent this last hour talking only to Angela, trying first to persuade her, and then to convince her, that she should come and sit beside me. My soul passed through the whole scale of colors, in a crucible of which the reader can have no idea unless he has been in a similar situation. After using every conceivable argument, I had recourse to prayers, then (*infandum* [“unutterable”] [3]) to tears. But when I realized that they were useless, the feeling which took possession of me was *the righteous indignation which ennobles anger*. I believe I should actually have struck the proud creature who had been monster enough to keep me for five whole hours in the most cruel kind of distress, if I had not been in the dark. I showered her with all the insults which a scorned love can suggest to an enraged mind. I hurled fanatical curses at her; I swore that all my love had changed to hate, and ended by warning her to beware of me, for I should certainly kill her as soon as my eyes could see her.

My invectives ended with the darkness of night. At the first glimmerings of dawn and at the noise made by the great key and the bolt when Signora Orio opened the door to go out and put her soul in the state of repose which was a daily necessity to her, I made ready to leave, taking my cloak and hat. But, reader, I cannot depict the consternation of my soul, when, glancing at the faces of the three girls, I saw them melting into tears. In such shame and despair that I felt tempted to kill myself, I sat down again. I reflected that my brutality had driven those three beautiful souls to sobs. I could not speak. Feeling choked me; tears came to my rescue, and I indulged in them with delight. Nanetta rose and told me that her aunt must soon be back. I quickly wiped my eyes, and without looking at them or saying a word, I left and went straight home to bed, where I could not get a wink of sleep.

At noon Signor Malipiero, noticing that I was greatly changed, asked me the reason for it, and, feeling a need to unburden my soul, I told him all. The wise old man did not laugh. His very sensible remarks were balm to my soul. He knew that he was in the same situation in respect to Teresa. But he could not help laughing, nor could I, when he saw me eat with the appetite of a dog. I had not supped; but he complimented me on my excellent constitution.

Resolved not to return to Signora Orio's, about that time I defended a metaphysical thesis in which I maintained that "any being which can be conceived only abstractly can exist only abstractly." I was right; but it was easy to make my thesis look impious, and I was obliged to retract it. I went to Padua, where I was granted the degree of Doctor *utroque jure.*[4]

On my return to Venice I received a note from Signor Rosa in which he told me that Signora Orio wished me to come and see her. I went in the evening, when I was sure that I should not find Angela, whom I wanted to put out of my mind. Nanetta and Marta were so gay that they dispelled the shame I felt at appearing before them after two months; but my thesis and my doctorate substantiated my excuses to Signora Orio, whose only reason for wanting to see me was to complain of my never visiting her any more. As I left, Nanetta handed me a letter containing one from Angela. "If you have the courage," Angela's letter ran, "to spend another night with me, you will not have cause to complain, for I love you. I wish to know from your own lips if you would have continued to love me if I had consented to dishonor myself."

Here is the letter from Nanetta, who was the only intelligent one of the three girls. "Signor Rosa having undertaken to persuade you to return to our house, I wrote this letter beforehand to let you know that Angela is in despair over losing you. The night that you spent with us was cruel, I admit; but it seems to me that it should not have made you determine not to come again, at least to see Signora Orio. I advise you, if you still love Angela, to risk one more night. She will perhaps be able to justify herself, and you will leave happy. So come. Adieu."

These two letters delighted me. I saw that I could now avenge myself on Angela by treating her with the most open contempt. I went on the first feast day, with two bottles of Cyprus wine[5] and a smoked tongue in my pocket, and was surprised not to find the hardhearted vixen there. Turning the conversation to her, Nanetta said that Angela had told her that morning at mass that she could not come until suppertime. I saw no reason to doubt it, so when Signora Orio asked me to stay I did not accept. Just before the supper hour I pretended to leave, as I had the time before, and ensconced myself in the appointed place. I could not wait to play the delightful role I had planned. I felt sure that even if Angela had made up her mind to change her tactics, she would grant me no more than small favors, and these no longer interested me. My only remaining emotion was a great desire for revenge.

Three quarters of an hour later I hear the street door shut, and ten minutes after that I hear footsteps coming up the stairs, and I see before me—Nanetta and Marta.

"But where is Angela?" I ask Nanetta.

"She must have been unable either to come or to send word. Yet she must know that you are here."

"She thinks she has tricked me, and I admit I did not expect this; now you know her as she is. She is laughing at me in triumph. She used you to make me fall into the snare; and she is better off, for if she had come it would have been I who laughed at her."

"Permit me to doubt that."

"Never doubt it, my dear Nanetta; you shall be convinced of it by the delightful time we shall have tonight without her."

"In other words, as a sensible man you will make the most of second-best; but you shall go to bed here, and we will go and sleep on the couch in the other room."

"I shall not prevent you; but you would be playing a cruel trick on me, and in any case I should not go to bed."

"What! You would have the endurance to spend seven hours with us? I am sure that when you run out of things to say you will fall asleep."

"We shall see. In the meanwhile here is a tongue and here is some Cyprus wine. Can you be cruel enough to let me eat by myself? Have you some bread?"

"Yes, and we will not be cruel. We'll eat a second supper."

"It is you I ought to be in love with. Tell me, beautiful Nanetta, if you would make me unhappy as Angela does."

"Do you think I can answer such a question? Only a conceited fool could ask it. All I can tell you is that I haven't the least idea."

They quickly set three places, brought bread, Parmesan cheese, and water, and, laughing all the while, they ate with me and shared my Cyprus wine, which, as they were not used to it, went to their heads. Their gaicty became delightful. Looking at them, I was surprised at not having realized all their good qualities until that moment.

Sitting between them after our late supper, I took and kissed their hands and asked them if they were truly my friends and if they approved of the contemptible way in which Angela had treated me. They answered together that they had wept for me. "Then permit me," I said, "to feel the fondness of a true brother for you, and do you feel for me as if you were my sisters; let us exchange pledges of our affection in the innocence of our hearts; let us kiss each other and swear eternal fidelity."

The first kisses I gave them came neither from amorous desire nor from any intention to seduce them, and for their part they swore to me some days later that they returned them only to assure me that they shared my innocent feeling; but these harmless kisses soon became ardent and began to kindle a fire in the three of us which must have taken us aback, for we broke off and then looked at each other in grave astonishment. The two sisters made some excuse to move away, and I remained absorbed in thought. It is not surprising that the fire which these kisses had kindled in my soul, and which was even then creeping through all my limbs, made me fall invincibly in love with the two girls on the instant. They were both of them prettier than Angela, and Nanetta's quick intelligence and Marta's gentle and artless nature made them infinitely superior to her: I felt greatly surprised that I had not recognized their qualities before that moment; but they were well-born and utterly innocent girls, and the chance which had put them into my hands must not prove to be their ruin. Nothing but blind vanity could have made me believe that they loved me; but I could well suppose that the kisses had affected them even as they had me. On this assumption it was plain to me that, in the course of the long night I was to spend with them, I should not find it difficult to bring them to concessions whose consequences would be nothing short of crucial. This thought filled me with horror. I resolved to exercise the severest restraint, and I did not doubt that I should find the strength to observe it.

They reappeared, and when I saw that their faces expressed nothing but trust and contentment, I instantly cast mine in the same mold, firmly resolving that I would not expose myself to the fire of kisses again.

We spent an hour talking of Angela. I told them I was determined not to see her again, since I was convinced that she did not love me. "She loves you," said the artless Marta, "I am sure of it; but if you do not mean to marry her you had better break with her entirely, for she is resolved not to grant you the slightest favor so long as you are only her lover: so you must either leave her or reconcile yourself to her granting you nothing."

"Your reasoning is perfect; but how can you be sure that she loves me?"

"Nothing is surer. And now that we have promised to love each other like brother and sister, I can frankly tell you why. When Angela sleeps with us, she covers me with kisses and calls me her 'dear Abate.' "

Nanetta burst out laughing and put a hand over her sister's mouth; but this artlessness so set me on fire that I had the greatest difficulty in controlling myself. Marta said to Nanetta that, since I was so intelligent, I could not fail to know what two girls who were good friends did when they were in bed together.

"Certainly, my dear Nanetta," I added, "everyone knows about these little games, and I cannot believe that your sister has been too indiscreet in making this confession."

"Well, it is done now; but one does not talk about these things. If Angela knew—"

"She would be in despair, I am sure, but Marta has given me such a proof of her friendship that I shall be grateful to her until I die. It is over and done with. I loathe Angela, I shall never speak to her again. She is false-hearted, she wants to destroy me."

"But if she loves you she has every right to want you to marry her."

"True enough; but the tactics she employs have no other aim than her own advantage, and since she knows how I suffer she cannot behave as she does unless she does not love me. Meanwhile, by a make-believe as false as it is monstrous, she assuages her beastly desires with this charming Marta, who kindly serves as her husband."

At this Nanetta's laughter redoubled; but I did not change my serious expression and went on talking to

Marta in the same style, praising her admirable sincerity with the most high-flown eloquence.

Finding that the subject was giving me the greatest pleasure, I told Marta that Angela ought to play the part of her husband too; whereupon she laughed and said that she only played husband to Nanetta, which Nanetta was obliged to admit.

"But by what name does Nanetta call her husband," I asked Marta, "in her transports?"

"Nobody knows."

"So then you love someone," I said to Nanetta.

"Yes, I do, but no one shall ever know my secret."

At this, I flattered myself that Nanetta might secretly be Angela's rival. But with all this charming talk, I lost any wish to spend the night in idleness with these two girls who were made for love. I said I was very glad that I entertained only friendly feelings toward them, for otherwise I should find it extremely hard to spend the night with them without wishing to give them proofs of my love and to receive proofs of theirs, "for," I added coolly, "you are both ravishingly beautiful and more than capable of turning the head of any man whom you will allow to know you as you are." After this speech I pretended I wanted to go to sleep. "Don't stand on ceremony," Nanetta said, "get into bed. We will go and sleep on the couch in the other room."

"If I did that, I should consider myself the most contemptible of men. Let us talk: my sleepiness will pass off. I am only sorry on your account. It is you who should get into bed, and I will go to the other room. If you are afraid of me, lock yourselves in, but you would be wrong, for I love you only with the heart of a brother."

"We will never do that," said Nanetta. "Please do as we say, and go to bed here."

"If I keep my clothes on, I shan't sleep."

"Then undress. We won't look at you."

"That doesn't worry me; but I could never get to sleep, with you obliged to stay up on my account."

"We'll go to bed too," said Marta, "but we won't undress."

"Such distrust is an insult to my integrity. Tell me, Nanetta, do you consider me a man of honor?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well and good. Do you want to convince me of it? You must both lie down beside me completely undressed, and count on my word of honor, which I now give you, that I will not touch you. You are two and I am one—what have you to fear? Won't you be free to leave the bed if I do not behave myself? In short, if you will not promise to show me this proof of your confidence, at least when you see that I have fallen asleep, I will not go to bed."

I then stopped talking and pretended to fall asleep, and they whispered together; then Marta told me to get into bed and said they would do likewise when they saw that I was asleep. Nanetta made the same promise, whereupon I turned my back to them, took off all my clothes, got into the bed, and wished them good night. I pretended to fall asleep at once, but within a quarter of an hour I was asleep in good earnest. I woke only when they came and got into the bed, but I at once turned away and resumed my sleep, nor did I begin to act until I had reason to suppose that they were sleeping. If they were not, they had only to pretend to be. They had turned their backs to me and we were in darkness. I began with the one toward whom I was turned, not knowing whether it was Nanetta or Marta. I found her curled up and covered by her shift, but by doing nothing to startle her and proceeding step by step as gradually as possible, I soon convinced her that her best course was to pretend to be asleep and let me go on. Little by little I straightened her out, little by little she uncurled, and little by little, with slow, successive, but wonderfully natural movements, she put herself in a position which was the most favorable she could offer me without betraying herself. I set to work, but to crown my labors it was necessary that she should join in them openly and undeniably, and nature finally forced her to do so. I found this first sister beyond suspicion, and suspecting the pain she must have endured, I was surprised. In duty bound religiously to respect a prejudice to which I owed a pleasure the sweetness of which I was tasting for the first time in my life, I let the victim alone and turned the other way to do the same thing with her sister, who must be expecting me to demonstrate the full extent of my gratitude.

I found her motionless, in the position often taken by a person who is lying on his back in deep, untroubled sleep. With the greatest precautions, and every appearance of fearing to waken her, I began by delighting her soul, at the same time assuring myself that she was as untouched as her sister; and I continued the same treatment until, affecting a most natural movement without which I could not have crowned my labors, she helped me to triumph; but at the moment of crisis she no longer had the strength to keep up her pretense. Throwing off the mask, she clasped me in her arms and pressed her mouth on mine. After the act, "I am sure," I said, "that you are Nanetta."

"Yes, and I consider myself fortunate, as my sister is, if you are honorable and loyal."

"Even unto death, my angels! All that we have done was the work of love, and let there be no more talk of Angela."

I then asked her to get up and light some candles, but it was Marta who obliged. When I saw Nanetta in my arms on fire with love, and Marta holding a candle and looking at us, seeming to accuse us of ingratitude for not saying a word to her, when, by having been the first to yield to my caresses, she had encouraged her sister to imitate her, I realized all my good fortune.

"Let us get up," I said, "and swear eternal friendship and then refresh ourselves."

Under my direction the three of us made an improvised toilet in a bucket of water, which set us laughing and renewed all our desires; then, in the costume of the Golden Age, we finished the rest of the tongue and emptied the other bottle. After our state of sensual intoxication had made us say a quantity of those things which only love can interpret, we went back to bed and spent the rest of the night in ever varied skirmishes. It was Nanetta who joined in the last. Signora Orio having gone to mass, I had to leave them without wasting time on words. After swearing that I no longer gave a thought to Angela, I went home and buried myself in sleep until dinnertime.

Signor Malipiero remarked on my happy look and the dark circles around my eyes, and I let him imagine whatever he pleased but told him nothing. I went to Signora Orio's house the next day but one, and since Angela was not there I stayed for supper, then left with Signor Rosa. Nanetta found an opportunity to hand me a letter and a packet. The packet contained a piece of dough on which was the impression of a key, and the letter told me to have the key made and to come and spend the night with them whenever I wished. It also said that Angela had come and spent the next night with them and that, in the course of their usual practices, she had guessed all that had happened and that they had admitted it and reproached her with being the cause. She had treated them to the coarsest insults and sworn never to set foot in the house again. But they did not care.

A few days later, fate delivered us from Angela. She went to live in Vicenza with her father,[6] who spent two years there decorating a number of houses with frescoes. I was thus left in undisturbed possession of these two angels, with whom I spent at least two nights a week, always being expected and gaining entrance with the key they had found means to obtain for me.

About the end of the Carnival, Signor Manzoni told me that the famous Giulietta wanted to talk with me and that she had always been disappointed not to see me again. Wondering what she could have to say to me, I went there with him. After receiving me politely enough, she said that she had been told I had a splendid drawing room in my house and that she would like me to give a ball for her there at her expense. I consented at once. She gave me 24 zecchini and sent her servants to fit up my drawing room and the other rooms with chandeliers, so that I had only to see to the orchestra and the supper. Signor Sanvitale had already left, and the government of Parma had appointed a steward to manage his affairs. I saw him ten years later at Versailles, decorated with various royal orders as Grand Equerry to the eldest daughter of Louis XV, the Duchess of Parma, who, like all the French princesses, could not abide living in Italy.

My ball went well. The only guests were Giulietta's circle and, in a small room, Signora Orio with her two nieces and the advocate Rosa whom, as people of no importance, she had allowed me to invite.

After supper, when the company were dancing minuets, she took me aside and said, "Quick! take me to your room; I've just had an amusing idea, and we'll have a good laugh."

My bedroom was on the fourth floor, and thither we repair. I observe that she immediately locks the door; I did not know what to think. "I want you," she said, "to dress me up as an abate in one of your suits, and I will dress you as a woman in my dress. We will go downstairs in these disguises and dance the quadrilles. Come, hurry, my dear friend, we'll begin by doing our hair."

Sure of making a conquest, and delighted at the novelty of the adventure, I quickly coil up her long hair and then let her make me a chignon which she arranges very neatly under her own bonnet. She puts rouge and some patches on my face, I submit with good grace, at the same time frankly letting her see that I am enjoying it, and she is pleased to grant me a sweet kiss, on condition that I should not look for anything more; I answer that everything must depend upon her. Meanwhile, I warn her that I adore her.

I lay on the bed a shirt, a neckband, a pair of drawers, black stockings, and a coat and breeches. Faced with having to drop her skirt and petticoat, she adroitly puts on the drawers and says that they fit well, but when she tries to put on my breeches she finds that they are too tight in the waist and at the top of the thighs. There is nothing for it but to unsew them in the back and, if need be, to cut the material. I undertake to do all this; I sit down on the foot of the bed and she stands with her back toward me, but she says that I want to see too much, that I am going about it clumsily, that I am taking too long, and that I touch her where there is no need to; she loses patience, she leaves me, she rips open the breeches and fixes them herself. I put my stockings and shoes on her, then slip the shirt over her head, but as I arrange the ruffle and the neckband she finds my hands too curious, for her bosom was bare. She upbraids me, she calls me vile names, but I take no notice; I was determined that she should not make a dupe of me; then too, she was a woman for whom a hundred thousand scudi had been paid, and who could not but be of interest to a thinking man. At last she was dressed and it was my turn.

I quickly take off my breeches despite her insisting that I keep them on; she has to put her shift on me herself, and then her skirt; but, suddenly turning coy, she berates me for not concealing the too visible effect of her charms upon me, and she refuses me the relief which would have calmed me in an instant. I try to give her a kiss; she resists; it is my turn to lose patience and, despite her, the result of my incontinence visibly stains the shift. She insults me, I reply in kind, and tell her that she is entirely to blame; but it is no use, she continues to sulk; however, she had to finish what she had begun and put the rest of her clothes on me.

Obviously, any respectable woman who had got herself into such a situation with me would have had amorous intentions and would not have belied them just when she saw that I shared them; but women of Giulietta's sort are governed by a perversity which makes them their own enemies. Giulietta felt she was tricked when she saw that I was not timid. My readiness seemed to her a lack of respect. She would have liked me to steal a few favors, which she would have granted me without seeming aware of it. But I was not willing to flatter her vanity to that extent.

Wearing our disguises, we went down to the drawing room, where general applause instantly put us in a good humor. Everyone supposed that I had made the conquest which had escaped me; but I was well pleased to let it be believed. I joined a quadrille with my abate, whom I was chagrined to find charming. During the evening Giulietta treated me so well that, believing she had repented of her scurvy behavior, I likewise repented of mine; but this was a momentary weakness for which Heaven was to punish me.

After the quadrille all the men felt entitled to take liberties with Giulietta in her role of abate; and on my side I did not restrain myself with the girls, who would have feared to be thought stupid if they had objected to my proceedings. Signor Querini was fool enough to ask me if I had on breeches, and I saw him go pale when I answered that I had had to give them to the abate. He went and sat in a corner of the room, and would not dance again.

The entire company having in course of time become aware that I had on a woman's shift, no one any longer doubted my good fortune, except Nanetta and Marta, who could not believe that I would be unfaithful. Giulietta realized that she had done a very stupid thing, but there was no help for it now.

As soon as we returned to my room to undress, thinking that she had repented and having, in the meanwhile, become possessed by a desire for her, I thought I could venture to kiss her and at the same time take one of her hands to convince her that I was ready to accord her all the satisfaction she deserved; but she gave me such a violent box on the ear that I very nearly returned the compliment. After that I undressed without looking at her and she did likewise. We went downstairs together; but despite the cold water with which I washed my face, the whole company could see on it the mark of the heavy hand which had struck it.

Before she left, she took me aside and told me emphatically that if I had any wish to get myself thrown out of a window, I had only to come to her house, and that she would have me assassinated if what had happened between us became known.

I gave her no cause to do either, but I could not prevent people from telling the story of our exchanging shifts. Since I was not seen at her house again, everyone thought that my absence was an atonement demanded by Signor Querini. The reader will see, six years later in these memoirs, on what occasion this notorious woman was obliged to pretend she had forgotten the entire incident.

I spent a very happy Lent with my two angels, at Signor Malipiero's receptions, and studying experimental physics at the monastery of La Salute.[7]

After Easter, having to keep the promise I had made to the Countess of Montereale and impatient to see my dear Lucia again, I went to Pasiano. I found a very different set of people from those who had been there the previous autumn. Count Daniele, who was the oldest member of the family, had married a Countess Gozzi;[8] and a rich young tenant farmer, who had married a goddaughter of the old Countess, was suffered to be present with his wife and his sister-in-law. I found supper a very long affair. I had been given the same room, and I could not wait to see Lucia, for I had made up my mind that my days of behaving like a child with her were over. . . .

Not having seen her before I went to bed, I was certain that she would be there when I woke in the morning; but instead I see only an ugly peasant woman. I ask her for news of the family, but I learn nothing for she can speak only Friulian. This is the local dialect.

I feel uneasy. What can have become of Lucia? Has our relationship been discovered? Is she ill? Is she dead? I stop asking myself questions and get dressed. If she has been forbidden to see me I will have my revenge, for one way or another I will find means to see her, and my desire for vengeance will make me do what honor prevented me from doing despite my love.

Enter the caretaker, looking woebegone. I immediately ask him how his wife and his daughter are, and when I name the latter he bursts into tears.

"Is she dead?"

"Would to God that she were!"

"What has she done?"

"She has run away with L'Aigle, Count Daniele's courier, and we do not know where."

His wife arrives in time to hear these words, which renews her grief and she faints. The caretaker, seeing me sincerely sharing his sorrow, tells me it was only a week ago that this misfortune had befallen him. "I know L'Aigle," I said. "He is a famous scoundrel. Did he ask you for her hand in marriage?"

"No, for he was sure that we would not consent."

"I am amazed at Lucia."

"He seduced her, and we did not realize until after she was gone why she was getting fat."

"Then they had been seeing each other for a long time?"

"She got to know him a month after your departure. He must have put a spell on her, for she was a perfect angel, and I believe you can bear witness to it."

"And does nobody know where they are?"

"Nobody. God knows what the wretch will do with her."

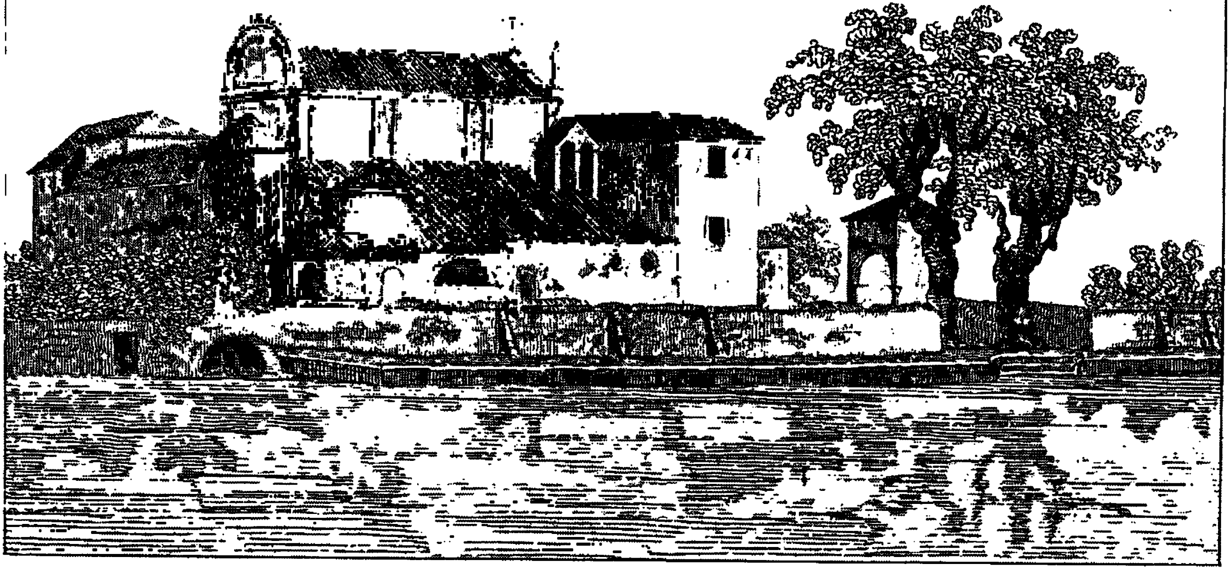
As downcast as these decent people, I buried myself in the woods to ruminate my grief. I spent two hours in the most various reflections, some of them sound, others unsound, but all beginning with *if*. *If* I had arrived, as I might easily have done, a week earlier, my loving Lucia would have confided everything to me and I should have prevented this murder. *If* I had proceeded with her as I did with Nanetta and Marta, I should not have left her in the aroused state which must have been the chief cause of her yielding to the scoundrel's desires. *If* she had not known me before she met the courier, her still innocent soul would not have listened to him. I was in despair at being forced to admit that I was the agent of the infamous seducer, that I had worked on his behalf.

> *El fior che sol potea pormi fra dei,*
> *Quel fior che intatto io mi venia serbando*
> *Per non turbar, ohimé! l'animo casto*
> *Ohimé! il bel fior colui m'ha colto, e guasto.*[9]
>
> ("And the flower which alone could raise me to the rank of the gods, the flower which I was keeping intact in order not to trouble, alas! that chaste soul, alas! he has plucked it and destroyed it.")

It is certain that if I had known where to look for her with any likelihood of finding her, I should have set off immediately. Before I knew of the disaster which had overtaken Lucia, I was proud, in my vanity, that I had been virtuous enough to leave her a virgin; and now I repented in shame of my stupid restraint. I promised myself that in the future I would behave more wisely so far as restraint was concerned. What made me most unhappy was the thought that before long, when Lucia would have sunk into unhappiness and perhaps infamy, she could not remember me without loathing and hate me as the original cause of her misfortunes. This disastrous outcome caused me to adopt a new principle of conduct, which I later carried too far.

I rejoined the lively company in the garden, which so restored me that at dinner I was the delight of the table. My sorrow was so great that I had either to put it ruthlessly behind me, or else leave. What gave me a flying start was the newly married lady's face, and even more her character, which was something wholly new to me. Her sister was the prettier of the two; but virgins were beginning to alarm me. I saw too much trouble ahead. . . .

The bride, who was between eighteen and twenty years of age, attracted the attention of the entire company because of her affected manners. Endlessly talkative, with an inordinate store of maxims which she saw fit to display, devout, and in love with her husband, she did not conceal the pain he caused her by showing that he was captivated by her sister, who always sat opposite to him at table and whom he always served. This husband of hers was a fool, who perhaps loved his wife very much but considered that he owed it to good manners to appear indifferent to her and who flattered his vanity by giving her reasons to be jealous. For her part, she was afraid she would be thought stupid if she did not notice them. The society of well-bred people embarrassed her precisely because she wanted to pass for accustomed to it. When I chattered idly away she listened attentively and, for fear of being thought stupid, laughed in the wrong places. She finally roused my curiosity to the point where I determined to take her in hand. Within three days my



Seminary and Church of San Cipriano, Murano assiduities, my antics, my attentions great and small made everyone aware that I had designs on her. My conduct was publicly pointed out to her husband but, nothing daunted, he laughed when he was told that I was dangerous. I feigned modesty and sometimes indifference. For his part, he stuck to his role and urged me to flirt with his wife, who, in her turn, gave a very poor performance as *la disinvolta.*[10]

On the fifth or sixth day, when I was walking in the garden with her, she made the mistake of saying that she had good reason for her anxiety, and how wrong it was in her husband to give her cause for it. I answered that, speaking as a friend, the only way for her to bring him to reason quickly was to pretend not to notice his attentions to her sister and, indeed, to pretend to be in love with me. To persuade her to this course, I told her that it was difficult and that only a woman of great intelligence could play so false a role. She assured me that she would play it to perfection; but she played it so badly that everyone saw the plot was of my own devising.

When I chanced to be with her in some walk of the garden where I was certain that no one could see us, and tried to make her play her role in good earnest, she first became serious, then haughty, and finally adopted the ill-advised expedient of running away from me and joining the others, who thereupon laughed at me and told me I was a poor hunter. After such an incident I vainly reproached her with the factitious triumph which she thus bestowed on her husband. I praised her intelligence and said that her upbringing had been deplorable. To calm her, I said that the way I behaved toward a woman of intelligence like herself was what was customary in good society. But after ten or twelve days she made me desperate by saying that, as a priest, I ought to know that any question of love made the slightest touch a mortal sin, that God saw everything, and that she would neither damn her soul nor risk the shame of having to tell her confessor that she had sunk to committing abominable acts with a priest. I told her that I was not a priest; but she finally floored me by asking if I would admit that what I wanted to do to her was a sin. Not having the effrontery to deny it, I saw that I must make an end.

When my treatment of her caused the old Count to remark before the entire table that my coldness was due to the fact that the expected had happened, I did not fail to point out to my bigot what conclusions her conduct suggested to people who knew the world; but it was to no avail. And now here is the strange incident which brought on the dénouement to the play.

On Ascension Day we all went to call on Signora Bergalli,[11] a famous ornament of the Italian Parnassus. When it was time to return to Pasiano the tenant-farmer's pretty bride started to get into the four-seated carriage in which her husband and her sister had already taken places, thus leaving me all by myself in a two-wheeled chaise. I protested, loudly complaining of her unjust suspicions; and the company all insisted that she must not insult me in this fashion. At that she came in with me, and upon my telling the postilion that I wanted to go by the shortest route, he left all the other carriages and took the road through the forest of Cecchini. The sky was clear, but in less than half an hour a storm came up, one of those storms which come up in Italy, last half an hour, seem to be trying to turn the earth and the elements upside down, and subside into nothing, with the sky cleared and the air cooler; so that usually they do more good than harm.

"Oh my God!" said the bride. "We are in for a storm."

"Yes, and though the chaise is covered, the rain will ruin your dress, I'm sorry to say."

"What do I care about my dress? It's the thunder I'm afraid of."

"Stop up your ears."

"And the lightning?"

"Postilion, take us somewhere where we can find shelter."

"The nearest houses," he answered, "are half a league from here, and in half an hour the storm will be over."

So saying, he drives calmly on. There is a flash of lightning, then another, thunder rumbles, and the poor woman is shaking all over. The rain comes down. I take off my cloak to use it to cover us both in front; and, heralded by an enormous flash, the lightning strikes a hundred paces ahead. The horses rear, and the poor lady is seized by spasmodic convulsions. She throws herself on me and clasps me in her arms. I bend forward to pick up the cloak, which had fallen to our feet, and, as I pick it up, I raise her skirts with it. Just as she is trying to pull them down again, there is another flash of lightning, and her terror deprives her of the power to move. Wanting to put the cloak over her again, I draw her toward me; she literally falls on me, and I quickly put her astride me. Since her position could not be more propitious, I lose no time, I adjust myself to it in an instant by pretending to settle my watch in the belt of my breeches. Realizing that if she did not stop me at once, she could no longer defend herself, she makes an effort, but I tell her that if she does not pretend to have fainted, the postilion will turn and see everything. So saying, I leave her to call me an impious monster to her heart's content, I clasp her by the buttocks, and carry off the most complete victory that ever a skillful swordsman won.

The rain coming down in torrents and the wind blowing straight in our faces, she is reduced to telling me with the greatest seriousness that I am ruining her reputation, for the postilion must be able to see her.

"I can see him," I answered, "and he has no idea of turning around, and even if he did my cloak covers us both completely; be reasonable and act as if you were in a faint, for I tell you I have no intention of letting you go."

She gives in, at the same time asking me how I can defy the lightning with such impious daring; I answer that the lightning is on my side, she is inclined to believe me, she has lost almost all her fear, and having seen and felt my ecstasy, she asks me if I have finished. I laugh and answer no, I want her consent until the storm is over. "Consent, or I will pull off my cloak."

"You are a monster who will have made me miserable for the rest of my days. Are you satisfied now?"

"No."

"What do you want?"

"A flood of kisses."

"Oh, how wretched I am! Well, there you are!"

"Tell me that you forgive me. Admit that I have given you pleasure."

"Yes. You can see that for yourself. I forgive you."

At that I wiped her off, and when I asked her to do as much for me, I saw that she was smiling.

"Tell me that you love me," I said.

"No, because you are an atheist and Hell awaits you."

I now put her back in her place and, seeing that the sky had cleared, I assured her that the postilion had never turned around. Joking over our adventure and kissing her hands, I said I was sure I had cured her of her fear of thunder, but that she would never tell anyone the secret of the cure. She answered that at least she was sure no woman had ever been cured before by such a remedy.

"In a thousand years," I said, "it must have happened a million times. I will even tell you that when I got into the chaise I was counting on it, for it was the only way I knew to possess you. Cheer up. I assure you that there is not a timid woman in the world who would have dared to resist in your situation."

"I can well believe it. But in future I will travel with no one but my husband."

"You will make a mistake, for your husband will not have the sense to reassure you as I have done."

"That is true too. One learns the strangest things from you; but you may be sure I will never travel with you again."

In such charming exchanges we reached Pasiano before any of the others. She had hardly got out of the chaise before she ran and locked herself in her room while I was looking for a scudo to give to the postilion. He was laughing.

"Why are you laughing?"

"You know why."

"Here is a ducato for you. But hold your tongue."

CHAPTER VI

My grandmother's death and its consequences. I lose the good graces of Signor Malipiero. I no longer have a house. La Tintoretta. I am put in a seminary. I am expelled. I am imprisoned in a fortress.

AT SUPPER no one talked of anything but the storm, and the tenant farmer, who knew his wife's weakness, told me he was sure I would never travel with her again. "Nor I with him," she retorted, "for he is an unbeliever who conjured up the lightning with his jokes."

The woman avoided me so successfully that I never found myself alone with her again.

On my return to Venice, I had to suspend my usual activities on account of the last illness of my good grandmother, whom I never left until I saw her expire.[1] She could leave me nothing, for she had given me all she possessed during her lifetime. This death had consequences which obliged me to adopt a new way of life. A month later I received a letter from my mother telling me that since there was no likelihood of her being able to return to Venice, she had decided to give up the house she had kept there. She said that she had communicated her intention to the Abate Grimani, whose wishes I was to obey. He, after selling all the furnishings, would see to it that I was settled in a good boardinghouse, and do the same for my brothers and my sister. I called on Signor Grimani to assure him that he would always find me obedient to his commands. The rent for the house was paid until the end of the year.

When I learned that at the end of the year I should be without a house and that all the furnishings were to be sold, I no longer stinted myself in my wants. I had already sold some linen and tapestries and pieces of porcelain; I set about selling mirrors and beds. I knew that I should be taken to task; but it was my father's inheritance, upon which my mother had no claim; I considered myself within my rights. As for my brothers, there would always be time to discuss it.

Four months later I received a letter from my mother dated from Warsaw and containing another. Here is a translation of my mother's letter: "I have made the acquaintance here, my dear son, of a learned Minimite,[2] a Calabrian, whose great qualities made me think of you every time he honored me with a visit. A year ago I told him that I had a son who was preparing for the priesthood but whom I had not the means to keep. He answered that my son would become his own if I could persuade the Queen[3] to appoint him to a bishopric in his native Calabria. The thing would be done, he said, if she would have the goodness to recommend him to her daughter the Queen of Naples.[4] Trusting in God, I flung myself at Her Majesty's feet, and I found favor. She wrote to her daughter, who arranged for Our Lord the Pope[5] to appoint him to the bishopric of Martorano.[6] True to his word, he will take you with him the middle of next year, for to reach Calabria he has to pass through Venice. He has written to you himself, answer him at once, send me your answer, and I will deliver it to him. He will set you on the road to the highest dignities of the Church. Imagine my happiness when, twenty or thirty years from now, I see you at least a bishop. Until he arrives, the Abate Grimani will take care of you. I give you my blessing, and I am, etc. . . .''

The Bishop's letter, which was in Latin, said the same thing. It was full of unction. He informed me that he would stay in Venice only three days. I answered as might be expected. These two letters turned my head. Good-by, Venice! Absolutely certain that the highest fortune would be mine at the end of my course, I could not wait to enter upon it; and I congratulated myself that I felt not the slightest regret for all that I should leave behind by leaving my country. ''I have done with trifling,'' I told myself. ''In future I shall concern myself only with what is great and substantial.'' Signor Grimani, after congratulating me to the skies on my good fortune, assured me that he would find me a boarding-house where I could live from the beginning of the coming year while I waited for the Bishop.

Signor Malipiero, who was a wise man in his fashion, and who saw me carried away by vain pleasures in Venice, was delighted when he saw me on the verge of setting out to fulfill my destiny elsewhere and read my ardent delight in the eager readiness with which I adapted myself to what circumstances had offered me. On this occasion he gave me a lesson which I have never forgotten. He told me that the famous precept of the Stoics, *sequere Deum* (''follow the God''),[7] meant neither more nor less than ''surrender yourself to what fate offers you, provided that you do not feel a strong repugnance to doing so.'' ''This,'' he went on, ''was the demon of Socrates, *saepe revocans raro impellens* ('which often forbids, seldom prompts');[8] and this the source of the *fata viam inveniunt* ('Destiny finds the way')[9] of the same Stoics.'' Herein lay the wisdom of Signor Malipiero, who had learned it without ever having studied any book but that of man's moral nature.

However, the maxims of the same school played a part in something which happened to me a month later, which brought me into disfavor with him, and which taught me nothing.

Signor Malipiero believed that he could recognize in the faces of young people signs indicative of the absolute dominion which Fortune would exercise over them. When he saw this, he took them under his protection so that he could teach them to assist Fortune by wise conduct for, as he said with great good sense, ''medicine in the hands of the foolhardy is poison, as poison becomes medicine in the hands of the wise.''

Accordingly, he had three protégés for whose education he did everything in his power. One was Teresa Imer, of whose innumerable vicissitudes my readers will find some account in these memoirs. I was the second, of whom they may judge as they see fit, and the third was one of the gondolier Gardela's daughters,[10] who was three years younger than I, and so far as prettiness goes, her face did bear a most striking sign. To put her on the stage, the philosophical old man was having her take dancing lessons, ''for,'' he said, ''the ball cannot go into the pocket unless someone gives it a push.'' She is the Gardela who, under the name of Agata, had a brilliant success in Stuttgart. She became the first acknowledged mistress of the Duke of Württemberg[11] in the year 1757. She was charming. She was in Venice when I left and she died there two or three years ago. Her husband, Michele Dall'Agata, poisoned himself soon afterward.

One day after having all three of us dine with him he left, as he always did, to take a siesta. The Gardela girl, having to go for a lesson, left me alone with Teresa, whom, though I had never flirted with her, I still found attractive. Sitting side by side at a small table with our backs to the door of the room in which we supposed our patron was sleeping, at a certain turn in the conversation it occurred to us in our innocent gaiety to compare the differences between our shapes. We were at the most interesting point of the examination when a violent blow from a cane descended on my neck, followed by another, which would have been followed by yet more if I had not escaped from the hailstorm at top speed by running out of the room. I went home without my cloak and without my hat. A quarter of an hour later I received them both, together with a note, from the Senator's old housekeeper, who also warned me never again to dare to set foot in His Excellency's palace.

I answered at once, directly to him and in the following terms: "You struck me in anger, hence you cannot boast of having given me a lesson. By the same token, I have learned nothing. I can forgive you only by forgetting that you are wise; and that I shall never forget."

The nobleman was perhaps in the right; but for all his prudence he acted unwisely, since his servants all guessed his reason for banishing me, and so the whole town laughed over the story. He did not dare to address the slightest reproach to Teresa, as she told me some time later; but, naturally, she did not dare ask him to pardon me.

One fine morning not long before our house was to be vacated, I saw before me a man of about forty, wearing a black wig and a scarlet cloak and with a face tanned by the sun, who handed me a note from Signor Grimani directing me to put all the furniture in the house at his disposition after turning it over to him in accordance with the inventory he had with him, of which I must have a duplicate. Fetching my inventory at once, I showed him all the specified pieces of furniture when they happened to be there, and when they were not, telling him that I knew what I had done with them. Taking a high tone, the oaf said he insisted on knowing what I had done with them, to which I replied that I was not answerable to him, then, hearing him begin to bellow, I advised him to clear out in a manner which showed him that I had the whip hand in my own house.

Feeling it incumbent on me to inform Signor Grimani of this occurrence, I called on him before he had risen, but found that my man was there already and had told him the whole story. I had to swallow a severe reprimand. He next demanded that I account for the missing articles of furniture. I answered that I had sold them to keep from running into debt. After calling me a scoundrel and telling me that I had no rights over them, he ordered me to leave his house on the instant.

Beside myself with rage, I start off to find a Jew to whom I can sell whatever is left, but, deciding to stop at my house on the way, I find a bailiff at my door, who hands me a summons. I read it and discover that it was executed at the instance of Antonio Razzetta.[12] This was the man with the tanned complexion. All the doors had been sealed. I cannot even enter my bedroom. The bailiff had gone but had left a guard. I leave and go to see Signor Rosa, who, after reading the summons, tells me that the seals will be removed the next day and that meanwhile he will have Razzetta summoned before the *avogadore*.[13]

"For tonight," he said, "you must find a bed in some friend's house. This is an outrage, but he shall pay you dearly for it."

"He is acting under Signor Grimani's orders."

"That is his affair."

I went and spent the night with my angels.

The next morning the seals were removed and I went home again; Razzetta not having appeared, Rosa summonsed him in my name under penal law in order to have a warrant issued for his arrest the following day if he did not appear. Early in the morning of the third day a footman of Signor Grimani's brought me a note from his master ordering me to come to his house to talk with him; I went.

Upon my appearance he asked me harshly what I meant to do.

"To secure myself against violence under the protection of the laws, by defending myself from a man with whom I have nothing to do and who forced me to spend the night in a place of ill repute."

"In a place of ill repute?"

"Exactly. Why was I prevented from going home?"

"You are there now. But go at once and tell your advocate to stop all proceedings. Razzetta did nothing except at my order. You were very likely going to sell all the rest of the furniture. Everything has been taken care of. You have a room in San Giovanni Grisostomo in a house belonging to me, the second floor of which is occupied by La Tintoretta,[14] our leading ballerina. Have your clothes and your books taken there and come to dine with me every day. I have put your brother in a good house and your sister in another, so everything is settled."

Signor Rosa, to whom I went at once with an account of all that had happened, advised me to do whatever the Abate Grimani wished, and I followed his advice. I had received satisfaction, and my being admitted to his table was an honor. In addition I was curious about my new lodging with La Tintoretta, who was being much talked about on account of a certain Prince Waldeck[15] who was spending a great deal on her. The Bishop was to arrive in the summer, I had only six more months to spend in Venice awaiting the prelate, who was perhaps to set me on the road to the Papacy. Such were my castles in Spain. After dining that same day at Signor Grimani's, without saying a word to Razzetta who was seated beside me, I went for the last time to my fine house in the parish of San Samuele, where I had everything which I considered my rightful property carried to my new lodging by boat.

Signorina Tintoretta, whom I did not know but with whose conduct and character I was acquainted, was a mediocre dancer but an intelligent girl who was neither pretty nor ugly. Prince Waldeck, who spent a great deal on her, did not prevent her from keeping her former protector. This was a Venetian nobleman of the now extinct Lin family,[16] aged about sixty years, who visited her at all hours of the day. It was this nobleman, who knew me, who entered my room on the ground floor early in the evening to bring me the Signorina's compliments and tell me that she was delighted to have me in her house and that she would be very glad if I would attend her reception. I answered Signor Lin that I did not know that I was lodging in her house, that Signor Grimani had not informed me that the room I was occupying belonged to her, otherwise I would have paid my respects to her even before I had had my few things brought over. After this excuse we went up to the second floor. He presented me and the acquaintance was made. She received me in the style of a princess, taking off her glove to give me her hand to kiss, and after announcing my name to five or six foreigners who were present, she named them to me one after the other and then made me sit down beside her. She was a Venetian, and thinking it absurd that she should converse with me in French, which I did not understand, I begged her to speak the language of our country. Surprised that I did not speak French, she made no attempt to conceal her disappointment, telling me that I would not cut much of a figure at her receptions, at which she received only foreigners. I promised to learn French. The great man arrived an hour later. This generous prince spoke to me in very good Italian and was extremely gracious to me all through the Carnival. Toward the end of it he presented me with a gold snuffbox in return for a very bad sonnet I had had printed in honor of "La Signora Margherita Grisellini detta la Tintoretta." Grisellini was her family name. She was called La Tintoretta because her father had been a dyer. The Grisellini whose fortune was made by Count Giuseppe Brigido[17] was her brother.[18] If he is still alive he is spending a happy old age in the beautiful capital of Lombardy.

La Tintoretta was far better endowed than Giulietta with qualities to captivate men. She was fond of poetry, and I should have fallen in love with her if I had not been expecting the Bishop. She was in love with a physician named Righelini,[19] a young man of the greatest talent who died in the prime of life and whom I still regret. I shall speak of him twelve years hence.

About the end of the Carnival, my mother having written to the Abate Grimani that it was improper for the Bishop to find me lodging in the house of a dancer, he determined to provide a decent and dignified dwelling for me. He consulted the priest Tosello and after discussing the most suitable place for me with him, they decided that nothing could be better than to put me in a seminary. They made all the arrangements without my knowledge, and the priest was charged with giving me the news and persuading me to go there willingly and without regrets.

I could not help laughing when I heard the priest adopting a style meant to soothe me and to gild the pill. I told him that I was ready to go wherever they saw fit to send me. Their idea was sheer madness, for at the age of seventeen and being the kind of person I was, the last thing anyone should have thought of was putting me in a seminary; however, still a disciple of Socrates and feeling no repugnance, I consented; but I thought the whole scheme so laughable that I could hardly wait to be there. I told Signor Grimani that I was ready for anything, provided that Razzetta was to have no part in it. He gave me his promise; but he did not keep it after the seminary; I have never been able to decide if the Abate Grimani was good because he was stupid or if his stupidity was a fault due to his goodness. But all his brothers were of the same stamp. The worst trick that Fortune can play on a young man of great talent is to make him answerable to a fool. After providing me with the costume of a seminarian, the priest took me to San Cipriano di Murano[20] and presented me to the rector.

The patriarchal church of San Cipriano is served by Somaschian monks.[21] The order was founded by the Blessed Girolamo Miani,[22] a Venetian nobleman. The rector received me with affectionate affability. From the unctuous tone of the discourse he delivered to me, I gathered that he thought I was being put in the seminary to punish me or at least to prevent me from continuing a scandalous course of life.

"I cannot believe, most reverend Father, that there is any intention of punishing me."

"No, no, my dear son. I only meant that you will be very happy with us."

I was shown three rooms in which there were at least a hundred and fifty seminarians, ten or twelve classrooms, the refectory, the dormitory, the gardens for walks during the hours of recreation, and I was given to expect that my life here would be the happiest a young man could desire, to the point where I should regret leaving it when the Bishop arrived. At the same time they seemed to be trying to encourage me by telling me I would be there at most for five or six months. Their eloquence made me laugh. I entered the seminary at the beginning of March. I had spent the night between my two wives, who, like Signora Orio and Signor Rosa, could not bring themselves to believe that a lad of my temperament could be so docile. They sprinkled the bed with their tears mingled with mine.

The evening before, I took all my papers to Signora Manzoni, who promised to keep them for me as a sacred trust. They made a considerable package, which I withdrew from that honorable woman's custody fifteen years later. She is still alive and in good health at the age of ninety. Laughing heartily at the stupidity which was putting me into a seminary, she maintained that I would not stay there more than a month at most.

"You are wrong, Signora; I am glad to go there and I shall wait there until the Bishop arrives."

"You know neither yourself nor the Bishop, with whom you will not remain either."

The priest accompanied me to the seminary. But halfway there he had the gondola stop at San Michele,[23] for I had been seized by a fit of vomiting which appeared to be choking me. The friar who was the apothecary restored me to health with melissa cordial. The attack was the effect of the amorous efforts I had made all night with my two angels, whom I feared I was holding in my arms for the last time. I do not know if my reader knows the state of a lover who, taking leave of the object of his love, fears that he will not see her again. He pays the final compliment and, when it is paid, refuses to let it be the last and repeats it until he sees his soul run out in blood.

The priest left me in the rector's custody. My trunk and my bed had already been taken to the dormitory, to which I went to leave my cloak and hat. I was not put in the class with the adults, because, despite my height, I was not old enough. I had the vanity to keep my face unshaven; I cherished that down because it left no doubt of my youth. *It was absurd; but at what age does a man cease to indulge in absurdities?* He gets rid of his vices more easily. Tyranny did not go so far with me as to require that I be shaved. But I found it tolerant only in this respect.

"In what school," the rector asked me, "do you wish to be put?"

"Doctrinal theology, most reverend Father; I want to learn the history of the Church."

"I will take you to the Father Examiner."

"I am a doctor and do not wish to take an examination."

"It is obligatory, my dear son. Come."

I considered this an insult. I was outraged. I instantly determined on taking a strange revenge, the idea of which filled me with joy. I answered all the questions, which the examiner asked me in Latin, so badly and committing so many solecisms,[24] that he had to put me in the lower grammar class, where, to my great satisfaction, I found myself with eighteen or twenty boys of nine or ten years who, when they learned that I was a doctor, all fell to repeating *Accipiamus pecuniam et mittamus asinum in patriam suam* ("Let us take the money and send the ass back to his country").

At recreation time my dormitory companions, who were all at least in the school of philosophy, looked at me scornfully and, as they were talking to one another about their abstruse theses, laughed at my appearing to listen to their arguments, which could not but be unintelligible to me. I had no idea of betraying my secret. But three days later an unavoidable circumstance unmasked me.

Father Barbarigo, a Somaschian from the monastery of La Salute in Venice, who had had me as a pupil in physics, and who had come to call on the rector, saw me coming out from mass and paid me a thousand compliments. The first question he asked me was what subject I was studying, and he thought I was joking when I replied that I was in the grammar class. The rector then came up, and we all went to our classes. An hour later the rector appeared and called me out.

"Why," he asked me, "did you pretend ignorance at your examination?"

"Why were you so unjust as to make me take it?"

Looking rather annoyed, he took me to the school of doctrinal theology, where my dormitory companions were astonished to see me. During the after-dinner recreation period they all made friends with me, gathering around me, and put me in a good humor.

A handsome seminarian of fifteen years, who, if he is not dead, is a bishop, was the one whose person and talent particularly impressed me. He inspired feelings of the strongest friendship in me, and during the recreation hours, instead of playing skittles, I did nothing but walk with him. We talked poetry. The finest odes of Horace were our delight. We preferred Ariosto to Tasso, and Petrarch was the object of our admiration, as Tassoni[25] and Muratori,[26] who had criticized him, were of our scorn. Within four days we became such fond friends that we were jealous of each other. We sulked when one of us left the other to walk with anyone else.

A lay monk was in charge of our dormitory. His function was to keep order in it. After supper the whole pack of us, led by this monk, who was called the prefect, proceeded to the dormitory; there each one went to his bed, and after saying his prayers in a low voice, undressed and got quietly in. When the prefect saw that we were all in bed, he went to bed too. The place, which was a rectangle eighty paces long by ten wide, was lighted by a large lantern. The beds were placed at equal distances apart. At the head of each bed were a prayer stool, a chair, and the seminarian's trunk. At one end of the dormitory there was a washroom on one side and the small room known as the "water closet" on the other. At the other end, close to the door, was the prefect's bed. My friend's bed was on the other side of the room, opposite to mine. The big lantern was between us.

The prefect's principal duty was to make very sure that no seminarian got into bed with another. Such a visit was never considered innocent; it was a capital crime, for a seminarian's bed is only for him to sleep in, not to give him a chance to talk with a schoolmate. Hence two schoolmates can break this law only for illicit reasons, though they are left free to do anything that they please alone, and so much the worse for them if they abuse themselves. The communities of boys in Germany where the directors are at pains to prevent masturbation are those in which it is most prevalent. *The framers of these regulations were ignorant fools who knew neither nature nor morality; because nature, for its own self-preservation, demands this relief in the healthy man who has not the* adiutorium[27] *of woman, and morality is undermined by the axiom* nitimur in vetitum.[28] *The prohibition stimulates him. Unhappy the body politic whose legislator was not a philosopher! What Tissot*[29] *says is partly true only when the young man masturbates without nature's demanding it; but this will never happen to a schoolboy unless someone sees fit to forbid him the practice, for in that case he does it in order to have the pleasure of disobeying, a pleasure natural to all men since the time of Eve and Adam, and which is largely indulged in whenever the opportunity presents itself. The mother superiors of convent schools for girls show much more sense than men do in this respect. They know from experience that there is not a girl who does not begin masturbating at the age of seven, and they never think of forbidding them this childish practice, although it can produce unfortunate results in girls too, though less extensively because the excretion is slight.*

It was on the eighth or ninth day of my stay in the seminary that I felt someone come and get into bed with me. He at once presses my hand, at the same time telling me his name, and sets me laughing. I could not see him because the lantern had gone out. It was the Abate with whom I had made friends, who, seeing the dormitory in darkness, took a fancy to pay me a visit. After we had laughed over it together, I asked him to leave, for if the prefect woke up and saw the dormitory dark, he would get up to relight the lamp and we should both be accused of having committed the oldest of crimes, according to some. Just as I was giving him this good advice, we hear footsteps; the Abate flees; but a moment later I hear a great thud, followed by the prefect's hoarse voice saying, "You scoundrel, wait till tomorrow, wait till tomorrow." After relighting the lantern he goes back to bed.

The next morning, even before the rising bell sounded, in comes the rector with the prefect. "Listen to me, all of you," said the rector. "You know what disorderly conduct occurred here last night. Two of you must be guilty, and it is my intention to forgive them and to safeguard their honor by keeping their names from becoming known. You will all come and confess to me today, before the recreation period."

He left. We got dressed, and after dinner all went to confession to him, and then to the garden, where the Abate told me that, having unluckily run into the prefect, he had been obliged to knock him down. This had given him time to get into bed.

"And now," I said, "you are sure of being forgiven, for you have 'been a good boy' and confessed the truth to the rector."

"You are joking. I would not have told him anything even if the innocent visit I paid you had been sinful."

"Then you must have made a false confession, for you *were* guilty of disobedience."

"Possibly. But the blame is his, because he forced us."

"My dear friend, your reasoning is perfect, and by now the Reverend Father must have learned that our dormitory is cleverer than he is."

This affair would have had no further consequences if, three or four nights later, I had not taken it into my head to return my friend's visit. An hour after midnight, having had to go to the water closet and hearing the prefect snoring on my way back, I quickly snuffed out the wick of the lamp and got into my friend's bed. He recognized me at once and we laughed together, but both keeping an ear open for our guardian's snores. Suddenly he stops snoring and, seeing the danger, I get out of my friend's bed without losing an instant and take only a moment to get into mine. But I was hardly in it before I have two surprises. The first is that I am beside someone; the second, that I see the prefect in his nightshirt, with a candle in his hand, walking slowly along between the two rows of beds looking sharply now to the right, now to the left. I understood that the prefect must have instantly lighted a candle with a powder tinderbox. But how was I to understand what was before my eyes? The seminarian in my bed was lying with his back to me, sound asleep. Without taking time to reflect, I decide to pretend I am asleep too. At the prefect's second or third shake I pretend to wake up; and my companion wakes in good earnest. Amazed to find himself in my bed, he stammers out excuses.

"I lost my way coming from the water closet in the dark; but the bed was empty."

"That may well be," I answered, "for I went to the water closet too."

"But," said the prefect, "how did you come to lie down without a word when you found your place taken? And, it being dark, how could you have failed to suspect that you were mistaken in thinking it was your bed?"

"I wasn't mistaken, for I groped until I found the pedestal of this crucifix here. As for the boy in my bed, I didn't notice him."

"That is not very likely."

At the same time he goes to the lamp, and seeing that the wick had been crushed:

"It did not go out," he said, "of itself. The wick is submerged, and that can only be the work of one of you two, who put it out on purpose when he went to the water closet. We shall see about this in the morning."

My fool of a roommate got into his bed, which was beside mine, and the prefect, having relighted the lamp, got into his. After this scene, which woke the whole dormitory, I slept until the rector appeared at dawn accompanied by the prefect and looking very angry.

After examining the scene of the crime and subjecting first the boy who had been found in my bed, and who of course was considered the guiltier, to a long interrogation and then questioning me, without succeeding in convicting me of any crime, he left, ordering us all to dress for mass. We were no sooner ready than he came back and, addressing the boy who was my neighbor and myself, "You are both," he said to me gently, "convicted of scandalous complicity, for you must have agreed together to put out the lamp. I am willing to believe all this disorder is, if not innocent, at least the result of nothing worse than thoughtlessness; but the whole dormitory has been scandalized and the discipline and the rules of this establishment gravely infringed, and the outrage calls for punishment. Go outside."

We obeyed; but no sooner were we between the two doors of the dormitory than four menservants seized us, tied our arms together behind our backs, brought us back inside, and made us kneel down before the great crucifix. In the presence of all our schoolmates, the rector then preached us a short sermon, at the conclusion of which he told his henchmen, who were behind us, to carry out his orders.

I then felt seven or eight strokes from a rope or a stick rain down on my shoulders, all of which, like my stupid companion, I took without uttering a single word of complaint. As soon as I was untied I asked the rector if I might write two lines at the foot of the crucifix. He had ink and paper brought me at once, and here is what I wrote:

"I swear by this God that I have never spoken to the seminarian who was found in my bed. My innocence therefore demands that I protest and that I appeal against this shameful act of violence to Monsignor the Patriarch.''

My companion in suffering signed my protest; and I asked all present if any one of them could declare the contrary of what I had sworn to in writing. All the seminarians then said with one voice that we had never been seen speaking together and that there was no way of knowing who had put out the lamp. The rector left in confusion, amid a storm of whistles and catcalls, but he nevertheless sent us to prison on the sixth floor of the monastery, separated from each other. An hour later my bed and all my belongings were brought up, as were my dinner and supper every day. On the fourth day the priest Tosello came to me with an order to take me to Venice. I asked him if he had gone into my case; he answered that he had talked with the other seminarian, that he knew the whole story and believed us to be innocent; but that he did not know what he could do about it. ''The rector,'' he said, ''refuses to admit that he is wrong.''

I thereupon threw off my seminarian's garb and dressed as one does in Venice, and we got into Signor Grimani's gondola, in which he had come, while my bed and trunk were loaded onto a boat. The priest instructed the boatman to take everything to the Palazzo Grimani. On the way he told me that Signor Grimani had told him, when he disembarked me in Venice, to warn me that if I dared to go to the Grimani palace the servants had orders to turn me away.

He took me to I Gesuiti,[30] where he left me without a soldo and possessed of nothing but what I had on.

I went to dinner at Signora Manzoni's and she laughed to find that her prophecy had come true. After dinner I went to see Signor Rosa, to take legal action against tyranny. He promised me he would bring an extrajudiciary to Signora Orio's, whither I at once went to wait for him and to cheer myself by the surprise of my two angels. It was beyond expression. What had happened to me astonished them. Signor Rosa came and gave me the document to read, though he had not had time to have it notarized. He assured me that I should have it the next day. I went to supper with my brother Francesco, who was boarding in the house of the painter Guardi. Tyranny was as heavy on him as it was on me, but I promised him I would deliver him from it. About midnight I went to Signora Orio's and made my way to the fourth floor, where my little wives, certain that I would not fail them, were waiting for me. On that night, I confess to my shame, worry disabled love, despite the two weeks I had spent in abstinence. I found myself having to think, and the proverb *"C. . . non vuol pensieri"*[31] is incontestably true. In the morning they condoled with me; but I promised them they would find me very different that night.

Having spent the whole morning in the Library of San Marco,[32] because I did not know where to go and had not a soldo, I left it at noon and was on my way to dine at Signora Manzoni's when a soldier came up and told me to go and speak to someone who was waiting for me in a gondola which he pointed out to me at one of the quays of the Piazzetta. I answered that whoever wanted to speak to me had only to come forward; but when he whispered to me that he had a companion with him who was well able to make me go by force, I did not hesitate but went. I loathed scandal and the disgrace of publicity. I could have resisted, and I should not have been arrested, for the soldiers were not armed and an arrest under such circumstances is forbidden in Venice. But this did not occur to me. The *sequere Deum* ("follow the God")[33] played its part. I felt no repugnance to going. Besides, *there are moments when even a brave man either is not brave or does not wish to show it.*

I enter the gondola, the curtain is drawn, and I see

Razzetta with an officer. The two soldiers sit down at the prow, I recognize Signor Grimani's gondola. It leaves the landing and heads in the direction of the Lido. No one says a word to me and I keep the same silence. After half an hour the gondola arrives at the small port of the fortress of Sant'Andrea,[34] which is at the entrance to the Adriatic, where the *Bucentaur*[35] stops when the Doge goes on Ascension Day to wed the sea.

The sentinel calls the corporal, who allows us to disembark.

The officer who was accompanying me presents me to the Major and hands him a letter. Having read it, he orders Signor Zen, his adjutant, to put me in the guardhouse and leave me there. A quarter of an hour later I saw them leave, then Adjutant Zen reappeared and gave me three and a half lire, and told me that I would receive the same amount every week. This came to ten soldi a day, which was exactly the pay of a soldier. I felt no anger, but a great indignation. Toward evening I gave a guard money to buy me something to eat so that I should not die of inanition. Then, stretched out on some planks, I spent a sleepless night in the company of some Slavonian soldiers who did nothing but sing, eat garlic, smoke tobacco which poisoned the air, and drink so-called Slavonian wine. It is like ink and only Slavonians can drink it.

Very early the next morning Major Pelodoro, for such was his name, had me brought up to his office and told me that in making me spend the night in the guardhouse he had only obeyed the order he had received from the Minister of War, whose title in Venice is *Savio alla Scrittura.*[36]

''From now on, Signor Abate, my only orders are to keep you under arrest at the fortress and to be responsible for your person. I give you the whole fortress for your prison. You have a good room, to which your bed and your trunk were brought yesterday. You may walk wherever you please; only remember that if you escape you will be the cause of my ruin. I am sorry that I have been ordered to give you only ten soldi a day; but if you have friends in Venice who are in a position to give you money, write to them and trust to me for the safety of your letters. Now go to bed if you need sleep."

I was conducted to my room, which was a fine one on the second floor with two windows which gave me a magnificent view. I saw my bed made up, and my trunk, of which I had the keys and which had not been forced. The Major had kindly had writing material placed on a table for me. A Slavonian soldier came and politely told me that he would wait on me and that I should pay him when I could, for everyone knew that I had only ten soldi. After eating a good dish of soup, I locked my door, then went to bed and slept for nine hours. When I woke, the Major sent to invite me up to his house for supper. I saw that things were not going so badly.

I wait on this honorable man, whom I find entertaining a large company. After introducing me to his wife, he named the other persons present to me. They were for the most part military officers, except for two, one of whom was the almoner of the fortress and the other a musician from the Church of San Marco named Paolo Vida; his wife was the Major's young sister, whom her husband obliged to live at the fortress because he was jealous of her, for in Venice jealous men always find their living quarters uncomfortable. The other women present were neither pretty nor ugly, neither young nor old; but the kindness they showed me made them all of interest to me.

What with my natural gaiety, the well-bred company at table were easily able to put me in a good humor. Everyone being curious to know what had provoked Signor Grimani to confine me there, I gave a detailed and faithful narrative of everything which had befallen me since the death of my good grandmother. This narrative kept me talking for three hours, without bitterness and often making a joke of things which would otherwise have been offensive, so that the whole company went off to bed assuring me of the most affectionate friendship and offering to serve me in any way.

Until I was fifty, I always had the same good fortune whenever I was the victim of oppression. As soon as I found myself with decent people who were curious to know the story of the misfortune which had befallen me, I no sooner told it than I inspired in them friendliness enough to take my part and be useful to me. *The trick I used to accomplish this was to relate the facts truthfully, not omitting certain circumstances which it takes courage to reveal. Therein lies the secret, which not everyone can apply, for the greater part of the human race is made up of cowards; I know from experience that truth is a talisman whose charms are unfailing, provided that it is not wasted on fools. I believe that a guilty man who dares to admit his guilt to a just judge is more likely to be absolved than an innocent man who equivocates. Of course the speaker must be young, or at least not old, for the old man has all nature as his enemy.*

The Major joked a good deal about the visit I received in my bed and then returned in the seminarian's, but the almoner and the women scolded him for it. He advised me to write my whole story to the Savio alla Scrittura and undertook to convey it to him, assuring me that he would become my protector. All the women urged me to follow the Major's advice.

CHAPTER VII

My brief stay in the fortress of Sant'Andrea. My first repentance in love. The pleasures of vengeance and brilliant proof of an alibi. Arrest of Count Bonafede. I am set free. Arrival of the Bishop. I leave Venice.

THIS fortress, in which the Republic usually kept only a garrison of a hundred disabled Slavonian soldiers, was then populated by two thousand Albanians. They were called Cimarioti.[1] The Minister of War, whose title in Venice is *Savio alla Scrittura,* had summoned them from the Levant on the occasion of a promotion. The officers were to be given the opportunity to prove their merit and to see it rewarded. They were all natives of the part of Epirus which is called Albania and which belongs to the Republic. It was then twenty-five years since they had distinguished themselves in the last war between the Republic and the Turks.[2] For me it was a spectacle as new as it was surprising to see eighteen or twenty officers, all elderly and in good health and all with scars on their faces and chests, which they kept bared from vanity. The Lieutenant Colonel literally had a quarter of his head missing. One ear, one eye, and his jawbone were nowhere to be seen. Yet he spoke and ate well enough;

he was a most cheerful man and had brought along his whole family, which consisted of two pretty daughters, whom their costume made all the more interesting, and seven sons all soldiers. This man, who was six feet tall and well built, had a face made so ugly by his horrible wound that he inspired fear. Nevertheless I liked him at once, and I should have talked with him often if he could have stopped eating garlic as freely as I ate bread. He always carried at least twenty cloves of it in his pocket, as one of us would carry sweetmeats. Can anyone doubt that garlic is a poison? Its only medical virtue is to restore appetite to animals off their feed.

This man did not know how to write, but he was not ashamed of it for, with the exception of the priest and a surgeon, no one in the regiment could do so. All of them, officers and soldiers alike, had their purses full of gold, and at least half of them were married. So I saw five or six hundred women among them and a great number of children. This spectacle, which I was seeing for the first time, kept me occupied and interested. Happy youth! I do not regret it, for it was always giving me something new; for the same reason I loathe my old age, in which I find nothing new except what I read in the gazette, whose existence I happily scorned in those days, and in terrible events which force me to think of the future.

The first thing I did was to unpack from my trunk my whole supply of ecclesiastical clothing. I sold it all to a Jew, sparing nothing. My second act was to send Signor Rosa all the receipts I had for the things I had put in pawn; I told him to have them all sold and to send me the proceeds. As a result of these two maneuvers, I was now able to give my soldier the paltry ten soldi a day which I received. Another soldier, who had been a hairdresser, looked after my hair, which the seminary discipline had made me neglect. I wandered about the barracks looking for something to enjoy. The Major's house for cordiality and the scarred veteran's quarters for a bit of love in the Albanian fashion were my only refuges. Being certain that his Colonel would be appointed Brigadier, he was asking for the regiment in preference to a rival who he feared would defeat him. I wrote a petition for him which, though short, was so strongly worded that the Savio, after asking him who had composed it, promised him what he asked. He returned to the fortress so happy that, clasping me in his arms, he said he owed it all to me. After making me share the family dinner, at which his garlic-flavored dishes burned my soul, he presented me with twelve *botargos*[3] and two pounds of exquisite crab's-eye tobacco.[4]

The effect of my petition led all the other officers to believe that they would obtain nothing without the help of my pen; and I refused it to no one, which got me into difficulties, for I also served the rival of him whom I had served earlier and who had paid me. Finding myself in possession of thirty or forty zecchini, I no longer feared poverty. But now for an unhappy occurrence which made me spend six dismal weeks.

As I was getting out of bed on April 2nd, the fatal day of my entrance into this world, I saw before me a beautiful Greek woman, who told me that her husband, an ensign, had all the qualities to make him a lieutenant, and that he would be made one were it not that his captain had become his enemy because she refused him certain favors which honor allowed her to grant only to her husband. She shows me his certificates, she asks me to compose a petition for him, which she will herself take to the Savio, and she ends by saying that, as she is poor, she can only reward me for my trouble with her heart. After replying that her heart was the perfect reward for desires, I proceeded with her in the fashion of a man who hopes to be rewarded in advance, and I find only the resistance which a pretty woman makes as a matter of form. After the act I tell her to come back at noon for the petition, and she is punctual. She has no objection to paying me a second time, and toward nightfall, on the excuse that there are some corrections to be made, she comes and rewards me yet again. However, the next day but one after the performance, instead of finding myself rewarded, I find that I am punished and under the necessity of putting myself in the hands of a spagyrist,[5] who in six weeks restores me to perfect health. When I was fool enough to reproach the woman with her base conduct, she laughed and answered that she had only given me what she had, and that it was for me to be wary. But my reader cannot imagine either the pain or the shame which this misfortune caused me. I felt degraded. The adventure had a consequence which I now proceed to relate, since it may give the curious some idea of my stupidity.

Signora Vida, the Major's sister, whose husband was jealous, confided to me one morning when she happened to be alone with me, not only the anguish her soul suffered from her husband's jealousy but also his cruelty in leaving her to sleep alone for the past four years despite her being in the prime of life. "God grant," she added, "that he does not find out you have spent an hour with me, for he would drive me to despair."

Returning confidence for confidence, and feeling profoundly sorry for her, I told her that if the Greek woman had not put me in a shameful state, she would make me perfectly happy by choosing me as the instrument of her revenge. At these words, which I spoke in the most perfect good faith, and perhaps even as a compliment, she rose and, burning with fury, treated me to every insult which an outraged woman could hurl at a man who had presumed to forget himself. Utterly astonished, but understanding that I might have failed in my duty toward her, I made her a bow. She commanded me never to visit her house again, and told me that I was a conceited ass unworthy of addressing a decent woman. I told her as I left that a decent woman should show more reserve than she had done in this particular. It occurred to me later that she would not have lost her temper if I had been in good health and had set about consoling her in quite a different fashion.

Another untoward incident for which I heartily cursed the Greek woman was a visit from my angels, with their aunt and Signor Rosa, on Ascension Day, the fortress being the place from which the nearest view of the splendid ceremony can be had. I gave them dinner and stayed with them all day. It was in the solitude of a casemate that they flung themselves on my neck, thinking that I would quickly give them good proof of my constancy. But alas! I gave them only a profusion of kisses, pretending to be afraid that someone would come in.

Having written to tell my mother where I was being kept until the Bishop should arrive, she answered that she had written to Signor Grimani in such terms that she was certain he would soon have me released; in regard to the furniture which Razzetta had sold, she told me that Signor Grimani had undertaken to provide the necessary patrimony[6] for my posthumous brother.

This was an imposture. The patrimony was provided thirteen years later,[7] but factitiously and by a stellionate.[8] I shall speak in the proper place of this unfortunate brother of mine, who died in poverty at Rome twenty years ago.

In the middle of June the Cimarioti were sent back to the Levant, the fort was left with a garrison of a hundred disabled soldiers, and, bored and unhappy, I grew more and more angry. Since the heat was extreme, I wrote to Signor Grimani to send me two summer suits, telling him where they should be if Razzetta had not sold them. I was astonished a week later to see Razzetta himself enter the Major's room in company with another man, whom he introduced to him, saying that he was Signor Petrillo,[9] the famous favorite of the Czarina of All the Russias,[10] and had just arrived from Petersburg. I knew him by name, but instead of "famous" he should have said "infamous," and instead of "favorite," "clown." The Major asked them to sit down, and Razzetta, taking a package from Signor Grimani's gondolier, handed it to me, saying, "I've brought you your rags, here they are."

"The day will come," I answered him, "when I shall bring you a *rigano.*" Such is the name of the uniform worn by galley slaves.

At these words he had the effrontery to raise his cane; but the Major petrified him by asking if he wanted to spend the night in the guardhouse. Petrillo, who had not opened his mouth, then told me that he was sorry not to have found me in Venice, for I would have taken him to a brothel.

"We should have found your wife there," I answered.

"I know faces," he replied. "You will be hanged."

The Major then rose, saying that he had some business to finish, and they left. He assured me that he would go the next day and complain to the Savio alla Scrittura. But after this scene I began seriously planning my revenge.

The fortress of Sant'Andrea was completely surrounded by water, and there was no sentinel who could see my windows. Hence a boat under my window, into which I could drop, could put me in Venice for the night and bring me back to the fortress before dawn, after I had accomplished my purpose. The thing was to find a boatman who, for the sake of money, would run the risk of going to the galleys.

Among a number of boatmen who came to bring provisions, one whose name was Biagio caught my attention. When I made my proposition to him, promising him a zecchino, he promised to give me his answer the next day. He told me that he was ready. He had wanted to find out if I was an important prisoner. The Major's wife had told him that I was being held only for some trifling escapades. We settled it that he should be under my window at nightfall with his boat, which he would provide with a mast long enough for me to catch hold of it and slide down.

He was on time. The sky was cloudy, and the tide high; the wind being contrary, I rowed with him. I disembarked at the Riva degli Schiavoni near the Sepolcro and ordered him to wait for me. I was wrapped in a sailor's cloak. I went straight to Sant'Agostino in the Calle Bernardo and got the waiter from the coffeehouse to guide me to the door of Razzetta's house. Certain of not finding him at home at that hour, I rang, and I heard and recognized my sister's voice telling me that if I wanted to find him I should come in the morning. I then went and sat at the end of the bridge to see from which direction he would enter the street. A quarter of an hour before midnight I saw him coming from the direction of the Campo San Polo. This being all I needed to know, I rejoined my boatman and returned to the fortress, getting in by the same window without any difficulty. At five o'clock in the morning everyone saw me walking about the fortress.

These are the measures, and the precautions, which I took to satisfy my hatred of the brute and to make sure that I could prove an alibi if I succeeded in killing him, as I hoped to do.

The day before the night I had fixed on with Biagio, I took a walk with Alvise Zen, the young son of the Adjutant, who was only twelve years old, but whose sly jokes amused me greatly. He later became famous, until the government sent him to live in Corfu twenty years ago. I shall speak of him under the year 1771.

Walking with this boy, then, I pretended to sprain my ankle in jumping down from a bastion. I had two soldiers carry me to my room, and the surgeon of the fortress, suspecting a dislocation, sent me to bed after applying towels soaked in camphor water to my ankle.

Everyone came to see me, and I insisted on my soldier keeping watch over me and sleeping in my room. One glass of brandy was enough to get the man drunk and make him sleep like a dormouse. As soon as I saw that he was asleep, I sent away the surgeon and likewise the almoner, who had a room above mine. At an hour and a half before midnight I climbed down into the boat.

I no sooner reached Venice than I spent a soldo for a good stick and went and sat on the doorstep of the last house but one in the street leading to the Campo San Polo. A narrow canal at the beginning of the street seemed made on purpose for me to throw my enemy into. The canal is no longer to be seen. It was filled in a few years later.

A quarter of an hour before midnight I saw him coming, walking at a slow, steady pace. I hurry out of the street, keeping to the wall to force him to make way for me, and I hit him first on the head, next on the arm, then a more violent blow knocks him into the canal, shrieking and calling out my name. At the same moment a Friulian[11] with a lantern in his hand emerges from a house at my left; I hit him on the hand which holds his lantern, he drops it and runs away down the street; throwing away my stick, I am over the square like a bird and I cross the bridge while everyone was running to the corner of the Campo where the thing had happened. I crossed the canal at San Tomà and in a few minutes was back in my boat. Midnight was striking as I entered my room through the window. I undress in an instant, I wake my soldier with piercing cries and order him to go for the surgeon as I am at death's door with colic. The almoner, wakened by my cries, comes down and finds me in convulsions. Certain that diascord would cure me, he goes for some and brings it to me. But instead of taking it I hide it while he is going for water. After half an hour of play-acting, I say that I feel well again and thank them all, and they leave, wishing me a restful sleep. After sleeping very well, I remained in bed because of my feigned sprain.

Before he left for Venice the Major came to see me and told me that the colic I had suffered came from a melon I had eaten.

An hour after noon I saw the Major again. "I have great news to tell you," he said with a smile. "Razzetta was cudgeled last night and thrown into a canal."

"Wasn't he killed?"

"No, but all the better for you, for your case would be much worse. Everyone is convinced that it was you who committed the crime."

"I am happy to have them think so, for it avenges me in some measure; they will have a hard time proving it."

"You are right. In the meanwhile Razzetta says that he recognized you, as does the Friulian Patissi, whose hand you broke when you knocked the lantern out of it. Razzetta only has a broken nose, three teeth missing, and bruises on the right arm. You have been accused before the Avogadore. As soon as Signor Grimani heard the news, he wrote to the Savio complaining of his having released you without notifying him, and I reached the War Ministry just as he was reading the letter. I assured His Excellency that the suspicion was groundless because I had just left you in bed unable to move because of a sprained ankle; I also told him that at midnight you thought you were dying of colic."

"Was he cudgeled at midnight?"

"That is what the accusation says. The Savio immediately wrote to Signor Grimani that he assured him you had not left the fortress, but that the complainant was at liberty to send commissaries to verify the fact. So you may expect to be questioned in three or four days."

"I shall answer that I am sorry to be innocent."

Three days later a commissary appeared with a clerk from the Avogaria,[12] and the proceedings were over at once. Everyone in the fortress knew of my sprained ankle; and the chaplain, the surgeon, the soldier, and several others who knew nothing about it, all swore that at midnight I had thought I was dying of colic. As soon as my alibi was found to be unassailable, the Avogadore who had received the *riferta*[13] sentenced Razzetta and the lantern carrier to pay the costs, without prejudice to my rights.

On the Major's advice I then presented the Savio with a petition in which I demanded my release, and I informed Signor Grimani of my action. A week later the Major told me that I was free and that he himself would present me to Signor Grimani. It was at table, and when we were at our merriest, that he told me this news. I did not believe it, but wishing to pretend that I did I answered that I preferred his house to the city of Venice and that to convince him of it I would remain in the fortress another week if he would let me. I was taken at my word, amid cries of delight.

When, two hours later, he confirmed the news to me so that I could no longer doubt it, I repented of the stupid present of a week I had given him; but I did not have the heart to break my promise. His wife's demonstrations of her delight had been such that to go back on my word would have made me a scoundrel. This excellent woman knew that I owed everything to her, and she was afraid that I would not realize it. But now for the last event in which I was involved at the fortress and which I must not pass over in silence.

An officer in the national uniform entered the Major's room, followed by a man who seemed to be about sixty years of age and who wore a sword. The officer handed the Major a sealed letter from the War Ministry, which he read and answered on the spot, and the officer departed alone.

The Major then told the gentleman, whom he addressed as Count, that he had received orders from the highest quarter to keep him in confinement and that his prison was the entire fortress. The gentleman then made to hand him his sword, but he generously refused it and conducted him to the room he had chosen for him. An hour later a servant in livery arrived, bringing the prisoner a bed and a trunk, and the same morning the same servant came and invited me, in his master's name, to breakfast with him. I went, and he at once addressed me as follows:

"Signor Abate, there has been so much talk in Venice about the brilliant exploit by which you proved the reality of an incredible alibi, that you should not be surprised at my wishing to make your acquaintance."

"When the alibi is real, Count, it is no exploit to prove it. Those who doubt it, permit me to say, pay me an ill compliment, because—"

"Then let us say no more about it, and excuse me. But since we have become fellow prisoners, I hope you will grant me your friendship. Now let us breakfast."

After breakfast, when he had learned from my own lips who I was, he considered that he owed me the same courtesy.

"I am," he said, "Count Bonafede.[14] In my youth I served under Prince Eugene, then left the military service for a civil career, first in Austria and then, because of a duel, in Bavaria. It was in Munich that I carried off a young lady of station and brought her here, where I married her. I have been here for the past twenty years, I have six children, everyone in the city knows me. A week ago I sent my lackey to the Flanders post[15] for my letters, but he was refused them because he did not have money enough to pay the postage. I went to the office myself and told them that I would pay when the next regular mail arrived. But it was no use; they refused to give them to me. I went up to see Baron von Taxis, who manages the post, to complain of the insult; but he rudely told me that his clerks did nothing except by his orders and that when I paid the postage I should have my letters. As I was in his house, I succeeded in restraining my first impulse and left; but a quarter of an hour later I wrote him a note in which I informed him that I considered I had been insulted and that I demanded satisfaction from him, warning him that I would wear my sword when I went out and that he would give me satisfaction wherever I found him. I found him nowhere; but yesterday the secretary of the State Inquisitors told me privately that I must forget the Baron's rudeness and go with an officer, who was waiting outside, and submit myself to imprisonment in this fortress, where he assured me that he would leave me for only a week. I shall thus have the very real pleasure of spending it with you."

I answered that I had been free for twenty-four hours; but that in token of my gratitude for the confidence he had just made me, I would accept the honor of keeping him company. Since I had already given my word to the Major, this was a white lie such as politeness condones.

After dinner, as we were standing together on the tower of the fortress, I pointed out to him a two-oared gondola which was coming toward the little port. After looking at it through a spyglass, he told me that his wife was coming to visit him, with their daughter. We went to meet them.

I saw a lady who might well have been worth carrying off and a tall girl between fourteen and sixteen years of age, who struck me as a beauty of a new kind. She was light blonde, with large blue eyes, an aquiline nose, and a fine mouth, whose smiling, half-parted lips showed, as if inadvertently, the edges of two splendid rows of teeth, as white as her complexion if its rosy tint had not made it impossible to see how white it was. Her figure was so slight that it seemed artificial, and her bosom, which was broad above, revealed itself as a splendid tablet unbroken save by two little rosebuds, rather far apart.

Emaciation here displayed a new kind of sumptuousness. Lost in ecstatic contemplation of this charmingly undeveloped bosom, I could not turn my insatiable eyes from it. My soul instantly gave it all that one could wish to find there. I raised my eyes to the Signorina's face, and her smiling look seemed to be saying: "In a year or two you will see in me all that you now only imagine."

She was elegantly turned out in the fashion of the time, with large hoops and a dress of the sort worn by girls of the nobility who have not yet reached the age of puberty; but the young Countess had reached it. I had never looked at the bosom of a well-born girl so openly; I thought I was more than free to look at a place where there was nothing, but which made that its boast.

When the conversation in German between the Count and Countess was over, it was my turn. He presented me in the most flattering terms, and the introduction was acknowledged in the most gracious way possible. Since the Major felt it incumbent upon him to show the Countess the fortress, I made good use of my inferior rank. I gave my arm to the Signorina, behind her mother and the attendant Major. The Count remained in his room.

Since I knew how to attend a lady only in the old Venetian fashion, the Signorina found me awkward. I considered that I was paying her the most polite attention when I put my hand under her arm. She drew away, laughing heartily. Her mother turns around to ask what she was laughing at, and I am nonplussed to hear her say that I had tickled her armpit. "This," she told me, "is the way a polished gentleman gives his arm."

So saying, she put her hand through my right arm, though, engaged in trying my utmost to regain my composure, I rounded it awkwardly again. The Signorina, concluding that she had to deal with the rawest of novices, decided to amuse herself by humiliating me.

She began by telling me that by rounding my arm as

I had done, I kept her away from my side so that I was out of drawing. I confessed that I did not know how to draw and asked her if she did. She answered that she was taking lessons and that, when I came to see her, she would show me the "Adam" and the "Eve" by the Cavaliere Liberi,[16] which she had copied and which her drawing masters admitted that they found beautiful, though they did not know they were her work.

"Why conceal it from them?"

"Because the two figures are too naked."

"I am not curious about your 'Adam,' but very much so about your 'Eve.' She will interest me, and I will keep your secret."

Her laughter made her mother turn around again. I played the simpleton. It was when she undertook to show me how to offer my arm that I conceived this stratagem, seeing the great advantage that I could reap from it. Finding me so ingenuous, she thought there could be no harm in telling me that her Adam was far finer than her Eve, for she had not left out a single one of his muscles, whereas none were to be seen on the woman.

"It is," she said, "a figure in which there is nothing to see."

"But it is precisely that nothing which will interest me."

"I assure you the Adam will please you better."

This exchange had affected me so strongly that I had become indecent and quite unable to hide the fact, for, the heat being intense, I was wearing linen breeches. I was afraid I should become a laughingstock to the Countess and the Major, who were walking ten paces ahead of us and might well turn round and see me.

A misstep that she made having caused the back of one of her shoes to slip from her heel, she held out her foot to me and asked me to put it right. I went down on my knees in front of her and set to work. She was wearing a wide pannier and no petticoat; forgetting this, she raised her dress a little, but it was enough to leave nothing to prevent me from seeing what very nearly made me drop dead. When I stood up she inquired if I was feeling ill.

As we were coming out of a casemate, her headdress became disarranged, and she asked me to readjust it for her, and bent her head. I could now no longer conceal my condition. She rescued me from my embarrassment by asking if my watch ribbon was a present from some beauty; I stammered out that my sister had given it to me; she now thought that she could convince me of her innocence by asking me tō let her see it close to. I answered that it was sewn to my fob pocket, which was true. Not believing me, she tried to draw it out; but, unable to resist any longer, I pressed my hand upon hers in such a way that she felt it necessary to stop insisting and call a halt. She must have been angry, for in unmasking her game I had been indiscreet. She became serious and afraid to laugh or talk with me any more, and in this fashion we made our way to the sentry-box where the Major was showing her mother the grave of Marshal Schulenburg, whose body[17] was being kept there until a tomb could be built for him. But what I had done made me feel so ashamed that I hated myself and did not doubt that she not only hated me in return but despised me. I supposed that I was the first scoundrel who had alarmed her virtue, and I was ready to do anything to repair the injury, if only someone would tell me what to do. Such was my delicacy at that age, though it was based on the opinion I had conceived of the person I had offended, which might well be mistaken. This trustfulness weakened in me as time went on, until today I have scarcely a trace of it. Nevertheless, I do not consider myself a worse man than my equals in age and experience.

We returned to the Count's quarters and spent the rest of the day dismally enough. At nightfall the ladies left. I had to promise the elder Countess that I would visit her at the Ponte di Barba Fruttarol,[18] where she told me she lived.

The young lady, whom I believed I had insulted, had impressed me so strongly that I spent seven days in the greatest impatience. I could not wait to see her, but only so that I might convince her of my repentance and thus obtain her forgiveness.

The next morning I found his eldest son with the Count. He was ugly, but I thought his manner noble and at the same time modest. Twenty-five years later I encountered him at Madrid, as a *garzon*[19] in the bodyguard of His Catholic Majesty. He had served for twenty years as a guard before obtaining this rank. I shall speak of him when I come to that time. He insisted that I had never met him and that he had never seen me. His humiliation demanded the lie; I felt sorry for him.

The Count left the fortress on the morning of the eighth day, and I left the same evening, after arranging to meet the Major at a coffeehouse in the Piazza San Marco, whence we were to go together to Signor Grimani's. I had no sooner reached Venice than I went to sup at Signora Orio's, and I spent the night with my angels, who hoped that my Bishop would die on his way to Venice.

When I took leave of the Major's wife, a true woman, whose memory is still dear to me, she thanked me for all I had done to prove my alibi; "but you must thank me, too," she said, "for having known you for what you are. My husband did not learn the whole story until afterwards."

The next day at noon I went to the Abate Grimani's with the Major. He received me as if he felt his guilt. His stupidity astonished me when he told me that I ought to forgive Razzetta and Patissi, who had made a mistake. He said that, as the Bishop was expected to arrive at any moment, he had ordered that I be given a room, and that

I could eat at his table. After that, I went with him to pay my respects to Signor Valaresso,[20] a man of intelligence who, his term having run out, was no longer "Savio." When the Major had left, he asked me to confess that it was I who had cudgeled Razzetta, and I admitted it frankly and amused him by relating the whole story. He thought for a moment and remarked that, since I could not have cudgeled him at midnight, the fools had made a mistake in their story, but that I did not need that in order to prove my alibi, since my sprained ankle, which everyone took to be genuine, had sufficed.

But now at last the moment has come when I shall go to see the goddess of my thoughts, whose forgiveness I was absolutely determined to obtain, or else to die at her feet.

I find her house without difficulty; the Count was not at home. The Countess receives me most graciously, but her appearance so astonishes me that I do not know what to reply.

Going to see an angel, I believed that I should enter a corner of Paradise, and I find myself in a drawing room in which there was nothing but three or four rotting wooden chairs and an old, dirty table. It was almost impossible to see, for the blinds were closed. This might have been to keep out the heat; but no—it was to conceal the fact that the windows had no panes. Even so, I could see that the lady who was receiving me was wrapped in a dress which was all tatters and that her shift was dirty. Seeing that my mind was elsewhere, she left me, saying that she would send her daughter to me.

She appears a moment later, with an air of dignity and ease, and tells me that she has been awaiting me impatiently but not at that hour, when she was not in the habit of receiving visitors.

I did not know what to answer, for she seemed a different person. Her wretched dishabille making her look almost ugly, I find that I no longer feel guilty of anything. I am astonished at the impression she had produced on me in the fortress, and she seems almost glad that I had been surprised into an act which, far from having offended her, must have been flattering to her. Reading all my emotions in my face, she displayed in hers not anger but a mortification which roused my pity. If she had been able, or had dared, to philosophize, she would have had the right to despise me as a man whom she had attracted only by her fine clothes, or by the idea of her rank or her wealth which she had led him to form.

Yet she set about the task of reviving my spirits by speaking to me sincerely. She felt certain that if she could manage to bring feeling into play, it would speak for her.

"I see that you are surprised, Signor Abate, and I know the reason. You expected to find opulence, and finding only a wretched poverty, you are taken aback. The government gives my father only a very small salary, and there are nine of us. Since we are obliged to go to church on feast days and present the appearance which our rank demands, we often have to go without eating in order to redeem the dress and the *zendale*[21] which need has driven us to put in pawn. We pawn them again the next day. If the priest did not see us at mass, he would strike our names from the list of those who share in the bounties of the Confraternity of the Poor. It is this charity which maintains us."

What a story!—as she had foreseen. Feeling overwhelmed me, but it was much more a feeling of shame than of sympathy. Not being rich, and being no longer in love, I first gave a great sigh and then became colder than ice.

However, I answered becomingly, talking sense to her in a kindly way and with a show of concern. I told her that if I were rich I should easily convince her that she had not confided her plight to a man without a heart, but that since I was on the eve of leaving Venice, she must see that my friendship could be of no service to her. I ended with the stupid commonplace which is always used to console a girl oppressed by poverty, even if she is respectable. I predicted that every imaginable happiness would come to her from the irresistible power of her charms. "That," she answered thoughtfully, "may well be, provided that he who is conquered by them knows that they are inseparable from my feelings and, by respecting these, renders me the justice which is my due. I aspire only to a lawful union, without demanding either high rank or wealth; I have lost all faith in the one and I can do without the other, for I have long been accustomed to poverty and even to going without the necessities of life, impossible as that may seem. But let us go and look at my drawings."

"You are most kind, Signorina."

Alas! I had forgotten all about them, and her Eve could no longer interest me. I followed her.

I enter a room in which I see a table, a chair, a small mirror, and a bed turned up so that only the bottom of the mattress was visible. The spectator was thus left free to imagine that there were sheets; but the last straw was a stench of no recent date; it finished me off. Never was lover more quickly cured. I had no other wish than to go and never come back, though I was sorry I could not leave a handful of zecchini on the table; it would have ransomed me and at the same time cleared my conscience.

She showed me her drawings; I thought them good and praised them, but without lingering over her Eve or joking about her Adam, as I would have done if I had been in a different frame of mind. As a matter of form, I asked her why, having so much talent, she did not turn it to account by learning to paint in pastel.

"I wish I could," she answered, "but the box of colors alone costs two zecchini."

"Will you forgive me if I make bold to offer you six?"

"Alas! I accept them; I am grateful to you and happy to be so far in your debt."

Unable to hold back her tears, she turned so that I should not see them. I quickly laid the sum on the table, and it was out of politeness and to spare her any humiliation that I saluted her lips with a kiss which she was free to believe came from love. I wanted her to attribute my moderation to respect. Taking my leave, I promised to come back some other day to pay a call on her father the Count; but I did not keep my promise. The reader will learn in due course in what a situation I found her when I saw her again ten years later.

What reflections when I left that house! What a lesson! Thinking of reality and imagination, I gave the latter the preference, for the former is dependent upon it. The source of love, as I learned later, is a curiosity which, combined with the inclination which nature is obliged to give us in order to preserve itself, leads to all the rest. Woman is like a book which, be it good or bad, must begin to please with its title page; if that is not interesting, it does not rouse a desire to read, and that desire is equal in force to the interest the title page inspires. Woman's title page runs from top to bottom like that of a book, and her feet, which inspire interest in so many men of my stamp, are of the same interest as the edition of the book is to the man of letters. Most men pay no attention to a woman's beautiful feet, and most readers do not notice the edition. Hence women make no mistake in taking such pains over their persons and their clothing, for it is only by these that they can arouse a curiosity to read them in those whom nature at their birth declared worthy of something better than blindness. Now, just as those who have read many books are always curious to read new ones, even if they are bad, as time goes on a man who has loved many women, all of them beautiful, reaches the point of feeling curious about ugly women if they are new to him. He sees a painted woman. The paint is obvious to him, but it does not put him off. His passion, which has become a vice, is ready with a strong argument in favor of the fraudulent title page. "It is quite possible," he tells himself, "that the book is not as bad as all that; indeed, it may have no need of this absurd artifice." He decides to scan it, he tries to turn over the pages—but no! the living book objects; it insists on being read properly, and the "egnomaniac"[22] becomes a victim of coquetry, the monstrous persecutor of all men who ply the trade of love.

You, Sir, who are a man of intelligence and have read these last twenty lines, which Apollo drew from my pen, permit me to tell you that if they fail to disillusion you, you are lost—that is, you will be the victim of the fair sex to the last moment of your life. If that prospect pleases you, I congratulate you.

Toward evening I visited Signora Orio to tell my wives that as I was to lodge at Signor Grimani's I could not begin by sleeping out. Old Rosa told me that people talked of nothing but the brilliance of my alibi, and that since all this acclaim could only come from their being certain that it was false, I must fear a revenge of the same sort at Razzetta's hands; hence I must be on my guard, particularly at night. It would have been too stupid of me to neglect the wise old man's advice. I never went about except in company or in a gondola. Signora Manzoni congratulated me on my precaution. The court, she said, had been obliged to find me not guilty; but people in general knew what to think, and Razzetta could not have forgiven me.

Three or four days later Signor Grimani informed me that the Bishop had arrived.[23] He was lodging in his Minimite monastery[24] of San Francesco di Paola. Signor Grimani himself took me to the prelate, as if I were a jewel which he cherished and which he alone had the right to display to him.

I saw a handsome monk with a bishop's cross on his chest; I would have taken him for Father Mancia had he not looked more robust and been more reserved in manner. He was thirty-four years old,[25] and he was a bishop by the grace of God, of the Holy See, and of my mother. After giving me first his blessing, which I received kneeling, and then his hand to kiss, he embraced me and called me his "dear son" in Latin, in which language he always addressed me thereafter. I was beginning to think that, being a Calabrian, he was ashamed to speak Italian; but he undeceived me when he spoke to Signor Grimani. He said that since he could not take me with him until after he had reached Rome, Signor Grimani would arrange to send me there, and that in Ancona a Minimite monk named Lazari, who was a friend of his, would give me his address and money for the journey. From Rome on we would remain together, and would go to Martorano by way of Naples. He asked me to come and see him very early the next morning so that we could breakfast together after he had said his mass. He said that he would leave on the day after that. Signor Grimani took me back to his palace, treating me all the way to a moral discourse at which I could not but laugh. Among other things he warned me that I must not study much, because in the heavy air of Calabria too much application could make me consumptive.

The next day I waited on the Bishop at daybreak. After mass and chocolate he catechized me for three hours on end. I saw clearly that he did not like me; but, on my side, I was well pleased with him; he seemed to me a thorough gentleman and in any case, since he was to guide me to the great stage of the Church, I could not but like him, for in those days, though I was very much prejudiced in my own favor, I had not a shred of self-confidence.

After the good Bishop's departure, Signor Grimani gave me a letter which he had left with him and which

I was to deliver to Father Lazari at the Minimite monastery in the city of Ancona. He told me that he would send me to Ancona with the Venetian Ambassador, who was about to set out; so I must be in readiness to leave. I was delighted with all this. I could not wait to be out of his custody.

As soon as I ascertained the time when the suite of the Cavaliere da Lezze,[26] Ambassador of the Republic, was to embark, I took leave of all my acquaintances. I left my brother Francesco in the school conducted by Signor Joli,[27] the celebrated theatrical scene painter. Since the peota[28] in which I was to travel to Chioggia was not to leave the quay until daybreak, I spent the brief night in the arms of my two angels, who were certain that they would never see me again. For my part, I could not foresee what might happen, for, having abandoned myself to fate, I considered that to think about the future was effort wasted. So we spent the night between joy and sorrow, between laughter and tears. I left them the key. This love, which was my first, taught me almost nothing about the way of the world, for it was perfectly happy, unbroken by trouble of any kind, and untarnished by any interested motives. All three of us often felt impelled to raise our hearts to Eternal Providence and render thanks for the direct protection by which it had kept us safe from any accident which could have troubled the sweet peace we had enjoyed.

All my papers, and all the forbidden books I owned, I left with Signora Manzoni. This lady, who was twenty years my senior and who, believing in fate, amused herself by turning over the pages of its great book, told me with a smile that she was sure she would be giving me back all that I had deposited with her by the next year at the latest. Her predictions astonished and pleased me; since I had a great respect for her, I felt it incumbent on me to help her see them come true. What enabled her to look into the future was neither superstition nor a vain, unreasonable foreboding; it was a knowledge of the world and of the character of the person in whom she was interested. She laughed over never having been wrong.

I embarked at the Piazzetta di San Marco. On the previous evening Signor Grimani had given me ten zecchini, which he said should be more than enough to keep me through the time I should have to spend in the lazaretto of Ancona undergoing quarantine.[29] Once I was out of the lazaretto, it was not to be expected that I should need money. Since they were so sure of it, it was my duty to be as sure as they were; but I gave the matter no thought. However, I found it comforting that, unknown to anyone, I had in my purse forty fine zecchini, which greatly raised my youthful spirits. I set off with a joyful heart, regretting nothing.

CHAPTER VIII

My misfortunes in Chioggia. Father Steffano, Recollect. The lazaretto at Ancona. The Greek slave. My pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loreto. I go to Rome on foot and from there to Naples to find the Bishop, but do not find him. Fortune provides me with the means of going to Martorano, which I very soon leave and return to Naples.

THE Ambassador's suite was called his "grand court," but I saw nothing grand about it. It was made up of a Milanese major-domo named Carnicelli, an abate who served as his secretary because he could not write, an old woman denominated the "housekeeper," a cook and his very ugly wife, and eight or ten menservants.

When I disembarked at Chioggia at noon I politely asked Signor Carnicelli where I was to lodge.

"Wherever you please. Just make sure you tell 'that man there' where you are so he can notify you when the tartan[1] is ready to sail for Ancona. My orders are to convey you to the lazaretto at Ancona, free of charge from the time we start. Until then, amuse yourself."

"That man there" was the captain of the tartan. I ask him where I can lodge.

"At my house, if you are willing to sleep in a big bed with our cook, whose wife will sleep on board my tartan."

I agree; and a sailor comes with me, carrying my trunk, which he puts under the bed because the bed took up the whole room. I laugh at this, for it was not my part to make difficulties, then I go and dine at the inn, after which I take a look at Chioggia. It is a peninsula, the seaport of Venice, with a population of ten thousand souls,[2] mariners, fishermen, merchants, pettifogging lawyers, and employees in the customs and finance offices of the Republic. Seeing a coffeehouse, I went in. A young Doctor of Law,[3] who had been a fellow student of mine at Padua, embraces me and introduces me to the apothecary whose shop next door to the coffeehouse was, he told me, the meeting place of all the local men of letters. A quarter of an hour later a tall one-eyed Jacobin monk, a native of Modena named Corsini, whom I had known in Venice, comes in, sees me, and greets me most cordially. He told me that I had arrived in time for the picnic which the members of the Macaronic Academy[4] were holding the next day after a session at which each member would recite a composition of his own to the honor and glory of macaroni. He urges me to honor the Academy by reciting a piece of my own composition and to attend the picnic, and I accept. I produced ten stanzas, and was admitted to the Academy by acclamation. I cut an even better figure at table, where I ate macaroni so diligently that I was accorded the title "Prince of Macaroni."

The young Doctor, who also was a member of the Academy, introduced me to his family. His parents, who were very well off, received me with the greatest cordiality. He had a very charming sister, and another who was a professed nun and whom I thought a prodigy. I could have spent my time very agreeably with these people until I had to leave; but it was written that I should have nothing but troubles at Chioggia. The young Doctor gave me another proof of his friendship; he warned me that Father Corsini was an ill-mannered scoundrel, that no one could put up with him, and that I should avoid him. I thanked the Doctor for his warning; but I paid no attention to it, because I believed that his bad reputation was due only to his unprejudiced opinions. Being tolerant by nature and stupid enough to have no fear of being gulled, I thought that, on the contrary, the monk could show me a good deal of amusement.

On the third day this ill-omened monk introduced me to a place where I could perfectly well have gone by myself and where, to show off, I surrendered myself to a miserable, ugly hussy. When we left, he took me to an inn to sup with four swindling friends of his, after which one of them made a bank at faro.[5] When I had lost four zecchini I wanted to stop; but my good friend Corsini persuaded me to risk another four in partnership with him. He made the bank, and it was broken. I wanted to stop playing; but Corsini, expressing great regret at having been the cause of my loss, advised me to make a bank of twenty myself, and they broke it. Since I could not afford such a loss, I did not have to be asked again. The hope of recovering my money made me lose all I had left. I went to the captain's house and got into bed with the cook, who was asleep; he woke and told me I was a scapegrace. I answered that I was indeed.

My constitution, shaken by this great misfortune, needed to forget it by losing itself in the brother of death. But at noon my accursed tormentor woke me and triumphantly told me that they had invited a very rich young man to supper, that he invariably lost, and so I should recoup.

"I have lost all my money. Lend me twenty zecchini."

"Whenever I lend, I am sure to lose. It is a superstition, but I have seen it happen too often. Try to find twenty zecchini somewhere else, and come. Good-by."

Ashamed to confess my misfortune to my sensible friend, I asked the first passer-by for the address of an honest pawnbroker. I went to the house of an old man, took him to my room, and emptied my trunk before him.

After making an inventory of all my possessions, he gave me thirty zecchini, on condition that if I did not return the amount to him by the third day at the latest everything would become his property. He asked no interest. A decent fellow! I made out a bill of sale; and when he had given me thirty brand-new zecchini, he carried everything away. It was he who made me keep three shirts and some socks and handkerchiefs; I did not want to keep anything. I had a presentiment that I should win back all my money that evening. Some years later I took my revenge by writing a diatribe against presentiments. *I believe that the only presentiment to which a wise man should pay any attention is one which predicts misfortune; it comes from the mind. A presentiment of good fortune comes from the heart, and the heart is a fool and deserves to trust in fortune, which is a fool too.* I wanted nothing more than to rejoin that honest company, who wanted nothing less than that I should fail to come. At supper not a word was said about play. I was praised to the skies for my eminent qualities and congratulated on the high destiny which could not but await me in Rome. But after supper, still hearing not a word about play, I loudly demanded my revenge. I was told that I had only to make a bank, and everyone would punt. I made it, and when I had lost everything I asked the *lumine laesus* (''the one-eyed man'')[6] to pay the innkeeper what I owed him, and he answered that he would be responsible for my share.

Already in despair, as I was getting ready for bed I saw what set the crown on my misfortunes—the loathsome signs of the same malady of which I had been cured less than two months before. I went to sleep stupefied. I woke eleven hours later, but I was so utterly dejected that I continued to drowse. I abhorred the thought of thinking, I abhorred the light, of which I felt myself unworthy. I feared to awaken completely, for then I should be under the cruel necessity of deciding on a course. I did not for a moment consider returning to Venice, though it was what I ought to have done; and I was ready to die rather than confess my situation to the young Doctor. My life had become a burden to me, and I hoped I should die of inanition without moving from the spot. I should certainly never have brought myself to get up, if Alban, the kindhearted captain of the tartan, had not come to give me a shake and tell me to get on board because, the wind being favorable, he was going to sail.

The mortal man who has escaped from a quandary, by whatever means, feels relieved. It seemed to me that Captain Alban had come to tell me what was the only course left to me in my extreme distress. After dressing as quickly as possible, I tied up my shirts in a handkerchief and went on board. An hour later the tartan raised anchor and the next morning dropped it in an Istrian port named Orsara.[7] We all went ashore to walk about the city, which does not deserve that name. It belongs to the Pope; the Venetians gave it to him to do homage to the Chair of St. Peter.

A young Recollect[8] monk from Belluno, named Frate Steffano, whom Captain Alban, who was a devotee of St. Francis of Assisi, had taken on board out of charity, came up to me and asked me if I was ill.

"Father, I am unhappy."

"You will get over it if you come and breakfast with me at the house of a woman who is one of our devotees."

It was thirty-six hours since the least particle of food had entered my stomach and the rough sea had made me vomit up whatever might have been left in it. In addition, my secret malady made me extremely uncomfortable, to say nothing of the depression which being penniless caused me. *My spirits were so low that I did not have the strength to say no to anything.* I followed the monk in a state of complete apathy.

He presented me to his devotee, telling her that he was taking me to Rome, where I was to assume the holy habit of St. Francis. Under any other circumstances, I would not have let his lie pass; but at the moment the fraud struck me as comical. The good woman gave us a fine meal of fish cooked in the excellent oil of the locality, the wine being a refosco,[9] which I found exquisite. A priest who happened to come in advised me not to spend the night in the tartan but instead to accept a bed in his house and even dinner the next day if the wind kept us from sailing. I accepted without hesitation. After thanking our devout hostess, I went for a walk with the priest, who gave me a good supper prepared by his housekeeper, who sat at table with us and whom I found attractive. His refosco, which was even better than my devout hostess's had been, made me forget all my troubles. The priest's conversation was amusing enough. He wanted to read me a short poem he had written, but as I could no longer keep my eyes open I told him that I should be glad to hear it the next day.

I went to bed, taking the necessary precautions to keep my infection from falling on the sheets. Ten hours later the housekeeper, who was watching for me to waken, brought me coffee, then left me alone to dress. Young and with a good figure, this housekeeper seemed worthy of my attention. I felt abashed that my condition prevented me from convincing her that I recognized her merits. I could not bear to have her think me either cold or impolite.

Determined to repay my host by listening attentively to his poem, I sent my gloom packing. My comments on his verses delighted him so much that, finding me more intelligent than he had supposed, he proposed to read me his idyls and I bowed to the yoke. I spent the whole day with him. The assiduity with which the housekeeper attended to my wants showed me that she had taken a liking to me, and by the same token put the finishing touch to the liking I had taken to her. The day passed like lightning for the priest, thanks to the beauties I found in what he read me, all of which was unutterably bad; but it passed slowly for me, because of the housekeeper, who was to show me to bed. Such was my nature; and I do not know if I should be ashamed of it or congratulate myself on it. In the most lamentable state, whether physical or moral, I dared to give myself up to enjoyment and to forget all the causes for gloom which could not but overwhelm any other reasonable man.

The time came at last. After a few appropriate preliminaries, I found her indulgent up to a certain point; but determined to refuse when I showed signs of wanting to do her full justice. Satisfied with what I had obtained, and even more satisfied that she had not taken me at my word when it came to the final point, I slept very well. In the morning over my coffee, the look in her face told me that she was delighted we had become so intimately acquainted. I took some steps to convince her that my affection had not been an effect of the refosco; she did not respond to them, but she gilded her refusal with a proviso which made it precious to me. She said that as we might be caught in the act, it would be better to wait until evening, since the southeast wind was even stronger than the day before. This was nothing short of a promise. I prepared myself to reap the benefit of it, *servatis servandis* ("on condition that what required to be done was done").

My day with the priest passed like the one before. At bedtime, when the housekeeper left me she said she would come back. Examining myself, I thought I saw that, if I took certain precautions, I could play my part without having to reproach myself for an unforgivable sin. It seemed to me that if I abstained and told her the reason, I should cover myself with ignominy and her with shame. If I had been a wise man, I would not have begun; I did not see how I could retreat now. She arrived. I gave her the reception she had expected, and after a couple of pleasant hours she returned to her room. Two hours later Captain Alban came and told me to make haste since he was determined to reach Pola[10] that evening by keeping close to the Istrian shore. I went on board the tartan.

Frate Steffano, the Recollect, kept me amused all day with a hundred remarks in which I detected ignorance mixed with knavery under the color of ingenuousness. He showed me all the alms he had received in Orsara—bread, wine, cheese, sausages, preserves, and chocolate. All the ample pockets of his religious habit were full of food.

"Have you money as well?"

"God forbid! In the first place, our glorious statutes forbid me to touch it; in the second place, if I accepted money when I go begging, people would salve their consciences with a soldo or two, while what they give me in food is worth ten times as much. Believe me, St. Francis was a wise man."

I reflected that the monk saw as wealth precisely what was then making me poor. He made me eat with him and was proud that I deigned to do him so much honor.

We landed at the port of Pola, which is named Veruda. After walking a quarter of an hour along an uphill road, we entered the city, where I spent two hours examining Roman antiquities, for this city had been the capital of the Empire; but I saw no vestiges of its former grandeur except a ruined arena. We returned to Veruda and, sailing from there, were the next day off Ancona, but we tacked back and forth all night and did not run in until morning. Though it is considered a great work of Trajan's,[11] the port would be a very poor one except for a dike built at great expense, which makes it good. There is a curious fact about the Adriatic which is worth mentioning: its northern coast has plenty of harbors, whereas the opposite coast has only one or two. It is obvious that the sea is withdrawing toward the east, and that in three or four centuries Venice will be joined to the mainland.[12]

We disembarked at Ancona at the old lazaretto, where we were sentenced to a quarantine of twenty-eight days because Venice had admitted the crews of two ships from Messina, where there had lately been a plague, after a quarantine of three months. I demanded a room for myself and Frate Steffano, who thanked me heartily for the arrangement; then I rented from the Jews a bed, a table, and some chairs, the hire for which I was to pay at the end of the quarantine; the monk refused to sleep on anything but straw. If he could have guessed that, without him, I should perhaps have died of starvation, he might not have been so proud of being lodged with me. A sailor who hoped to find me generous asked me where my trunk was; when I answered that I had no idea, he tried hard to find it, and I was much amused when Captain Alban, who had joined in the search, came and humbly asked me to excuse him for having left it behind and promised that I should have it in less than three weeks.

The monk, who was to spend four weeks with me, expected to live at my expense, whereas it was he whom Providence had sent to me to keep me alive. He had food enough to sustain us for a week.

It was after supper that I gave him a touching account of my sad situation, telling him that I should be in need of everything until we reached Rome, where (I lied) I was to serve the Ambassador as Secretary of Memorials.

I was astonished to observe that Frate Steffano was delighted by the sad tale of my misfortunes.

"I will take care of you," he said, "until we reach Rome. Only tell me if you can write."

"Are you joking?"

"Splendid! As I live and breathe, I cannot write anything but my name; true, I can write it with my left hand too; but what need have I to be able to write?"

"I am a little surprised, for I thought you were a priest."

"I am not a priest; I am a monk, I say mass, and so I have to know how to read. But consider that St. Francis, whose unworthy son I am, could not write, and there are those who say he could not even read, which is why he never said mass. But to come to the point. Since you can write, you shall write tomorrow in my name to all the persons I shall name to you; and I promise you they will send us food in plenty all through our quarantine."

He made me spend all the next day writing eight letters, because according to a saying handed down in his order any friar who had knocked on seven doors and been refused could be sure he would receive plentiful alms at the eighth. As he had already made the journey to Rome once before, he knew all the good houses in Ancona which were devoted to St. Francis, and all the superiors of the rich monasteries. I had to write to all the persons he named, and all the lies he wanted. He made me sign his name as well, saying that if he signed, the difference in the hands would show that he had not written the letter, which would reflect on him because in this corrupt age only the learned were esteemed. He made me fill the letters with passages in Latin, even the ones addressed to women, and all my remonstrances were in vain. When I objected, he threatened to stop feeding me. I decided to do whatever he asked. In several of the letters there were lies which others contradicted. He made me tell the superior of the Jesuits that he had not applied to the Capuchins because they were atheists, which was why St. Francis could not tolerate them. I tried to tell him that in St. Francis's day there were neither Capuchins nor Recollects, but he said I did not know what I was talking about. I was sure he would be dismissed as a fool and that no one would send anything. I was wrong. The quantity of provisions which arrived two days later and the day after surprised me. Three or four people each sent us wine enough to last us through the entire quarantine. It was cooked wine, which would have been bad for me; but in any case I was drinking water for dietary reasons, for I could not wait to be cured. So far as food was concerned, we had enough every day for five or six persons. We gave some of it to our guard, who was poor and had a large family. For all this bounty the monk was grateful to St. Francis alone, not to the good souls who were giving him charity.

He undertook to give my scandalously soiled shirts to our guard to wash, saying that he ran no risk for everyone knew that Recollects did not wear shirts. He did not know that such a malady as mine existed. As I kept to my bed all day, I escaped exhibiting myself to those who, having received one of his letters, felt it their duty to visit him. Those who did not come to visit sent him letters full of elegantly expressed incongruities, which I took care not to point out to him. I had a hard time making him understand that such letters did not require answers.

Two weeks of my regimen had cured my indisposition to the point where I was taking an early morning walk in the courtyard; but a Turkish merchant from Salonica arriving at the lazaretto with his household and being lodged on the ground floor, I had to give up my walks. My only remaining pleasure was to pass my time on the balcony, which gave on the same courtyard, in which the Turk strolled about. What interested me was a Greek slave girl of astonishing beauty. She spent almost the whole day sitting at the door of her room, knitting or reading in the shade. The heat was extreme. When she raised her beautiful eyes and saw me, she looked away and often, pretending surprise, rose and went slowly back into her room, as if to say, "I did not know anyone was looking at me." She was tall and her whole appearance showed that she was very young. Her skin was white and her eyes black like her hair and her brows. She dressed in the Greek fashion, which is very voluptuous.

Unoccupied, confined to a lazaretto, and such as nature and habit had made me, could I contemplate such an object four or five hours every day without falling madly in love? I had heard her conversing in *lingua franca*[13] with her master, a handsome old man who was as bored as she was and who would come out for a few moments with his pipe in his mouth, only to return to his room almost at once. I would have spoken to the girl, had I not been afraid of driving her away and never seeing her again. I finally resolved to write to her, since nothing stood in the way of my getting a letter to her, for I had only to drop it at her feet. But not being certain that she would pick it up, I hit upon the following plan to avoid any risk of precipitating an awkward situation.

Waiting for a time when she was alone, I dropped a sheet of paper folded like a letter but on which I had written nothing, meanwhile keeping my real letter in my hand. When I saw her stoop to pick up the pretended letter, I threw her the other too. She picked them both up, put them in her pocket, and vanished. My letter ran as follows: "Angel of the East whom I adore! I shall spend the whole night on this balcony, hoping that you will come for but a quarter of an hour to hear my voice through the hole at my feet. We will speak in whispers, and to hear me you can climb up on the bale which is under the same hole."

I asked my guard to be good enough not to lock me in as he did every night, and he made no objection to granting my request, on condition, however, that he would watch me, for if I took a notion to jump down, he risked losing his head. However, he promised not to come out on the balcony.

Waiting at the appointed place, I saw her appear at midnight, just as I was giving up hope. I lay down on my stomach and put my head to the hole, which was a splintery square five or six inches across. I saw her climb on the bale; when she stood up her head was only a few feet from the floor of the balcony. She had to steady herself against the wall with one hand, for the awkward position made her totter. In this situation, we talked of ourselves, of love, of desires, of obstacles, of impossibilities, and of ruses. When I told her why I could not jump down, she said that even if I did we should be lost, for there was no way I could get back up again. Then too, God alone knows what the Turk would have done to her and to me if he had caught us. After promising me that she would come and talk with me every night, she put her hand up through the hole. Alas! I could not get my fill of kissing it. I thought I had never touched a hand so soft and so delicate. But what delight when she asked me for mine! I quickly thrust my whole arm down through the hole, and she pressed her lips to the bend of my elbow; after that she forgave my rapacious hand all that it could steal from her Greek bosom, for which I hungered far more ravenously than I had for the kisses I had just imprinted on her hand. After we parted I was delighted to see my guard sound asleep in a corner of the room.

Satisfied that I had obtained all that I could obtain in this awkward position, I waited impatiently for the next night, racking my brains for a way to make it still more delicious; but the Greek girl, thinking to the same purpose, obliged me to admit that her wits were more fertile than mine.

She was in the courtyard with her master after dinner and had said something to him to which he nodded his assent, whereupon I saw a Turkish servant and their guard drag out a great basket of merchandise and place it under the balcony; while she had another bale placed on top of two others, as if to make more room for the basket. Understanding her plan, I trembled with joy. I saw that by this maneuver she had provided the means to stand two feet higher that night. "But what of it?" I reflected. "She will be in the most awkward position imaginable, so stooped over that she cannot possibly bear it. The hole is not big enough for her to make herself comfortable by putting her whole head through it."

Raging because I could not hope to enlarge the hole, I lie down, I examine it, and I see no other course but to unnail the whole worn plank from the two beams underneath it. I go back into the room; the guard was not there. I choose the strongest among the pairs of tongs which I see; I set to work and, making several attempts, for I am constantly afraid I will be caught, I pull out the four big nails which held the plank to the beams; I can now take it up whenever I please. I leave it there and wait impatiently for night. After eating a bite or two, I post myself on the balcony.

The object of my desires arrived at midnight. Dismayed to see that it took great agility on her part to climb up on the new bale, I lift my plank, set it aside, and, lying down, offer her the whole length of my arm; she takes hold of it, climbs, and, straightening up, is astonished to find that she is in my balcony down to her waist. She brought the whole length of her bare arms into it without any difficulty. We wasted only three or four minutes congratulating each other on having independently worked for the same end. If on the previous night I had been more her master than she had been mine, on this night she commanded my entire body. Alas! stretch my arms as I would, I could not possess more than half of hers. I was in despair; but she, though she had me entirely in her hands, was ready to weep because she could satisfy only her mouth. She heaped a thousand Greek curses on the wretch who had not made the bale at least half a foot bigger. Even then we should not have been satisfied; but my hand could have soothed her ardor somewhat. Though our pleasures were sterile, they occupied us until dawn. She departed without making a sound; I put back the plank, and went to bed in great need of regaining my strength.

She had told me that since the Lesser Bairam[14] began that day and continued for three more, she could not come again until the fourth day. It was the Turkish Easter. The Lesser Bairam lasts longer than the Greater. I spent these three days watching their ceremonies and their constant bustling about.

The first night after the Bairam, when she had clasped me in her loving arms, she told me that she could not be happy unless she were mine and that, as she was a Christian, I could buy her and then wait for her in Ancona till she had finished her quarantine. I had to confess that I was poor, and at that she sighed. The next night she told me that her master would sell her for two thousand piasters,[15] that she could give them to me, that she was a virgin, and that I could convince myself of it if the bale were bigger. She said she would give me a box filled with diamonds, a single one of which was worth two thousand piasters, and that by selling the others we could live in comfort without any fear of poverty. She said that her master would not notice the theft of the box until he had completed his quarantine, and that he would suspect anyone rather than her.

I was in love with this creature; her proposal troubled me; but when I woke in the morning I hesitated no longer. The next night she came with the box, and when I told her that I could not bring myself to be an accomplice in robbery, she wept and answered that I did not love her as she loved me, but that I was a "true Christian." It was the last night. The prior of the lazaretto was to come the next day at noon to give us our freedom. Surrendering to her senses, no longer able to resist the fire which was burning her soul, the charming Greek told me to stand up, bend over, take her under the armpits, and pull her up onto the balcony. What lover could resist such an invitation? Naked as a gladiator, I stand up, I bend over, I take her under the armpits and, without needing the strength of Milo of Crotona,[16] I was pulling her up when I felt my shoulders grasped and heard the guard's voice saying, "What are you doing?" I let go, she flees, and I fall on my stomach. I have no wish to get up, and I let the guard shake me. He thought the effort I had made had killed me, but I was worse than dead. I did not get up, because I wanted to strangle him. Finally I went to bed without addressing a word to him, and even without putting back the plank.

The prior came in the morning and told us we were free. As I left, brokenhearted, I saw the Greek girl wiping away her tears. I arranged to meet Frate Steffano at the Exchange[17] and he left me with the Jew to whom I owed the hire for the furniture he had supplied me with. I took him to the Minimite monastery, where Father Lazari gave me ten zecchini and the address of the Bishop, who had undergone his quarantine at the Tuscan frontier and must by now be in Rome, where I was to meet him. After paying the Jew and eating a poor dinner at an inn, I went to the Exchange to see Frate Steffano. On the way I had the bad luck to run into Captain Alban, who coarsely insulted me for having let him believe that he had left my trunk at his house. I calmed him by telling him the whole miserable story, and gave him a statement in writing certifying that I had no claims on him. I bought myself a pair of shoes and a blue redingote.

At the Exchange I told Frate Steffano that I wanted to go to the *Santa Casa* of Our Lady of Loreto,[18] that I would wait there three days for him, and that we could proceed to Rome on foot together. He replied that he did not want to go to Loreto and that I would repent of having scorned the protection of St. Francis. The next day I set off for Loreto, in excellent health.

I reached that holy city tired to death. It was the first time in my life that I had done fifteen miles[19] on foot, drinking nothing but water because cooked wine gave me heartburn. Despite my poverty I did not look like a beggar. The heat was intense.

As I enter the city, I meet a respectable-looking, elderly abate. Seeing that he is looking at me attentively, I raise my hat and ask him where there is a decent inn.

"Seeing such a person as you on foot," he says, "I conclude that it is devotion which has led you to visit this holy place. *Ella venga meco*" ("Come with me, Sir").

He turns back and leads me to a handsome house. After speaking privately to the proprietor, he takes a stately leave, saying, "*Ella sarà ben servita*" ("You will be well served").

I thought he took me for someone else, but I let it pass.

I was conducted to a suite of three rooms, of which the bedroom was hung in damask and had a canopied bed and an open secretary furnished with pens, ink, and paper. A manservant hands me a light dressing gown, then leaves and comes back with a companion carrying a large basin of water by its two handles. They set it before me, take off my shoes, and wash my feet. A well-dressed woman comes in, followed by a maid carrying bed linen, and after saluting me with a low bow, makes the bed. After my bath, a bell rings, they kneel, and I do likewise. It was the Angelus. A small table is laid; I am asked what wine I drink, I answer Chianti. I am brought the newspaper and two silver candlesticks, then left to myself. An hour later I am served a delicious fast-day supper, and before I go to bed I am asked if I will take my chocolate before I go out or after mass. Divining the reason for the question, I answer "before I go out." I get into bed, I am brought a night lamp mounted in front of a timepiece, and left to myself. I find that I am lying in a bed the equal of which I have found only in

France. It was made to cure insomnia; but I did not need that. I slept for ten hours. The treatment I was receiving made me certain I was not at an inn; but could I have ventured to suppose that I was in a hospice?[20] After my morning chocolate, in comes a genteel hairdresser who does not wait to be questioned before speaking. Guessing that I did not want to have a beard, he offers to trim my face-down with the points of his scissors, which, he says, will make me look even younger.

"What makes you think I want to conceal my age?"

"That is easily seen, for if Monsignore did not have that in mind, he would have had himself shaved long ago. The Countess Marcolini is here. Does Monsignore know her? I am to dress her hair at noon."

Seeing that I am not interested in the Countess, the chatterbox goes on:

"Is this the first time Monsignore has lodged here? In all the states of Our Lord the Pope there is not a finer hospice."

"I can well believe it, and I shall congratulate His Holiness on it."

"Oh, he knows it himself. He lodged here before his elevation. If Monsignor Caraffa[21] had not known you, he would not have brought you here."

Such is the use of barbers to a stranger in any part of Europe; but it does not do to ask them questions, for then they bring out a mixture of falsehood and truth and instead of letting themselves be pumped, pump you. Considering it my duty to pay Monsignor Caraffa a visit, I had a servant show me the way there. He received me cordially and, after showing me his library, gave me a guide in the person of one of his abati, who was my own age and, as I found, both witty and intelligent. He showed me everything. If he is still alive, he is now a canon of San Giovanni in Laterano.[22] Twenty-eight years later he was of service to me in Rome.

The next morning I received the sacrament in the very place where the Blessed Virgin gave birth to her Creator. I spent the whole of the third day seeing all the treasures of the magnificant sanctuary. Early the next morning I set out, having spent only the three paoli[23] which I gave the hairdresser.

Halfway to Macerata, I overtook Frate Steffano, who was walking very slowly. Delighted to see me, he told me he had left Ancona two hours after I did and that he was traveling only three miles a day, being perfectly satisfied to spend three months making the journey, which even on foot could be made in a week. "I want," he said, "to reach Rome fresh and well; I have no reason to hurry; and if you feel like traveling in the same way, come with me. St. Francis can easily take care of us both."

August 1743.[24]

This lazy lout was thirty years old, red-haired, of a very strong constitution, a true peasant, who had become a monk only so that he could live without tiring his body. I answered that, as I was in a hurry, I could not become his companion. He said he would walk twice as far that day if I would wear his cloak, which he found very heavy. I agreed to try, and he put on my redingote. We made such a comical pair that everyone who passed us laughed. I found that his cloak was in fact a load for a mule. It had twelve pockets, all of them full, besides a big back pocket, which he called a *batticulo*[25] and which all by itself contained twice what could be put in the others: bread, wine, cooked, fresh, and salted meat, chickens, eggs, cheeses, hams, sausages; there was enough in it to feed us for two weeks. When I told him how I had been treated in Loreto, he answered that if I had asked Monsignor Caraffa to give me a note to all the hospices on the road to Rome, I would have received much the same treatment everywhere.

"Hospices," he said, "are all under the curse of St.

Francis, because they do not receive mendicant monks; but we do not care about that because they are too far apart. We prefer the houses of people devoted to the order, and we find them at the end of every hour's travel."

"Why do you not lodge in your monasteries?"

"I am not such a fool as that. In the first place, they would not receive me because, being a fugitive, I have not the written 'obedience' they always insist on seeing; I should even run the risk of being sent to prison, for they are a bad lot. In the second place, we are not as well treated in our monasteries as we are by our benefactors."

"How and why are you a fugitive?"

He answered by giving me an absurd and mendacious account of his imprisonment and escape. He was a fool who had the brains of Harlequin and thought that those who listened to him were even greater fools. Yet there was a shrewdness in his stupidity. His religion was extraordinary. In his determination not to be a bigot, he made a scandal of himself; to raise a laugh, he talked the most revolting filth. He had not the slightest inclination for women or for any other kind of immorality, and he insisted that this was a virtue in him, whereas it was only a lack in his nature. He considered everything of the kind material for jokes; and when he was tipsy he asked his table companions—husbands, wives, daughters, sons—such obscene questions that he made them blush. The lout simply laughed.

When we were a hundred paces from the house of a benefactor, he put his cloak on again. Entering, he gave his blessing to everyone, and the whole family came and kissed his hand. The mistress of the house having asked him to say a mass for her, he most obligingly allowed himself to be led to the sacristy of the church, which was only twenty paces away.

"Have you forgotten," I whispered to him, "that we have breakfasted?"

"That is none of your affair."

I dare not answer; but when I hear him saying mass, I am much surprised to observe that he did not know how to go about it. I find this amusing; but the real comedy began when, after mass, he entered the confessional, where, after confessing the whole household, he took it into his head to refuse absolution to the hostess's daughter, a sweet little girl twelve or thirteen years old, charming and very pretty. He made his refusal in front of everyone, berating her and threatening her with hell-fire. The poor girl was overwhelmed with shame and left the church weeping, while I, greatly touched and concerned for her, first told Frate Steffano in a loud voice that he was mad and then ran after her to console her; but she had vanished, after absolutely refusing to come to the dinner table. This outrage so angered me that I was ready to cane him. In the presence of the whole family I called him an impostor and the infamous destroyer of the girl's honor, then asked him why he had refused her absolution, and he reduced me to silence by coolly answering that he could not reveal what he had learned in confession. I refused to eat, having made up my mind to part from the beastly monk. As I left the house I was forced to take a paolo for the accursed mass the scoundrel had celebrated. They must have supposed me his treasurer.

As soon as we were on the highroad, I told him I was leaving him, to escape the risk of being sent to the galleys with him. In the course of my reproaches I called him an ignorant scoundrel, and when I heard him answer that I was a tramp I could not refrain from giving him a slap, to which he replied by a blow from his stick, which I instantly snatched from his hands. Leaving him there, I set off at a fast pace for Macerata. A quarter of an hour later a *vetturino*[26] on his way back to Tolentino with his carriage empty offered me a seat in it for two paoli, and I accepted. From there I could have gone on to Foligno for six paoli; but an accursed wish to save money prevented me and, since I felt perfectly well, I thought I could get to Valcimara[27] on foot; I arrived there completely done in after a five-hour walk. A five-hour walk is enough to wear out a young man who, though strong and healthy, is not accustomed to walking. I went to bed.

The next morning when I go to pay my host out of the copper money I had in my coat pocket, I cannot find my purse, which should be in my breeches pocket. There must have been seven zecchini in it. What a blow! I remember that I had left it on the inn table at Tolentino when I changed a zecchino to pay for my dinner there. What a misfortune! I dismissed any idea of retracing my steps to recover the purse, which contained all my funds. Since I thought it impossible that whoever had filched it would give it back to me, I could not persuade myself to undergo a certain loss for the sake of an uncertain hope. I paid and, sick at heart, took the road to Serravalle.[28] But when, after walking for five hours and breakfasting at Muccia, I had only another hour's journey before me, I stumbled in jumping a ditch and sprained my ankle so painfully that I could not walk another step. I sit down beside the ditch, left with no resource but that which religion always affords to those who are in distress. *I pray, asking God in his mercy to send some traveler along the road to rescue me.*

An hour later a peasant came by on his way to fetch an ass's colt; for a paolo he took me to Serravalle, where I arrived with a capital of eleven paoli in coppers; to save me money, he lodged me at the house of a scoundrelly-looking man who put me up for two paoli paid in advance. I asked for a surgeon; but none is to be had until the next day. After a foul supper I retire to a very poor bed, where I nevertheless hope to find sleep; but it was precisely there that my evil demon was lying in wait to torment me with the pains of hell.

Three men come in, armed with carbines, making terrifying faces, conversing among themselves in a dialect I did not understand, swearing, raving, and not paying the slightest attention to me. After drinking and singing until midnight, they lay down on heaps of straw; but to my great surprise my host came in drunk and stark-naked and made to lie down beside me, bursting out laughing when I told him I would not permit it. Blaspheming God, he said that all hell could not keep him from lying in his own bed. I had to make room for him, exclaiming "Whose house am I in?" To this he answered that I was lodging with the most honest policeman in all the Papal States.

Could I have imagined that I was in the company of those accursed enemies of the entire human race? But this was not all. Scarcely has he lain down before the filthy brute, more by actions than words, reveals his infamous design upon me in a way which forces me to ward him off with a blow on the chest which knocks him out of the bed. He curses, he gets up, and returns to the attack undaunted. I decide to crawl out and sit in a chair, thanking God that he does not try to stop me and in fact has promptly fallen asleep. There I spent four miserable hours. At daybreak his comrades roused my tormentor and he got up. They drank and, taking their carbines, departed.

In this pitiable state I spent another hour calling for someone. A boy finally came up and, for a baiocco,[29] went and fetched me a surgeon. After examining me and assuring me that three or four days' rest would cure me, the surgeon advised me to have myself carried to the inn. I took his advice, and at once went to bed, where he looked after me. I sent my shirts to be washed and was well treated. I was reduced to wishing I would not get well, so greatly did I dread the moment when I should have to sell my redingote to pay the innkeeper. The thought filled me with shame. I saw that if I had not intervened on behalf of the girl to whom Frate Steffano had refused absolution, I should not now be in this wretched situation. I had to admit, it seemed, that my zeal had been misplaced. If I could have put up with the Recollect, "if," "if," "if," and *all the accursed "if's" which rack the soul of the man in misfortune who thinks and who, having thought, finds himself even more unfortunate.* Yet it is true that he learns to live. The man who refuses to think never learns anything.

On the morning of the fourth day, finding that I could walk as the surgeon had predicted, I resolve to entrust him with the sale of my redingote, a disastrous necessity because the rains were beginning. I owed the innkeeper fifteen paoli and the surgeon four. Just as I was about to entrust him with this heartbreaking sale, in walks Frate Steffano, laughing like a madman and asking me if I have forgotten the blow he had given me. I request the surgeon to leave me alone with the monk. *I ask my reader: Is it possible to witness such things and keep one's mind free from superstition?* The astonishing part is the timing, for the monk arrived at the very last minute; and what astonished me even more was the power of Providence, of fortune, of the inescapable concatenation of events, which insisted, determined, decreed that my only hope lay in this ill-omened monk, who had begun to be my guardian genius at the height of my misfortunes in Chioggia. But what a genius! I could not but find such power more a punishment than a blessing. Yet I felt comforted when I saw this fool, this rascal, this ignorant scoundrel appear, because I did not doubt for a moment that he would rescue me from my difficulties. Whether it was Heaven which sent him to me, or Hell, I saw that I must submit to him. It was he who would take me to Rome. Destiny had decreed it.

The first words Frate Steffano spoke to me were the proverb *Che va piano va sano* ("He who goes slowly goes safely").[30] He had spent five days making the journey I had made in one; but he was in good health and had suffered no misfortunes. He said that he was passing by, when someone told him that an abate who was Secretary of Memorials to the Venetian Ambassador was lying ill at the inn after having been robbed at Valcimara.

"I come to see you," he said, "and I find you well. Let us forget everything, and set off for Rome at once. To please you, I will walk six miles a day."

"I cannot; I have lost my purse and I owe twenty paoli."

"I will go and find them in the name of St. Francis."

An hour later he comes in with the accursed drunkard and sodomite of a policeman, who tells me that if I had let him know who I was he would have kept me in his house.

"I will give you forty paoli," he said, "if you will undertake to obtain the protection of your Ambassador for me; but when you have reached Rome you shall give them back to me if you do not succeed. So you must write me out a receipt."

"Very well."

It was all settled in a quarter of an hour; I received forty paoli, I paid my debts, and I set off with the monk.

An hour after noon he said that, as Collefiorito[31] was still a long way off, we could stop for the night in a house which he pointed out to me a couple of hundred paces from the highroad. It was a cottage, and I said we should be poorly lodged there; but my objections were of no avail, I had to do as he wished. We go there, and all we see is a decrepit old man, lying in bed and coughing, two ugly women of thirty or forty years, three stark-naked children, a cow in a corner, and an accursed barking dog. It was the picture of poverty; but the monstrous monk, instead of giving them alms and going his way, demanded supper in the name of St. Francis. The dying old man turned to his womenfolk and said: "You must cook the hen and bring out the bottle I've been keeping for twenty years.'' Then he fell into such a fit of coughing that I expected he would die on the instant. The monk promises him that St. Francis will make him young again. I wanted to go on to Collefiorito by myself and wait for him there; but the women protested and the dog held me by the coat with teeth which terrified me. I had to stay where I was. After four hours the hen was still tough; I uncorked the bottle and found vinegar. Losing all patience, I got some food from the monk's *batticulo,* and I saw the women delighted at seeing so many good things.

When we had all eaten well enough, they made us two beds of fairly good straw, and we lay down in darkness, for there was neither candle nor oil. Five minutes later, just when the monk was telling me that a woman had lain down beside him, I felt another beside me. The hussy takes hold of me and goes her way, despite my absolutely refusing to submit to her fury. The racket the monk made trying to ward off his made the scene so comic that I could not be really angry. The fool shouted for help at the top of his voice, invoking St. Francis since he saw he could expect no help from me. I was even worse off than he was, for when I tried to get up the dog came at my throat and terrified me. The same dog, going from me to the monk and from the monk to me, seemed to be in league with the strumpets to keep us from resisting them. We shouted ''murder'' at the top of our voices; but it was no use, for the house was isolated. The children slept, the old man coughed. Unable to escape and hearing the b[itch][32] assure me that she would go away if I would be a little kinder, I thought it best to let her have her way. I found that the writer who says *sublata lucerna nullum discrimen inter mulieres* (''when the lamp is taken away, all women are alike'')[33] says true; but without love this great business is a vile thing. Frate Steffano did otherwise. Protected by his heavy robe, he escaped from the dog, got up, and found his stick. Then he ran up and down the room, striking out blindly to left and right. I heard a woman's voice cry, "Oh, my God!" and the monk say, "I've killed her." I thought he had killed the dog too, for I did not hear it, and I thought the old man had been killed as well, for he had stopped coughing. The monk came and lay down beside me, holding his stout stick, and we slept until morning.

I dressed quickly, surprised to see nothing of the two women and terrified to see that the old man gave no sign of life. I showed Frate Steffano a bruise on the dead man's temple; he said that in any case he had not killed him on purpose. But I saw him go into a fury when he found his *batticulo* empty. For my part, I was delighted. Seeing nothing of the two sluts, I thought they had gone to the authorities for help and that we should be in serious trouble; but when I saw that the *batticulo* had been pillaged, I knew they had gone off so that we could not call them to account for the theft. However, I urged him so earnestly, telling him the danger we were in, that we set out. Coming upon a *vetturino* on his way to Foligno, I persuaded the monk to seize this opportunity to get away and, after eating a hasty bite, we got into another carriage which took us to Pisignano,[34] where a benefactor gave us an excellent lodging and where I had a good sleep, no longer fearing arrest.

The next day we reached Spoleto early. Having two benefactors there, he saw fit to honor them both. After dining with the first, who treated us like princes, he decided to sup and spend the night with the second. He was a rich wine merchant with a large family, all of whom were charming. All would have gone well if the ill-omened monk, who had already drunk too much in the house of the first benefactor, had not become completely intoxicated under the roof of the second. Thinking to please our good host and his wife by speaking ill of the man at whose house we had dined, the wretch told lies with which I could not put up. When he had the insolence to say he had told him that all his wines were doctored and he was a robber, I denied it in so many words and called him a villain. Our host and hostess calmed me by saying that they knew the people in question; and when the monk threw his napkin in my face in answer to my calling him a scandalmonger, the host gently took him by the arm and led him to a bedroom and locked him in. He showed me to another.

Early the next morning I was making ready to set off alone, when the monk, who had sobered up, came and said that in future we must live together as good friends. Bowing to my destiny, I went with him to Soma,[35] where the hostess of the inn, who was a rare beauty, gave us dinner. She gave us some Cyprus wine which the Venetian couriers brought her in exchange for the excellent truffles she gave them, which they took back to Venice on their return trip. When I set out I left the excellent woman a little of my heart; but what were my feelings when, two or three miles from Terni, the monster showed me a small sack of truffles he had stolen from her? The theft amounted to at least two zecchini. Furious, I took the sack from him, saying that I was absolutely determined to send it back to that good and beautiful woman. We fought until, having taken his stick from him, I threw him into a ditch and left him. I no sooner reached Terni than I sent the hostess her sack, with a letter asking her forgiveness.

I went to Otricoli on foot to look at the fine antique bridge[36] at my leisure, and from there a *vetturino* conveyed me to Castelnuovo[37] for four paoli. Setting out from there at midnight on foot, I reached Rome three hours before noon on September 1st.[38] But now for an experience which will perhaps be of interest to some of my readers.

An hour after leaving Castelnuovo on my way to Rome under a clear and windless sky, I noticed, at some ten paces to my right, a pyramidal flame a cubit high keeping pace with me some four or five feet above the ground. It stopped when I stopped, and when there were trees by the roadside it disappeared, but I saw it again as soon as I was beyond them. I went toward it several times, but it withdrew as far as I had approached. I tried retracing my steps, whereupon it vanished from my sight, but as soon as I started on again I saw it in the same place. It did not disappear until dawn.

What a wonder for superstitious ignorance if I had had witnesses to this phenomenon and then had made a great name in Rome! History abounds in such trifles, and the world is full of intellects which still attach great importance to them, for all the so-called enlightenment which the sciences have bestowed on the human mind. Yet I must candidly admit that, despite my knowledge of physics, the sight of this little meteor gave me some singular thoughts. I was prudent enough not to mention it to anyone. I reached Rome with seven paoli in my pocket.

Nothing stays my steps—neither the fine approach to the Porta del Pioppo,[39] which ignorance has dubbed "del Popolo," nor the façades of its churches, nor any of the monuments with which that magnificent city impresses the visitor who sees it for the first time. I make my way to Monte Magnanopoli,[40] where the address I had been given assured me that I should find my Bishop. I am told that he had left ten days earlier, leaving orders that I should be sent, all expenses paid, to Naples to an address which is given me. A coach would be leaving the next morning. I do not even consider seeing Rome; I go to bed and stay there until it is time for me to set out. I reached Naples on September 6th. I ate, drank, and slept with the three peasants who were my fellow travelers and never said a word to them.

As soon as I arrive, I find someone to guide me to the place named in the address I had been given, but the

Bishop is not there. I go to the Minimite monastery, and am told that he had left for Martorano, and all the inquiries I make are fruitless. He had left no orders which could possibly concern me. So there I am in the great city of Naples with eight carlini[41] in my pocket and no idea where to turn. Yet my destiny calls me to Martorano, and there I am determined to go. The distance is only two hundred miles.[42] I find several coachmen setting out for Cosenza, but when they learn that I have no trunk, they refuse to take me unless I pay in advance. I admit they are right; but I had to get to Martorano. I determine to go on foot, boldly asking for food anywhere along the way, as Frate Steffano had taught me to do. I spend two of my carlini on a meal; that leaves me with six. Told that I should take the Salerno road, I get to Portici in an hour and a half. My legs carry me to an inn where I take a room and order supper. Excellently served, I eat, go to bed, and sleep very well. The next morning I get up and go to look at the royal palace.[43] I tell the innkeeper that I will come back for dinner.

As I enter the royal palace, a man of prepossessing appearance and dressed in the fashion of the East approaches me and says that if I wish to see the palace he will show me everything and so I shall save my money. I accept, thanking him heartily, and he walks beside me. When I tell him that I am a Venetian, he answers that, as a Zantiote,[44] he is my subject. I take the compliment for what it is worth and make him a slight bow.

"I have some excellent muscat wines from the Levant,"[45] he says, "which I could sell you cheaply."

"I might buy some; but I know them well."

"So much the better. Which one do you prefer?"

"Cerigo."

"You are right. I have some which is excellent, and we shall taste it at dinner, if you will dine with me."

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"I have wine from Samos and from Cephalonia.[46] I have a stock of minerals—vitriol, cinnabar, antimony, and a hundred quintals of mercury."

"I will buy some mercury too."

It is quite naturally, and without any thought of deceit, that a young man who is new to poverty and ashamed to be poor, and who falls into conversation with a rich man who does not know him, talks of buying. I suddenly remember an amalgam of mercury made with lead and bismuth. The mercury increased by a fourth part. I say nothing; but I think to myself that if the Greek did not know this magistery,[47] I might make money from it. I felt that I must proceed with cunning and caution. I saw that if I proposed point-blank to sell him my secret, he would think it worthless; I must first surprise him with the miracle of the increase, laugh at it, and then watch him come on. *Cheating is a sin, but honest cunning is simply prudence. It is a virtue.* To be sure, it has a likeness to roguery, but that cannot be helped. He who has not learned to practice it is a fool. In Greek this kind of prudence is called *kerdaleophron.*[48] *Kerda* means "fox." After seeing the palace, we repair to the inn. The Greek takes me to his room, where he orders the innkeeper to set a table for two. In the next room he had large flagons full of muscat wine and four filled with mercury, each holding ten pounds. Having my plan sketched out in my head, I ask him for a flagon of mercury at whatever it was worth, and I take it to my room. He goes out on some business, telling me that we shall meet again at dinnertime. I go out too, and buy two and a half pounds of lead and the same quantity of bismuth. It was all that the druggist had. I go back to my room, ask the innkeeper for two large empty flagons, and I make my amalgam.

We dine in high spirits and the Greek is delighted to see that I find his Cerigo muscat exquisite. He asks me smilingly why I had bought a flagon of his mercury and

I answered that he could see the reason in my room. He comes there, sees the mercury in two bottles, I ask for a piece of chamois, strain it, fill his flagon, and see him astonished by the quarter-flagon of fine mercury which I have left, together with an equal quantity of a powdered metal which he did not recognize and which was the bismuth. I greet his astonishment with a burst of laughter. I summon the waiter and send him off with the mercury I had left to sell it to the druggist. He comes back and hands me fifteen carlini.

The astounded Greek asks me to give him back his own flagon, which stood there full and was worth sixty carlini; I give it to him with a smile and thank him for having enabled me to make a profit of fifteen carlini. At the same time I tell him that early the next morning I must leave for Salerno. "Then we shall sup together again," he says, "this evening."

We spend all the rest of the day on Vesuvius, and never mention the mercury; but I saw that he was thoughtful. During our supper, he says smilingly that I might well stay over the next day and make forty-five carlini on the other three flagons of mercury he had with him. I answered him in a dignified and serious tone that I did not need them and that I had only increased one of his flagons to amuse him by a pleasant surprise.

"But," he said, "you must be very rich."

"No, for I am after[49] the method of increasing gold, and that costs us a great deal."

"Then there are several of you?"

"My uncle and I."

"What need have you to increase gold? Increasing mercury should be enough for you. Tell me, please, can the mercury you have increased be increased by as much again?"

"No. If it could, it would be a vast seedbed of wealth."

"I find your sincerity delightful."

Supper over, I paid the innkeeper and asked him to have a carriage and pair ready early in the morning to take me to Salerno. Thanking the Greek for his excellent muscat wine, I asked him for his address at Naples, adding that he would see me two weeks hence for I was determined to buy a barrel of his Cerigo. After embracing him cordially, I went off to bed, well pleased with my day's work and not at all surprised that the Greek had not proposed that I sell him my secret. I was sure that he would think it over all night and that I should see him at daybreak. In any case I had money enough to get me to Torre del Greco, and there Providence would take care of me. I thought I could not possibly make my way to Martorano by begging alms, because, such as I was, I did not arouse pity. I could interest only people ready to believe that I was not in need. That is of no use to a genuine beggar.

As I had hoped, the Greek came to my room at dawn.

"We will take coffee together," I said.

"Tell me, Signor Abate, will you sell me your secret?"

"Why not? When we meet again in Naples."

"Why not today?"

"I am expected in Salerno. Besides, the secret is worth a great deal of money and I do not know you."

"That is no obstacle, since I am well enough known here to pay you in cash. What do you want for it?"

"Two thousand once.* " 50

"I will give you that, on condition that I shall myself increase the thirty pounds I have here with whatever material you specify to me, which I will go and buy myself."

"That is impossible, since the material is not to be had here; but at Naples anyone can get as much as he pleases."

"If it is a metal, it can be found at Torre del Greco.

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* A coin worth 14 paoli. (C.'s note.)

We can go there together. Can you tell me what the increase costs?"

"One and one-half per cent; but are you known in Torre del Greco too? For I should not wish to waste my time."

"Your doubt pains me."

He takes a pen, writes the following note, and hands it to me: "On sight. Pay the bearer fifty once in gold and charge them to my account. Panagiotti—Rodostemo. To Signor Gennaro di Carlo."

He tells me the man lives two hundred paces from the inn and urges me to go there myself. I go without waiting to be asked twice, receive fifty once and, returning to my room where he was waiting for me, put them on the table. I then tell him to come with me to Torre del Greco,[51] where we will complete the transaction, after exchanging engagements in writing. Having his own carriage, he ordered the horses harnessed and generously told me to take the fifty once.

At Torre del Greco he wrote me out a receipt in which he promised to pay me two thousand once as soon as I should have told him with what substances and by what process he could increase mercury by a fourth without impairment of its purity and of the same quality as that which I had sold at Portici in his presence.

Pursuant to this, he drew me up a bill of exchange payable in eight days at sight on Signor Gennaro di Carlo. I thereupon told him that the substances were lead, which amalgamated naturally with mercury, and bismuth, which served only to give it the fluidity it must have to pass through the chamois. The Greek went out to perform the operation in the house of some person whom he did not name. I dined alone, and in the evening I saw him looking very gloomy. I had expected as much.

"The operation is performed," he said, "but the mercury is not perfect."

"It is 'of the same quality as that which I sold in Portici.' Your receipt states that clearly."

"But it also says 'without impairment of its purity.' You must admit that its purity is impaired. It is also true that it can no longer be increased."

"I stick to the point of quality. We will go to court, and you will lose. I should be sorry to have the secret become public knowledge. If you do win, you can congratulate yourself, for you will have got my secret from me for nothing. I did not think you capable, Signor Panagiotti, of tricking me in this fashion."

"Signor Abate, I am incapable of tricking anyone."

"Do you know the secret, or do you not? Would I have told it to you except for the bargain we made? This will set all Naples laughing, and the lawyers will make money."

"I am already in trouble enough over the affair."

"In the meanwhile, here are your fifty once."

As I was taking them from my pocket in great fear that he would accept them, he left, saying he did not want them. We supped separately, each in his own room, divided by open war; but I knew that we would make peace. He came to me in the morning, when I was getting ready to leave and a carriage was already waiting for me. When I told him to take his fifty once, he answered that I should content myself with another fifty and give him back his bill of exchange for two thousand. We then began talking sense, and after two hours I gave in. He handed me another fifty once, we dined together, we embraced afterward, and then he presented me with a note good for a cask of muscat wine at his storehouse in Naples and with a magnificent case containing twelve silver-handled razors from the famous manufactory in Torre del Greco. We parted the best of friends. I stayed in Salerno for two days to buy shirts, stockings, handkerchiefs, and whatever I needed. I had a hundred zecchini at my disposal, I was in excellent health and proud of my exploit, in which I saw nothing with which I need reproach myself. The cunning and the quickness of mind on which I had drawn to sell my secret could be condemned only by a civic morality which has no place in the business of life. Free, rich, and certain of appearing before my Bishop a well-turned-out youth instead of a tramp, I recovered all my high spirits, and congratulated myself on having learned, at my own expense, to defend myself against Father Corsinis, swindling gamesters, mercenary women, and especially against those who praise a man to his face. I set off with two priests who were in a hurry to reach Cosenza. We did the one hundred and forty miles in twenty-two hours. The morning after I arrived in the capital of Calabria, I hired a small carriage and proceeded to Martorano.

As I traveled, I fixed my eyes on the famous *Mare Ausonium*[52] and rejoiced in being at the center of *Magna Graecia,*[53] which Pythagoras's[54] sojourn had rendered illustrious for twenty-four centuries. I looked with astonishment at a country renowned for its fertility, in which, despite the prodigality of nature, I saw only poverty, a dearth of all that delightful superfluity which alone can make life precious, and a humanity to which I was ashamed to remember that I belonged. Such is the Terra di Lavoro[55] where *labor* is held in abhorrence, where everything is sold for a song, where the inhabitants feel relieved of a burden when they find someone willing to accept their gifts of all kinds of fruits. I saw that the Romans had not erred in calling them brutes instead of Bruttii.[56] The priests who were traveling with me laughed when I confessed to my fear of the tarantula and the chersydrus.[57] I believed that the malady they communicated was even more horrible than that of Venus. The priests assured me that they were fabulous and laughed at the *Georgics*[58] of Vergil and the line which I quoted to justify my fear.

I found Bishop Bernardo da Bernardis sitting in an uncomfortable chair at a wretched table on which he was writing. He got up to raise me from my knees and, instead of blessing me, clasped me to his bosom. I saw that he was sincerely concerned when I told him that I had found no word at Naples telling me where I could come to fall at his feet, and he looked relieved when I said that I was in debt to no one and in good health.

He sighed as he told me of his feelings and his poverty, and ordered a servant to lay a third place at his table. In addition to this man, he had the most canonical of maidservants and a priest whose few words at table made me think him a great ignoramus. His house was quite large, but badly built and falling to ruin. It had so little furniture that, to provide me with a poor bed in a room near his, he had to give me one of his own hard mattresses. His wretched dinner horrified me. His attachment to the rule of his order made him keep the fast and the oil was bad. However, he was intelligent and, what is more, an honest man. He told me what greatly surprised me—that his bishopric, though it was not one of the poorest, yielded him only five hundred ducati del regno[59] a year and, still worse, he was in debt to the amount of six hundred. He said with a sigh that the only happiness he enjoyed was having escaped from the clutches of the monks, whose persecution of him had made his life a purgatory for fifteen years. All this information discouraged me, for it showed me the straits in which my presence must put him. I saw that he was disconcerted to realize what a poor present he had made me. Yet I felt that he was only to be pitied.

He smiled when I asked him if he had good books, a literary circle, or any good society in which to spend a pleasant hour or two. He admitted that in his entire diocese there was not a person who could boast of writing decently, still less of having taste and any notion of good literature, not a single real library, and no one curious enough to look into a newspaper. However, he promised me that we would give some time to letters together when the books he had ordered from Naples arrived.

That might well be; but without a good library, a circle, a spirit of rivalry, a literary intercourse, was this the country in which I must settle down at the age of eighteen? Seeing me thoughtful and almost overwhelmed by the prospect of the dreary life I must be prepared to lead with him, he tried to encourage me by telling me that he would do everything in his power to make me content.

As he had to officiate at a pontifical service the next day, I saw all his clergy and the women and men who filled his cathedral. It was then that I decided upon my course, grateful to fortune that I was in a position to do so. I saw nothing but brutes who seemed to me positively scandalized by my entire appearance. What ugly women! I told Monsignore in so many words that I felt no call to die a martyr in this city a few months hence.

"Give me," I said, "your episcopal blessing and permission to go, or come with me yourself, and I assure you that we shall make our fortunes. Resign your bishopric to those who made you such an ill present of it."

My proposal set him laughing again and again all the rest of the day; but if he had accepted it, he would not have died two years later in the prime of life.[60] The worthy man was moved to ask my forgiveness for the fault he had committed in bringing me there. Recognizing that it was his duty to send me back to Venice, and being without money and not knowing that I had any, he told me he would send me back to Naples, where a citizen to whom he would give me an introduction would give me sixty ducati del regno, with which I could go back to my native country. I accepted his offer gratefully, and hurried off to open my trunk and bring back the fine case of razors which Panagiotti had given me. I had all the trouble in the world persuading him to accept it, for it was worth the sixty ducati he was giving me.

He took it only because I threatened to stay on there if he persisted in refusing it. He gave me a letter to the Archbishop of Cosenza,[61] in which he praised me and asked him to send me to Naples at his expense. So it was that I left Martorano sixty hours after I arrived, pitying the Bishop whom I left there and who shed tears as he gave me a thousand heart-felt blessings.

The Bishop of Cosenza, a man of intelligence and wealth, insisted on lodging me in his house. At table I warmly praised the Bishop of Martorano; but I railed mercilessly at his diocese and then at the whole of Calabria, in a style so cutting that Monsignore and the entire company could not contain their laughter. Two ladies, relatives of his, did the honors of his table. The younger of them saw fit to disapprove of my satirical attack on her country. She declared war on me; but I mollified her by saying that Calabria would be a ravishing country if only a quarter of its inhabitants were like her. It may have been to prove the contrary of what I had maintained that, the following evening, he had a large company to supper. Cosenza is a city in which a gentleman can have a pleasant time, for there is a rich nobility, some pretty women, and some not uncultivated men.[62] I left on the third day, with a letter from the Archbishop to the celebrated Genovesi.[63]

I had five traveling companions who struck me from the first as being pirates or professional thieves, so I was careful never to let them see that I had a well-filled purse. I always slept with my breeches on, not only for the safety of my money but as a precaution I thought necessary in a country where unnatural desires are common.

1743.

I arrived at Naples on September 16th, and at once went to deliver my letter from the Bishop of Martorano. It was addressed to Signor Gennaro Palo, at Santa Anna.

This man, whose only obligation was to give me sixty ducati, read the letter and said that he would be glad to put me up, as he wanted me to make the acquaintance of his son, who wrote poetry too. The Bishop had written him that I was a sublime poet. After the usual protests, I accepted his invitation, then went and had my little trunk carried to his house. As soon as I got back, he had me shown into his room again.

CHAPTER IX

I make a short but pleasant stay in Naples. Don Antonio Casanova. Don Lelio Caraffa. I go to Rome in delightful company and there enter the service of Cardinal Acquaviva. Barbaruccia. Testaccio. Frascati.

I FOUND no difficulty in answering all the questions he asked me; what I did find most strange and curious was the prolonged laughter which burst from his lungs at every answer I made him. My account of the poverty of Calabria and the state of the Bishop of Martorano, both of which I described in a way to draw tears, roused his laughter to the point where I thought it would kill him.

He was big, fat, and red-faced. Thinking that he was mocking me, I was ready to take offense when he finally became calm and told me with great earnestness that I must pardon his laughter, for it was due to a disease which ran in his family and that one of his uncles had actually died of it.

"Died of laughing?"

"Yes. The disease, which was unknown to Hippocrates,[1] is called *li flati.*"[2]

"How can this be? Do hypochondriac affections, which make all their victims melancholy, make you cheerful?"

"But my *flati*, instead of acting on the hypochrondrium,[3] affect my spleen, which my physician holds to be the organ of laughter. It is a new discovery."

"Not at all. Indeed, it is a very old idea."

"You don't say so! We shall discuss it at table, for I hope you will spend several weeks here."

"I cannot. I must leave day after tomorrow at the latest."

"Then you have some money?"

"I am counting on the sixty ducati which you will have the goodness to give me."

At this his laughter began again; he accounted for it afterward by telling me that the idea of making me stay there as long as he pleased had amused him. He then asked me to go and see his son who, at the age of fourteen, was already a great poet. A maidservant showed me to his room, and I was delighted to find him a youth of fine presence and with a manner which aroused interest at once. After greeting me most politely, he asked me to excuse him if he could not give me his entire attention, since he was busy on a canzone which must go to press the next day; a young lady who was related to the Duchess of Bovino[4] was to take the veil at Santa Chiara, and his poem was for the occasion. Considering his excuse more than legitimate, I offered to help him. He read me his canzone and, finding it full of enthusiasm and versified in the manner of Guidi,[5] I advised him to call it an ode. After praising it where it deserved praise, I ventured to correct it where I thought it needed correction, even going so far as to substitute new verses for those I considered weak. He thanked me, asking me if I were not Apollo himself, and began making a copy of it to send to the compiler. While he was copying it, I wrote a sonnet on the same subject. Paolo was delighted with it and insisted that I sign it and send it to the compiler with his ode.

While I was copying it for the second time to correct some errors in spelling, he went to his father and asked him who I was, which set him laughing until we sat down at table. A bed was made up for me in the young man's own room, an arrangement which pleased me greatly.

Don Gennaro's family consisted only of this son, a daughter who was not pretty, his wife, and two old sisters who were very devout. At supper he had some men of letters. I made the acquaintance of the Marchese Galiani, who was writing a commentary on Vitruvius[6] and was the brother of the Abate Galiani, whom I met at Paris twenty years later when he was embassy secretary to the Count of Cantillana.[7] The next day at supper I met the celebrated Genovesi, who had already received the letter the Archbishop of Cosenza had written him. He talked to me at some length of Apostolo Zeno[8] and the Abate Conti.[9] During supper he remarked that *the most venial mortal sin a regular priest could commit was to say two masses in one day to earn two more carlini, whereas a secular priest who committed the same sin deserved burning.*

The next day the nun took the veil, and the most highly praised compositions in the *raccolta*[10] were the two by Paolo and myself. A Neapolitan named Casanova no sooner learned that I was a foreigner than he became curious to meet me. Finding that I was staying with Don Gennaro, he came to compliment him on the occasion of his name day, which was celebrated the day after the nun took the veil at Santa Chiara.

After telling me his name, Don Antonio Casanova asked me if my family was originally Venetian. "I am, Signore," I answered modestly, "a great-grandson of the grandson of the unfortunate Marcantonio Casanova who was secretary to Cardinal Pompeo Colonna and who died of the plague at Rome in the year 1528, during the pontificate of Clement VII." Upon hearing this, he embraced me and called me his cousin. It was just at this moment that the whole company thought Don Gennaro would die from laughing, for it seemed impossible to laugh as he was doing and live through it. His wife gave Don Antonio a look of annoyance and said that since he was aware of her husband's disorder, he might well have spared him this absurdity; he answered that he could not have supposed it a laughing matter; I said nothing for, all things considered, I thought this scene of recognition highly comic. When Don Gennaro quieted down, Don Antonio, never losing his gravity, invited me to dinner, together with young Paolo, who had become my inseparable friend.

The first thing my worthy cousin did when I arrived at his house was to show me his genealogical tree, which began with a Don Francisco, brother of Don Juan. In mine, which I knew by heart, Don Juan, from whom I was directly descended, was born posthumously. It was possible that Marcantonio had had a brother; but when he learned that mine began with Don Francisco, of Aragon, who lived at the end of the fourteenth century, and that in consequence the whole genealogy of the illustrious house of the Casanovas of Saragossa became his own, he was so beside himself with joy that he did not know what to do to convince me that the blood which flowed in his veins was mine.

Seeing that he was curious to know what chance had brought me to Naples, I told him that, having entered the Church after my father's death, I was on my way to seek my fortune in Rome. When he introduced me to his family I thought his wife did not receive me cordially; but his pretty daughter and his still prettier niece could easily have made me believe in the fabled power of blood. After dinner he told me that the Duchess of Bovino had expressed her curiosity to know who this Abate Casanova was, and that he would consider it an honor to take me to call on her and introduce me as his relative.

Since we were alone, I begged him to excuse me, as I was outfitted only for my journey. I told him that I had to spare my purse, so that I should not arrive in Rome without money. Delighted at my confiding my reason to him, and persuaded that it was a good one, he told me that he was rich and that I must not hesitate to let him take me to a tailor. He assured me that no one would know of it and that he would be greatly chagrined if I refused him the pleasure. I clasped his hand and said that I was ready to do whatever he wished. So he went with me to a tailor, who took all the measurements he indicated, and who the next day appeared at Don Gennaro's bringing me everything the most highborn abate would need to appear in society. Don Antonio arrived later, stayed for dinner with Don Gennaro, then took me to call on the Duchess with young Paolo. To show her graciousness she at once addressed me in the familiar form, as is the custom in Naples. She was with her very pretty daughter, then ten or twelve years of age, who some years later became Duchess of Matalona.[11] She presented me with a snuffbox of light tortoise shell covered with arabesque incrustations in gold. She invited us to dine with her on the following day and said that afterwards we would go to Santa Chiara to call on the new nun.

When I left the Casa Bovino I went by myself to Panagiotti's warehouse to obtain the cask of muscat wine. The head of the establishment did me the favor of putting it in two small casks, of which I sent one to Don Gennaro and the other to Don Antonio. As I left the warehouse, I encountered the worthy Greek, who was glad to see me again. Was I to blush in the presence of this man whom I knew I had deceived? Not at all—on the contrary, he considered that I had acted most uprightly toward him.

At supper Don Gennaro thanked me for my valuable present without laughing. The next day Don Antonio, in return for the excellent muscat I had sent him, presented me with a cane which was worth at least twenty once, and his tailor brought me a traveling suit and a blue redingote with gold buttonholes, all of the finest cloth. I could not be better outfitted. At the Duchess of Bovino's I met the wisest of all Neapolitans, the illustrious Don Lelio Caraffa,[12] of the ducal family of Matalona, for whom the King, Don Carlos, had a particular liking and whom he honored with the name of friend.

In the visiting room at Santa Chiara, I shone for two hours, holding my own against all the nuns behind the gratings and satisfying their curiosity with my answers. If my destiny had let me remain in Naples, I should have made my fortune there; but I believed I ought to go to Rome, though I had no settled plan. I steadfastly refused to yield to the urging of Don Antonio, who offered me the most honorable employment in several noble houses, which he specified to me, as tutor to the eldest son of the family.

The dinner at Don Antonio's was magnificent; but I was preoccupied and angry because his wife obviously frowned on me. I noticed that she more than once looked at my coat and then whispered something to her neighbor. She had found out everything. There are certain situations in life to which I have never learned to adapt myself. *In the most brilliant company, if but a single member of it stares me up and down, I am undone; I become ill-tempered and stupid.* It is a weakness.

Don Lelio Caraffa offered me a liberal salary if I would remain as tutor to his nephew the Duke of Matalona, who was then ten years old. I called to thank him and begged him to become my true benefactor by giving me a good letter of introduction for Rome. He sent me two the next morning, one addressed to Cardinal Acquaviva,[13] the other to Father Georgi, a powerful churchman.[14]

I quickly made up my mind to leave when I found that my acquaintances were determined to procure me the honor of kissing the Queen's hand. It was obvious that in answering the questions she would put to me, I should have to tell her that I had just left Martorano and give her an account of the wretched bishopric which her intercession had secured for the good Minimite. Then too, Her Majesty knew my mother, there was nothing to stop her from revealing her position in Dresden; Don Antonio would be scandalized and my genealogy made ridiculous. I knew the inevitable and unhappy results of the prejudices then current; I should have come a complete cropper. I left while it was still time. Don Antonio presented me with a watch in a tortoiseshell case inlaid with gold and gave me a letter to Don Gaspare Vivaldi,[15] whom he termed his best friend. Don Gennaro gave me sixty ducati, and his son begged me to write to him and swore eternal friendship. They all wept as they accompanied me to a coach in which I had taken the last place.

From my landing at Chioggia until my arrival at Naples, fortune had treated me outrageously. It was at Naples that I began to breathe again, and Naples was always propitious to me, as will be seen in the course of these memoirs. At Portici I went through the horrible moment when I nearly came to the end of my courage, and *for lost courage there is no remedy.* It cannot be recovered. The mind succumbs to an apathy against which nothing avails. With his letter to Don Gennaro, the Bishop of Martorano compensated me for all the harm he had done me. I did not write to him until after I reached Rome.

Busy looking at the fine Strada di Toledo[16] and drying my tears, I did not think of examining the faces of my three traveling companions until we reached the gate of the great city. The man of forty or fifty years who sat beside me had a pleasant, lively face. The two women on the forward-facing seat were young and pretty; their clothes were clean and neat, they looked jolly but at the same time respectable. We reached Aversa in complete silence, where the driver told us that he would stop only to water his mules, so we did not get out. Toward nightfall we stopped at Capua. Incredible as it may seem, I never opened my mouth all day long but listened with pleasure to the dialect of the man, who was a Neapolitan, and the beautiful speech of the two sisters, who were Romans. It was the first time in my life that I had the firmness to spend five hours in silence in the company of two charming girls or women. At Capua we were given a room with two beds, as a matter of course. The man who had sat beside me was the first to speak, looking at me and saying:

"So I shall have the honor of sleeping with the Signor Abate."

"I leave it to you, Signore," I said coldly, "to make whatever arrangement you wish." This answer brought a smile to the lips of the young lady whom I had already decided was the prettier. I considered it a good omen.

We were five at supper, for when the *vetturino* has contracted to feed his passengers, it is customary for him to eat with them. In the casual remarks at the table I found a certain good breeding and knowledge of the world. This made me curious. After supper I went downstairs to ask the *vetturino* who my traveling companions were. "The man," he replied, "is an advocate and one of the two sisters is his wife, but I do not know which."

I showed them the civility of going to bed first, and also of rising earliest and going out, so that the ladies were left the freedom of the room. I did not come back until I was summoned to take coffee. I praised it, and the more attractive of the two sisters promised me the same charming offering every day.

A barber appeared and shaved the advocate and, when he had finished, offered me the same service, but in a tone which I did not like. When I answered that I had no need of him, he replied that a beard was a dirty thing.

As soon as we were in the coach the advocate remarked that barbers were mostly an insolent lot.

"The question," said my beauty, "is whether a beard is a dirty thing or not."

"The answer is yes," said the advocate, "for it is an excretion."

"That may be so," I replied, "but it is not regarded as such; does anyone call the hair an excretion? On the contrary, its growth is stimulated and it is admired for its length and beauty."

"It follows," the lady resumed, "that the barber is a fool."

"But apart from that," I replied, "have I a beard?"

"I thought so."

"Then I will begin being shaved when I get to Rome. This is the first time anyone has accused me of needing it."

"My dear wife," said the advocate, "you should have held your tongue, for it is quite possible that the Signor Abate is going to Rome to become a Capuchin."[17]

This thrust made me laugh; but I did not want to leave him master of the field. I told him that he had guessed right, but that my wish to become a Capuchin had left me as soon as I saw his wife. Laughing too, he said that his wife was mad about Capuchins, so I should not abandon my vocation. This jest having led to more, we spent our day pleasantly until we reached Garigliano, where amusing conversation made up for a poor supper. My budding inclination was fostered by the obvious partiality of its object.

As soon as we were seated in the coach the next day, the fair lady asked me if I expected to stay in Rome for a time before going on to Venice. I answered that as I knew no one in Rome, I feared I should have a dull time. She said that foreigners were well liked there and she was sure that I would find it pleasant.

"Then may I hope that you will permit me to pay my respects to you?"

"We should consider it an honor," said the advocate.

My beauty blushed, I pretended not to notice it, and we whiled away the day in talk as pleasant as that of the day before. We stopped at Terracina, and were given a room with three beds, two of them narrow, with a wide bed between them. It went without saying that the two sisters would share the wide bed, and they got into it while the advocate and I chatted at the table with our backs turned to them. The advocate got into the bed on which he saw his nightcap, and I into the other, which was only a foot from the wide bed, on the side on which his wife was lying. All vanity apart, I could not bring myself to believe that this arrangement was entirely due to chance. I was already on fire for her.

I undress, put out the candle, and lie down, considering a plan which made me restless, for I was afraid either to adopt it or to reject it. I could not get to sleep. A faint light by which I could see the bed in which the charming woman was lying kept me from closing my eyes. God knows to what decision I should finally have come, for I had been struggling with myself for over an hour, when I saw her sit up, get out of the bed, walk softly around it, and get into her husband's. After that I heard not a sound. This action was so little to my liking, indeed it so mortified and disgusted me, that I turned over on the other side and slept until dawn, when I saw the lady back in her own bed.

I dress in a foul humor and go out, leaving them all asleep. I go for a walk and do not return to the inn until, the coach being ready to leave, the two ladies and the advocate were waiting for me.

My beauty gently reproaches me with having forgone her coffee. I offer the excuse that I had needed a walk. I spent the whole morning not only without saying a word but without ever looking at her. I complained of a bad toothache. At Piperno, where we dined, she remarked to me that my indisposition was made to order. The reproach pleased me, for it gave me the right to have things out with her.

In the afternoon I played the same role all the way to Sermoneta, where we were to spend the night and which we reached early. As it was a fine day, the lady said she would like to take a little stroll and asked me civilly if I would give her my arm. I consented at once. Politeness left me no alternative. My heart was sore. I could not wait to return to my former footing, but only after having the matter out with her, and I did not know how to precipitate such an explanation.

As soon as I saw that I was far enough from her husband, who was giving his arm to her sister, I asked her what had made her think my toothache made to order.

"I will be frank. The change in your manner was too marked, you even took great care not to look at me all day. Since a toothache could not prevent you from being polite, I concluded that it was made to order. Besides, I know that none of us gave you any cause to change your attitude."

"Yet the change must have been caused by something. You are only half sincere, Signora."

"You are mistaken, Signore. I am completely sincere, and if I gave you any cause, I do not know what it was or it is something which I should not know. Be so good as to tell me in what way I have failed you."

"In no way, for I have no right to make any claim upon you."

"But you have rights, the same rights as I have, the rights which good society grants to all its members. Speak. Be as frank as I am."

"You are in duty bound not to know the cause, or rather, to pretend not to know it—that is true. But admit at the same time that my duty is not to tell it to you."

"Excellent! Now it has all come out. But if it is your duty not to tell me the reason for your change of humor, the same duty obliges you not to reveal the change. Delicacy sometimes commands a gentleman to conceal certain feelings which might be compromising. It is a restraint on impulse, I know; but it is worth the effort when it only makes him who exercises it all the more admirable."

An argument at once so subtle and so strong made me blush for shame. I pressed my lips to her hand, saying that I admitted I was in the wrong and that she would see me at her feet, begging her to forgive me, if we were not in the street. "Then let us say no more about it," she said, and touched by my quick repentance, she gave me a look of such forgiveness that I thought I did not deepen my guilt when I took my lips from her hand and let them feed on her lovely smiling mouth.

Intoxicated with happiness, I changed from gloom to gaiety so quickly that at supper the advocate indulged in a hundred witty sallies at my toothache and the walk which had cured it. The next day we dined at Velletri, going on from there to spend the night at Marino, where despite the large number of troops we had two small rooms and a fairly good supper.

I could not have wished to be on better terms with the charming Roman. I had received only one pledge from her; but it was a pledge of the firmest love, and it assured me that, once we were in Rome, she would be wholly mine. In the coach we spoke to each other with our knees more than with our eyes, thus making sure that what we said would be overheard by no one.

The advocate had told me that he was going to Rome to conclude an ecclesiastical suit and that he would lodge with his mother-in-law near the Minerva.[18] His wife was most anxious to see her after an absence of two years, and her sister expected to remain in Rome as the wife of an employee in the Santo Spirito bank.[19] Invited to call on them, I promised that I would avail myself of the opportunity whenever my business should permit.

We had come to the dessert when my beauty, admiring the design of my snuffbox, said to her husband that she wished she had one like it. He promised that she should.

"Then buy this one, Signore," I said; "I will let you have it for twenty once. You can pay the amount to the bearer of a note of hand which you will draw up for me. He will be an Englishman to whom I happen to owe that sum and whom I am glad to have this means of repaying."

"Your snuffbox," said the advocate, "is worth the twenty once you ask, and I should be delighted to see it in my wife's possession, she would find it a pleasant reminder of you; but I will do nothing but pay you cash for it."

Seeing that I was unwilling, his wife told him that she could just as well write me the note of hand to bearer which I needed. He answered, with a laugh, that she must beware of me, for it was all a trick on my part. "Don't you see," he added, "that his Englishman is a fiction? He will never put in an appearance, and the snuffbox will be ours for nothing. This Abate, my dear wife, is a great rogue."

"I had no idea," she answered, with a look at me, "that such rogues existed." I told her sadly that I wished I were rich enough to be able to indulge in such rogueries.

But now something happened which filled me with joy. There was one bed in the room where we were eating supper and another in an adjoining closet which had no door and could only be entered from the room we were in. The two sisters naturally chose the closet. When they were in bed the advocate went to bed too, and I followed him. Before extinguishing the candle, I put my head into the closet to wish them a good night. My real reason was to find out on which side of the bed the wife was lying. I had a plan all prepared.

But what curses did I not heap on my bed when I heard the dreadful noise it made when I got into it! Feeling certain that the lady would be acquiescent even though she had promised me nothing, I wait until the advocate begins snoring, then start to get up to pay her a visit; but as soon as I try to rise, the bed begins squeaking, the advocate wakes and puts out his arm. He feels that I am there and goes back to sleep. A half hour later I try the same maneuver, the bed goes through the same *lazzi*[20] and the advocate through the other. Sure that I am there, he goes back to sleep, but the accursed blabbing of the bed makes me decide to abandon my plan. But then the most unlikely thing happens.

A great noise of people running up and down stairs, tramping back and forth, fills the house. We hear gunshots, a drum beating the alarm, cries, shouts, someone knocks at our door, the advocate asks me what is going on. I say I have no idea and will he please let me sleep. The terrified sisters ask us in Heaven's name to bring a light. The advocate gets up in his shirt to look for one, and I get up too. I go to shut the door after him, and I shut it, but the spring breaks and I find it can only be opened with the key, which I do not have. I proceed to the bed of the two sisters to hearten them amid the noise and confusion, the cause of which I did not know. While I am telling them that the lawyer will be back in a moment with a light, I obtain some substantial favors. The weak resistance emboldens me. Fearing to lose a time so precious, I bend forward and, to take the object of my affection in my arms, I let myself fall on it. The planks supporting the mattress slip and the bed collapses. The advocate knocks, the sister gets up, my goddess begs me to leave her, I cannot but yield to her prayers, I grope my way to the door and tell the advocate that, as the spring is out of order, I cannot open it. He goes downstairs to find the key. The two sisters were behind me in their shifts. Hoping I have time to finish, I put out my arms; but, feeling that I am roughly repulsed, I realize that it must be the sister. I take hold of the other. The advocate being now at the door with a bunch of keys, she begs me in God's name to go back to bed, for if her husband sees me in the dreadful state I must be in, he will guess everything. Feeling that my hands are sticky, I understand what she means, and I hurry to my bed. The sisters retire to theirs, and the advocate comes in.

He at once goes to the closet to reassure them; but he bursts out laughing when he sees them buried in the fallen bed. He urges me to go and look, but I naturally excuse myself. He tells us that the alarm was due to a German detachment having surprised the Spanish troops which were in the town and which thereupon decamped. A quarter of an hour later not a soul was left, and silence succeeded all the uproar. After congratulating me on not having stirred from my bed, he lay down again.

I waited sleeplessly for dawn so that I could go downstairs and wash and change my shirt. When I saw the state I was in, I admired my love's presence of mind. The advocate would have guessed everything. Not only were my shirt and my hands dirtied, but, I do not know how, so was my face. Alas! he would have found me guilty, and I was not as guilty as I might have been. This camisade is recorded in history; but I am not mentioned. I laugh every time I read it in the elegant De Amicis,[21] who wrote better than Sallust.

My divinity's sister sulked over our coffee; but on the face of the angel whom I loved I saw love, friendliness, and content. It is a great pleasure to feel happy. Can one be so and not feel it? The theologians say one can. Let them go mind their own business! I saw myself in possession of Donna Lucrezia (for such was her name), though I had obtained nothing from her. Neither her eyes nor the slightest of her gestures retracted anything;

the ostensible reason for our laughter was the rout of the Spaniards; but that, though she did not know it, was only incidental.

We reached Rome early. At the Tower,[22] where we ate an omelette, I cajoled the advocate with the fondest advances; I called him "papa," I gave him a hundred kisses, and I predicted that he would become the father of a son, which obliged his wife to vow that she would give him one. Then I said so many charming things to my idol's sister that she had to forgive me the collapse of the bed. On leaving them I said I would visit them the next day. I was let out at an inn near the Piazza di Spagna,[23] whence the *vetturino* took them to their house near the Minerva.

So here I was in Rome, with a good wardrobe, a fair amount of money, some jewelry, and a fair amount of experience, with good letters of recommendation, completely free, and at an age when *a man can count on the help of fortune if he has a spark of courage and a face which disposes those whom he approaches to look on him with favor.* It is not beauty, but something more valuable, which I possessed but which I cannot define. I felt that I was capable of anything. I knew that *Rome was the one city in which a man who set out from nothing had often risen very high; and it is not surprising that I believed I possessed all the qualities needed to rise; my capital was an unbridled self-esteem which inexperience prevented me from mistrusting.*

The man fit to make a fortune in this ancient capital of Italy must be a chameleon sensitive to all the colors which the light casts on his surroundings. He must be flexible, insinuating, a great dissimulator, impenetrable, obliging, often base, ostensibly sincere, always pretending to know less than he does, keeping to one tone of voice, patient, in complete control of his countenance, cold as ice when another in his place would be on fire; and if he is so unfortunate as not to have religion in his heart he must *have it in his mind, and, if he is an honest man, accept the painful necessity of admitting to himself that he is a hyprocrite. If he loathes the pretense, he should leave Rome and seek his fortune in England. Of all these necessary qualities—I do not know if I am boasting or admitting my deficiency—I possessed only obligingness, which, without the others, is a fault. I was an interesting fool, a rather fine horse of a good breed, but unbroken or, what is worse, badly broken.*

I at once took Don Lelio's letter to Father Georgi. This learned monk was esteemed by the whole city. The Pope thought highly of him because, being no friend to the Jesuits, he did not hide the fact. The Jesuits, for their part, thought themselves strong enough to disregard him.

After carefully reading the letter, he said he was prepared to be my adviser and that hence, if I wished, I might make him responsible for preserving me from misfortune, for if a man behaves himself properly he need not fear that evil will befall him. He then asked me what I wanted to do in Rome, to which I replied that it was for him to tell me.

"All in due time. So come and see me often, and conceal nothing from me, nothing, I say, of all that concerns you and happens to you."

"Don Lelio also gave me a letter to Cardinal Acquaviva."

"Then I congratulate you, for he is the one man who has more power in Rome than the Pope."

"Shall I take it to him at once?"

"No. I will speak to him about you this evening. Come here tomorrow early. I will tell you where and when you are to deliver it to him. Have you money?"

"Enough to keep me for at least a year."

"Excellent. Have you any acquaintances?"

"None."

"Do not make any without consulting me, and above all do not go to coffeehouses and eating houses, and if you must go, listen and do not talk. *Shun those who would interrogate you* and if *politeness obliges you to answer, evade the question if it can lead to any consequences.* Do you speak French?"

"Not a word."

"Too bad—you must learn it. Have you finished your studies?"

"After a fashion. But I am *infarinato*[24] enough to hold my own in a conversation."

"That is all to the good, but be on your guard, for Rome is the city of *infarinati*, and they are forever unmasking each other and bickering among themselves. I hope that when you take your letter to the Cardinal, you will be dressed as a modest abate and not in that elegant coat, which is not of a cut to placate Fortune. Good-by until tomorrow."

Very well pleased with the monk, I went to the Campo di Fiore[25] to deliver my cousin Don Antonio's letter to Don Gaspare Vivaldi. This excellent man received me in his library, where he was conversing with two respectable abati. After welcoming me most graciously, Don Gaspare asked me for my address and invited me to dinner the next day. He spoke in the highest terms of Father Georgi and, seeing me to the stairs, said that he would attend the next day to paying the sum which Don Antonio directed him to give me.

So my generous cousin was giving me more money, which I could not refuse. *It is not difficult to give, but to know how to give.* On my way home I met Father Steffano; he was the same as ever and loaded me with caresses. *I could not but feel a certain respect for this sordid freak, whom Providence had employed to save me from utter ruin.* After telling me that the Pope had granted him all that he asked, he warned me to avoid the policeman who had given me the two zecchini, for, finding that he had been deceived, he wanted his revenge. The rascal was in the right. I told Frate Steffano to persuade the officer to deposit my note with some merchant and when I knew with whom it had been left I would go and take it up. The thing was arranged in this fashion, I paid the two zecchini, and the ugly business was over.

I supped at an eating house with some Romans and some foreigners, faithfully following Father Georgi's advice. I was made to listen to some harsh criticism of the Pope and of the Cardinal Minister, who was responsible for the Papal State's being inundated by eighty thousand men, both Germans and Spaniards. What surprised me was that everyone ate meat, though it was a Saturday; but at the end of a week a number of things I observed in Rome had exhausted my capacity for surprise. There is not a Catholic Christian city in the world where people are less strict in matters of religion than they are at Rome. The Romans are like the employees at the tobacco monopoly, who are allowed to take away as much as they please for nothing. The citizens of Rome live in the greatest freedom, except for one thing: the *ordini santissimi*[26] are as much to be feared as *lettres de cachet*[27] were in Paris before the atrocious revolution.

1743.

It was on the next day, October 1st of the year 1743, that I finally made up my mind to be shaved. My down had become a beard. I felt that I must begin to renounce certain privileges of adolescence. I dressed completely in the Roman fashion, as Don Antonio's tailor had decreed that I should do. Father Georgi seemed much pleased when he saw me so turned out. After inviting me to take a cup of chocolate with him, he told me that the Cardinal had been informed of my impending visit by a letter from the same Don Lelio, and that His Excellency would receive me about noon at the Villa Negroni,[28] where he would be taking a stroll. I said that I was to dine at Signor Vivaldi's, and he advised me to visit him often.

At the Villa Negroni, the Cardinal no sooner saw me than he stopped to receive my letter, leaving the two people who were with him to walk on. He put it in his pocket without reading it. After two minutes of silence, which he spent looking at me, he asked me if I felt any inclination for politics. I answered that as yet I had not felt drawn to anything but frivolities, and that hence I could only answer for my extreme readiness to do whatever His Excellency should command me, if he found me worthy to enter his service. He at once told me to go to his palace[29] the next morning and speak with the Abate Gama,[30] whom he would inform of his intentions. "You must," he said, "set about learning French at once. It is indispensable." After asking me if Don Lelio was in good health, he left me, giving me his hand to kiss.

From there I went to the Campo di Fiore, where Don Gaspare kept me to dine with a select company. He was a bachelor and his only passion was literature. He loved Latin poetry even more than Italian and his favorite poet was Horace, whom I knew by heart. After dinner he gave me a hundred Roman scudi[31] on behalf of Don Antonio Casanova. After I signed a receipt for the amount, he said that he would be delighted to have me take chocolate with him in his library any morning.

When I left his house I went to the Minerva quarter. I could not wait to see how surprised Donna Lucrezia and her sister Angelica would be. To find the house, I inquired where Donna Cecilia Monti lived. This was her mother.

I found a young widow, who looked as if she were the sister of her daughters. I did not need to tell her who I was, for she was expecting me. Her daughters entered, and their reception of me gave me some passing amusement, for they seemed to think I was a different person.

Donna Lucrezia introduced her younger sister to me, a girl of eleven, and her brother the abate, who was fifteen and as handsome as possible.

I maintained a behavior calculated to please the mother: I was modest and respectful and showed a fittingly lively interest in everything about me. The advocate arrived and, surprised to find me so greatly changed, was flattered when I remembered to address him as father. He began making jokes and I followed his lead, though not so far as to color my witticisms with the levity which had kept us laughing in the coach. "Having your beard shaved," he said, "has added one to your mind." Donna Lucrezia did not know what to make of the change in my manner. Toward nightfall I observed the arrival of some ladies who were neither ugly nor beautiful and of five or six abati who were clearly material for study. All these gentlemen listened most attentively to whatever I said, and I left them free to make what conjectures they pleased. Donna Cecilia told the advocate that he was an excellent painter but that his portraits were not good likenesses; he answered that she saw me wearing a mask, and I pretended to find his explanation mortifying. Donna Lucrezia said that I seemed to her exactly the same, and Donna Angelica maintained that the air of Rome gave foreigners a completely different appearance. Everyone applauded her aphorism, and she blushed with pleasure. After four hours I slipped away, but the advocate came running after me to tell me that Donna Cecilia wished me to consider myself a friend of the house, free to call there at any time without ceremony. I returned to my inn, hoping that I had pleased the household as much as it had enchanted me.

The next morning I waited on the Abate Gama. He was a Portuguese and appeared to be about forty years of age; his handsome countenance expressed frankness, humor, and intelligence. His affability sought to inspire trust. His speech and his manners were such that he could have passed as a Roman. He told me in honeyed phrases that His Excellency had himself given orders to his majordomo in regard to my residing in the palace. He said that I should dine and sup with him at the secretaries' table and that until I had learned French, I could, when I saw fit, occupy myself with making abstracts of letters which he would give me. He then gave me the address of the French teacher, to whom he had already spoken. He was a Roman advocate named Dalacqua, who lived directly across from the Palazzo di Spagna.[32]

After giving me these brief instructions and telling me that I could count on his friendship, he had a servant take me to the majordomo, who, after making me sign my name in a large book, at the bottom of a page filled with other names, paid me sixty Roman scudi in bank notes as three months' salary in advance. Followed by a footman he then took me up to the fourth floor and showed me my apartment. It consisted of an anteroom next to which was a bedroom with an alcove between two smaller rooms, all very nicely furnished. We then left, and the servant handed me the key and told me that he would come to wait on me every morning. He took me to the main door to make me known to the porter. Without losing an instant, I went to my inn and arranged to have my few possessions transported to the Palazzo di Spagna. This is the whole story of my sudden entrance into a house in which I would have made a great fortune if I had conducted myself in a way in which, being what I was, I could not. *Volentem ducit, nolentem trahit* ("[Fate] leads the willing, drags the unwilling").[33]

I at once went to my mentor, Father Georgi, to tell him all that had happened. He said that I could consider my career well begun and that, in the superior situation in which I found myself, my future depended entirely on how I behaved. *"Bear in mind," this wise man told* *me, "that to make your conduct irreproachable, you must discipline yourself; and that if anything untoward befalls you, no one will consider it either a piece of bad luck or an unavoidable calamity; these terms mean nothing; it will be entirely your own fault."*

"I am sorry, most reverend Father, that my youth and lack of experience will often make me trouble you. I shall become a burden to you; but you will find me docile and obedient."

"You will often think me too strict; but I foresee that you will not tell me everything."

"Everything, absolutely everything."

"Excuse me if I smile. You are not telling me where you spent four hours yesterday."

"It is of no importance. I made the acquaintance during my journey. I believe it is a decent house, where I can properly visit, unless you tell me it is not."

"Heaven forbid! It is a perfectly decent house, frequented by respectable people. The family is happy to have made your acquaintance. You pleased all their guests and they hope you will become a member of their circle. I heard all about it this morning. But you must not visit them constantly."

"Am I to stop going there from one day to the next?"

"No. That would be impolite. Go once or twice a week. But not regularly. You sigh, my son."

"No, no. I will obey you."

"I do not wish you to do it out of obedience, and I hope that your heart will not suffer; but, whether or no, you must conquer it. *Remember that reason has no greater enemy than the heart.*"

"Yet it is possible to reconcile them."

"There are those who think so. Beware of the *animum* of your favorite Horace. You know there is no middle course, *nisi paret imperat.*"[34]

"Yes. *Compesce catenis,*[35] he tells me, and he is right. But in Donna Cecilia's house my heart is not in danger."

"So much the better for you. For then ceasing to frequent it will not pain you. Remember it is my duty to believe what you say."

"And it is mine to follow your advice. I will go to Donna Cecilia's only occasionally."

Stricken with despair, I took his hand to kiss it, but he withdrew it and embraced me, turning away so that I should not see his tears.

I dined at the Palazzo di Spagna, sitting beside the Abate Gama at a table with ten or twelve other abati, for in Rome everyone either is or wants to be an abate. Since there is no prohibition against wearing their distinctive dress, everyone who wants to be respected wears it, with the exception of noblemen who have not entered on an ecclesiastical career. At table, where my grief kept me from saying a word, my silence was attributed to my sagacity. The Abate Gama invited me to spend the day with him, but I excused myself on the ground that I had some letters to write. I spent seven hours writing to Don Lelio, to Don Antonio, to my young friend Paolo, and to the Bishop of Martorano, who candidly answered me that he wished he were in my place.

In love with Donna Lucrezia and happy in my love, I thought that to abandon her was the blackest perfidy. To ensure the supposititious happiness of my life in the future, I was to begin by destroying my present happiness and denying my heart; I could accept this logic only by becoming a base object of contempt at the judgment seat of my own reason. I decided that when he forbade me her house Father Georgi should not have told me that it was respectable; my grief would have been less.

The next morning the Abate Gama brought me a large book filled with ministerial letters which I was to abstract to keep myself occupied. When I was ready to go out, I went to have my first French lesson; then, with the idea of taking a walk, I was crossing the Strada Condotta, when I heard my name called from a coffeehouse. It was the Abate Gama. I whispered to him that Minerva had forbidden me the coffeehouses of Rome.

"Minerva," he answered, "commands you to acquire some notion of them. Sit down here beside me."

I heard a young abate loudly recounting a true, or imaginary, incident which directly impugned the justice of the Pope, though without bitterness. Everyone laughed, and he joined in. Another, asked why he had left the service of Cardinal B., answered that is was because His Eminence claimed *not to be obliged to pay him, except for certain extra services which he demanded in his nightcap*. The laughter was general. Another came over and told the Abate Gama that if he cared to while away the afternoon at the Villa Medici,[36] he would find him there with *due romanelle*[37] who asked only a quartino.[38] This is a gold coin worth one fourth of a zecchino. Another read an inflammatory sonnet against the government and several people copied it. Another read a satire of his own composition which tore the honor of a family to shreds. In comes a pretty-faced abate. His hips and thighs make me think him a girl in disguise; I say so to the Abate Gama, who tells me that it is Beppino della Mammana,[39] a famous castrato. The Abate calls him over and laughingly says that I had taken him for a girl. He gives me a bold look and says that if I will spend the night with him he will serve me as a boy or a girl, whichever I choose.

At dinner everyone at the table spoke to me, and I thought that I had made such answers as I should. Giving me coffee in his room afterward, the Abate Gama said that all the company with whom I had dined were respectable men, then asked me if I believed I had made a good impression on them.

"I venture to think so."

"You flatter yourself. You evaded certain questions so obviously that everyone at the table was aware that you were keeping something back. No one will ask you any more questions."

"I should be sorry if they did not. Was I to make public what is my own business?"

"No, but there is always a middle course."

"So Horace tells us.[40] It is often difficult."

"One must know how to win affection and esteem at the same time."

"That is my sole aim."

"God bless me! today you aimed at esteem far more than at affection. That is all very fine, but you must be prepared to fight envy and her daughter calumny; if those two monsters cannot ruin you, you will triumph. At table you demolished Salicetti,[41] who is a physician and, what is more, a Corsican. He must hold it against you."

"Was I to let him maintain that the *voglie*[42] of pregnant women cannot have the slightest influence on the skin of the fetus? I know from experience that they do. Are you of my opinion?"

"I am neither of yours nor of his, for I have certainly seen children with marks that are called 'longings'; but I cannot answer that those marks come from longings their mothers have had."

"But I can swear to it."

"So much the better for you if you know it so positively, and so much the worse for him if he denies that it is possible. *Leave him to his error. That is better than to convince him he is wrong, and make an enemy of him.*"

That evening I went to Donna Lucrezia's. They knew my news, and congratulated me. She told me that I looked sad, and I answered that I was in mourning for my time, which was no longer mine to dispose of as I wished. Her husband told her that I was in love with her, and his mother-in-law advised him not to be so sure of himself. After spending only an hour there, I returned to the palace, setting the air on fire with my amorous sighs. I spent the night composing an ode which I sent to the advocate the next morning, being certain that he would show it to his wife, who was fond of poetry and who did not know that it was my passion. I spent three days without going to see her. I studied French and abstracted letters from ministers.

His Excellency was "at home" every evening, and at these occasions the highest nobility of Rome, both men and women, were present; I did not attend. Gama told me that I should attend as he did, without putting myself forward. I went. No one spoke to me; but since I was unknown, everyone asked who I was. Gama asked me which of the ladies I thought the most charming, and I pointed her out to him; but I was sorry at once, for I saw the toady go and tell her what I had said. I saw her look at me attentively, then smile. She was the Marchesa G.,[43] whose gallant was Cardinal S. C.[44]

On the morning of a day when I had decided to spend the evening at Donna Lucrezia's, her husband appeared in my room and, after saying that I was wrong if I thought I was convincing him that I was not in love with his wife by not going to see her more often, he invited me to a light repast at Testaccio with the whole family on the following Thursday. He said that at Testaccio I would see the only pyramid in Rome.[45] He said that his wife knew my ode by heart and that she had aroused a great desire to make my acquaintance in his sister-in-law Donna Angelica's fiancé, who was a poet and would make one of the party going to Testaccio. I promised to be at his house at the appointed hour in a carriage seating two.

At that time the Thursdays in October were days for gaiety in Rome. That evening at Donna Cecilia's we talked of nothing but the excursion, and I felt that Donna Lucrezia was counting on it as much as I was. We did not know how, but, consecrated to love, we commended ourselves to its protection. We loved each other and pined because we could not exchange proofs of it.

I did not want my good Father Georgi to learn of the outing from anyone but myself. I was determined to go to him and ask his permission. I feigned indifference, and he offered no objection. Indeed, he told me that I should certainly go, it was an irreproachable family party, and in any case there was nothing against my getting to know Rome and enjoying decent diversions.

I went to Donna Cecilia's at the appointed hour in a coupé which I hired from a native of Avignon named Roland.[46] My acquaintance with this man had important consequences, which will give me occasion to speak of him eighteen years hence. The charming widow introduced her future son-in-law Don Francesco to me as a great admirer of literary men and unusually well versed in letters. Taking this description at its face value, I treated him accordingly; at the same time I thought him stupid-looking and quite without the gallantry to be expected in a young man who was about to marry an extremely pretty girl, for such Angelica was. *However, he was respectable and rich, which is worth far more than gallantry and learning.*

When we started to get into our carriages, the advocate told me that he would keep me company in mine and that the three ladies would go with Don Francesco. I answered that he would go with Don Francesco himself, since Donna Cecilia should properly fall to my share, and any other arrangement would be an insult to me; and so saying, I gave my arm to the beautiful widow, who agreed that my arrangement was in accordance with the rules of etiquette observed in the best society. I saw approval in Donna Lucrezia's eyes, *but I was amazed at the advocate, for he could not fail to know that he owed me his wife.* "Can he have become jealous?" I asked myself. If he had, I should be greatly put out; yet I hoped that at Testaccio I could make him see his duty.

The journey and the collation at the advocate's expense easily brought us to the end of the day, but the gaiety was at mine. There was none of the usual joking about my love for Donna Lucrezia, and I lavished my attentions only on Donna Cecilia. I said but a few casual words to Donna Lucrezia and not one to the advocate. I thought this the only way to make him understand that he had failed in his duty to me. When we were ready to return to our carriages, the advocate took Donna Cecilia from me and seated himself beside her in the carriage for four in which Donna Angelica and Don Francesco had already taken places; so, almost out of my mind with delight, I gave my arm to Donna Lucrezia, treating her to some inane compliment, while the advocate, laughing heartily, appeared to be congratulating himself on having tricked me.

How many things we should have said to each other before giving ourselves up to our love if time had not been so precious! But knowing all too well that we had only half an hour, we instantly became a single individual. At the summit of happiness and intoxicated with satisfaction, I was surprised to hear Donna Lucrezia's lips utter these words: "Oh, my God! what misery!" She pushes me away, rearranges her clothes, the coachman stops, and the footman opens the door.

"What is it?" I ask, restoring myself to a decent condition.

"We are home."

Every time I recall this episode, I think it fabulous, or supernatural. It is not possible to reduce time to nothing, for it was less than an instant, yet the horses were worn-out nags. We had two pieces of good luck. The first was that the night was dark, the second that my angel was seated where she had to get out first. The advocate was at the door the moment the footman opened it. Nothing can be more quickly put to rights than a woman. But a man! If I had been on the other side, I should have been in a sorry fix. She got out slowly, and it all passed off perfectly. I remained at Donna Cecilia's until midnight.

I went to bed—but how was I to sleep? I was still filled with all the fire which the too short distance between Testaccio and Rome had prevented me from returning to the Sun from which it came. It was devouring my entrails. *Alas for those who think that the pleasure of Venus is worth anything, unless it comes from two hearts which love each other and which are in perfect concord!*

I got up in time to go for my lesson. My French teacher had a pretty daughter named Barbara; the first times I went to take a lesson she was always present, and indeed she sometimes gave it to me herself, and even better than her father. A handsome youth who also came for lessons was her lover, as I did not find it hard to perceive. This youth often came to visit me, and one reason why I liked him was his discretion. I had talked to him about Barbaruccia[47] a dozen times, but though he admitted that he loved her, he always changed the subject. I ceased to mention it to him; but not having seen him for several days, either at my apartment or at the French teacher's, and Barbaruccia having ceased to appear too, I wanted to know what had happened, more out of curiosity than from any real concern.

Finally, as I was coming out of church after mass at San Carlo al Corso, I see the young man. I go up to him and reproach him for dropping out of sight. He answers that his soul was so tormented by a grievous misfortune that he did not know what he was doing; that he was on the brink of ruin; that he was desperate.

I see that his eyes are filled with tears, he makes to leave me, I hold him back, I tell him that he can no longer count me among his friends if he will not confide his troubles to me. At that he stops, leads me to a cloister, and speaks as follows:

"I have loved Barbaruccia for six months, and three have gone by since she made me certain that I was loved. Five days ago her father came upon us at five o'clock in the morning in a situation which left no doubt that we were guilty lovers. He controlled himself and left the room, but just as I was about to throw myself at his feet, he conducted me to the door of the house and forbade me ever to enter it again. The monster who betrayed us was the maidservant. I cannot ask her hand in marriage because I have a married brother and my father is not rich. I have no profession and Barbaruccia has nothing. Alas! since I have confessed all to you, tell me what state she is in. Her despair must be as great as mine, it cannot be greater. There is no way that I can get a letter to her, for she never leaves the house, even to go to mass. Alas for me! what shall I do!"

I could only condole with him, for as a man of honor I could not interfere in such a situation. I told him I had not seen her for five days, and not knowing what else to say I gave him the advice which all fools give in such circumstances: I advised him to forget her. We were on the Ripetta[48] quay, and, the distracted look with which he fixed his eyes on the waters of the Tiber making me fear that his despair would lead to some tragedy, I said that I would ask her father for news of Barbaruccia and would tell him what I learned. He implored me not to forget him.

It was four days since I had seen Donna Lucrezia, despite the fire which the excursion to Testaccio had kindled in my soul. I feared Father Georgi's mildness, and still more that he might have decided to stop advising me.

I went to see her after taking my lesson and found her alone in her room. She said sadly and tenderly that it was impossible I could not have had time to come and see her.

"Ah! my beloved! It is not time that I lack. I am so jealous of my love that I would rather die than have it discovered. I have been thinking of inviting you all to dinner at Frascati. I will send a phaeton for you. I hope that there we can be alone together."

"Yes, yes, do that; I am sure your invitation will not be refused."

A quarter of an hour later everyone came in and I proposed the excursion, entirely at my expense, for the following Sunday, the feast of St. Ursula, which was the name of my angel's younger sister. I asked Donna Cecilia to bring her, and her son as well. My invitation was accepted. I said that the phaeton would be at their door at exactly seven o'clock, together with myself in a carriage for two.

The next day, on my way downstairs after taking my lesson from Signor Dalacqua, I see Barbaruccia passing from one room to another; she gives me a look and drops a letter. I feel obliged to pick it up, otherwise the maid, who was coming up the stairs, would have seen it. The letter, which enclosed another and was directed to me, said: "If you think it wrong to give this letter to your friend, burn it. Pity an unhappy girl and be discreet." The enclosure, which was not sealed, ran: "If your love equals mine, you cannot hope to be happy without me. We can neither speak nor write to each other except by the intermediary I have made bold to employ. I am ready to do anything which can unite our fates until death. Think, and decide."

I felt greatly touched by the girl's cruel situation; but I at once made up my mind to return her letter to her the next day, enclosed in one from me in which I would ask her to forgive me if I could not render her this service. I wrote it that evening and put it in my pocket.

The next day I prepared to give it to her, but, having changed my breeches, I could not find it; so, having left it at home, I had to wait until the next day. In any case, I did not see the girl.

But the same day the poor, disconsolate lover appears in my room just after I had finished dining. He flings himself on a couch and paints such a vivid picture of his desperation that finally, fearing the worst, I cannot but soothe his grief by giving him Barbaruccia's letter. He was talking of killing himself because his heart told him that Barbaruccia had resolved to forget him. I had no other way to persuade him that his conviction was false than to give him the letter. It was my first error in this disastrous affair, committed because I was too soft-hearted.

He read it, read it over again, he kissed it, he wept, he flung himself on my neck thanking me for restoring him to life, and ended by saying that he would bring me his answer before I went to bed, for his mistress must be in need of the same consolation he had received. He left, assuring me that his letter would not implicate me in any way and that I was free to read it.

And in fact his letter, though it was very long, contained nothing but protestations of eternal constancy and chimerical hopes; even so, I should not have assumed the role of Mercury in the affair. To keep out of it, I need only have considered that Father Georgi would never approve of my complying.

The next morning, finding Barbaruccia's father ill, I was delighted to see his daughter sitting at his bedside. I concluded that he had probably forgiven her. It was she who gave me my lesson, though without leaving her father's side. I handed her her lover's letter, which she put in her pocket, blushing furiously. I told them they would not see me the next day. It was the feast of St. Ursula, one of the thousand martyred virgins and royal princesses. That evening at His Eminence's reception, which I attended regularly although it was only very rarely that anyone of distinction spoke to me, the Cardinal beckoned to me. He was talking with the beautiful Marchesa G., to whom Gama had reported that I thought she outshone all the other women.

"The Signora," says the Cardinal, "wants to know if you are making good progress in the French language, which she speaks to perfection."

I answer in Italian that I have learned a good deal, but that I did not yet venture to speak.

"You must venture," said the Marchesa, *"but at the same time be unassuming. That will shield you from any criticism."*

Since I had not failed to take the word "venture" in a sense which the Marchesa had presumably not intended, I blushed. Noticing it, she opened another subject with the Cardinal, and I slipped away.

At seven o'clock the next morning I was at Donna Cecilia's. My phaeton was at the door. We set off at once, in the same order as before. We reached Frascati in two hours.

This time my carriage was an elegant vis-à-vis,[49] softly upholstered and so well sprung that Donna Cecilia praised it. "I shall have my turn," said Donna Lucrezia, "on the way back to Rome." I bowed to her, as if taking her at her word. In this way she *dissipated suspicion by defying it.* Certain that my desire would be fully satisfied at the end of the day, I surrender to all my natural high spirits. After ordering a dinner which did not spare my purse, I let them take me to the Villa Ludovisi.[50] Since we might well lose sight of one another, we agreed to meet at one o'clock at the inn. The discreet Donna Cecilia took her son-in-law's arm, Donna Angelica her fiancé's, and Donna Lucrezia was left with me. Ursula went running off with her brother. In less than a quarter of an hour we were out of sight.

"Did you hear," she began, "how innocently I made sure of spending hours alone with you? And it is a vis-à-vis! How clever love is!"

"Yes, my angel, love has made our two minds one. I adore you, and I do not go for days without coming to visit you only that I may be sure of one day in which we shall be undisturbed."

"I did not think it possible. It is you who have done it all. You know too much for your age."

"A month ago, my darling, I knew nothing. You are the first woman who has initiated me into the mysteries of love. You are she whose departure will make me wretched, for in all Italy there can be but one Lucrezia."

"What! I am your first love! Alas for you! You will never get over it! Why am I not wholly yours? You, too, are my soul's first love, and you will surely be the last. Happy the woman whom you will love after me. I am not jealous of her. I am only sorry that she will not have a heart like mine."

Seeing my tears, Donna Lucrezia gave way to hers. Throwing ourselves down on a lawn, we pressed our lips together, and tasted our own tears flowing down on them. *The ancient natural philosophers are right: Tears are sweet, I can swear to it; the moderns are but idle chatterers.* We were sure that we had swallowed them with the nectar which our kisses distilled from our amorous souls. We were but one being, when I said that someone might catch us.

"Never fear. Our Geniuses are watching over us."

We were resting there quietly after the first brief combat, looking at each other without a word and without thinking of changing our position, when the divine Lucrezia glanced to her right.

"Look!" she said, "did I not tell you that our Geniuses were watching over us? Ah! How he stares at us! He is trying to reassure us. Look at that little demon.

Nature has no greater mystery. Admire him. He is certainly your Genius or mine.''

I thought she had gone out of her head.

''What are you saying, my angel? I do not understand you. What is it that I am to admire?''

''Do you not see that beautiful snake with his fiery scales and his raised head, which seems to be worshiping us?''

I look in the direction in which she was staring and see an iridescent snake an ell long which was indeed looking at us. I was far from pleased by the sight, but, not wishing to show less courage than she did, I controlled myself.

''Is it possible, my dearest,'' I said, ''that the sight of him does not terrify you?''

''The sight of him delights me, I tell you. I am sure that such an idol is a snake only in appearance.''

''And if he came writhing and hissing toward you?''

''I would clasp you even more closely to my breast and I would defy him to harm me. Lucrezia in your arms can feel no fear. Look. He is going away. Quick, quick! He is trying to tell us by his going that some of the profane are on their way here, and that we must find another lawn on which to renew our pleasures. So let us get up. Arrange your clothing.''

We had scarcely risen and were walking slowly away when we saw Donna Cecilia and the advocate emerging from the adjoining walk. Neither hurrying nor avoiding them, as if it were perfectly natural that we should meet, I ask Donna Cecilia if her daughter is afraid of snakes.

''For all her intelligence, she is afraid of lightning to the point of fainting and she runs away screaming when she sees a snake. There are snakes here; but she is mistaken to be afraid, they are not poisonous.''

My hair stood on end, for her words assured me that I had witnessed a miracle of love. Her children came up, and we separated again.

"But tell me," I said, "you astonishing creature, what would you have done if your husband and your mother had caught us in the act?"

"Nothing. *Do you not know that in such divine moments one is only in love? Can you suppose that you did not possess me entirely?*"

She was not composing an ode when she spoke these words.

"Do you believe," I asked her, "that no one suspects us?"

"My husband either thinks that we are not in love or pays no attention to certain little freedoms in which young people commonly indulge. My mother is intelligent, and perhaps suspects everything; but she knows that it is none of her business. Angelica, my dear sister, knows everything, for she will never be able to forget the ruined bed, but she is discreet, and besides, she has taken it into her head to feel sorry for me. She has no conception of what my passion is. Without you, my dear, I might have died without ever knowing love, for my husband has won from me only the acquiescence which it is a wife's duty to give."

"Ah! your husband enjoys a divine privilege, of which I cannot help being jealous. He clasps all your beauties in his arms whenever he pleases. No veil keeps his senses, his eyes, his soul from enjoying them."

"Where are you, beloved snake? Hasten to watch over me, and I will satisfy my lover this instant."

In this fashion we spent the whole morning, declaring that we loved each other and proving it wherever we thought we were safe from being caught.

> *Nè per mai sempre pendergli dal collo*
> *il suo desir sentia di lui satollo.*[51]
>
> ("No matter how long she hung on his neck,
> her desire for him was never satisfied.")

At my choice and delicious dinner, I was chiefly attentive to Donna Cecilia. Since my Spanish tobacco[52] was excellent, my pretty snuffbox made the round of the table several times. Once when it had reached the hands of Donna Lucrezia, who was seated at my left, her husband told her that she might give me her ring and keep it. "Done!" I said, thinking that the ring was worth less; but it was worth more. Donna Lucrezia would not hear a word. She put my snuffbox in her pocket and gave me her ring, which I put in mine since it was too small for my finger.

But suddenly we were all reduced to silence. Angelica's fiancé takes from his pocket a sonnet, fruit of his genius, which he had composed to my honor and glory, and insists on reading it. Everyone applauds, and I have to thank him, take the sonnet, and promise him another in due course. He thought that I would immediately have called for writing materials and answered him on the spot, and that there we should remain, devoting to his accursed Apollo the three hours which were destined for love. After coffee, I having settled with the innkeeper, we all scattered about the gardens of another villa, the Aldobrandini[53] if I remember rightly.

"Explain to me," I asked my Lucrezia, "out of the metaphysics of your love, how it can be that at this moment I feel as if I were about to plunge into the delights of love with you for the first time. Let us hasten to look for a spot where we shall find an altar to Venus, and let us sacrifice until we perish, even if we see no snakes; and if the Pope comes with all the Sacred College, let us not stir. His Holiness will give us his blessing."

After wandering about a little, we entered a shady walk; it was quite long, and halfway down it there was an arbor filled with turf seats, each of a different shape. We saw one which struck us. It was in the form of a bed but in addition to the regular bolster there was another, lying parallel to it about two feet away, but only a quarter as high. We looked at it and laughed. It was an eloquent bed. We instantly made ready to try its virtues. From where it stood we had a prospect of a great, solitary plain, across which even a rabbit could not have reached us unobserved. Behind the bed there was no way of approaching the walk and we saw its two ends at equal distances to right and left. No one who entered the walk could reach us in less than a quarter of an hour except by running. Here in the garden at Dux, I have seen an arbor of the same sort; but the German gardener never thought of the bed. In this happy spot we had no need to tell each other our thoughts.

Standing face to face, intensely serious, looking only into each other's eyes, we unlaced, we unbuttoned, our hearts throbbed, our hands hurried to calm their impatience. Neither of us having been slower than the other, our arms opened to clasp the object of which they were to take possession. After our first combat the beautiful Lucrezia laughed and confessed that since genius had the right to shine everywhere, it was nowhere out of place. We both applauded the happy effect of the smaller bolster. Our adventures varied after that, but though they were all good, they were all rejected to give place to others. At the end of two hours, enchanted with each other and looking most lovingly into each other's eyes, we spoke in unison, saying these very words: "Love, I thank thee."

After turning her grateful eyes for a moment on the infallible sign of my defeat, Donna Lucrezia laughed and gave me a most languorous kiss; but when she saw that she was restoring me to life, "Enough!" she cried, "a truce to triumphing! Let us get dressed." At that we hurried, but instead of keeping our eyes on ourselves, we fixed them on that which impenetrable veils were to hide from our insatiable desire. When we were fully dressed we agreed to make a libation to love, to thank him for having guarded us from being disturbed while we celebrated his orgies. A long, narrow seat without a back, which could be straddled like a riding mule, was our simultaneous choice. The combat began and was proceeding vigorously; but foreseeing that the end was too distant and the libation doubtful, we put it off until we should be face to face in the darkness of night to the music of four trotting horses.

As we slowly made our way toward the carriages, our talk was the confidences of satisfied lovers. She told me that her future brother-in-law was rich and that he had a house at Tivoli, where he would invite us to spend the night. She thought of nothing but imploring love to reveal how we could spend it together. She finally told me sadly that the ecclesiastical suit with which her husband was occupied was going so well that she feared he would obtain his judgment too soon.

We passed the two hours which we spent face to face in the carriage playing a comedy which we could not finish. Arriving at their house, we had to ring down the curtain. I should have finished it if I had not taken a fancy to divide it into two acts. I went to bed rather tired; but a good sleep restored me completely. The next day I went to take my lesson at the usual hour.

CHAPTER X

Benedict XIV. Excursion to Tivoli. Departure of Donna Lucrezia. The Marchesa G. Barbara Dalacqua. My bad luck and my departure from Rome.

IT WAS Barbaruccia who gave it to me, for her father was seriously ill. As I was leaving she slipped a letter into my pocket, then ran away so that I should not have time to refuse it. She was right, for it was not a letter to be refused. It was addressed to me and dictated by feelings of the liveliest gratitude. She asked me to tell her lover that her father was speaking to her, and that she hoped as soon as he recovered he would engage a different maid. She ended by assuring me on her oath that she would never implicate me.

Her father being kept in bed by his illness for twelve consecutive days, it was she who gave me my lessons. She aroused my interest in a way which was entirely new to me where a pretty girl was concerned. It was a feeling of pure pity, and I was flattered when I perceived that she counted upon it. Her eyes never lingered on mine, her hand never touched mine, her toilet never showed the least sign of being studied to make it pleasing to me. She was pretty, and I knew that she was susceptible; but these considerations detracted nothing from what I felt that I owed to honor and good faith, and I was very glad that she did not believe me capable of taking advantage of my knowledge that she had erred.

As soon as her father recovered he dismissed his maid and engaged another. She begged me to give her lover the news and to tell him that she hoped to win her over to their side, so that at least they could have the pleasure of writing to each other. When I promised to tell him, she took my hand to kiss it. I withdrew it and made to give her a kiss, whereupon she blushed and turned away. This pleased me. I conveyed the news of the new maid to her lover, he contrived to speak to her, and won her over to his cause, and I took no more part in the intrigue, for I clearly saw the unfortunate consequences it could have. But the harm was already done.

I seldom called on Don Gaspare, for my French studies prevented me; but I called on Father Georgi every evening; though my standing there was only that of a protégé of the monk's, I gained some reputation by it. I never spoke myself, but I found much to interest me. There was criticism without backbiting, there was talk of politics and literature; I was picking up knowledge. On leaving the wise monk's monastery, I went to the great reception at the palace of my master the Cardinal, which it was my duty to attend.

At almost every one of these, when the Marchesa G. saw me at the table where she was playing cards, she would speak a word or two to me in French, which I always answered in Italian because I felt that I ought not to make her laugh in public. A strange feeling, which I leave to the perspicacity of my reader. *I thought her charming, and I avoided her, not because I was afraid I should fall in love with her, for, in love as I was with Donna Lucrezia, that seemed to me impossible, but for fear she might fall in love with me or at least become* *interested in me. Was this a vice or a virtue? Solvat Apollo* ("Let Apollo find the solution"). As once before, she sent the Abate Gama to fetch me; this time she was standing and in the company of my master and Cardinal S. C. I go to her, and she surprises me with a question in Italian which I should never have expected.

"*Vi ha piaciuto molto,*" she asks, "*Frascati?*" ("Did you like Frascati very much?")

"Very much, Signora. I never in my life saw anything so beautiful."

"*Ma la compagnia con la quale eravate, era ancora più bella, ed assai galante era il vostro vis à vis*" ("But the company you were with was even more beautiful, and your vis-à-vis was very smart").

My only answer was a bow. A moment later Cardinal Acquaviva said to me, kindly:

"Are you surprised that it is known?"

"No, Monsignore, but I am surprised that it is talked about. *I did not think that Rome was so small.*"

"*And the longer you remain in Rome,*" said S. C., "*the smaller you will find it.* Have you not gone yet to kiss His Holiness's foot?"

"Not yet, Monsignore."

"You must go," said Cardinal Acquaviva.

I answered with a bow.

As we left, the Abate Gama told me that I must go without fail the next morning.

"I suppose," he said, "you sometimes put in an appearance at the Marchesa G.'s."

"You may stop supposing so, for I have never been there."

"You amaze me. She calls you over, she talks to you!"

"I will go there with you."

"I never go."

"But she talks to you, too."

"Yes, but . . . You do not know Rome. Go there by yourself. You must go."

"You think she will receive me?"

"Are you joking? You need not have yourself announced. Simply go in to see her when the double doors of the room she is in are open. You will find it full of people paying her court."

"Will she see me?"

"You may be sure of that."

The next day I go to Monte Cavallo,[1] and I go straight into the room where the Pope was as soon as I am told that I may enter it and that he is alone. I kiss the "holy cross" on the "most holy slipper," he asks me who I am, I tell him, and he answers that he has heard of me, and he congratulates me on my good fortune in being in the service of so eminent a Cardinal. He asks me how I had managed to enter his service, and I tell him the whole story, altering nothing, beginning with my arrival at Martorano. After laughing heartily at my account of the Bishop, he said that instead of struggling to speak to him in Tuscan I should speak to him in Venetian just as he was speaking to me in Bolognese.[2] I talked away at such a rate that he said he would be glad to have me come to see him as often as I could. I asked him for permission to read all the forbidden books, and he granted it by giving me his blessing and saying that he would have a written permission sent me gratis; but he forgot to do it.

Benedict XIV was learned, a man who liked his joke, and extremely agreeable. The second time I talked with him was at the Villa Medici. He called me over and, continuing his walk, talked in the lightest vein. He was accompanied by Cardinal Annibale Albani[3] and the Venetian Ambassador. A man of modest appearance approaches, the Pontiff asks him what he wants, the man speaks to him in a low voice, the Pope hears him out and says, "You are right, commend yourself to God." He gives him his blessing, the man goes dejectedly away, and the Pope continues his walk.

"That man," I said to the Holy Father, "was not satisfied with the answer Your Holiness gave him."

"Why?"

"Because presumably he had already commended himself to God before he spoke to you and, hearing you send him back to God again, he feels he is being sent, as the saying goes, from Herod to Pilate."[4]

The Pope burst out laughing, as did his two companions, but I kept a straight face.

"I cannot," said the Pope, "accomplish anything without the help of God."

"Very true. But this man also knows that Your Holiness is his prime minister; so it is easy to imagine how frustrated he feels now that he has been sent back to Your Holiness's master. His only resource is to go and give money to all the beggars in Rome. For a baiocco apiece they will all pray to God for him. They boast of their influence. I believe only in Your Holiness's, so I beg you to deliver me from this irritating inflammation of the eyes by dispensing me from eating fish."

"Eat meat."

"Most Holy Father, your blessing."

He gives it to me, adding that he did not dispense me from fasting.

That evening at the Cardinal's reception, I found that the news of the dialogue between the Pope and myself was out. Everyone was now eager to speak to me. What I found flattering was Cardinal Acquaviva's pleasure, which he vainly tried to conceal.

I did not fail to follow the Abate Gama's advice. I went to the Marchesa G.'s at the hour when anyone could go there. I saw her, I saw her Cardinal and a great many other abati; but I thought I must be invisible, for since the Signora did not honor me with a look, no one said a word to me. After half an hour I left. It was not until five or six days later that she told me, with the most gracious courtesy, that she had seen me in her reception room.

"I did not know that the Signora had done me the honor to notice me."

"Oh, I see everyone. I am told you have wit."

"If those who have told you so, Signora, know what wit is themselves, you have given me very good news."

"Oh, they know what it is."

"If they had never spoken to me, they would never have found it out."

"Very true. Let me see you here."

A circle had formed around us. Cardinal S. C. said that when the Signora spoke to me in French, I ought to answer her in the same language, whether well or badly. The politic Gama said to me privately that my style was too cutting and that in the end I would be disliked.

Having learned enough French, I took no more lessons. Practice would suffice to familiarize me with the language. I did not call on Donna Lucrezia except occasionally in the morning; and I went to Father Georgi's every evening. He had heard of my excursion to Frascati, and had found no fault with it.

Two days after the Marchesa had more or less commanded me to pay my court to her, I entered her reception room. Seeing me at once, she gave me a smile, which I thought it proper to answer with a low bow; but that was the end of it. A quarter of an hour later she sat down to cards and I went off to dinner. *She was pretty, and a power in Rome; but I could not bring myself to crawl. Roman manners exasperated me.*

Toward the end of November Donna Angelica's fiancé called on me with the advocate to invite me to spend a day and a night at his house in Tivoli with the same company I had entertained at Frascati; I accepted with pleasure, for since St. Ursula's Day I had not been alone with Donna Lucrezia for a single moment. I promised him I would be at Donna Cecilia's in my carriage at dawn of the appointed day. We had to start very early, since Tivoli is sixteen miles from Rome and since the large number of beautiful things to be seen there took a great deal of time. As I was to be away for a night, I asked the Cardinal himself to give me permission; when he heard with whom I was going, he answered that I was quite right to take the opportunity of seeing the wonders of the famous place in good company.

At the appointed hour I was at Donna Cecilia's door with the same four-horse vis-à-vis, and as usual she fell to my lot. Notwithstanding her irreproachable morals, the charming widow was well content that I should love her daughter. The whole family was in a phaeton for six, which Don Francesco had hired. At half past seven we stopped at a small house where Don Francesco had arranged to have an elegant breakfast ready for us which, as it was to serve us for dinner too, was ample as well. At Tivoli we should have time only for supper. So after breakfasting heartily, we returned to our carriages and reached his house by ten o'clock. I was wearing the ring Donna Lucrezia had given me, having had it remade to fit my finger. I had also had an obverse setting fitted to it, which displayed only a field of enamel with a caduceus[5] entwined by a single snake. On either side of the caduceus were the Greek letters Alpha and Omega. This ring was the sole subject of conversation at breakfast as soon as it was seen that the reverse contained the same stones that had been set in Donna Lucrezia's ring. The advocate and Don Francesco cudgeled their brains to decipher the hieroglyph, much to the amusement of Donna Lucrezia, who knew the secret.

After half an hour spent in viewing Don Francesco's house, which was really charming, we all set off together to spend six hours seeing the antiquities of Tivoli. While Donna Lucrezia was saying something to Don Francesco, I whispered to Donna Angelica that when she became the mistress of the house I would come and spend a few days with her during the seasons of good weather.

"As soon, Signore, as I become the mistress here, the first person to whom I shall order my door closed will be you."

"Thank you for warning me, Signorina."

The joke is that I took this reprimand for nothing less than a very flattering and very clear declaration of love. I was almost paralyzed. Donna Lucrezia gave me a shake and asked me what her sister had said to me. When I told her she said very seriously that after she left I must take her sister in hand and force her to admit that she was wrong. "She pities me," she added; "it is for you to avenge me."

When I praised a small room which gave on to the orangery, Don Francesco said that I should sleep in it. Donna Lucrezia pretended not to have heard him. Since the whole party was to view the beauties of Tivoli together, we could not hope to be alone during the day. We spent six hours looking and admiring, but I saw very little. If my reader is interested in knowing something about Tivoli without going there, he has only to read Campagnani.[6] I did not get to know Tivoli well until twenty-eight years later.

Toward evening we returned to the house, exhausted and dying of hunger. An hour's rest before supper, two hours at the table, the exquisite dishes, and the excellent wine of Tivoli did so much to restore us that we needed nothing more than our beds, whether for sleep or for the rites of love.

Since no one wanted to sleep alone, Lucrezia said she would share a bed with Angelica in the room which gave on the orangery, that her husband should sleep with the Abate, and her young sister with her mother. Everyone thought the arrangement excellent. Don Francesco took a candle, conducted me to the small room I had praised, showed me how to lock the door, and bade me good night. This small room was next to the room in which the two sisters were to sleep. Angelica had no idea that I was her neighbor.

I put my eye to the keyhole and five minutes later saw them come in, accompanied by Don Francesco, who lit a night lamp for them and then left. After locking the door they sat down on the couch, where I watched them undress. Lucrezia, knowing that I could hear her, told her sister to take the side of the bed toward the window. Upon which the virgin, unaware that she was observed, takes off even her shift and in this striking array crosses to the other side of the room. Lucrezia extinguishes the night light, blows out the candles, and lies down too.

Happy moments for which I hope no longer, but whose precious memory death alone can take from me! I believe I never undressed more quickly. I opened the door and fell into the arms of my Lucrezia, who said to her sister: "It is my angel, hold your tongue and go to sleep."

She could say no more, for our clinging mouths were no longer either organs of speech or channels for respiration. Become a single being at the same instant, we did not have the strength to restrain our first desire for more than a minute; it ran its course without the sound of a single kiss or the least movement on our part. The raging fire which urged us on was scorching us; it would have burned us had we tried to restrain it.

After a short respite, ourselves the ingenious ministers of our love and jealous of the fire which it was to rekindle in our veins, we went silently, seriously, and calmly to work drying from our fields the too copious flood which had followed the first eruption. We performed this sacred service for each other with fine linen, devoutly and in the most religious silence. After this expiation we paid homage with our kisses to all the places which we had lately flooded.

It was now my part to invite my fair enemy to begin a battle whose tactics could be known only to love, a combat which, enchanting all our senses, could have no fault but that of ending too soon; but I excelled in the art of prolonging it. When it was over, Morpheus took possession of our senses and held us in a sweet death until the moment when the light of dawn showed us in each other's scarcely opened eyes an inexhaustible spring of new desires. We surrendered to them, but it was to destroy them. A delightful destruction, which we could only accomplish by satisfying them!

"Beware of your sister," I said; "she might turn and see us."

"No, my sister is charming; she loves me and she pities me. Is not that so, dear Angelica? Turn and embrace your sister, who is possessed by Venus. Turn and see what awaits you when love makes you his slave."

Angelica, a girl of seventeen, who must have passed a hellish night, asks nothing better than an excuse to turn and show her sister that she had forgiven her. Kissing her a hundred times, she confessed that she had not slept at all.

"Forgive," Lucrezia said, "him who loves me and whom I adore; come, look at him, and look at me. We are as we were seven hours ago. The power of Love!"

"Hated by Angelica," I said, "I dare not—"

"No," said Angelica, "I do not hate you."

Telling me to kiss her, Lucrezia gets on the other side of me and enjoys the spectacle of her sister in my arms, languishing and showing no signs of resistance. But feeling, even more than love, prevents me from defrauding Lucrezia of the token of gratitude which I owed her. I clasp her frenziedly, at the same time reveling in the ecstasy I saw on the face of Angelica, who was witnessing so splendid a combat for the first time. The swooning Lucrezia implores me to stop, but finding me inexorable throws me on her sister who, far from repulsing me, clasps me to her bosom so strongly that she achieves happiness almost without my participation. *It was thus that when the Gods dwelt on earth the voluptuous Anaideia,*[7] *in love with the soft, delightful breath of the West Wind, one day opened her arms to it and became fruitful. It was the divine Zephyrus.*[8] The fire of nature made Angelica insensible to pain; she felt only the joy of satisfying her ardent desire.

Astonished, blissfully content, and kissing us in turn, Lucrezia was as delighted to see her swoon as she was charmed to see that I continued. She wiped away the drops of sweat which dripped from my brow. Angelica finally perished for the third time, so lovingly that she ravished my soul.

However, the sun's rays coming in through the cracks in our window shutters, I left them. After locking my door, I got into bed; but only a few minutes later I heard the voice of the advocate reproaching his wife and his sister-in-law for their sloth. Then, knocking on my door and finding me in my nightshirt, he threatened to bring my neighbors in. But he left, saying he would send me a hairdresser. I lock my door again, I give my face a thorough washing in cold water, which restores me to my usual looks. An hour later I enter the drawing room, showing not a sign of anything. I am delighted to see that my fair conquests look fresh and rosy. Donna Lucrezia was perfectly relaxed, Angelica gayer than usual and radiant; but as she keeps turning uneasily now to the left, now to the right, I can see her only in profile. Seeing her smile at my vain attempts to catch her eye, which she was determined not to let me do, I tell Donna Cecilia that her daughter should not powder her face. Trapped by my calumny, she makes me rub her face with a handkerchief, and looks at me. I take it back and beg her pardon, and Don Francesco is delighted that the whiteness of his future wife's complexion has led to such a doubt.

After drinking chocolate, we go to view his fine garden, and finding myself alone with Donna Lucrezia I reproach her for her perfidy. Looking at me like a goddess, she reproaches me for my ingratitude.

"I have enlightened my sister," she says. "Instead of pitying me, she must now approve of me, she must love you; and as I am soon to go away, I leave her to you."

"But how can I love her?"

"Is she not charming?"

"She is indeed. But charmed by you I am proof against all other charms. And in any case at this time she should be entirely taken up with Don Francesco, and it is not for me to trouble the harmony of a married couple. I can tell you, too, that your sister has a very different way of looking at things from yours. Last night both she and I were victims of our senses. This is so true that I do not feel that I have been unfaithful to you. But Angelica—do you hear?—Angelica must already be regretting that she allowed nature to lead her astray."

"That may be all very true; but what distresses me is that we shall leave at the end of the month. My husband is certain he will obtain his judgment this very week. So our pleasures are over."

The news made me sad. At table I paid no attention to anyone but the generous Don Francesco, whom I promised an epithalamium for his wedding, which was to take place in January.

We returned to Rome, and during the three hours we were alone together Donna Lucrezia could never convince me that I was less in love with her than I had been before she surrendered all her treasures to me. We stopped at the small house where we had breakfasted, to eat some ices which Don Francesco had ordered made for us. We reached Rome at eight o'clock. Feeling badly in need of rest, I at once went to the Palazzo di Spagna.

Three or four days later the advocate called and took his leave of me with the utmost civility. He was returning to Naples after winning his suit. As he was to leave on the next day but one, I spent the last two evenings of his stay in Rome at Donna Cecilia's. Having learned the hour at which he was to leave, I set out two hours earlier and stopped where I supposed he would spend the night, hoping thus to have the pleasure of supping with him for the last time; but something having come up which obliged him to delay his departure for four hours, I had only the pleasure of dining with him.

After the departure of this extraordinary woman, I was left in the state of lassitude to which a young man succumbs when his heart is empty. I spent all my days in my room, making summaries of the Cardinal's French correspondence, and he was good enough to tell me that he found my extracts well chosen but that I really must not work so hard. The Marchesa G. was present and heard this most flattering compliment. After the second time I had paid my court to her she had seen no more of me. Her manner to me was cool. Hearing the Cardinal reproach me with working too much, she told him that I must be working to cure my grief at Donna Lucrezia's departure.

"You are right, Signora, I felt it very keenly. She was kind; and *she forgave me if I could not visit her often.* In any case, my friendship for her was innocent."

"I have no doubt of it, despite the fact that in your ode the poet seems to be in love."

"A poet cannot compose," said my adorable Cardinal, "without pretending to be in love."

"But if he is in love," the Marchesa replied, "he need not pretend to be."

So saying, she took my ode from her pocket and handed it to S. C., remarking that it did me honor, that it was a little masterpiece according to all the wits of Rome, and that Donna Lucrezia knew it by heart. The Cardinal smiled and handed it back to her, saying that he did not care for Italian poetry but that since she admired it she might well give herself the pleasure of translating it into French. She answered that she only wrote prose in French, and that any translation of a piece of poetry into prose could not but be bad.

"My literary endeavors," she added, with a look at me, "go no further than an occasional modest poem in Italian."

"I should consider myself fortunate, Signora, if I could obtain the favor of seeing one of them."

"Here," said her Cardinal, "is a sonnet by the Signora."

I respectfully take it and prepare to read it, when the Signora tells me to put it in my pocket and give it back to His Eminence the next day, though, she added, her sonnet did not amount to much.

"If you go out in the morning," said the Cardinal, "you can dine with me and give it back to me then."

"In that case," Cardinal Acquaviva replied instantly, "he will go out on purpose."

After a low bow which excused me from speaking, I gradually move away and go to my room, eager to read the sonnet. But before reading it, I give a moment's thought to myself, to my present situation, and to the very great progress it seemed to me I had made that evening at the reception. The Marchesa G. telling me in the clearest way possible that she has taken an interest in me!

The Marchesa G., under cover of her grandeur, having no fear of compromising herself by making advances to me in public! Who would have dared to see anything wrong in it? A young abate like myself, of no importance whatever, could only aspire to her protection, and her nature was such that she granted it chiefly to those who, though considering themselves more than worthy of it, showed no sign of laying claim to it. My modesty in this respect was perfectly apparent to everyone. Why, the Marchesa would have insulted me if she had thought me capable of imagining that she was drawn to me! Impossible! No one could be so stupidly conceited! This was so true that her Cardinal himself invites me to dinner. Would he have done so if he could possibly have thought his Marchesa found me attractive? On the contrary, he did not ask me to come and dine with him until he had gathered from what the Marchesa herself said that I was the very person they needed for an hour of talk now and again at no risk, absolutely none.

Nonsense!

Why should I put on a mask before my dear reader? If he thinks me conceited, I forgive him. I felt certain that I had attracted the Marchesa; I congratulated myself on her having taken that terrifying first step without which I should never have dared even to cast an eye on her, let alone attack her in force. In short, I did not see her as a woman I could love, and a woman well worthy of succeeding Donna Lucrezia, until that evening. She was beautiful, young, intelligent, witty, highly cultivated, well read, and a power in Rome. I decided I would pretend not to be aware of her liking for me, and to begin the next day giving her reason to believe that I loved her without daring to hope. I was certain that I should triumph. It was a course which Father Georgi himself could not but pretend to approve. I had observed with the greatest satisfaction that Cardinal Acquaviva had been pleased that Cardinal S. C. had invited me, though he himself had never so far honored me.

I take up her sonnet and read it, I find it good, flowing, facile, faultless in diction. In it the Marchesa praised the King of Prussia, who had recently captured Silesia by what amounted to a surprise attack.[9] As I copied it out, I took a fancy to compose an answer to it in which Silesia would complain because Love, the speaker in the Marchesa's sonnet, dared to applaud her royal conqueror when he was himself a declared enemy of Love.

A man who is in the habit of composing verses cannot possibly deny himself the pleasure once a happy idea has come to his mind. I thought my idea splendid, and that is what counts. I replied to the Marchesa's sonnet, using the same rhymes, and went to bed. In the morning I polished it, made a fair copy, and put it in my pocket.

The Abate Gama came to breakfast with me and congratulated me on the honor S. C. was doing me, but he warned me to be on my guard because His Eminence was extremely jealous. I thanked him and assured him that I had nothing to fear in that respect, since I did not feel the slightest inclination for the Marchesa.

Cardinal S. C. received me kindly but with a dignity calculated to make me conscious of the favor he was conferring on me.

"Did you," he at once asked me, "find the Marchesa's sonnet well turned?"

"Charming, Monsignore. Here it is."

"She is very talented. I am going to show you ten stanzas she composed, but in the strictest confidence."

"Your Eminence may be sure that I will not betray it."

He opens a secretary and hands me ten stanzas to read, of which he was himself the subject. I find them lacking in inspiration, but with some images well expressed in a passionate style. They were clearly a declaration of love. By showing them to me, the Cardinal had committed a grave indiscretion. I ask him if he has answered; he says he has not, smiles, and asks me if I will lend him my pen, but still in the strictest confidence.

"I will stake my head on that, Monsignore; but the Signora will notice the difference in style."

"She has nothing of mine; but in any case I am sure she does not think me a good poet. So your stanzas must be such that she will not find them above my ability."

"I will write them, Monsignore, and Your Eminence shall pronounce on them. If you find that you cannot do as well, Your Eminence will not deliver them."

"Excellent. Will you write them now?"

"Now? It is not prose, Monsignore."

"Try to bring them to me tomorrow."

We dined alone together at two o'clock, and he liked my appetite. He congratulated me on eating as much as he did. I answered that he flattered me too greatly and that he had outdone me. I was laughing to myself over his eccentric character and considering the advantage I could reap from it, when in comes the Marchesa, without being announced, of course. It was the first time that I had found her a perfect beauty. At her sudden appearance the Cardinal laughs because she goes and sits down beside him so quickly that she does not give him time to rise. For my part, I am left standing, as is to be expected. She talks of various things in a lively way; coffee is brought, and at last she tells me to sit down, but as if she were throwing a coin to a beggar.

"By the way, Abate, have you read my sonnet?"

"And brought it back to His Eminence. I admired it, Signora. I found it so well turned that I am sure you must have spent much time over it."

"Time?" says the Cardinal. "You do not know her."

"Without toil, Monsignore, one accomplishes nothing of value. That is why I have not dared to show Your Eminence an answer to it which I composed in half an hour."

"Show it, show it," says the Marchesa. "I want to read it."

"*Silesia's Answer to Love.*" The title makes her blush. She becomes perfectly serious. The Cardinal remarks that love has nothing to do with it.

"Wait," says the Signora. "We must respect the ideas of poets."

She reads it aloud, and very well; she reads it over again. She finds Silesia's reproaches to Love well justified, and she explains to the Cardinal why Silesia cannot but take it ill that her conqueror was the King of

Prussia. "Ah yes, of course," says the Cardinal. "I see . . . Silesia is a woman[10] . . . The King of Prussia is . . . Oh really! it is a marvelous idea."

We had to wait ten minutes for His Excellency's laughter to subside.

"I want to copy the sonnet," he said. "I must have it."

"The Abate," said the Marchesa, smiling, "will save you the trouble."

"I will dictate it to him. What is this? Wonderful! he has written it with the same rhymes as yours. Did you notice that, Marchesa?"

A glance which she gave me put the finishing touch to my falling in love with her. I saw that she wanted me to understand the Cardinal as she understood him and to be in league with her. I felt more than ready. After copying the sonnet I left them. The Cardinal said that he expected me for dinner the next day.

I went to my room and locked myself in, for the ten stanzas I had to compose were of the most peculiar nature. I had to straddle the ditch with consummate skill, for at the same time that the Marchesa would have to pretend she thought the Cardinal the author of the stanzas, she must not only know that they were mine but also know that I knew she knew it. I had to spare her pride, and at the same time make certain that she would find an ardor in my verses which could come only from my love and not from poetic imagination. I also had to keep in mind doing my best from the Cardinal's point of view, for the more well turned he found the stanzas the more he would think them worthy of his owning their authorship. The great point was to be clear, and that is precisely the most difficult thing in poetry. Obscurity, which is easier, would have passed as sublimity with the man whose good graces I must endeavor to gain. If the Marchesa in her ten stanzas described the Cardinal's excellent qualities, both physical and moral, I had to give him something of the same sort. So I composed them to all these requirements. I described her visible beauties and took care not to describe her hidden ones, and I concluded my last stanza with these two beautiful lines from Ariosto:

Le angeliche bellezze nate in cielo
Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo.[11]

("The angelic beauties born in heaven
cannot be hidden under any veil.")

Well pleased with my little effort, I went to the Cardinal's and gave it to him, saying that I doubted if he would want to acknowledge himself the author of a production which only too clearly revealed the hand of an apprentice. After reading them aloud twice, and very badly, he said that, true enough, they did not amount to much but they were what he needed; and he thanked me for having put in the two lines from Ariosto, which would show the Marchesa that he had needed their help. To console me, he said that when he copied them out he would change some verses so that they would not scan, which would make her certain that he had written them. We dined earlier, and I left to give him time to copy out the stanzas before the lady arrived.

It was on the next day, in the evening, that meeting her at the door of the Palazzo just as she was stepping out of her carriage, I gave her my arm. She told me point-blank that she would be my enemy if Rome came to know her stanzas and mine.

"I do not know what you are talking about, Signora."

"I expected you would not, but mark my words."

As soon as she reached the drawing room, I fled to my own room in despair, for I believed that she was really angry. "My stanzas," I thought to myself, "are too highly colored; they are compromising to her pride, and she does not like my knowing too much about her intrigue. She tells me she is afraid I will be indiscreet;

but I am sure she is only pretending; it is an excuse for dismissing me from her favor. What would she have done if I had stripped her naked in my verses?" I was sorry that I had not. I undress, I go to bed, and a half hour later the Abate Gama knocks at my door; I pull the latchstring. He comes in saying that Monsignore wished me to come down. "The Marchesa G. and Cardinal S. C. are asking for you."

"I am sorry. Go and tell them the truth. Tell them too, if you like, that I am ill."

As he did not return, I saw that he had done his errand well.

The next morning I received a note from Cardinal S. C. informing me that he expected me for dinner, that he had been bled, that he needed to speak to me, and that I was to come early, even if I were ill—it was urgent. I could not guess the reason for his summons, but I did not anticipate anything unpleasant.

No sooner am I dressed than I hurry downstairs and go to hear mass, at which I was sure Monsignore would see me. After the mass, he took me aside and asked if I was really ill.

"No, Monsignore. I only wanted to sleep."

"You were wrong, for you are liked. Cardinal S. C. is being bled."

"I know. He mentions it in this note, in which he commands me to wait on him if Your Eminence approves."

"Very well. But it is odd. I did not know that he needed a third person."

"Will there be a third person?"

"I have no idea, and I am not curious."

Everyone thought that the Cardinal had been speaking to me of state affairs. I went to Cardinal S. C.'s, and found him in bed.

"Since I have been put on a diet," he said, "I will dine alone; but you will lose nothing by it, for the cook has not been informed. What I have to tell you is that I fear your stanzas are too well turned, for the Marchesa is mad about them. If you had read them to me as she read them, I would not have claimed them."

"Yet she believes they are by Your Eminence."

"She has no doubt of it; but what am I to do if she takes it into her head to ask me for more verses?"

"I am at your disposal, Monsignore, day and night, and you may be sure that I will die rather than betray your secret."

"I beg you to accept this small present. It is some Negrillo from Havana[12] which Cardinal Acquaviva gave me."

The tobacco was good, but what went with it was better. The snuffbox was of enameled gold. I accepted it with respect and a feeling of gratitude. *If His Eminence did not know how to compose verses, at least he knew how to give, and in a nobleman that knowledge is a far greater grace than the other.*

At noon I was surprised to see the Marchesa appear in the most elegant dishabille.

"If I had known," she said to him, "that you were in good company, I would not have come."

"I am sure," he answered, "that you will not find our Abate unwelcome company."

"No, for I believe he is honorable."

I stood there without a word, but at the same time determined to leave with my fine snuffbox at the first cutting remark she should take it into her head to make to me. He asked her if she would eat dinner, at the same time telling her that he had been put on a diet.

"Yes," she said, "but I shall not enjoy it, for I hate eating alone."

"If you will grant him the honor, the Abate will keep you company."

She answered only by giving me a gracious look. She was the first woman of high station with whom I had had anything to do. I could not become accustomed to her accursed air of patronage, which can have nothing in common with love; but I saw that in the presence of her Cardinal she could not behave otherwise. *I knew that she must know that a haughty air is unnerving.*

The table was laid near His Eminence's bed. Eating next to nothing herself, the Marchesa encouraged me by praising my excellent appetite.

"I told you," the Cardinal said, "that the Abate is my equal."

"I think," she answered, "that he is not far from it. But you are more discriminating."

At that, I ask her to tell me what reason she had for thinking me a glutton.

"I like only the choice, exquisite morsel *in everything,* Signora."

"Explain your 'in everything,'" says the Cardinal.

Venturing a laugh, I began improvising in verse, enumerating every kind of thing which deserved to be called a "choice morsel." The Marchesa applauded, saying that she admired my courage.

"My courage, Signora, is your doing, for I am as timid as a rabbit when I am not given it. *It is you who are the author of my impromptu, 'cum dico quae placent dictat auditor'*" ("when I say anything pleasing, it is my reader who has dictated it").[13]

"I admire you. For my part, even if Apollo himself should encourage me, I could not produce four lines except in writing."

"Have the courage, Signora, to trust in your Genius, and you will utter things divine."

"I agree," said the Cardinal. "Please allow me to show the Abate your ten stanzas."

"They are faulty; but I am willing, provided it remains between us."

The Cardinal then handed me the Marchesa's ten stanzas, and I read them aloud, giving them all the feeling which reading aloud can give a good piece of poetry.

"How well you read that!" said the Marchesa. "I can no longer believe that I wrote them. I thank you. But now please be so good as to give His Eminence's ten stanzas in answer to mine the same kind of reading. They are far better."

"Never believe it," he said to me. "However, here they are. *But try not to make them worse than they are by your reading.*"

There was no need for the Cardinal to ask this of me, for the verses were mine, I was incapable of reading badly, and the more so since Bacchus had increased the fire which having the Marchesa before me had kindled in my soul.

I read them in a way which delighted the Cardinal and which made the Marchesa blush at the passage wherein I described certain beauties which poetry is permitted to praise but which I could not have seen. She snatched them from me with every sign of resentment, saying that I had altered some of the verses. It was true, but I pretended not to admit it. I was aflame, and so was she. The Cardinal had fallen asleep; she rose, made her way to the *belvedere*[14] and sat down, and I followed her. She had scarcely seated herself on the balustrade before I came and stood in front of her. One of her knees was touching the fob pocket in which I had my watch. Taking one of her hands with respectful tenderness, I told her that she had set me on fire.

"I adore you, Signora, and if you do not permit me to hope, I am determined never to see you again. Pronounce sentence on me."

"I believe you are a libertine and inconstant."

"I am neither."

With these words, I clasped her in my arms and saluted her lips with an amorous kiss, which she received without stooping to make me offer her the least violence. My famished hands now tried to open the way to complete possession; but she quickly changed her position and begged me so sweetly to respect her that I felt it my duty not only to calm my transports but also to ask her pardon. She then spoke to me of Donna Lucrezia, and she must have been delighted to find me a paragon of discretion. After that she talked of the Cardinal, trying to make me believe that she was only his good friend. We then recited beautiful passages of poetry to each other, she sitting so that I could see half of a well-turned leg, I still standing and pretending not to see it, and determined that I would wait for another day to obtain a greater favor than I had been granted on this.

We were interrupted by the Cardinal, who came out in his nightcap, *innocently asking if we had not lost patience waiting for him.*

I did not leave them until nightfall, well satisfied with my good fortune and determined to hold my budding love in check until a propitious occasion should assure me that it would be crowned with victory. From that day on, the charming Marchesa never ceased to give me tokens of her particular esteem without the slightest attempt at concealment. I thought I could count on the coming Carnival, feeling certain that the more I spared her delicacy, the more she would herself try to present me with an opening on an occasion when she could give my love, my loyalty, and my constancy their full reward. But my fortune was to take a different turn just when I least expected it and when Cardinal Acquaviva and the Pope himself were planning to give it a firm foundation. That illustrious pontiff had most warmly congratulated me on the beautiful snuffbox I had received from Cardinal S. C., at the same time never breathing a word to me about the Marchesa G.; and Cardinal Acquaviva had not concealed his pleasure when he saw the beautiful snuffbox in which his generous brother cardinal had given me a sample of his Negrillo. Seeing me so well on the road, the Abate Gama, though he congratulated me, did not dare give me any more advice; and Father Georgi, who divined the whole situation, told me that I should content myself with the favor of the Marchesa G. and take very good care not to give her up for some other acquaintance. Such was my situation.

It was on Christmas Day that I saw Barbaruccia's lover enter my room, shut the door, and throw himself on a sofa, saying that I was seeing him for the last time.

"I come only to ask you for some good advice."

"What advice can I give you?"

"Here—read this. It will tell you everything."

It was a letter from Barbaruccia and ran as follows: "I am pregnant, my dear, I can no longer doubt it. I write to tell you that I have resolved to leave Rome by myself and to die where God may please to send me if you do not take care of me. I will bear anything rather than confess to my father the unhappy state to which we have brought ourselves."

"As a man of honor," I said, "you cannot abandon her. Marry her, despite your father and hers, and then live with her. Eternal Providence will help you."

He reflects, he seems calmer, he leaves.

Anno 1744.

At the beginning of January he appears again, looking very happy.

"I have," he says, "rented the top floor of the house next to Barbaruccia's. She knows this; and tonight I will leave it by the attic window and go in through the attic window of hers. We will settle on a time when I can carry her off. My plan is laid. I have decided to take her to Naples; and since her maid, who sleeps in the attic, cannot help knowing of her elopement, I will take her with us."

"May God bless you."

A week later I see him enter my room an hour before midnight with an abate.

"What do you want with me at this hour?"

"I want to make you acquainted with this handsome abate."

I recognize Barbaruccia and am alarmed. "Did anyone see you come in?"

"No. And suppose anyone did? It is only an abate. We spend every night together."

"I congratulate you."

"The maid has already consented, she will come with us. We leave in a little while and shall be at Naples in twenty-four hours. We have a carriage to take us to the first posthouse, where I am sure they will give us horses."

"Good-by, then. I wish you happiness. I must ask you to leave."

"Good-by."

A few days later when I was walking at the Villa Medici with the Abate Gama, I hear him remark that there is to be an execution at the Piazza di Spagna that night.

"What sort of execution?"

"The Bargello[15] or his lieutenant will execute some *ordine santissimo,* either by searching some suspected house or carrying off someone who does not expect it."

"How has it become known?"

"His Eminence has to know it, for the Pope would not dare to encroach on his jurisdiction[16] without asking his leave."

"So he has asked him?"

"Yes. An *auditore santissimo*[17] came to ask his permission this morning."

"But our Cardinal could have refused."

"True, but he never refuses such a request."

"And if the person sought is under his protection?"

"In that case His Eminence sends him a warning."

A quarter of an hour later, when I had left the Abate, I began to feel very uneasy. It occurred to me that the order might concern Barbaruccia or her lover. Dalacqua's house was under the jurisdiction of Spain. I looked for the young man everywhere, but in vain, though I did not dare to go to his house or to Barbaruccia's for fear of implicating myself. Yet if I had been sure I should find him there, I would certainly have gone, but my suspicion was not firmly founded enough.

About midnight, feeling ready for bed, I go to the door to take out the key when I am surprised to see an abate come in breathless and throw himself into a chair. Recognizing Barbaruccia I lock my door; I gather what has happened and, foreseeing the consequences, consider myself lost. In my trouble and confusion I ask her no questions, I give her a piece of my mind, upbraiding her for having taken refuge in my room, and I ask her to go.

Alas! I should not have asked her, I should have forced her and even summoned help if she refused to go. I did not have the heart.

At the word "go," she flung herself at my feet, sobbing, moaning, and begging me to take pity on her. I gave in, but warning her that we were both lost.

"No one saw me enter the palace or come up here, I am sure of it; and I think I am lucky to have come here to see you ten days ago, otherwise I should never have guessed where your room is."

"Better that you should never have known! What has become of your lover the Doctor?"

"The *sbirri*[18] have carried him off with the maid. But here is the whole story:

"My lover told me last evening that a carriage[19] would be waiting at eleven o'clock tonight at the foot of the Scala di Trinità dei Monti[20] and that he would be waiting for me in it. Accordingly, an hour ago I left my house by the attic window, with the maid going ahead. I entered his house, I put on the clothes which you see, I came downstairs and started straight toward the carriage. My maid was walking ahead of me with my few belongings. Turning a corner, I notice that one of my shoe buckles has come undone, I stop and bend over to fasten it. My maid, thinking that I was still following her, went on to the carriage and got in; I was only thirty paces behind her. But then something stopped me in my tracks. The maid had scarcely got in when by the light of a lantern I see the carriage surrounded by *sbirri,* at the same time the postilion dismounts, another man takes his place and drives the carriage away at full gallop with my maid and my lover, who was certainly waiting for me in it. What could I do at that terrible moment? Since I could not go back home, I obeyed an impulse which I can only call involuntary and which brought me here. So here I am. You tell me that my action has ruined you, and all this is killing me. Find some expedient, I am ready for anything; even to ruin myself if necessary, to save you."

But as she uttered these last words she burst into sobs for which I can find no comparison. Realizing the full horror of her situation, I thought it far worse than mine; but that did not prevent me from seeing that I was on the verge of ruin, guiltless though I was.

"Let me take you to your father's feet," I said. "I feel that I have the power to convince him that he must save you from shame."

But when she hears me propose this expedient, which was the only one, I see that the poor creature is in despair. Her tears falling *in torrents,* she answers that she would rather I put her out in the street and abandoned her there. This is what I should have done, and I considered it; but I could not bring myself to do it. What stopped me was her tears.

Do you know, my dear reader, the power of tears falling from the lovely eyes of a young, pretty girl who is respectable and *unfortunate*? Their power is irresistible. *Credete a chi ne ha fatto esperimento* ("Believe him who has had the experience").[21] It was a physical impossibility for me to turn her out. What tears! Three handkerchiefs were soaked with them in half an hour. I have never seen tears shed so uninterruptedly; if they were necessary to assuage her grief, there was never in the world a grief to equal hers.

After all these tears, I asked her what she thought of doing when daylight came. It had already struck midnight.

"I will leave the palace," she said, sobbing. "In these clothes no one will notice me; I will leave Rome; I will walk until my breath fails."

With these words she fell to the floor; I thought she was going to die. She herself put a finger to her neckband to help her to breathe, for she was choking. I saw her turning blue. I was in the most excruciating of quandaries.

After untying her neckband and unbuttoning everything that was tight on her, I brought her back to life by sprinkling her face with water. The night being extremely cold, and there being no fire in my room, I told her to get into bed and be sure that I would respect her. She answered that she believed her state was such that it could inspire only pity, but that in any case she was in my hands to do with as I would. To restore her courage and to give her blood a chance to flow freely, I persuaded her to undress and get under the covers. Since she had not the strength, I had to undress her and carry her to the bed myself. In so doing, I performed a new experiment on myself. It was a discovery. I resisted the sight of all her charms without any difficulty. She went to sleep, and so did I, lying beside her, but fully dressed. A quarter of an hour before dawn I woke her and, finding her strength restored, she did not need me to help her dress.

As soon as it was daylight, I went out, telling her to remain calm until I returned. I went out with the intention of going to her father, but I changed my mind as soon as I saw spies. I went to the coffeehouse in the Via Condotti, observing that I was followed at a distance. After taking a cup of chocolate, I put some biscuits in my pocket and returned to the palace, observing that I was still followed by the same spy. I gathered from this that the Bargello, having failed to catch her, was now reduced to acting on conjectures. The porter told me, without my asking him, that a seizure was attempted during the night but that he believed it had failed. At the same moment an *auditore* of the Cardinal Vicar's asked the porter when he could speak to the Abate Gama. I saw that there was no time to be lost, and I went up to my room to decide on a course.

After making Barbaruccia eat two biscuits dipped in Canary wine, I took her to the top of the palace to an indecorous place to which no one ever went. I told her she must wait there until she heard from me, since my lackey was bound to arrive. He arrived a few minutes later. I went down to the Abate Gama's apartment, first ordering the man to bring me the key to my room as soon as he had finished cleaning it.

I found the Abate in conversation with an *auditore* of the Cardinal Vicar's. When he had finished talking with him, he came to me and at once ordered chocolate. To give me the news of the day, he told me about the Cardinal Vicar's message. His Eminence was to be asked to dismiss from the palace a person who must have taken refuge in it about midnight. "Nothing can be done," he added, "until the Cardinal is visible; if anyone has hidden in the palace without his knowledge, he will certainly have the person turned out." We then talked of the cold weather until my servant brought me the key. Seeing that I had at least an hour before me, I thought of an expedient which alone could save Barbaruccia from disgrace.

Making sure that I was unobserved, I went to the place where Barbaruccia was hiding, gave her a pencil, and made her write a note in good French, in these terms: "I am, Monsignore, a decent girl disguised as an abate. I implore Your Eminence to permit me to tell you my name in person. I trust in your magnanimity to save my honor."

"You will leave this place," I told her, "at exactly nine o'clock. You will go down three flights of stairs and you will enter the apartment on your right and pass through it to the last antechamber, where you will see a stout gentleman sitting before a brazier. You will hand him this note, asking him to deliver it to the Cardinal at once. Do not fear that he will read it, for he will not have time. As soon as he has delivered it, you may be sure that the Cardinal will let you come in at once and will hear you without a witness. Go down on your knees and tell him your whole story, perfectly truthfully, all except the fact that you spent the night in my room and that you have talked with me. Say that when you saw your lover carried off, you were frightened, you entered the palace, and went up to the top floor where, after spending an agonizing night, you felt inspired to write him the note which you sent in to him. I am certain, my poor Barbaruccia, that His Eminence will save you from disgrace in one way or another. This is your only hope of having your lover become your husband."

When she had assured me that she would carry out all my instructions to the letter, I went downstairs, had my hair dressed, changed my clothes, and, after hearing mass in the presence of the Cardinal, I went out and did not return until dinnertime.

At table this extraordinary incident furnished the sole subject of conversation. Each gave his own version of it. Only the Abate Gama said nothing, and I did likewise. What I gathered was that the Cardinal had extended his protection to the person who was sought. This was all I wanted; so, thinking that I had no further reason for fear, I silently rejoiced in the outcome of my little stratagem, which I thought a masterpiece. After dinner I asked the Abate Gama to tell me what all this business was about, and here is his answer:

"A father whose name I have not yet learned appealed to the Cardinal Vicar to prevent his son from eloping with a girl whom he planned to take out of the state. The elopement was to take place at midnight in our Piazza. After obtaining His Eminence's leave, as I told you yesterday, the Vicar ordered the Bargello to bring in his men and capture the guilty couple in the act. The order was carried out; but the *sbirri* discovered they had been tricked when, on arriving at the Bargello's and ordering the prisoners out of the carriage, instead of a girl they found a woman and indeed such a woman as no one would think of carrying off. A few minutes later a spy came to the Bargello and told him that just as the carriage was leaving the Piazza an abate had run into the Palazzo di Spagna. The Bargello at once went to the Cardinal Vicar and reported the circumstance which had been responsible for his failure to apprehend the girl, apparently mentioning his suspicion that she might be the very abate who had taken refuge in the Palazzo. The Vicar then informed our master that a girl dressed as an abate might be hiding in his palace. He asked him to have the person, whether girl or abate, turned out, unless it was someone whom His Eminence knew to be above suspicion. Cardinal Acquaviva was informed of this just before nine o'clock this morning by the Vicar's *auditore,* with whom you saw me talking this morning. He dismissed him with an assurance that he would have a thorough search made and would turn out anyone in the palace who was not known to him.

"Sure enough, the Cardinal immediately gave such an order to the majordomo, who at once began carrying it out; but a quarter of an hour later he was ordered to stop the search. The reason for the counterorder can only be this:

“The Chamberlain has told me that on the stroke of nine o’clock a very good-looking abate, whom he really thought a girl in disguise, appeared before him and asked him to deliver to His Eminence a note which the abate handed him. He delivered it immediately, and no sooner had His Eminence read it than he ordered him to admit the abate, who has not left His Eminence’s apartment since then. As the order to stop the search was given immediately after the abate was admitted, there is good reason to believe that the said abate is the girl whom the *sbirri* failed to apprehend and who took refuge in the palace, where she must have remained in hiding all night until she was prompted to present herself to the Cardinal.”

“Even so, His Eminence may today put her into the hands not of the *sbirri* but of the Vicar.”

“Not even into the hands of the Pope. You can have no idea of the power of our Cardinal’s protection, and his protection has already been extended since the person is not only still in the palace but in the master’s own apartment under his guard.”

The story was interesting and the attention with which I listened to it was far from offending the inquisitive Gama, who would certainly have told me nothing if he knew how deeply I was involved and how great my interest in the story must be. I went to the opera at the Teatro Aliberti.[22]

The next morning Gama entered my bedroom and smilingly told me that the Cardinal Vicar knew that the abductor was a friend of mine and that the girl must be too, since her father was my French teacher.

“Everyone is certain,” he said, “that you knew about the whole affair and they naturally think that the poor child spent the night in your room. I admire the prudence you demonstrated in your behavior toward me yesterday. You were so well on your guard that I would have wagered you knew nothing about it.”

"Nor did I," I answered calmly and seriously. "I have learned of it only this moment from your own lips. I know the girl, but I have not seen her since six weeks ago, when I stopped taking lessons; I am much better acquainted with the young Doctor, yet he never told me anything about his plan. However, everyone is free to think what he chooses. It is natural, you say, that the girl should have spent the night in my room. *Permit me to laugh at those who take conjectures for certainties.*"

"*It is the particular vice of the Romans,* my dear friend, and those who can laugh at it are fortunate; but this slander, for I believe it to be a slander, can turn our master's mind against you."

That evening, there being no opera, I went to the reception. I found not the slightest change in the Cardinal's manner nor in anyone else's. I found the Marchesa more gracious to me than usual. It was the next day after dinner that Gama told me that the Cardinal had sent the girl to a convent, where she was being very well taken care of at His Eminence's expense.

"I am sure," he said, "that she will not leave it except to become the wife of the young man who tried to abduct her."

"I assure you," I answered, "that I shall be very glad, for both he and she are honorable and worthy of everyone's esteem."

A day or two later Father Georgi told me that the news of the day in Rome was the abortive attempt to carry off the daughter of the advocate Dalacqua; and that I was credited with having managed the entire intrigue, as he was greatly displeased to hear. I spoke to him as I had spoken to Gama, and he appeared to believe me, but he said that *Rome did not like to know things as they were but as it chose to think they must be.*

"It is known," he said, "that you went to Dalacqua's house every morning; it is known that the young man frequently called on you, and that is enough. *No one* *wishes to know what would scotch the slander, for slander is the delight of this holy city.* Your innocence will not prevent the business from being laid to your account forty years hence at a conclave of cardinals at which you are put up as a candidate for the Papacy.''

During the following days this accursed adventure began to be a real annoyance, for everyone spoke of it to me and I clearly saw that if people listened to what I had to say and appeared to believe me, it was only because they could not do otherwise.

The Marchesa G. slyly told me that Signorina Dalacqua was under the greatest obligation to me; but what troubled me most was that, even in these last days of the Carnival, Cardinal Acquaviva had changed his old unconstrained manner toward me. No one noticed it; but I saw it beyond peradventure.

It was, in fact, at the beginning of Lent, when everyone had stopped talking about the elopement, that the Cardinal told me to go into his study with him. It was there that he treated me to the following little discourse:

''The Dalacqua affair is over, no one even mentions it now. But, leaving aside the question of whether it is a slander or not, the general verdict is that those who profited by the young man's bungling attempt to abduct the girl are you and I. All this talk is nothing to me, for if the same thing happened to me again, I would not act otherwise; nor do I wish to know what no one can oblige you to tell and what, as a man of honor, you even ought not to tell. If you knew nothing about it beforehand, by turning the girl away—always supposing that she was in your room—you would have committed a barbarous and even cowardly act, which would have made her miserable for the rest of her life and, even so, would have left you suspected of complicity and, what is worse, of disloyalty. But despite all this you can well imagine that, though I scorn all talk of the kind, I nevertheless cannot remain entirely indifferent[23] to it. Such being the case, I find myself obliged to ask you to leave not only my service but Rome as well; but I will supply you with an excuse which will preserve your honor and, what is more, such consideration as the proofs of my esteem which I have given you may have gained you. I give you permission to inform anyone you please in confidence, and even to announce to the world, that you are going away on a piece of business which I have entrusted to you.

"Consider what country you wish to go to; I have friends everywhere; I will give you such recommendations as I am certain will procure you employment. I will give you letters of introduction in my own hand; it rests with you to arrange matters so that no one will know where you are going. Come tomorrow to the Villa Negroni, prepared to tell me to what place you wish me to give you letters. You must be ready to leave in a week. Believe me, I am sorry to lose you. It is a sacrifice which I make to the greatest of all prejudices. Do not oblige me to witness your grief, I beg you."

He spoke these last words when he saw my tears, and he gave me no time to answer so that he need not see more of them; I nevertheless found the strength to compose myself and to appear in good spirits to all who saw me coming out of his office. At table everyone thought me in the best possible humor. The Abate Gama, after giving me coffee in his room, congratulated me on looking so happy. "I am sure," he said, "that it is because of your conversation with His Eminence this morning."

"You are right. But you do not know the concern which I conceal."

"Concern?"

"Yes, I am very much afraid I may fail in a difficult mission which the Cardinal entrusted to me this morning. I am obliged to hide the little confidence I feel in myself in order not to diminish the confidence His Eminence has in my small abilities."

"If my advice can be of any use to you, make free of it. However, you do very well to appear happy and calm. Is it a mission in Rome?"

"No. It involves a journey on which I must start in a week or ten days."

"In what direction?"

"Westward."

"I will not ask you any more."

I went by myself to the Villa Borghese, where I walked for two hours in desperation, for I loved Rome and, having started on the highroad to fortune, I saw myself an outcast not knowing which way to turn and with all my hopes blighted. Examining my conduct, I could not find that I was guilty; but I clearly saw that Father Georgi was right. I should not only have had nothing to do with Barbaruccia's subsequent course, I should have changed my French teacher as soon as I discovered that she was carrying on a love affair. But at my age and with my small knowledge of what misfortune meant, I could not have a caution which could only be the fruit of long experience. I considered where I ought to go, I thought about it all night and all the next morning, yet I could not decide on one place rather than another. I went back and retired to my room without any thought of supper. The Abate Gama came and told me that His Eminence wished me not to make any engagement for dinner the next day as he had business to transact with me.

I found him at the Villa Negroni, *tomando el sol.*[24] He was walking with his secretary, whom he left as soon as he saw me. Left alone with him, I gave him a full and faithful account of Barbaruccia's intrigue, omitting not the smallest detail. After this faithful narrative, I described the grief I felt at leaving him, painting it in the liveliest colors. I told him that I felt that all my hopes of fortune were dashed for my entire life, since I was certain that I could attain to it only in his service. I spent an hour talking to him in this vein, weeping most of the time; but all that I said was of no avail. He told me in the kindest manner to take courage, and when he urged me to tell him to what place in Europe I wished to go, the word which despair and resentment brought to my lips was "Constantinople."[25]

"Constantinople?" he said, falling back two steps.

"Yes, Monsignore, Constantinople," I repeated, wiping away my tears.

The prelate, who was a man of wit, though a thorough Spaniard, said not a word for two or three minutes. Then, looking at me with a smile:

"I am obliged to you," he said, "for not choosing Ispahan,[26] for I should have been at a loss. When do you wish to leave?"

"A week from today, as Your Eminence commanded me."

"Shall you embark at Naples, or at Venice?"

"At Venice."

"I will give you an adequate passport, for you will find two armies in winter quarters[27] in Romagna. So far as I am concerned, you can tell everyone that I am sending you to Constantinople, for nobody will believe you."

This piece of political acumen almost made me laugh. He gave me his hand, which I kissed, and set off to rejoin his secretary, who was waiting for him in another walk; as he left, he told me that I was to dine with him.

On my way back to the Palazzo di Spagna, considering what I had done, my astonishment at having chosen Constantinople was so great that for a moment I thought only two things were possible: either I had gone mad, or I had been impelled to bring out the name by nothing other than the mysterious power of my Genius, who was summoning me there in concert with my destiny. What surprised me was that the Cardinal had consented at once. It seemed as if his pride had prevented him from advising me to go somewhere else. He was afraid I might think he had been boasting when he told me that he had friends everywhere. To whom would he recommend me? What should I do in Constantinople? I had no idea, but go there I must. His Eminence dined alone with me and made a point of showing me the utmost kindness, as I did of showing the utmost satisfaction, for my self-esteem was stronger than my grief and would not allow me to give anyone who might be observing me the slightest cause for suspecting that I was in disfavor. The chief reason for my sadness was having to leave the Marchesa G., with whom I was in love and from whom I had obtained nothing of consequence.

On the next day but one His Eminence gave me a passport for Venice and a sealed lètter addressed to "Osman Bonneval,[28] Pasha of Karamania, at Constantinople." I could have kept it to myself, but since the Cardinal had not forbidden it, I showed the address on the letter to all my acquaintances. The Abate Gama laughed and said he knew I was not going to Constantinople. The Cavaliere da Lezze, the Venetian Ambassador, gave me a letter addressed to a rich and kindly Turk who had been a friend of his. Don Gaspare asked me to write to him, as did Father Georgi. When I took leave of Donna Cecilia, she read me part of a letter from her daughter, containing the happy news that she was pregnant. I also paid a call on Donna Angelica, whom Don Francesco had married without inviting me to the wedding.

When I went to receive the Holy Father's blessing, I was not surprised to hear him tell me of his acquaintances in Constantinople. Of these the one he had known best was Monsieur de Bonneval. He directed me to give him his compliments and tell him he was sorry he could not send him his blessing. Giving me a most hearty one, he presented me with a rosary of agates connected by a thin gold chain, which might be worth twelve zecchini.

When I took leave of Cardinal Acquaviva, he gave me a purse in which I found a hundred coins of the sort the Castilians call *doblones de a ocho*.[29] They were worth seven hundred zecchini and I had three hundred. I kept two hundred and procured a bill of exchange for sixteen hundred Roman scudi on a Ragusan who had an office in Ancona and was named Giovanni Bucchetti. I took a seat in a berlin with a lady who was taking her daughter to Loreto to fulfill a vow she had made at the crisis of an illness which, but for the vow, might well have brought her to the grave. The girl was ugly. I was bored during the whole journey.

Volume Two
CHAPTER I

My short and too lively stay in Ancona. Cecilia, Marina, Bellino. The Greek slave girl from the Lazaretto. Bellino unmasks.

I REACHED Ancona at nightfall on the 25th of February in the year 1744 and put up at the best inn in the town. Satisfied with my room, I tell the host that I wish to eat meat. He replies that in Lent Christians eat fish. I say that the Pope has given me permission to eat meat; he tells me to show him the permission; I say that he gave it to me by word of mouth; he will not believe me; I call him a fool; he tells me to go and lodge elsewhere; and this last proposition of his, which I do not expect, astonishes me. I swear, I curse; whereupon a solemn-looking individual comes out of a room and proceeds to tell me that I *was wrong* to want to eat meat, since fish was better in Ancona; that I *was wrong* to expect the innkeeper to take my word for it that I had permission; that, if I had permission, I *was wrong* to have asked for it at my age; that I *was wrong* to have called the innkeeper a fool, since he was free to refuse to lodge me; and, finally, that I *was wrong* to raise such a row.

This man who was sticking his nose into my business unasked, and who had come out of his room only to tell me how unimaginably *wrong* I was, had very nearly set me laughing.

"Sir," I said, "I subscribe to all your accusations. But it is raining, I am extremely hungry, and I have no wish to go out looking for another lodging at this hour. So I ask you if, since our host refuses, you will provide me with supper."

"No, for I am a Catholic and hence am keeping the fast; but I will undertake to calm our ruffled host, who will give you a good supper, though of fish."

So saying, he started downstairs; and I, comparing his cool common sense with my hasty petulance, acknowledge that he is worthy of teaching me a thing or two. He comes back upstairs, enters my room, says that all is well again, that I shall have a good supper, and that he will keep me company at it. I reply that I shall consider it an honor and, to oblige him to tell me his name, I tell him mine, adding that I am Cardinal Acquaviva's secretary.

"My name," he says, "is Sancho Pico, I am a Castilian and Proveditor of the army of His Catholic Majesty, which is commanded by the Count de Gages[1] under orders from the Generalissimo, the Duke of Modena.[2]

After exclaiming over the appetite with which I ate all that was set before me, he asked me if I had dined; and he seemed relieved when I answered that I had not.

"Will the supper you have eaten," he asked, "make you ill?"

"I have reason to hope that, on the contrary, it will do me good."

"Then you have deceived the Pope. Follow me to the next room. You will have the pleasure of hearing some good music. The first actress is lodging there."

The word "actress" arouses my curiosity, and I follow him. I see a woman rather well on in years eating supper at a table with two girls and two handsome youths. I look in vain for the actress. Don Sancho introduces her to me in the person of one of the youths, who was ravishingly handsome and could not have been more than sixteen or seventeen years old. I think at once that he is the castrato who had played the part of first actress at the theater in Ancona,[3] which was subject to the same regulations as the theaters in Rome. The mother introduces her other son, a good-looking boy too, but not a castrato, whose name was Petronio and who appeared as prima ballerina, and her two daughters, the elder of whom, named Cecilia, was studying music and was twelve years old; the other, who was a dancer, was eleven and named Marina; they were both pretty. The family came from Bologna and made a living by its talents. Affability and lightheartedness made up for their poverty.

When Bellino (for such was the name of the castrato who was first actress) rose from table he yielded to Don Sancho's urging and sat down at the harpsichord and accompanied himself in an air which he sang with the voice of an angel and enchanting *fioriture.* The Spaniard listened with his eyes closed and seemed to be in ecstasy. For my part, far from keeping my eyes closed, I was admiring Bellino's which, black as carbuncles, sparkled with a fire which burned my soul. This anomalous being had some of Donna Lucrezia's features and certain gestures reminiscent of the Marchesa G. The face seemed to me feminine. And the masculine attire did not prevent my seeing a certain fullness of bosom, which put it into my head that despite the billing, this must be a girl. In this conviction, I made no resistance to the desires which he aroused in me.

After two pleasant hours Don Sancho saw me to my room and told me that he was leaving early in the morning for Sinigaglia[4] with the Abate Vilmarcati, and would return the following day in time for supper. Wishing him a good journey, I said that I should meet him on the road, since I wished to sup at Sinigaglia that day. I was stopping in Ancona only for a day, to present my bill of exchange to the banker and get another for Bologna.

I went to bed full of the impression which Bellino had made on me and sorry to leave without having given him proof of the justice I did him in not being hoodwinked by his disguise. But the next morning I had no more than opened my door when he appears before me and offers me his brother to serve me instead of a hired manservant. I agree, he comes at once, and I send him to bring coffee for the whole family. I make Bellino sit down on my bed, intending to treat him as a girl; but his two sisters come running to me and thwart my plan. I could not but delight in the charming picture I had before my eyes: gaiety, of three different kinds, unadorned beauty, familiarity without presumption, the verve of the theater, a pretty playfulness, little Bolognese grimaces with which I was not yet familiar and which I found most charming. The two little girls were perfect living rosebuds, and more than worthy of being preferred to Bellino if I had not taken it into my head that Bellino was a girl too. Despite their extreme youth the sign of their precocious puberty was visible on their white bosoms.

The coffee came, brought by Petronio, who served us and took some to his mother, who never left her own room. Petronio was a true Giton,[5] and a professional at that. This is not unusual in outlandish Italy, where intolerance in this matter is not unreasonable, as it is in England, nor ferocious, as it is in Spain. I gave him a zecchino to pay for the coffee and made him a present of the eighteen paoli in change, which he accepted with such a mark of his gratitude as clearly revealed his tastes. It was a kiss from half-open lips, which he planted on mine in the belief that I was a devotee of the pretty practice. I had no difficulty in setting him right, but I saw no sign that he felt humiliated. When I told him to order dinner for six, he answered that he would order it only for four, since he had to keep his dear mother company, who ate in bed.

Two minutes later the innkeeper came up and said that the people I was having to dinner each ate at least enough for two, so he would serve me only if I paid six paoli apiece. I agreed. Thinking it proper to say good day to the obliging mother, I go to her room and congratulate her on her charming family. She thanks me for the eighteen paoli I had given her dear son and proceeds to confide her poverty-stricken circumstances to me.

"The impresario Rocco Argenti," she tells me, "is a hardhearted monster who has given me only fifty Roman scudi for the whole Carnival. We have spent it all, and can only get back to Bologna on foot and begging for alms on the road."

I gave her a doblon de a ocho, at which she wept for joy. I promise her another if she will tell me a secret.

"Admit," I say, "that Bellino is a girl."

"You may be sure he is not; but he does look it. So much so, indeed, that he had to submit to being examined."

"By whom?"

"By the very reverend confessor of Monsignor the Bishop."

"I will not believe a word of it until I have examined him myself."

"Very well; but in conscience I can have nothing to do with it for, God forgive me, I do not know what your intentions are."

I go to my room, I send Petronio out to buy a bottle of Cyprus wine, he gives me seven zecchini in change from a doblon I had given him, and I divide it among Bellino, Cecilia, and Marina; then I ask the two girls to leave me alone with their brother.

"My dear Bellino," I say, "I am sure that you are not of my sex."

"I am of your sex, but a castrato; I have been examined."

"Let me examine you too, and here is a doblon for you."

"No, for it is clear that you are in love with me, and religion forbids me to let you."

"You were not so scrupulous with the Bishop's confessor."

"He was old, and all he did was take a hasty look at my unfortunate condition."

I put out my hand, he pushes it away and rises. This obstinacy angers me, for I had already spent fifteen or sixteen zecchini to satisfy my curiosity. I sit down to dinner in the sulks, but the appetite of the three pretty creatures restores my good humor and I make up my mind to obtain a return for the money I had spent from the two younger sisters.

With the three of us sitting before the fire eating chestnuts, I begin distributing kisses; and Bellino, on his side, shows no want of compliance. I touch and then kiss the budding breasts of Cecilia and Marina; and Bellino, with a smile, does nothing to stop my hand from slipping behind his shirt ruffle and laying hold of a breast which leaves me in no possible doubt.

"This breast," I said, "proclaims you a girl, and you cannot deny it."

"All we castrati have the same deformity."

"So I am aware. But I know enough about it to tell the one kind from the other. This alabaster breast, my dear Bellino, is the charming breast of a girl of seventeen."

Completely on fire, and seeing that he offered no resistance to my hand, which was delighting in possessing such a breast, I make to approach it with my panting lips, which were pale from the intensity of my ardor; but the impostor, as if he had only that moment become aware of the forbidden pleasure I was enjoying, rises and walks off. I am left raging, yet unable to blame him, for I should first have had to blame myself. Needing to recover my calm, I asked Cecilia, who was his pupil, to sing me some Neapolitan songs; then I went out to see the Ragusan Bucchetti, who gave me a bill of sight on Bologna in exchange for the one I presented to him. Back at the inn, I went to bed after eating a dish of macaroni in the company of the girls. I told Petronio to have a post chaise ready for me at daybreak, as I wished to leave.

Just as I was going to shut my door, I see Cecilia, wearing little more than a shift, coming to tell me that Bellino would consider it a favor if I would take him with me as far as Rimini, where he was engaged to sing in an opera which was to be produced after Easter.

"Go and tell him, my little angel, that I am ready to do him the favor if he will first do me that of showing me, in your presence, whether he is a girl or a boy."

She goes, and comes back to tell me he is already in bed, but that if I would put off my departure for only one day he promised to satisfy my curiosity.

"Tell me the truth and I will give you six zecchini."

"I cannot earn them, for I have never seen him naked and so cannot be sure of my own knowledge; but he is certainly a boy, otherwise he would not have been allowed to sing in this city."

"Very well. I will not leave until day after tomorrow, if you will spend the night with me."

"So you love me?"

"Very much; but you must be kind to me."

"That I will, because I love you too. I'll go and let my mother know."

"You have surely had a lover."

"Never."

She came back in high spirits, saying that her mother thought me a man of honor. She fastened my door and fell into my arms with all the abandon of love. I found that she might be a virgin; but as I was not in love with her I did not catechize her. Love is the divine sauce which makes that morsel delicious. Cecilia was charming, but I had not had time to desire her; hence I could not say to her, "You have made me happy"; it was she who said it to me; but I did not feel much flattered. However, I was willing to believe her, she was tender, I was tender, I fell asleep in her arms, and when I woke, after giving her love's morning salutation, I presented her with three doblones, which could not but please her better than vows of eternal constancy. Ridiculous vows, which no man can make to the most beautiful of women. Cecilia left to carry her wealth to her mother, who wept for joy as she renewed her trust in Divine Providence.

I sent for the innkeeper and ordered him to prepare a supper for five regardless of expense. I was sure that the noble Don Sancho, who was to be back toward evening, would not refuse me the honor of supping with me. I ate no dinner; but the Bolognese family did not feel that any such abstinence was necessary to give them an appetite for supper. When I sent for Bellino and demanded that he keep his promise, he replied with a smile that the day was not over yet and that he was sure he would travel to Rimini with me. I asked him if he would like to take a walk with me, and he went to dress.

Just then in comes Marina, looking sulky, and says that she does not know how she had deserved the proof of my disfavor I was about to give her.

"Cecilia spent the night with you, you go off tomorrow with Bellino, I am the only unlucky one of us."

"Do you want money?"

"No, I love you."

"You are too young."

"Age has nothing to do with it. I am better developed than my sister."

"Then perhaps you have had a lover."

"Certainly not."

"So much the better. We'll find out this evening."

"Then I'll tell my mother to have some sheets ready for tomorrow, otherwise the maid would guess what happened."

I found these comedies in the highest degree entertaining. Coming to the port with Bellino, I bought a small barrel of oysters at the Venetian arsenal as a treat for Don Sancho, and after arranging to have them delivered to the inn, I took Bellino out to the roads with me and went on board a Venetian ship of the line which had just finished its quarantine. Finding no one I knew in it, I went on board a Turkish vessel which was making ready to sail for Alexandria.

Scarcely aboard, the first person I see is the beautiful Greek girl whom I had left in the lazaretto at Ancona seven months earlier. She was beside the old captain. I pretend not to see her and ask him if he has any fine merchandise to sell. He takes us to his cabin and opens his closets. I read in the Greek girl's eyes her joy at seeing me again. Nothing that the Turk showed me having suited me, I told him that I would be glad to buy something pretty, such as might please his fairer half. He laughs, she speaks to him in Turkish, and he goes off. She comes running and throws herself on my neck, and, clasping me to her bosom, says: "Fortune gives us this one moment." My courage being no less than hers, I sit down, accommodate her to my position, and in less than a minute do what her master had never done to her in five years. I plucked the fruit, and I was eating it; but to swallow it I needed another minute. The poor Greek girl, hearing her master coming back, left my arms and turned her back to me, thus giving me time to set myself to rights without his seeing my disordered state, which could well have cost me my life, or all the money I possessed, to bring to an amicable settlement. What amused me in this really serious situation was to see Bellino struck motionless by surprise and shaking with fear.

The knickknacks which the beautiful slave chose cost me only twenty or thirty zecchini. "*Spolaitis,*"[6] she said to me in her native language; but she ran away when her master told her she ought to kiss me. I left more sad than gay, feeling sorry for the charming creature whom, for all her courage, Heaven had obstinately determined to grant only a partial favor. In the felucca,[7] when Bellino had recovered from his fright, he said that I had shown him a prodigy which he could not believe he had really seen but which gave him a strange idea of my character; as for the Greek girl's, he was completely at a loss, unless I were to tell him that all women from her country were of the same nature. Bellino said that they must be unhappy.

"Then you must believe," said I, "that coquettes are happy?"

"I don't want either kind. I want a woman to yield to love sincerely, and to surrender after she has struggled with herself; I don't want her to give in to the first sensation a man who attracts her arouses in her and abandon herself to him like a bitch whose only law is instinct. Admit that this Greek girl certainly showed you that you were attractive to her, but at the same time gave you unequivocal proof of her animality and of an effrontery which exposed her to the shame of being refused, for she could not know that she had attracted you as much as you attracted her. She is very pretty, and it all went well; but I was terrified."

I could have calmed Bellino and put an end to his perfectly sound argument by telling him the whole story; but that would not have served my purpose. If he was a girl, it was to my advantage to convince him that I attached little importance to the great affair and that it was not worth employing trickery to prevent it from following its course unimpeded.

We returned to the inn, and toward nightfall we saw

Don Sancho enter the courtyard in his carriage. I went to meet him and asked him to excuse me for having assumed that he would do me the honor of supping with Bellino and myself. Acknowledging with dignity and politeness the favor which I had been so kind as to do him, he accepted.

The choice and well-prepared dishes, the good Spanish wines, the excellent oysters, and still more the high spirits and the voices of Bellino and Cecilia, who performed duets and seguidillas[8] for us, gave the Spaniard five hours of paradise. Leaving us at midnight, he said he would only go to bed easy if I would promise to sup with him in his room the next evening, in the same company. This meant that I must put off my departure for another day. I surprised him by accepting.

I then urged Bellino to keep his promise to me; but he answered that Marina had something to say to me and that we should have plenty of time to be together the next day, and so left me. I remained alone with Marina, who happily locked my door.

More well developed, though younger, than Cecilia, the girl felt she owed it to herself to convince me that she deserved to be preferred to her sister. I could well believe it, merely from seeing the fire in her eyes. Fearing that she would be slighted by a man who might have been exhausted by the previous night, she poured out all the amorous ideas which occupied her soul; she told me in detail all that she knew how to do, she set forth all her theories, and gave me a full account of all the occasions she had had to become a past mistress in the mysteries of love, together with her notion of love's pleasures and the means she had employed to obtain a taste of them. I finally made out that she was afraid that, not finding her a virgin, I would reproach her. Her anxiety pleased me, and I amused myself by assuring her that virginity in girls seemed to me only childish imagination, since nature had not even given most of them the tokens of it. I ridiculed those who only too often made the mistake of chiding them on the subject.

I saw that my doctrine pleased her and that she came into my arms full of confidence. And in fact she proved herself superior to her sister in every way, and she was exultant when I told her so; but when she wanted to fill my cup by assuring me she would stay awake the whole night with me, I persuaded her not to, arguing that we would be the losers by it, since if we granted nature the sweet respite of sleep she would show her gratitude by the increased energy of her fire when we woke.

So, having enjoyed ourselves sufficiently and slept well, we renewed the celebration in the morning; and Marina left me well satisfied when she saw the three doblones which she happily carried to her mother, who was insatiable in contracting ever greater obligations to Divine Providence.

I went out to get money from Bucchetti, since I did not know what might happen to me on my journey before I reached Bologna. I had enjoyed myself, but I had spent too much. I still had to consider Bellino, who, if he was a girl, must not find me less generous than his sisters had done. Whether he was must inevitably come out during the course of the day; and I thought I was certain of it.

Those who say that life is only a combination of misfortunes mean that life itself is a misfortune. If it is a misfortune, then death is a happiness. Such people did not write in good health, with their purses stuffed with money, and contentment in their souls from having held Cecilias and Marinas in their arms and being sure that there were more of them to come. Such men are a race of pessimists[9] (forgive me, my dear French language!) which can have existed only among ragged philosophers and rascally or atrabilious theologians. If pleasure exists, and we can only enjoy it in life, then life is a happiness.

There are misfortunes, of course, as I should be the first to know. But the very existence of these misfortunes proves that the sum of good is greater. I am infinitely happy when I am in a dark room and see the light coming through a window which opens on a vast horizon.

At suppertime I waited on Don Sancho, whom I found alone and in a very decent room. His table was laid with silver dishes and his servants were in livery. Bellino, whether from whim or as a ruse, enters dressed as a girl, followed by his two very pretty sisters but whom he totally eclipsed, and at that moment I became so sure of his sex that I would have staked my life against a paolo. It was impossible to imagine a prettier girl.

"Are you convinced," I asked Don Sancho, "that Bellino is not a girl?"

"Girl or boy, what does it matter? I think he is a very handsome castrato; and I have seen others as good-looking as he."

"But are you sure of it?"

"*Valgame Dios!*[10] I am not interested in making sure."

Respecting the Spaniard for possessing a wisdom which I lacked, I made no answer; but at table I could not take my eyes from this being whom my depraved nature impelled me to love and to believe a member of the sex to which it was necessary to my purposes that he should belong.

Don Sancho's supper was exquisite and, as was to be expected, better than mine, for otherwise he would have considered himself dishonored. He gave us white truffles, several kinds of shellfish, the best fish from the Adriatic, still champagne, Peralta, sherry, and Pedro Ximenes.[11] After supper Bellino sang in a fashion to make us lose the little reason the excellent wines had left us. His gestures, the way he moved his eyes, his gait, his bearing, his manner, his face, his voice, and above all my instinct, which I concluded could not make me feel its power for a castrato, all combined to confirm me in my idea. Yet I still needed to make certain from the testimony of my own eyes.

After duly thanking the noble Castilian, we wished him a good sleep and went to my room, where Bellino must either keep his promise to me or earn my contempt and resign himself to seeing me set off alone at dawn.

I take his hand and I make him sit down beside me before the fire, and I ask his two young sisters to leave us alone. They go at once.

"This business," I said, "will not take long if you are of my sex, and if you are of the other you will have only to spend the night with me. I will give you a hundred zecchini in the morning and we will leave together."

"You will leave alone, and you will be generous enough to forgive my weakness if I cannot keep my promise to you. I am a castrato, and I cannot bring myself either to let you see my shame or to expose myself to the loathsome consequences which convincing you of it may have."

"It will have none, for as soon as I have seen, or touched, I will myself beg you to go to bed in your own room; we will leave tomorrow the best of friends and there will be no more of this matter between us."

"No, my mind is made up: I cannot satisfy your curiosity."

At these words I am out of all patience, but I control myself and try gently to advance my hand to the place where I should find if I was right or wrong; but he uses his to stop mine from pursuing the investigation I was set on making.

"Take your hand away, my dear Bellino."

"No, absolutely not! For I see you are in a state which horrifies me. I knew it, and I shall never consent to such infamies. I will go and send my sisters to you."

I hold him back, and pretend to regain my calm; but suddenly, thinking I could take him unawares, I stretch out my arm to the bottom of his back, and my quick hand would have learned the truth from that direction if he had not parried the thrust by rising and blocking my hand, by which I was still holding on, with his, which he had been keeping over what he called his shame. It was at this moment that I saw he was a man, and believed that I saw it against his will. Astonished, angered, mortified, disgusted, I let him leave. I saw that Bellino was in truth a man; but a man to be scorned both for his degradation and for the shameful calm I observed in him at a moment when I ought not to have seen the most patent evidence of his insensibility.

A little later his sisters appeared, but I asked them to leave since I needed sleep. I told them to inform Bellino that he would leave with me and that he would no longer find me in the least curious. I fastened my door and went to bed, but very much dissatisfied, for despite the fact that what I had seen should have disillusioned me, I felt that it had not. But what more did I want? Alas! I thought about it and I could not imagine.

Next morning, after eating an excellent soup, I set off with him, and with my heart torn by the tears of his sisters and of their mother, who, mumbling paternosters and telling her beads, kept repeating *"Dio provvederà"* [12] over and over.

Belief in Eternal Providence on the part of most of those who live by practices forbidden by laws or religion is neither absurd nor feigned nor the fruit of hypocrisy; it is true, real, and, such as it is, pious, for its source is unimpeachable. Whatever ways it takes, it is always Providence which acts, and those who worship it regardless of everything else can only be good souls though guilty of sinning.

Pulchra Laverna
Da mihi fallere; da justo, sanctoque videri;
Noctem peccatis, et fraudibus objice nubem!

> ("Fair Laverna, let me deceive, let me appear just and good; cover my sins with darkness and my stealth with a cloud.")[13]

Such was the Latin which Roman thieves talked to their goddess in Horace's day, who, so a Jesuit told me, would not have known his language if he had said *justo sanctoque*.[14] There were ignorant men among the Jesuits too. Thieves laugh at grammar.

So now I was traveling with Bellino, who, believing that he had disillusioned me, might well hope that I would no longer be curious about him. But a quarter of an hour had not passed before he found that he was mistaken. I could not look into his eyes and not burn with love. I told him that since his eyes were a woman's and not a man's, I needed to convince myself by touch that what I had seen when he had run away was not a monstrous clitoris.

"It may be that," I said, "and I feel that I shall have no difficulty in forgiving you for such a defect, which in any case is merely a trifle; but if it is not a clitoris, I need to convince myself of it, which is a very easy matter. I no longer want to see; all I ask is to touch, and you may be sure that as soon as I am certain I will become as gentle as a dove, for once I discover that you are a man, I cannot possibly continue to love you. That is an abomination for which—God be praised!—I feel no inclination in myself. Your magnetism and, what is more, your breasts, which you abandoned to my eyes and my hands expecting that they would convince me I was mistaken, instead of doing so gave me an invincible impression which makes me still believe that you are a girl. Your build, your legs, your knees, your thighs, your hips, your buttocks are a perfect replica of the Anadyomene,[15] which I have seen a hundred times. If after all that it is true that you are simply a castrato, permit me to believe that, knowing you look exactly like a girl, you hatched the cruel scheme of making me fall in love and then driving me mad by refusing me the proof which alone can restore me to sanity. An excellent physician, you have learned in the most diabolical of schools that the one way to make it impossible for a young man to be cured of an amorous passion to which he has succumbed is to aggravate it; but, my dear Bellino, you must admit that you cannot practice this tyranny unless you hate the person upon whom it is to produce such an effect; and, that being the case, I should use what reason I have left to hate you in the same measure, whether you are a girl or a boy. You must also be aware that your obstinate refusal to give me the certainty which I ask of you forces me to despise you as a castrato. The importance you attribute to the matter is childish and malicious. If you have human feelings, you cannot persist in your refusal, which, as the logical consequence of my reasoning, reduces me to the painful necessity of doubt. Such being my state of mind, you must finally realize that I cannot but resolve to use force, for if you are my enemy I must treat you as such without further scruples.''

At the end of this too threatening harangue, to which he listened without once interrupting me, he answered only in the following few words:

''Consider that you are not my master, that I am in your hands on the strength of the promise which you sent me by Cecilia, and that you will be guilty of murder if you use force on me. Tell the postilion to stop; I will get out, and I will complain of your conduct to no one.''

After this short answer, he melted into tears which reduced my poor soul to utter desolation. I almost believed that I was wrong—I say ''almost,'' for if I had been sure of it I would have begged him to forgive me. I was unwilling to set myself up as the judge of my own cause. I withdrew into the bleakest possible silence, and found the strength of mind not to speak another word until halfway through the third post, which ended at Sinigaglia, where I intended to sup and spend the night.

Before we reached there, things had to be settled. I thought there was still hope that I could make him see reason.

"We could," I said, "have parted at Rimini good friends, and that would have been the case if you had felt any friendship for me. At the price of a compliance which would have led to nothing, you could have cured me of my passion."

"It would not have cured you," answered Bellino, firmly, but with a sweetness which surprised me, "for you are in love with me whether I am a girl or a boy, and when you found that I am a boy, you would have continued to love me, and my refusals would have made you even more furious. Finding me still inexorably determined, you would have run into excesses which would later have made you shed useless tears."

"So you say, and think you are proving that your obstinacy is reasonable; but I have every right to contradict you. Convince me, and you will find me a good and loyal friend."

"You will be furious, I tell you."

"What has infuriated me is the way you deliberately displayed your charms, when, you must admit, you knew the effect they would have on me. You did not fear my amorous fury then; and do you expect me to believe that you fear it now, when all that I ask of you is to let me touch an object which cannot but fill me with disgust?"

"Ah! disgust! I am certain of the contrary. Here is my reasoning, and let it be the end of the matter. If I were a girl, I could not help loving you, and I know it. But since I am a boy, my duty is not to comply in the least with what you demand, for your passion, which is now only natural, would at once become monstrous. Your ardent nature would become the enemy of your reason, and your reason itself would soon surrender, to the point of becoming the accomplice of your frenzy, thus seconding your nature. This inflammatory revelation which you desire, which you do not fear, which you demand of me, would leave you with no control over yourself. Your sight and your touch, seeking what they cannot find, would want to avenge themselves on what they found, and the most loathsome thing that can happen between men would happen between you and me. How can you, with your intelligence, cozen yourself into thinking that when you found me a man you would cease to love me? Do you believe that after your discovery what you call my charms, which you say have made you fall in love, would vanish? No, they might even grow more powerful, and then your ardor, become merely animal, would employ every means your amorous mind could conjure up to calm itself. You would manage to persuade yourself that you could change me into a woman, or, imagining that you could become a woman yourself, you would want me to treat you as such. Led astray by your passion, your reason would invent sophism after sophism. You would say that your love for me, a man, is more reasonable than it would be if I were a girl, for you would find the source of it in the purest friendship, and you would not fail to cite me examples of such anomalies. Led astray yourself by the specious brilliance of your arguments, you would become a torrent which no dam could hold back, and I should be at a loss for words to demolish your specious reasoning, and lack the strength to repulse your furious efforts. You would finally threaten me with death, if I denied you entrance to an inviolable temple, whose gate wise nature made to open only outward. It would be a loathsome profanation, which could not be accomplished without my consent, and you would find me ready to die before I would give it."

"Nothing of the sort would happen," I answered, rather shaken by his cogent reasoning, "and you exaggerate. Yet I feel obliged to tell you, if only as a matter of form, that even if all you say should happen, it seems to me there would be less harm in allowing nature an aberration of this kind, which philosophy may well consider a mere folly without consequences, than to follow a course which will make an incurable disease of a sickness of the mind which reason would render only momentary.''

Thus does the poor philosopher reason when he undertakes to reason at moments when a tumultuous passion leads the divine faculties of his soul astray. To reason rightly one must be neither in love nor in anger; for those two passions reduce us to the level of animals; and unfortunately we are never so much inclined to reason as when we are agitated by one or the other of them.

Having reached Sinigaglia in comparative calm, and the night being dark, we stopped at the posthouse inn. After having our trunks untied and brought to a good room I ordered supper. As there was only one bed I asked Bellino in a perfectly calm voice if he wished to have a fire lighted for him in another room. He surprised me by gently answering that he had no objection to sleeping in my bed.

My reader can easily imagine the astonishment I felt at this answer, which I could never have expected and which I greatly needed to purge my mind of all the dark humor which was troubling it. I saw that I had come to the dénouement of the play, and I was afraid to congratulate myself, for I could not foresee if it would be pleasant or tragic. The one thing I was sure of was that in bed he would not escape me, even if he were insolent enough to refuse to undress. Satisfied that I would be victorious, I was determined to win a second victory by leaving him alone if I found he was a man, though I did not believe it. If I found him a girl, I had no doubt that I would be gratified by all the compliance which he ought to show, if only in reparation.

We sat down to supper; and in his words, his manner, the expression of his eyes, his smiles, he seemed to me to have become a different person.

Feeling relieved of a great burden, I got through supper more quickly than usual and we rose from the table. After sending for a night lamp, Bellino fastened the door, undressed, and got into bed. I had done the same without uttering a word. And so we were in bed together.

CHAPTER II

Bellino unmasks; his story. I am arrested. My involuntary flight. My return to Rimini and my arrival in Bologna.

I HAD scarcely got into the bed before I was overcome to see him moving toward me. I clasp him to me, I see that he is fired by the same transport. The exordium of our dialogue was a deluge of mingling kisses. His arms were first to slip down from my back to my loins. I stretch mine still lower, it is revelation enough that I am happy, I sense it, I feel it, I am convinced of it. I am right, I am vindicated, I cannot doubt it, I do not want to know how, I fear that if I speak I shall no longer be happy, or be happy as I would not wish to be, and I give myself, body and soul, to the joy which flooded my entire being and which I saw was shared. The excess of my bliss seizes all my senses with such force that it reaches the degree at which nature, drowning in the highest of all pleasures, is exhausted. For the space of a minute I remain motionless in the act of mentally contemplating and worshiping my own apotheosis.

Sight and touch, which I had thought would be the leading actors in this drama, play only secondary roles. My eyes ask no greater bliss than to remain fixed on the face of the being who held them spellbound, and my sense of touch, concentrated in my fingertips, fears to move elsewhere since it cannot imagine that it could find anything more. I should have accused nature of the most despicable cowardice if, without my permission, it had dared to leave the place of which I could feel I was in possession.

Scarcely two minutes had passed before, without breaking our eloquent silence, we set to work together to give each other fresh assurances of the reality of our mutual happiness—Bellino by assuring me of it every quarter of an hour by the sweetest moans; I by refusing to reach the end of my course again. I have all my life been dominated by the fear that my steed would flinch from beginning another race; and I never found this restraint painful, for the visible pleasure which I gave always made up four fifths of mine. For this reason nature must abhor old age, which can itself attain to pleasure, but can never give it. Youth shuns its presence, for youth's deadly enemy is age, sad, weak, deformed, hideous age, which drives it into lonely seclusion at last, and always too soon.

We finally broke off. We needed an interval. We were not exhausted; but our senses demanded that our minds be calm so that they could return to their proper seats.

Bellino, the first to break the silence, asked me if I had found him a good mistress.

"Mistress? Then you admit you are a woman? Tell me, tigress, if it is true that you loved me, how could you put off your happiness, and mine, for so long? But is it really true that you belong to the bewitching sex of which I believe I have found you to be?"

"You are the master now. Make certain."

"Yes. I need to convince myself. Good God! what has become of the monstrous clitoris I saw yesterday?"

After a complete conviction, which was followed by a long outpouring of gratitude, the fascinating creature told me her story as follows:

"My name is Teresa. The poor daughter of an employee at the Institute at Bologna,[1] I made the acquaintance of the celebrated castrato singer Salimbeni,[2] who lodged in our house. I was twelve years old and had a good voice. Salimbeni was handsome; I was delighted to find that I pleased him, and to have him praise me, and eager to learn music from him and to play the harpsichord. Within a year I had acquired a fairly good grounding and was able to accompany myself in an air, imitating the *fioriture* of the great master, whom the Elector of Saxony, the King of Poland,[3] had summoned to serve him. His reward was such as his affection made him demand of me; I did not feel ashamed to grant it to him, for I worshiped him. Men like yourself are certainly to be preferred to men like my first lover; but Salimbeni was an exception. His good looks, his intelligence, his manners, his talent, and the rare qualities of his heart and soul made him preferable to all the whole men I had known until that time. Modesty and discretion were his favorite virtues, and he was rich and generous. He could never have found a woman to resist him; but I never heard him boast of conquering any woman. In short, his mutilation made him a monster, as it could not but do, but a monster of adorable qualities. I know that when I gave myself to him he made me happy; but he did so much that I can only believe I made him happy too.

"Salimbeni had a protégé whom he was boarding in the house of a music teacher in Rimini, a boy of my own age whom his dying father had had castrated to preserve his voice, so that he could turn it to profit for the benefit of the numerous family he was leaving behind, by appearing on the stage. The boy was named Bellino and was the son of the good woman whose acquaintance you just made at Ancona and whom everyone believes to be my mother.

"A year after I first came to know this being so favored by Heaven, it was he himself who told me the unhappy news that he must leave me to go to Rome. I was in despair, even though he assured me that I would soon see him again. He left my father the charge and the means to continue the cultivation of my talent; but within a few days a malignant fever carried him off; and I was left an orphan. After that Salimbeni could no longer resist my tears. He decided to take me with him as far as Rimini and leave me to board with the same music teacher in whose house he was keeping the young castrato, the brother of Cecilia and Marina. We left Bologna at midnight. No one knew that he was taking me with him—which was easy enough, for I knew no one, and no one took any interest in me, except my dear Salimbeni.

"As soon as we reached Rimini he left me at the inn and himself went to see the music teacher and make all the necessary arrangements with him for me. But half an hour later he is back at the inn, lost in thought. Bellino had died the day before our arrival. Thinking of the grief his mother would feel when he wrote her the news, it occurs to him to take me back to Bologna under the name of the Bellino who had just died and put me to board with his mother, who, being poor, would find it to her advantage to keep the secret. 'I would give her,' he said, 'sufficient means to have you complete your musical studies, and four years from now I will bring you to Dresden, not as a girl but as a castrato. We will live there together, and no one can say anything against it. You will make me happy until I die. All that is necessary is to make everyone believe you are Bellino, which you will find easy enough, since no one knows you. Only Bellino's mother will know the truth. Her children will not suspect that you are not their brother, for they were infants when I sent him to Rimini. If you love me, you must renounce your sex and even forget it completely. You must now take the name of Bellino and leave with me at once for Bologna. Within two hours you will be dressed as a boy; all you need do is to keep anyone from knowing that you are a girl. You will sleep alone; you will keep out of sight when you dress; and when in a year or two your breasts begin to develop it will be of no consequence, for having too much bosom is a defect in which all we castrati share. In addition, before I leave you I will give you a little apparatus and teach you how to adjust it so well to the place which shows the difference of sex that the deceit will pass unnoticed if it ever happens that you have to undergo an examination. If you like my plan, you will enable me to live in Dresden with you without giving the Queen,[4] who is very devout, any occasion to object. Tell me if you consent.'

"He could be sure that I would. I could have no greater pleasure than to do whatever he wished. He had me dressed as a boy, he made me leave all my girls' clothes behind, and after ordering his servant to wait for him in Rimini, he took me to Bologna. We arrive there at nightfall, he leaves me at the inn, and goes at once to see Bellino's mother. He explains his plan to her, she assents to it, and it consoles her for the death of her son. He brings her back to the inn with him, she calls me her son, I address her as 'Mother'; Salimbeni goes off, telling us to wait. He comes back an hour later and takes from his pocket the apparatus which in case of necessity would make me pass as a man. You have seen it. It is a sort of long, soft gut, as thick as one's thumb, white and with a very smooth surface. I had to laugh to myself this morning when you called it a clitoris. It was attached to the center of an oval piece of very fine transparent hide, which was five or six inches long and two inches wide. When this is fixed with gum tragacanth to the place where sex can be distinguished, it obliterates the female organ. He dissolves the gum, tries the apparatus on me in the presence of my new mother, and I find that I have become like my dear lover. I should really have laughed if the imminent departure of the person I adored had not pierced my heart. I was left more dead than alive, with a presentiment that I should never see him again. People laugh at presentiments, and with good reason, for not everyone can hear the voice of his heart; but mine did not deceive me. Salimbeni died still a young man in the Tyrol last year,[5] with the resignation of a philosopher. I was left under the necessity of turning my talent to account. My mother thought it a good plan to continue passing me off as a man, for she hoped she could send me to Rome to sing. In the meanwhile she accepted an offer from the theater in Ancona, where she also put Petronio to dance as a girl.

"After Salimbeni, you are the only man in whose arms Teresa has truly sacrificed to perfect love; and you have but to ask and I will from this day on abandon the name of Bellino, which I loathe since Salimbeni's death and which is beginning to cause me difficulties for which I have no patience. I have appeared in only two theaters, and to be admitted to both of them I had to submit to the same degrading examination, for wherever I go people think I look so much like a girl that they will not believe I am a man until they have been convinced. Until now I have had to deal only with old priests, who were innocently satisfied with having seen, and then certified me to the bishop; but I have continually to defend myself against two kinds of people, who assail me to obtain illicit and loathsome favors. Those who, like you, fall in love with me and so cannot believe that I am a man, insist upon my showing them the truth; and that I cannot bring myself to do for fear they will want to convince themselves by touch as well; in such a case I am afraid not only that they will strip off my mask but that, becoming curious, they will want to use the apparatus to satisfy monstrous desires which may come to them. But the wretches who persecute me beyond endurance are those who declare their monstrous love to me as the castrato I pretend to be. I fear, my dear one, that I will stab one of them. Alas, my angel! Rescue me from my shame. Take me with you. I do not ask to become your wife, I will only be your loving mistress, as I would have been to Salimbeni; my heart is pure, I know that my nature is such that I can live faithfully with my lover. Do not forsake me. The affection you have inspired in me is true love; what Salimbeni inspired in me was the fondness of innocence. I believe I did not become truly a woman until I tasted the perfect pleasure of love in your arms."

Moved to tears, I wiped hers away and promised her in all sincerity that she should share my fate. Infinitely affected though I was by the extraordinary story she had told me, in which I could see nothing but truth, I yet could not convince myself that I had awakened a genuine love in her during my stay in Ancona. "How could you bear, if you loved me," I said, "to let me suffer so greatly and to give myself to your sisters?"

"Alas, my dear! Consider our great poverty, and how very hard it would have been for me to disclose myself. I loved you; but could I be sure that the liking you showed for me was not a passing fancy? When I saw you change so readily from Cecilia to Marina, I thought that you would treat me in the same way as soon as you had satisfied your desires. But I could no longer doubt of your fickle nature, and of the little importance you attached to the happiness of love, when I saw what you did with that Greek slave girl on the Turkish ship, without my presence troubling you in the least. It would have troubled you if you had loved me. I was afraid that you would scorn me afterward, and God alone knows how I suffered! You insulted me, my dear one, in a hundred different ways, but I pleaded your cause. I saw your anger and your determination to be revenged. Did you not threaten me today in the carriage? I confess that you frightened me; but do not go thinking that it was my fear which decided me to satisfy your desire. No, my dear—I had made up my mind to give myself to you as soon as you took me away from Ancona, even from the moment when I sent Cecilia to ask you if you would take me to Rimini."

"Break your engagement in Rimini, and let us go on. We will stay in Bologna only three days, you shall come to Venice with me and, dressed in the clothing of your real sex and under another name, I defy the impresario of the opera at Rimini to find you."

"I agree. Your will shall always be mine. Salimbeni is dead. I am my own mistress, and I give myself to you; you shall have my heart, and I hope that I shall be able to keep yours."

"Please let me see you once again with the strange device which Salimbeni gave you."

"At once."

She gets out of bed, pours water into a glass, opens her trunk, takes out her apparatus and her gums, dissolves them, and fits on the mask. I see something unbelievable. A charming girl, who looked it in every part of her body, and who, with this extraordinary attachment, seemed to me even more interesting, for the white pendant offered no obstruction to the well of her sex. I told her that she had been wise not to let me touch it, for it would have intoxicated me and made me become what I was not, unless she had instantly calmed me by revealing the truth. I wanted to convince her that I was not lying, and our skirmish was comical. We fell asleep afterwards and did not wake until very late.

Struck by all that I had heard from the girl's lips, by her beauty, her talent, the innocence of her soul, her feelings, and her misfortunes, the most cruel of which was certainly the false role she had been obliged to play, for it exposed her to humiliation and infamy, I determined to make her the partner of my fate, or myself the partner of hers, for we were very nearly in the same situation.

Thinking further, I saw that now that I was resolved to make her mine, and to give myself to her, I ought to set the seal of marriage on our union. According to the notions I then held, this should only increase our affection, our mutual esteem, and that of society at large, which could never have considered our union legitimate or accept it as such unless it was validated by the civil law. Her talent assured me that we should never lack the necessaries of life, nor was I without hope of mine, though I did not know either in what direction or how I was to turn it to advantage. Our mutual love would have been not only impaired but reduced to nothing if the idea of living at her expense could have humiliated me, or if she could have grown proud, begun to domineer over me, and changed the nature of her feeling because, instead of seeing me as her benefactor, she had come to regard herself as my benefactress. If Teresa had a soul capable of such baseness, she deserved my utmost contempt. This I must know, I must sound her out, I must submit her to a test which would reveal her soul to me completely. With this idea in mind, I addressed her as follows:

"My dear Teresa, all that you have told me makes me sure that you love me, and your own certainty that you have become the mistress of my heart has made me so completely in love with you that I feel ready to do anything to convince you that you have not made a mistake. I must show you that I am worthy of a trust of which I know none higher, by treating you with a sincerity equal to your own. Our hearts, that is, must be placed in exactly the same position toward each other. I know you now, but you do not know me. You tell me it is all the same to you, and your trustfulness is proof of the most perfect love; but it sets me too far below you at the very moment when you believe you have made yourself even more adorable by setting me above you. You ask to know nothing, you ask only to be mine, you aspire to nothing but to possess my heart. It is noble, my beautiful Teresa, but it humiliates me. You have confided your secrets to me, I must confide mine to you. Promise me that when you have learned all, you will tell me sincerely if anything has changed in your soul."

"I swear it. I will hide nothing from you; but do not be so cruel as to tell me things that are not true. I warn you that they will accomplish nothing if you expect them to show you that I am less worthy of your love, but they will lower you a little in my soul. I should not want to find you capable of trickery. Trust in me as I trust in you. Tell me the plain truth."

"Here it is. You assume that I am rich; I am not. I shall have nothing once I have emptied my purse. You perhaps suppose that I am a man of high birth, and I am of a rank either lower than your own or equal to it. I have no talent which can earn money, no employment, no reason to be sure that I shall have anything to eat a few months hence. I have neither relatives nor friends nor rightful claims nor any settled plan. In short, all that I have is youth, health, courage, a modicum of intelligence, a sense of honor and of decency, with a little reading and the bare beginnings of a career in literature. My great treasure is that I am my own master, that I am not dependent upon anyone, and that I am not afraid of misfortunes. My nature tends toward extravagance. Such is the man I am. Now answer me, my beautiful Teresa."

"To begin with, I want you to know that I am sure that all you have told me is pure truth, and that nothing in your account surprised me except the noble courage with which you gave it to me. Know, too, that there were times in Ancona when I thought you were such as you have just described yourself to be, and that far from being frightened off, I hoped that I was not mistaken, for if I was not I had better reason to hope I might win you. But to be brief. Since it is true that you are poor, that you have nothing to rely on, and that you are even no good at economizing, permit me to tell you that all this makes me very glad, for if you love me you naturally cannot scorn the present I am about to give you. The present is the person you love. I give myself to you; I am yours; I will take care of you. Hereafter think of nothing but loving me; but it must be me alone. From this moment I am Bellino no longer. Let us go to Venice, and my talent will earn our living; and if you do not want to go to Venice, let us go wherever you please."

"I must go to Constantinople."

"Let us go there. If you are afraid you will lose me because I will be inconstant, marry me and then your right over me will be legal. I do not say that I will love you better as my husband; but it will please me to bear the flattering title of your wife, and we will laugh at it."

"Very well. Day after tomorrow at the latest, I will marry you in Bologna; for I want to make you mine by every possible tie."

"Now I am happy. We have nothing to do here in Rimini. We will leave tomorrow morning. There is no use in our getting up. Let us eat in bed, and then make love."

"An excellent idea."

After spending a second night in pleasure and content, we set off at dawn; and after traveling for four hours we thought it time to eat breakfast. We were at Pesaro.[6] Just as we were entering the carriage again to continue our journey, up comes a noncommissioned officer with two fusiliers and asks our names and then for our passports. Bellino hands him hers; I look for mine and cannot find it. I had put it with my letters from the Cardinal and the Cavaliere da Lezze; I find the letters and cannot find the passport; all my searching is in vain. The corporal makes off, after ordering the postilion to wait. A half hour later he comes back and hands Bellino his passport, telling him that he is free to leave; but as for me, he has been ordered to take me to the commandant. The commandant asks me why I have no passport.

"Because I have lost it."

"No one loses a passport."

"Indeed they do, and the proof is that I have lost mine."

"You cannot go farther."

"I came here from Rome, and I am on my way to Constantinople to deliver a letter from Cardinal Acquaviva. Here is his letter, sealed with his arms."

"I will have you taken to Signor de Gages."

I was led into the presence of the famous General, who was standing surrounded by his staff. After telling him what I had told the commandant, I asked him to let me continue my journey.

"The only favor I can do you is to hold you under arrest here until a new passport reaches you from Rome, in the same name under which you registered here. Only a fool loses a passport, and the Cardinal will learn not to entrust his errands to fools."

He then ordered that I be put under arrest at the principal guardpost, which was outside the city and was called the Santa Maria,[7] after I had written to Rome for a new passport. So I was taken back to the posthouse, where I wrote to the Cardinal telling him of my misfortune and begging him to send me the passport without delay, and sent my letter off by courier. I asked him to send the passport directly to the military secretariat. After that I embraced Bellino-Teresa, whom this untimely mishap had plunged in gloom. I told her to go to Rimini and wait for me there, and I made her accept a hundred zecchini.

She wanted to stay in Pesaro; but I would not let her. I had my trunk untied and, after watching her leave, I allowed myself to be taken to the guardpost. These are moments when every optimist doubts his theory; but a stoicism which it is not difficult to assume has the power to blunt their influence for evil. What distressed me greatly was the anguish of Teresa, who, seeing me thus torn from her arms in the first moment of our union, almost choked with trying to hold back her tears. She would not have left me if I had not convinced her she would see me again at Rimini within ten days. She was also well aware that she should not remain at Pesaro.

At Santa Maria the officer put me in the guardhouse, where I sat down on my trunk. He was an accursed Catalan, who did not even honor me with an answer when I told him that I had money, that I wanted a bed and a servant to attend to all my wants. I had to spend the night on a heap of straw, among Catalan soldiers, and without having eaten anything. It was the second night I spent in this fashion after delicious ones. My Genius diverted himself by treating me in this fashion in order to give me the pleasure of making comparisons. It is a harsh school; but its effect is certain, especially on men who have something of the stockfish[8] in their nature.

To close the lips of a philosopher who presumes to tell you that in the life of men the sum of pains is greater than the sum of pleasures, ask him if he would want a life in which there was neither pain nor pleasure. He will not answer you, or he will tergiversate; for if he says he would not, he likes life, and if he likes it, he admits that it is pleasant, which it could not be if it were painful; and if he says he would, he proves himself a fool, for then he must conceive of pleasure as indifference.

When we suffer, we gain the pleasure of hoping for the end of our suffering; and we are never wrong, for we have at least the resource of sleep, in which good dreams console and soothe us; and when we are happy, the thought that our happiness will be followed by misery never comes to trouble us. Pleasure, then, when it is present, is always pure; pain is always tempered.

You are twenty years old. The regent of the universe comes to you and says: "I give you thirty years of life; fifteen of them will be painful and fifteen delicious. Each fifteen will be consecutive. Choose. Do you wish to begin with the painful years or with the delicious years?"

Admit, reader, whoever you may be, that you would answer: *"God in Heaven,* I will begin with the fifteen unhappy years. In the certain expectation of the fifteen delicious years, I am sure that I shall have the strength to make light of my sufferings."

You see, my dear reader, the conclusion which follows from these considerations. Believe me, the wise man can never be wholly unhappy. Indeed he is always happy, says my master Horace, *nisi quum pituita molesta est* ("except when phlegm troubles him").[9]

But what man always has catarrh?

The fact is that during that accursed night at Santa Maria in Pesaro, I lost little and gained much, for, so far as Teresa was concerned, since I was sure I should be with her again in ten days, it meant nothing. What I gained was some schooling in the life of man. I gained a system against stupidity. Foresight. It is a hundred to one that a young man who has lost his purse on one occasion and his passport on another will never lose either again. And in fact neither of these misfortunes ever again befell me. They would have befallen me if I had not always been afraid that they would befall me. A fool is never afraid.

When the guard was changed the next morning, I was turned over to a pleasant-looking officer. He was French. I have always liked Frenchmen, even as I have an aversion to Spaniards. Yet I have often been gulled by Frenchmen, never by Spaniards. We should not trust our likes and dislikes.

"By what chance, Signor Abate," the officer asked me, "have I the honor to have you in my custody?"

Such language allays apprehension at once. I tell him the whole story and after hearing it to the end, he says it is very "amusing." I really found nothing "amusing" in my wretched adventure; but a man who found it "amusing" was one whom I could not dislike. He immediately put a soldier at my service who, for a price, found me a bed, chairs, a table, and everything I needed. The officer ordered my bed put in his own room.

After dinner, to which he invited me, he suggested a game of piquet,[10] and by evening I had lost three or four ducati; but he warned me that my skill was not equal to his, and still less to that of the officer who would take over guard duty the next day. He therefore advised me not to play with him, and I followed his advice. He also told me that he was having guests for supper, and that there would be a bank at faro;[11] he added that the banker would be a man against whom I ought not to play. He said he was a "Greek."[12] The players arrived, the play went on all night, the punters lost and berated the banker, who let them talk and pocketed the money, after giving his share to my friend the officer, who had put money in the bank. The banker was called Don Bepe il cadetto;[13] recognizing from his speech that he was a Neapolitan, I asked the officer why he had told me he was a "Greek." He thereupon explained the meaning of the word to me, and the lesson he read me on the subject proved useful to me afterwards.

For the next five or six days nothing happened to me. On the sixth, the same French officer who had treated me so well reappeared. When he saw me he said that he was sincerely glad to find me still there; I accepted the compliment for what it was worth. Toward evening the same players arrived; and the same Don Bepe, after winning, was treated to the epithet "sharper" and a blow from a cane, which he intrepidly pretended not to notice. Nine years later I saw him in Vienna, become a captain in the service of the Empress Maria Theresa under the name of Afflisio. Ten years after that I found him a colonel; still later I found him a millionaire, and finally, thirteen or fourteen years ago, sentenced to the galleys. He was handsome but, oddly enough, despite his good features he had the look of a gallows bird. I have seen others of the same cast of countenance—Cagliostro,[14] for example, and another man who has not yet been sent to the galleys but who will certainly not escape it, for *nolentem trahit* ("he who is unwilling is dragged").[15] If my reader is curious, I will whisper the rest into his ear.

In nine or ten days, during which I waited for my passport, which must arrive soon, the whole army came to know me and like me. I went walking even out of sight of the sentinel; no one had any fear that I would try to escape, and rightly, for I should have been a fool to think of it; but now comes one of the strangest things that has happened to me in all my life.

Walking at six o'clock in the morning a hundred paces from the guardhouse, I see an officer dismount from his horse, drop the reins on its neck, and go off somewhere. Meditating on how quietly the horse was standing there, like a trusty servant his master had told to wait for him, I approach and, for no particular reason, I pick up the reins, put my foot in the stirrup, and mount. It was the first time in my life I had ever been on the back of a horse. I do not know if I touched it with my cane or with my heels; the horse starts off like a thunderbolt, and at full gallop, when it feels my heels, with which I was pressing against it only to keep from falling off, my right foot even being out of the stirrup. The sentry at the last advanced post orders me to halt; it was an order which I was incapable of obeying. The horse keeps on. I hear musketshots, which miss me. At the first advanced post of the Austrians, my horse is stopped, and I thank God that I can dismount. The officer of hussars asks me where I am going in such a hurry, and without thinking, I answer that I cannot tell anyone except Prince Lobkowitz,[16] who was in command of the army and was at Rimini. The officer thereupon orders two hussars to mount their horses, and after mounting me on another, they take me at full gallop to Rimini and present me to the officer at the principal guardpost, who at once has me taken to the Prince.

He was alone, I tell him the unvarnished truth, at which he laughs and says that my story is none too plausible. He says that he ought to put me under arrest, but that he was willing to spare me that vexation. He summons an adjutant and orders him to accompany me outside the Porta Cesena. Then, turning to me, he says in the officer's presence that from there I could go wherever I pleased; but he tells me to take good care not to come back into his army again without a passport, for he would give me a bad time. I ask him if I may have back my horse. He answers that the horse does not belong to me.

I was sorry I had not asked him to send me back to the Spanish army.

The officer who was to take me out of the city asked me, as we passed a coffeehouse, if I would like to drink a cup of chocolate, and we went in. I see Petronio and, when the officer is speaking to someone, I tell him to pretend not to know me and at the same time ask him where he was lodging, which he tells me. When we have drunk our chocolate, the officer pays, we set off, and as we ride along he tells me his name, I tell him mine, and the story of the strange chance which accounted for my being in Rimini. He asks me if I had stopped a few days in Ancona, I answer yes, and I see him smile. He tells me that I can obtain a passport in Bologna, return to Rimini and Pesaro without any fear, and recover my trunk by paying the value of the horse to the officer from whom

I had taken it. So conversing, we arrived outside the gate, and he wished me a good journey.

I am free again, with money and jewels, but without my trunk. Teresa was in Rimini, and I was forbidden to return there. I decide to hurry on to Bologna, obtain a passport, and return to the Spanish army, where I was sure that the passport from Rome would come. I could not bring myself either to abandon my trunk or to do without Teresa until the end of her engagement with the impresario of the opera at Rimini.

It was raining; I had on silk stockings, I needed a carriage. I stop under the door of a chapel to wait for the rain to end. I turn my handsome redingote inside out so as not to be recognized as an abate. I ask a peasant if he had a conveyance to take me to Cesena, and he answers that he has one half an hour's walk away. I tell him to go and fetch it, assuring him that I would wait; but then this befell me. Some forty loaded mules pass by, on their way to Rimini. It was still raining. I approach one of the mules, put my hand on its neck, really with no particular intention, and slowly keeping pace with the mule, I re-enter the city of Rimini, and since I appear to be a muleteer no one says a word to me; even the muleteers themselves may not have noticed me. In Rimini I gave two baiocchi to the first urchin I saw to show me the way to the house where Teresa was lodging. With my hair under a nightcap, my hat brim pulled down, my fine cane hidden under my reversed redingote, I looked like a nobody. As soon as I was safely in the house, I asked a maid where Bellino's mother was to be found; she takes me to her room, and I see Bellino, but dressed as a girl. She was there with the whole family. Petronio had forewarned them. After telling them the whole brief story, I made them understand the necessity for secrecy, and they each swore that no one should learn from him that I was there; but Teresa was in despair to find me in such great danger, and despite her love and her joy at seeing me again she reproves me for what I have done. She says that I absolutely must find a way to leave for Bologna and come back with a passport, as Signor Weiss[17] had advised me to do. She said that she knew him, that he was a very decent sort, and that he came to visit her every evening, and that consequently I must hide. We had time to think about it. It was only eight o'clock. I promised her that I would leave, and calmed her by telling her that I would find a way to do it without being seen by anyone. Meanwhile Petronio went to find out if any muleteers were leaving. It would be easy for me to go as I had come.

When Teresa had taken me to her room she told me that even before entering Rimini she had met the opera impresario, who immediately took her to the apartment she was to occupy with her family. Being alone with him there, she had told him that, as she was really a girl, she no longer wished to appear as a castrato, and that he would thenceforth see her only in the dress of her sex. The impresario had congratulated her. Rimini belonged to a different legateship,[18] where it was not forbidden, as it was in Ancona, for women to appear on the stage. She ended by saying that, as she was only engaged for twenty performances, to begin after Easter, she would be free at the beginning of May and so, if I could not stay in Rimini, she would come and join me wherever I wished at the end of her engagement. I answered that as soon as I had obtained a passport and so would have nothing to fear in Rimini, nothing would prevent me from spending the six weeks there with her. Knowing that Baron Weiss visited her, I asked her if it was she who had told him that I had spent three days in Ancona, and she said that she had and had even told him that I had been arrested for not having a passport. I then understood why he had smiled.

After this necessary conversation, I received the compliments of the mother and of my little wives, whom I thought less gay and less unreserved because they felt certain that Bellino, who was no longer a castrato or their brother, must have pre-empted me in the character of Teresa. They were not mistaken, and I was careful not to give them even a single kiss. I listened patiently to all the mother's lamentations, who insisted that by admitting that she was a girl Teresa had thrown away her hope of fortune, since she would have had a thousand zecchini for the coming Carnival at Rome. I said that she would have been unmasked at Rome and put in some wretched convent for the rest of her life.

Despite my state of agitation and the dangerous situation I was in, I spent the whole day alone with my dear Teresa, with whom I felt I was more in love every minute. She freed herself from my arms at eight o'clock in the evening, having heard someone arrive, and left me in the dark. I saw Baron Weiss come in and Teresa give him her hand to kiss in the style of a princess. The first news he gave her was mine; she pretended to be glad, and listened with apparent indifference when he told her he had advised me to come back to Rimini with a passport. He spent an hour with her, and I thought her adorable in everything she did, for she maintained a behavior which could not possibly kindle the least spark of jealousy in my soul. It was Marina who lit him downstairs about ten o'clock, and Teresa at once returned to my arms. We had a pleasant supper and were about to go to bed, when Petronio told us that six muleteers were leaving for Cesena with thirty mules two hours before dawn, and that he was sure if I went to the stable only a quarter of an hour before they left and drank with them, I could easily leave in their company without even trying to keep them in the dark. I felt sure he was right and instantly resolved to follow his advice, and he promised to wake me at two in the morning. He did not have to wake me. I dressed quickly and set off with Petronio, leaving my dear Teresa sure that I adored her and would be faithful to her, but uneasy about my getting away from Rimini. She wanted to give me back the sixty zecchini she had left. I kissed her and asked her what she would think of me if I took them.

When I told a muleteer, with whom I drank, that I wanted to ride one of his mules as far as Savignano, he replied that I was at liberty to do so, but that it would be best if I did not mount until I was outside of the city and had gone through the gate on foot, as if I were one of them.

This was just what I wanted. Petronio went with me as far as the gate, where I gave him a handsome token of my gratitude. My departure from Rimini went off as well as my entrance. I left the muleteers at Savignano, where, after sleeping for four hours, I took the post to Bologna and put up at a wretched inn.

In that city it took me only a day to discover that I could not possibly obtain a passport. I was told that I did not need one, and rightly; but I knew that I did need one. I decided to write to the French officer who had treated me so courteously on the second day I was under arrest, asking him to inquire at the military secretariat if my passport had arrived and, if it had, to send it to me and, meanwhile, to find out who was the owner of the horse I had absconded with, for I thought it only right that I should pay him for it. In any case, I resolved to wait for Teresa in Bologna, and I informed her of my decision the same day, begging her never to leave me without letters from her.

What I decided to do the same day after posting these two letters, the reader will see.

CHAPTER III

I lay aside my clerical garb and put on a uniform. Teresa leaves for Naples, and I go to Venice, where I enter my country's service. I sail for Corfu and go ashore at Orsara to take a walk.

AT Bologna, to escape observation, I put up at an inn which no one frequented. After writing my letters and resolving to wait for Teresa there, I bought some shirts and, being far from certain that my trunk would be returned, I considered getting some clothes. Reflecting that there was now little likelihood of my achieving fortune in my ecclesiastical career, I decided to dress as a soldier in a uniform of my own invention, since I was certain that I would not be called upon to explain my business to anyone. Coming from two armies in which I had seen no dress but a soldier's respected, I wished to inspire the same respect. Then, too, I was very well pleased with the idea of returning to my country under the ensign of honor, where I had been not a little ill-treated under that of religion.

I inquire for a good tailor; I am sent one named Morte.[1] I explain to him of what cut and what colors I want my uniform made, he takes my measurements, he gives me samples of cloth, I choose, and no later than the next morning he brings me everything I need to impersonate a follower of Mars. I bought a long sword, and with my handsome cane in hand, a trim hat with a black cockade, with my hair cut in side whiskers and a long false pigtail, I set forth to impress the whole city. I at once took lodging at the Albergo al Pellegrino.[2] I have never had a pleasure in this kind equal to that which I felt when I saw myself in a mirror dressed as I now was. I decided I had been born to be a soldier, I thought I was astonishing. Certain that no one would recognize me, I relished the stories which would be invented about me when I made my appearance at the most frequented coffeehouse in the city.

My uniform was white, with a blue vest, a shoulder knot of silver and gold, and a sword knot to match. Very well pleased with my appearance, I go to the principal coffeehouse, where I take chocolate and try to read the gazette, but my thoughts were elsewhere. I was delighted to find myself the center of attention, though I pretended to be unaware of it. I aroused such curiosity that everyone was whispering into his neighbor's ear. One brazen fellow, hoping to draw me into conversation, ventured to speak to me; but my monosyllabic answer discouraged even the most hardened questioners in the coffeehouse. After strolling for a considerable time under the finest of the arcades,[3] I went to my inn and dined alone.

When I had finished, the innkeeper came up with a book to register my name.

"Casanova."

"Your profession?"

"Officer."

"In what service?"

"None."

"Your country?"

"Venice."

"Where have you come from?"

"That is none of your business."

I am well satisfied with my answers. I see that the innkeeper has come to ask me all these questions only at the instigation of some busybody, for I knew that Bologna was a city in which people lived in perfect freedom.

The next morning I went to the banker Orsi to draw money on my bill of exchange. I took a hundred zecchini and a bill for six hundred on Venice. Then I went for a walk on La Montagnola.[4] Two days later, just as I was drinking coffee after dinner, a servant announces the banker Orsi. Surprised that he should call on me, I have him shown in, and I see that he is accompanied by Monsignor Cornaro,[5] whom I pretend not to know. After saying that he has come to offer me money on my drafts, he introduces the prelate to me. I rise, saying that I am delighted to make his acquaintance. He tells me that we had already met in Venice and in Rome; with an injured air, I answer that he was certainly mistaken. The prelate looks grave and, instead of persisting, begs my pardon, the more so since he thought he knew the reason for my reserve. After taking coffee he leaves, inviting me to come and breakfast with him the following morning.

Firmly resolved to continue denying my identity, I went. I did not want to admit that I was the person whom Monsignor Cornaro knew, because of the bogus officer's rank I had bestowed on myself. Unschooled in imposture as I was, I did not know that in Bologna I had nothing to fear.

The prelate, who at that time was only an apostolic protonotary, said, as he drank chocolate with me, that I might have very good reasons for my reserve, but that I was mistaken in not trusting him, since the affair in question did me honor. Upon my answering that I did not know to what affair he was referring, he asked me to read an article in the gazette published in Pesaro, which he had before him: "Signor Casanova, an officer in the Queen's Regiment, has deserted after killing his captain in a duel. The circumstances of the duel are not known; it is only known that the aforesaid officer took the road to Rimini, riding the horse of the other officer, who was left dead on the field."

Greatly surprised at this farrago, in which falsehood was mixed with a very small proportion of truth, I managed to keep a straight face and said that the Casanova of the article must be another man of the same name.

"Possibly, but you are certainly the Casanova I met a month ago at Cardinal Acquaviva's and two years ago in Venice at the house of my sister Signora Loredan. Furthermore, Bucchetti of Ancona gives you the title of abate in his bill of exchange on Orsi."

"Very well, Monsignore. Your Excellency forces me to admit it; I am he; but I beg you not to ask any of the further questions you have in mind. Honor compels me to observe the strictest silence."

"You have said enough and I am satisfied."

"Let us talk of something else."

After a little polite conversation, I thanked him for all his offers and left. I did not see him again until sixteen years later. I will give my reader an account of that meeting when we get there.

Laughing to myself over all unfounded stories and over the combinations of circumstances which give them a semblance of veracity, from that time on I became a great Pyrrhonist[6] in respect to historical truths. It gave me the greatest pleasure to see that my very reserve was encouraging the Abate Cornaro in his belief that I was the Casanova who was mentioned by the Pesaro gazette. I felt sure that he would write to Venice, where the incident would do me honor, at least until people learned the truth, which would then justify my denial. For this reason I resolved to go there as soon as I had received a letter from Teresa. I thought I would have her come to Venice, since I could wait for her much more comfortably there than in Bologna, and in my own country there could be nothing to prevent me from marrying her openly. Meanwhile, the fallacious tale amused me. I expected every day to see it cleared up in the gazette. The officer Casanova must be laughing over the horse the gazette writer in Pesaro had sent him off on, just as I was laughing over the whim which had taken me to dress as an officer in Bologna and which had laid the foundation for the whole story.

On the fourth day of my stay in Bologna, an express messenger handed me a thick letter from Teresa. The letter contained two enclosures. She told me that the day after I left Rimini, Baron Weiss had brought the Duke of Castropiñano[7] to see her and that, after hearing her sing to her own accompaniment on the harpsichord, he had offered her a thousand once and her traveling expenses to sing at the Teatro San Carlo[8] for a year. She must be there in May. She was sending me a copy of the contract he had drawn up for her. She had asked him to give her a week to consider it, and he had agreed. She only awaited my answer to her letter before either signing the Duke's contract or refusing his offer.

The second enclosure was a document in her own hand in which she undertook to serve me as long as she lived. She told me that if I wanted to go to Naples with her, she would meet me at whatever place I would designate, and that if I felt any aversion to going back to Naples, I must disregard her piece of good fortune and be certain that she could conceive of no good fortune and no happiness except doing all that she could to make me content and happy.

Her letter having made it necessary for me to reflect, I told the messenger to come back the next day. I was in a state of the greatest irresolution. It was the first time in my life that I found myself unable to make up my mind. Two equally strong motives in the scales kept them from inclining in one direction or the other. I could neither command Teresa to reject such good fortune, nor let her go to Naples without me, nor bring myself to go to Naples with her. The mere thought that my love could stand in the way of Teresa's prospects of fortune made me shudder; and what prevented me from going to Naples with her was my self-esteem, which was even stronger than the fire with which I burned for her. How could I bring myself to go back to Naples seven or eight months after I had left it, and appear there without any position in the world but that of a dastard living at the expense of his wife or his mistress? What would my cousin Don Antonio have said, and Don Gennaro Palo and his son, and Don Lelio Caraffa, and all my acquaintances among the nobility? The thought of Donna Lucrezia and her husband made me shudder too. If I went there and found everyone despising me, would the love which I would feel for Teresa keep me from being unhappy? Sharing her destiny, whether as husband or lover, I should find myself degraded, humiliated, and condemned to servility both by my position and as my only possible profession. The reflection that now, at the fairest time of my youth, I was about to renounce all hope of the high fortune for which I considered that I was born gave the scales such a push that my reason silenced my heart. I decided on a course which would gain me time. I wrote to Teresa to go to Naples and to be sure that I would join her there either in July or when I returned from Constantinople. I advised her to take a respectable-looking chambermaid with her, so that she could appear with decency in the great city of Naples, and to conduct herself in such a way that I could marry her without blushing. I foresaw that Teresa's fortune would owe even more to her beauty than to her talent, and knowing myself as I did, I knew that neither as a lover nor as a husband could I brook even the semblance of a rival.

My love yielded to my reason; but my love would not have been so accommodating a week earlier. I wrote to her to answer me at Bologna by the same express messenger, and three days later I received her last letter, in which she told me that she had signed the contract, that she had engaged a chambermaid who could pass as her mother, that she would leave in the middle of May, and that she would wait for me until the time came when I wrote her that I no longer thought of her. On the fourth day after receiving her letter I set off for Venice; but first for what happened to me before I left.

The French officer to whom I had written about retrieving my trunk, offering to pay him for the horse I had absconded with, or which had absconded with me, wrote me that my passport had arrived and was at the war chancellery and that he could easily send it to me with my trunk if I would go to the trouble of paying fifty doblones[9] in compensation for the horse I had taken to Don Marcello Birac, business agent for the Spanish army, who lived at an address which he gave me. He said that he had written, explaining the whole matter, to the said Birac, who, upon receiving the money, would give me a written undertaking to have my trunk and my passport delivered to me.

Delighted that all was well in this respect, I lost not a moment in repairing to the business agent, who lived with a Venetian I knew named Batagia. I paid over the money, and received my trunk and my passport on the morning of the day I left Bologna. Everyone in Bologna heard that I had paid for the horse, which made the Abate Cornaro still more certain that I was the Casanova who had killed his captain in a duel.

To get to Venice, I had to go through being quarantined, which I was determined not to do. The quarantine was still enforced because the two governments[10] concerned were at odds. The Venetians insisted that the Pope be the first to open his frontiers to travelers, and the Pope maintained the contrary. The matter was not yet settled, and commerce suffered from it. Here is how I went about it, without fear for the result, though it was a delicate undertaking, for Venice was particularly strict in matters of health; but in those days one of my greatest pleasures was to do anything which was forbidden or at any rate difficult.

As I knew that passage was free from the State of Mantua to the State of Venice, and from the State of Modena to that of Mantua, I saw that if I could enter the State of Mantua under color of coming from Modena, all would be accomplished. I would cross the Po somewhere, and go straight to Venice. So I hired a *vetturino* to take me to Revere. This is a city on the Po, belonging to the State of Mantua. The *vetturino* told me that he could take byroads to Revere and say that he had come from Modena; but that we would be in difficulties when we were asked for a health certificate made out at Modena. I told him to say that he had lost it and to leave the rest to me. My money persuaded him.

At the Revere gate, I said that I was an officer of the Spanish army on my way to Venice to discuss a matter of great importance with the Duke of Modena, who was there at the time.

Not only was the *vetturino* not asked to produce the health certificate from Modena, but in addition to being accorded military honors I was treated with great politeness. No difficulty was made over giving me a certificate of departure from Revere, with which, after crossing the Po at Ostiglia, I went on to Legnago, where I left my *vetturino* handsomely paid and thoroughly satisfied. At Legnago I took post horses, and arrived that evening at Venice, putting up at an inn in the Rialto[11] quarter on April 12, 1744, my birthday, which in the course of my life has on ten different occasions been remarkable for some unusual event. The next day at noon I went to the Exchange, intending to engage passage on a vessel and leave for Constantinople at once; but since I found none intending to sail for two or three months, I took a room on a Venetian ship of the line which was to sail for Corfu in the course of the month. The vessel was named *Our Lady of the Rosary,* and was commanded by Captain Zane.[12]

Having thus obeyed my destiny, which according to my superstitious fancy was summoning me to Constantinople, where I felt that I had irretrievably engaged myself to go, I set out toward the Piazza San Marco, very curious to see and to be seen by all my acquaintances, who could not but be surprised to see me no longer dressed as an abate. From Revere on, I had worn a red cockade[13] on my hat.

My first visit was to the Abate Grimani, who loudly exclaimed when he saw me. He sees me in a military uniform when he has every reason to think I am with Cardinal Acquaviva and on the road to political office. He was just getting up from dinner and had a number of visitors. Among them I notice an officer in Spanish uniform; but I do not let that daunt me. I tell the Abate Grimani that as I am passing through Venice, I am delighted that it gives me the opportunity to pay him my respects.

"I did not expect to see you in this attire."

"I came to the wise decision of abandoning that of the Church, wearing which I could not hope for a destiny capable of satisfying me."

"Where are you going?"

"To Constantinople, to which I hope to find a quick passage from Corfu. I am on a mission from Cardinal Acquaviva."

"Where have you come from now?"

"From the Spanish army, which I left ten days ago."

At these words I hear the voice of a young nobleman saying, with a look in my direction, "That is not true." I answer him that my profession does not permit me to stomach the lie direct, and, so saying, I bow all around and leave, paying no attention to anyone who told me to stop.

Since I had on a uniform, I considered that I should also have all the pride and touchiness which go with it. As I was no longer a priest, I must not pass over being given the lie. I go to call on Signora Manzoni, whom I was most anxious to see, and her reception of me is all that I could wish. She reminds me of her predictions and plumes herself on their accuracy. She insists on my telling her all that has happened to me, I oblige, and she smiles and says that if I am going to Constantinople it is more than likely that she will never see me again.

On leaving her house, I go to Signora Orio's. It was there that I enjoyed the surprise which greeted my appearance. She, the old advocate Rosa, and Nanetta and Marta were as if turned to stone. I thought the two girls had grown prettier in the last nine months, of which they vainly asked me to give them an account. The story of those nine months was not of a nature to please Signora Orio and her nieces; it would have lowered me in the estimation of those innocent souls; even so, I gave them three delicious hours. Seeing that the old lady was in raptures, I told her that she had only to say the word and she could keep me for all of the four or five weeks I had to wait for my ship to sail, by giving me a room and supper, but on condition that I should be no trouble to her. She answered that she would be happy if only she had a room, and Rosa told her that she had one and that he would undertake to get it furnished within two hours. It was the room next to the one occupied by her nieces. Nanetta said that in that case she would move downstairs with her sister and they would sleep in the kitchen; and

I immediately said that, not wanting to cause them any inconvenience, I would remain at the inn where I was. Signora Orio at once told her nieces that there was no need for them to move downstairs, since they could fasten their door.

"They would not need to, Signora," I said gravely.

"I know that; but they are prudes with a high opinion of themselves."

I then made her accept fifteen zecchini, assuring her that I was rich and that it was an advantageous arrangement for me even so, for a month at the inn would cost me more. I said that I would send her my trunk and would come the next day to take supper and spend the night. I saw joy on the faces of my two little wives, who regained their empire over my heart despite the image of Teresa which was before the eyes of my soul at every moment.

The next morning, after sending my trunk to Signora Orio's, I went to the War Office; but to avoid any difficulties I went without a cockade. Major Pelodoro flung himself on my neck when he saw me in uniform. As soon as I told him that I had to go to Constantinople and that, despite the uniform he saw me wearing, I was at liberty, he said that it would be a great advantage to me to go to Constantinople with the Bailo,[14] who was to set off in two months at the latest, and that I should try to arrange it and even try to enter the Venetian service.

I thought it good advice. The Savio for War,[15] who was the same one who had made my acquaintance the year before, saw me there and called me over. He said he had received a letter from Bologna informing him of a duel which did me honor, and that he knew I refused to admit it. He asked if I had been given a discharge when I left the Spanish service, and I answered that I could not have a discharge since I had never served. He asked how I could be in Venice without having gone through quarantine, and I answered that travelers entering by way of the State of Mantua were not quarantined. He, too, advised me to enter the service of my country.

Leaving the Doges' Palace, I found the Abate Grimani under the Procuratie[16] and he told me that my abrupt departure from his house had displeased everyone present.

"Including the Spanish officer?"

"No. On the contrary, he says that if it is true you were with the Spanish army ten days ago, you were right to act as you did; what is more, he told me that you were with it and showed me a copy of a gazette which gives an account of a duel and says that you killed your captain. Surely this is sheer invention."

"Who told you it is sheer invention?"

"Then it is true?"

"I do not say that; but it could be true, as it is true that I was with the Spanish army ten days ago."

"That is impossible, unless you violated the *contumacia.*" [17]

"There was no violation. I openly crossed the Po at Revere, and here I am. I regret that I can no longer call on Your Excellency unless the person who gave me the lie accords me proper satisfaction. I could stomach insults when I belonged to a calling which professes humility, but now I belong to one which professes honor."

"You are wrong to take this tone. The person who gave you the lie is Signor Valmarana, at present a Proveditor for Health,[18] who maintains that since all entries are closed, you cannot be here. Satisfaction! Have you forgotten who you are?"

"No. I know that last year I could let myself be thought a coward, but now I will give anyone who slights me cause to repent it."

"Come and dine with me."

"No, for the officer would hear of it."

"He would even see you, for he dines with me every day."

"Very well. I will let him judge my cause."

Dining with Pelodoro and three or four officers, who all told me that I ought to enter the Venetian service, I decided to do so. A young lieutenant, whose health prevented him from going to the Levant, wanted to sell his commission;[19] he asked a hundred zecchini for it; but, beyond that, it was necessary to obtain the approval of the Savio. I told Pelodoro that the hundred zecchini were ready, and he promised to speak to the Savio on my behalf.

Toward nightfall I went to Signora Orio's, where I found my quarters very comfortably furnished. After quite a good supper, I had the pleasure of seeing the aunt herself order her two nieces to make me at home in my room.

The first night they both slept with me, and on the following nights they took turns, removing a plank from the wall and thus leaving an aperture by which the mistress of the moment came and went. We did all this very carefully and had no fear of being caught. Our doors were fastened, so, if the aunt came to see her nieces, the one who was missing would have time to go back, replacing the plank; but no such visit was ever made. Signora Orio counted on our good behavior.

Two or three days later the Abate Grimani arranged an interview between me and Signor Valmarana at the Sultana coffeehouse; he told me that if he had known that the quarantine could be eluded he would never have said that what I had said was impossible, and that he thanked me for making the fact known to him; the matter was thus amicably settled, and I always dined at the Abate Grimani's until my departure.

Toward the end of the month I entered the service of the Republic as an ensign in the Bala[20] regiment, which was at Corfu. The officer who had left it in consequence of the hundred zecchini I had paid him was a lieutenant; but the Savio for War advanced arguments to which, if I wanted to enter the service, I was obliged to yield. He promised that at the end of the year I would be promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and that I would at once be granted the leave I needed to go to Constantinople. I accepted because I wanted to serve.

The person who obtained me the favor of traveling to Constantinople with the Cavaliere Venier, who was going there as Bailo, was Signor Pietro Vendramin, the illustrious Senator. He introduced me to the Cavaliere Venier,[21] who promised to take me with him from Corfu, which he would reach a month after I did.

Some days before I left I received a letter from Teresa, telling me that the Duke who had engaged her for Naples was taking her there in person. She said that he was old, but that even if he were young, I had nothing to fear. She said that if I needed money I should draw bills of exchange on her and be sure that she would pay them even if she had to sell everything she possessed.

Another passenger on the ship which would take me to Corfu was to be a Venetian nobleman who was going to Zante[22] as Councilor. He had a very large retinue, and the captain of the vessel, after warning me that if I had to eat by myself I would not eat any too well, advised me to obtain an introduction to the nobleman, and so assure myself of being invited to his table. His name was Antonio Dolfin,[23] but he was generally known by his byname of Bucintoro.[24] He had been given the name of that magnificent ship because of his manner and the elegance of his attire.

As soon as Signor Grimani learned that I had engaged a room on the same ship in which this nobleman was going to Zante, he did not wait for me to ask before presenting me to him and thus gaining me the honor and benefit of eating at his table. Signor Dolfin said with the greatest affability that he would be happy if I would present myself to his wife, who was to sail with him. I called on her the following day, and saw before me a charming woman for her years, but totally deaf. I had nothing to hope for. She had a charming young daughter,[25] whom she left in a convent and who later became celebrated. I think she is still alive, the widow of the Procurator Tron, whose family is now extinct.

I have rarely seen a handsomer man or one who bore himself better than this lady's father, Signor Dolfin. Withal he was highly intelligent, and no less remarkable for his eloquence and perfect breeding; a dashing gamester, though he always lost, loved by every woman whose love he sought, always courageous and unruffled, in good fortune and bad. He had traveled without obtaining permission, which had brought him into disgrace with the government, so that he had entered the service of a foreign country. A Venetian nobleman cannot commit a greater crime; representations were made and he was forced to return to Venice and suffer the punishment of spending some time under "the Leads."[26]

This charming, generous, but not wealthy man had to ask the Great Council[27] for a lucrative governorship, and he was appointed Councilor for the island of Zante; but he was going there with such a suite that he could not hope to profit by it.

This noble Venetian, Dolfin, being such a man as I have described, could not make his fortune in Venice. An aristocratic government cannot hope for peace unless it is based upon the fundamental principle of equality among aristocrats. Now, it is impossible to judge of equality, whether physical or moral, except by appearances; from which it follows that the citizen who wants to avoid persecution must, if he is not like everyone else or worse, bend his every effort to appearing to be so. If he has much talent, he must hide it; if he is ambitious, he must pretend to scorn honors; if he wants to obtain anything, he must ask for nothing; if his person is handsome, he must neglect it: he must look slovenly and dress badly, his accessories must be of the plainest, he must ridicule everything foreign; he must bow awkwardly, not pride himself on being well-mannered, care little for the fine arts, conceal his good taste if he has it; not have a foreign cook; he must wear an ill-combed wig and be a little dirty. As Signor Dolfin Bucintoro had none of these qualifications, it follows that he could not make his fortune in his native country, Venice.

The day before I sailed, I did not leave Signora Orio's house. She shed as many tears as her nieces, and I shed no fewer. A hundred times over as they perished from love in my arms on that last night they said that they would never see me again, and they predicted rightly. If they had seen me again, they would have predicted wrongly. Such is all the value of prophecies!

I went on board on the 5th of May, very well off in clothing, jewels, and ready money. I had five hundred zecchini. Our ship was armed with twenty-four cannon and had a garrison of two hundred Slavonians. We sailed from Malamocco[28] to Istria during the night and dropped anchor in the port of Orsara[29] for the operation called *savorna.*[30] This means filling the bottom of the hold with a sufficient quantity of stones, for if the ship is too light it cannot be sailed properly. I landed with several others to take a walk, in spite of my knowing the ugly place, where I had spent three days not nine months before. I laughed as I reflected on the difference between my present profession and the one I had abandoned. I was sure that no one would recognize in the imposing figure I now presented the miserable abate who, but for the ill-omened Frate Steffano, would have become God knows what.

CHAPTER IV

Laughable meeting at Orsara. Voyage to Corfu. Stay in Constantinople. Bonneval. My return to Corfu. Signora F. The pretended prince. My flight from Corfu. My pranks on the island of Casopo. I submit to arrest at Corfu. My speedy deliverance and my triumphs. My success with Signora F.

STUPIDITY is far more dangerous in a housemaid than malice, and more costly to her master, for he may be justified in punishing one who is malicious but not one who is a fool; he can only discharge her, and learn another lesson in the conduct of life. Mine has just used three notebooks, containing a detailed account of what I am about to set down in outline in this one, because she needed paper for her housekeeping. To excuse herself, she tells me that since the sheets were old and scrawled all over and even blotted in places, she thought them more fit for her to use than the clean white sheets on my table. If I had thought about it I would not have flown into a rage; but the first effect of rage is precisely to render the mind incapable of thought. I can say to my credit that my anger is always short-lived; *irasci celerem tamen ut placabilis essem* ("I become angry quickly, even as I am quickly appeased").[1] After wasting my time treating her to epithets whose application escaped her entirely and proving to her by the most lucid reasoning that she was a fool, she refuted all my arguments by never answering a word. I resigned myself to writing all over again, angrily and consequently badly, what had I been in a good humor I should have written well; but my reader can console himself with the thought that, as in mechanics, he will gain in time what he loses in energy.

Having, then, gone ashore at Orsara while ballast was being loaded into the hold of our vessel, whose excessive lightness made it difficult to maintain the equilibrium necessary for navigation, I noticed a decent-looking man, who stopped and looked at me with great attention. Certain that he could not be a creditor, I imagined that my face interested him and, since I could hardly be offended by that, I was proceeding on my way when he addressed me.

"May I make bold to ask you, Captain, if this is the first time you have been in this city?"

"No, Signore. I was here once before."

"Was it not last year?"

"It was."

"But you were not in uniform?"

"You are right again; but I think your curiosity is a trifle indiscreet."

"You must forgive me for it, Signore, since it arises from my gratitude. You are the man to whom I am under the greatest obligation, and I must believe that God sent you to this city a second time in order that I may become yet more in your debt."

"But what did I do for you, and what can I do now? I cannot imagine."

"Be so good as to come and breakfast with me at my house. My door stands open. Come and taste my rare refosco,[2] and I will tell you a very short story which will convince you that you are my true benefactor and that

I am justified in hoping that you have returned here only to renew your benefactions.''

Seeing no indication that the man was mad, I supposed that he wanted to persuade me to buy some of his refosco, and I let him take me to his house. We go up to the second floor and enter a room, where he leaves me to order the good breakfast he had promised me. Seeing all the paraphernalia of a surgeon, I suppose that he is one and, when he reappears, I tell him so.

''Yes, Captain, I am a surgeon. I have lived in this city for twenty years in poverty, for I never found occasion to practice my profession except to bleed, to cup, to treat some scratch, or to put a sprained ankle back in joint. What I earned was not enough to keep me alive; but since last year, I may say that my situation has changed; I have earned a great deal of money, I have invested it to advantage, and it is you—God bless you! —who have made me rich.''

''How?''

''Here is the whole brief story. You communicated a certain love-token to Don Gerolamo's housekeeper, who gave it to a friend, who honorably shared it with his wife. She in turn gave it to a libertine, who distributed it so effectively that in less than a month I had fifty patients under my care, all of whom I cured, of course for a proper fee. I still have a few patients, but within a month I shall have none, for the disease has died out. When I saw you I could not but rejoice. I saw you as a bird of good omen. Can I hope that you will remain here for a few days and give the disease a fresh start?''

After I had laughed heartily, I saw him look gloomy when I said that I was perfectly well. He told me that I would not be able to say as much on my return, for the country to which I was going was full of the same shoddy merchandise, in the arcana of getting rid of which he had no equal. He begged me to rely on him and not to believe the charlatans who would offer me remedies. I promised to do whatever he asked, I thanked him, and went back on board.

Signor Dolfin had a good laugh when I told him the story. We set sail the next morning and on the fourth day weathered out a bad storm behind Curzola.[3] This storm very nearly cost me my life, in the following way.

A Slavonian priest who served as ship's chaplain, an ignorant, insolent, brutish fellow whom I derided at every opportunity, had quite justifiably become my enemy. At the height of the storm he was standing on deck with his breviary in his hand, exorcising the devils which he saw in the clouds and which he made all the sailors see, so that, giving themselves up for lost, they did nothing but weep and, in their desperation, neglected to do what would save the ship from the rocks which were visible on either hand. Seeing the obvious peril, and the evil consequences produced by the exorcisms of the priest, who was driving the crew to despair just when they needed to be heartened, I very imprudently considered it my duty to intervene. Climbing up into the rigging, I urged the sailors to keep working and to brave the danger, telling them that there were no devils and that the priest who was pointing them out was a madman; but the energy of my harangues did not prevent the priest from proclaiming me an atheist and setting the greater part of the crew against me. The winds continued to be bad the next day, and on the third day the rabid priest convinced his disciples among the sailors that so long as I was on board fair weather would never return. One of them saw that he could accomplish what the priest wanted by creeping up on me from behind as I stood at the edge of the deck and pushing me overboard by hitting me such a blow with a rope as could not but knock me down. No sooner planned than done. Only the arm of an anchor catching in my coat kept me from falling into the sea. Help came, and I was saved.

A corporal pointed out the murderous sailor to me, I took his stick and was proceeding to give him a sound thrashing when other sailors came running with the priest, and I should have been killed if the soldiers had not defended me. The ship's captain appeared with Signor Dolfin, and after hearing what the priest had to say they were obliged, in order to quiet the mob, to promise that they would put me ashore as soon as possible; but the priest insisted that I give him a parchment scroll I had bought from a Greek at Malamocco just before going on board. I had forgotten all about it, but it was true. I burst out laughing, and at once gave it to Signor Dolfin, who handed it to the priest, who triumphantly called for a brazier and threw it on the burning coals. Before being reduced to ashes the parchment performed contortions for half an hour—a phenomenon which convinced all the sailors that it was black magic. Its supposed virtue was to make every woman fall in love with the man who had it on his person. I hope that my reader will be good enough to believe that I had no faith in philters of any kind, and that I had only spent half a scudo on the parchment for the fun of it. All over Italy, and in ancient and modern Greece, there are Greeks, Jews, and astrologers who sell their dupes pieces of paper whose virtues are prodigious. Among others, "charms" to make one invulnerable; likewise little bags filled with drugs containing what they call "spirits."[4] This sort of merchandise finds no sale in Germany, in France, in England, and throughout the North; but to make up for it people in those countries are taken in by a far more serious kind of charlatanism. They search for the philosophers' stone,[5] and their belief in it never dies.

The storm ceased during the same half hour which it took to burn my parchment, and the conspirators forgot all about getting rid of me. At the end of a week of excellent sailing, we arrived at Corfu, where, after finding comfortable lodgings, I took my letters to His Excellency the Proveditor-General,[6] then to all the *capi di mar*[7] to whom I had letters of introduction. After paying my respects to my Colonel and to all the officers of my regiment, I thought of nothing but amusing myself until the arrival of the Cavaliere Venier, who was going on to Constantinople and was to take me with him. He arrived about the middle of June, and in the meanwhile, having taken to playing basset,[8] I lost all my money and sold or pawned all my jewels. Such is the fate of every man who is addicted to games of chance, unless he can put Fortune on his side by playing with a real advantage arising from calculation or from skill. A wise player can do both without risk of being called a cheat.

During the month I spent in Corfu before the Bailo's arrival, I did not give a thought to studying the country either in its physical or its moral aspect. Except on the days when I had guard duty I lived in the coffeehouse in a desperate assault on the faro bank and falling a victim, of course, to the bad luck which I persisted in defying. I never went home with the consolation of having won, and I never had the firmness to stop so long as, having lost all my money, I still had some possessions. The only stupid satisfaction I had was hearing myself called a "fine player" by the banker himself each time I lost a crucial card.

In this miserable situation I felt I was being restored to life when the boom of cannons announced the arrival of the Bailo.[9] He was on board the *Europa,* a warship of seventy-two guns, and had taken only a week to come from Venice. The anchor had scarcely been dropped before he broke out the flag of captain-general of the naval forces of the Republic, and the Proveditor-General of Corfu lowered his. The Republic of Venice has no higher office on the sea than that of Bailo to the Ottoman Porte. The Cavaliere Venier had a most distinguished suite. Count Annibale Gambara and Count Carlo Zenobio, both Venetian noblemen, and the Marquis Archetti, a nobleman of Brescia, were accompanying him to Constantinople to satisfy their curiosity. During the week they spent in Corfu all the naval commanders in turn entertained the Bailo and his staff with great suppers and balls. As soon as I presented myself His Excellency told me that he had already spoken to the Proveditor-General and that he was granting me a leave of six months to accompany him to Constantinople as an adjutant. After receiving it, I went on board with my modest baggage, and the next morning the ship raised anchor, and His Excellency the Bailo came on board in the Proveditor-General's felucca. We set sail at once and, the wind remaining constant, on the sixth day we arrived off Cerigo,[10] where we anchored to send a number of sailors ashore to replenish the water supply. My curiosity to see Cerigo, which is said to be the ancient Cythera, induced me to ask permission to go ashore. I would have done better to stay on board, for I made an unfortunate acquaintance. I went with a captain who was in command of the soldiers on board.

Two sorry-looking, ill-dressed men come up to us and ask for charity. I ask them who they are, and the one who seemed the brighter of the two answers me as follows:

"We are condemned to live, and perhaps to die, on this island by the despotism of the Council of Ten, with thirty or forty other unfortunates; and we were all born subjects of the Republic. Our alleged crime, which is a crime nowhere, is the custom we had of living with our mistresses and not being jealous of those among our friends who, finding them pretty, obtained the enjoyment of their charms with our consent. As we were not rich, we even felt no qualms over profiting by it. Our practices were denounced as illicit and we were sent here, where we are given ten soldi a day in 'long money.'[11] We are called '*mangiamarroni.*'[12] We are worse off than the galley slaves, for we are perishing of boredom and devoured by hunger. I am Antonio Pocchini, a nobleman of Padua, and my mother is of the illustrious house of Camposampiero."

We gave them some money, then walked about the island and, after seeing the fortress, went back on board. We shall speak of this Pocchini fifteen or sixteen years hence.

The still favorable winds brought us to the Dardanelles in a week or ten days; then Turkish boats took us on board and carried us to Constantinople. The view of the city from a league away is astonishing. Nowhere in the world is there such a beautiful spectacle. This magnificent view was the cause of the end of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Greek. Constantine the Great, arriving at Constantinople by sea, was so fascinated by the view of Byzantium that he cried: "Here is the seat for the empire of the whole world," and to make his prophecy inevitable he left Rome and settled there. If he had read, or believed, Horace's prophecy,[13] he would never have done anything so foolish. The poet had written that the Roman Empire would not near its end until a successor of Augustus should take it into his head to move the seat of it to the place of its birth. The Troad is not far from Thrace.

We arrived at the Venctian palace in Pera about the middle of July. The plague was not prevalent in the great city at the time, which was a rare occurrence. We were all most comfortably lodged; but the extreme heat persuaded the two Baili[14] to enjoy the coolness of a country house which the Bailo Donà had rented. It was in Buyukderé.[15] The first order I received was never to venture out without the Bailo's knowledge and without a janissary.[16] I obeyed it to the letter. In those days the Russians had not yet quelled the insolence of the Turkish people.[17] I am told that nowadays foreigners can go where they please without any fear.

It was on the second day after my arrival that I had my guard conduct me to the house of Osman, Pasha of Karamania. This was the name which Count de Bonneval assumed after his apostasy.[18]

After sending my letter in to him, I was shown into a room on the ground floor furnished in the French fashion, where I saw a stout elderly gentleman, in complete French apparel, rise and ask me with a smile what he could do in Constantinople for a protégé of a cardinal of the Church which he could no longer call his mother. My only answer was to narrate the train of events which had led me, in my despair, to ask the Cardinal for a letter of recommendation for Constantinople, having received which I felt superstitiously obligated to deliver it to him. "It follows," he replied, "that but for the letter you would never have thought of coming here, where you have absolutely no need of me."

"None whatever; but I consider myself very fortunate thus to have secured the honor of meeting in Your Excellency a man of whom all Europe has talked, still talks, and will talk for a long time to come."

After indulging in some reflections on the happy situation of a young man like myself, who without either cares or plans or any fixed abode abandoned himself to Fortune fearing nothing and expecting nothing, he said that since Cardinal Acquaviva's letter obliged him to do something for me, he would introduce me to three or four of his Turkish friends who were well worth knowing. He invited me to dine with him every Thursday, and promised to send me a janissary who would protect me from the insolence of the mob and show me everything worth seeing.

Since the Cardinal's letter described me as a literary man, he rose and said that he would show me his library. I followed him across the garden. We entered a room furnished with cupboards with doors of grillwork; behind the brass wire grilles were curtains; and presumably behind the curtains were books.

But I had a good laugh with the stout Pasha when he opened the locked cupboards and, instead of books, I saw bottles full of all sorts of wines.

"There," he said, "is my library and my seraglio, for at my age women would shorten my life, whereas good wine can only lengthen it or at least make it pleasanter."

"I suppose Your Excellency has obtained a dispensation from the Mufti?"[19]

"You are mistaken, for the Pope of the Turks is far from having as much power as yours. He cannot permit anything which the Koran prohibits; but that is no bar to anyone's being free to damn himself if he pleases. The devout Turks pity libertines, but they do not persecute them. There is no Inquisition here. Those, they say, who do not obey the precepts of religion will be unhappy enough in the next life without being punished in this world too. The dispensation for which I asked, and which I had no difficulty in obtaining, was from what you call circumcision, for properly speaking it cannot be called circumcision. At my age it would have been dangerous. It is a ceremony which is usually observed; but it is not compulsory."

In the course of the two hours I spent with him he asked me for news of several Venetian friends of his, particularly Signor Marcantonio Diedo; I told him that his friends still loved him, and were only sorry for him because of his apostasy; he answered that he was a Turk as he had been a Christian, and that he did not know the Koran any better than he had known the Gospels.

"I am certain," he added, "that I shall die in peace and shall be far happier when that time comes than Prince Eugene[20] was. I had to say that God is God and that Mohammed is his prophet. I said it, and the Turks do not bother their heads over whether I thought it or not. In addition I wear the turban, as it is my duty to wear the uniform of my master."

He said that, as he knew no profession but that of a soldier, he had not resolved to serve the "Grand Turk"[21] as Lieutenant-General until he had found himself reduced to having nothing to live on. "When I left Venice," he said, "the soup had eaten up the china; if the Jewish nation had decided to put me at the head of fifty thousand men, I would have gone to besiege Jerusalem."

He was a handsome man, though too stout. In consequence of a saber cut he wore a silver plate over his abdomen to prevent a hernia. He had been exiled to Asia, but not, he said, for long, since cabals are not as long-lived in Turkey as they are in Europe, especially at the Court of Vienna. When I left him he said that in all the time he had been a Turk he had not spent two such pleasant hours as those I had whiled away for him, and he asked me to present his compliments to the two Baili.

His Excellency the Bailo Giovanni Donà, who had known him well in Vienna, asked me to convey his warm compliments to him, and the Cavaliere Venier expressed his regret at not being able to make his personal acquaintance.[22]

The next day but one after this first interview was the Thursday on which he had promised to send me the janissary, and he kept his word. He arrived at eleven o'clock and conducted me to the Pasha, whom on this occasion I found dressed in the Turkish fashion. His guests soon appeared, and we sat down at table to the number of eight, all in high spirits. The whole dinner was served in the French fashion, both as to the ceremonial observed and the dishes; his steward was French and his cook an honest renegade too. He had not failed to introduce me to all his guests; but he did not set me talking until toward the end of dinner. Only Italian was spoken, and I noticed that the Turks never once opened their mouths to speak even a word to each other in their own language. Each had at his left a bottle which might be white wine or else hydromel;[23] I do not know what it was. Like Monsieur de Bonneval, who was on my right, I drank an excellent white Burgundy.

I was encouraged to talk of Venice, but still more of Rome, which brought the conversation round to religion; not to dogma, though, but to discipline and liturgical ceremonies. A pleasant Turk, who was addressed as Effendi,[24] because he had been Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the Venetian Ambassador[25] in Rome was a friend of his and launched into his praises; I echoed them and said that he had given me a letter to a Moslem gentleman whom he likewise called his intimate friend. He asked me the gentleman's name, and as I had forgotten it, I took my portfolio, in which I had the letter, from my pocket. He was most gratified when, reading out the address, I uttered his name. After asking my permission, he read the letter, then kissed the signature, rose, and embraced me. This scene delighted Monsieur de Bonneval and the entire company. The Effendi, whose name was Ismail, obtained Pasha Osman's promise to bring me to dinner at his house on such-and-such a day.

But at this dinner, which I greatly enjoyed, the Turk who most interested me was not Ismail. It was a handsome man who appeared to be about sixty years of age and whose noble countenance betokened both wisdom and kindness. I found the same characteristics two years later in the fine face of Signor Bragadin, Senator of Venice, of whom I shall speak when we come to that time. During all the discussions into which I had been led at table he had listened to me with the greatest attention but had never uttered a word. A man whose face and bearing are interesting, and who says nothing, cannot but arouse the curiosity of any member of the company to whom he is unknown. As we left the room in which we had dined, I asked Monsieur de Bonneval who he was; he replied that he was a rich and wise philosopher, whose probity was unquestioned and whose purity of life was equal to his attachment to his religion. He advised me to cultivate his acquaintance if he gave me an opening.

I was glad to hear this, and after we had strolled in the shade and had entered a room furnished in the style of the country, I sat down on a sofa beside Yusuf Ali, for such was the name of the Turk who had aroused my interest and who at once offered me his pipe. I politely refused, and accepted the one brought me by a servant of Monsieur de Bonneval's. When one is in the company of people who are smoking, one must either smoke or leave, for otherwise one cannot but suppose that one is breathing in the smoke which escapes from the mouths of the rest. This idea, which has an element of truth, is disgusting and revolting.

Yusuf Ali, pleased to have me sitting beside him, at once led me to talk on subjects similar to those which had been brought up at table, but more especially on the reasons which had induced me to leave the peaceful career of a cleric and choose the life of a soldier. To satisfy his curiosity without giving him a bad opinion of me, I thought I should give him a brief account of my whole life, for I thought I ought to convince him that I had not entered the career of the priesthood from vocation. He seemed satisfied. When I heard him speak of vocation in the terms of a Stoic philosopher, I saw that he was a fatalist; and I had the tact not to launch an attack on his whole system, so that my objections gratified him because he found that he was strong enough to destroy them. He must, I suppose, have thought highly of me to consider me worthy to become his pupil, for at the age of nineteen and lost in a false religion, it was impossible that I should be his teacher. After spending an hour questioning me and listening to my principles, he said that he thought I was born to know the truth, since he saw that I was concerned for it and was not sure that I had found it. He invited me to spend a day with him, and told me on what days of the week I would find him at home; but he added that before promising to give him the pleasure I should consult Pasha Osman. I then told him that the Pasha had already described his character to me, which greatly pleased him. I promised to dine with him on a certain day, and we parted.

When I told Monsieur de Bonneval all this, he was delighted and said that his janissary would be at the palace of the Venetian Baili every day, ready to serve me.

When I told Their Excellencies the Baili of the acquaintances I had made that day at Count de Bonneval's, I saw that they were well pleased. And the Cavaliere Venier advised me not to neglect such acquaintances in a country where boredom is more of a threat to foreigners than the plague.

On the appointed day I called on Yusuf very early in the morning, but he had already gone out. His gardener, to whom he had given instructions, showed me every politeness and whiled away two hours most pleasantly for me by taking me to see all the beauties of his master's gardens, and especially the flowers. This gardener was a Neapolitan who had belonged to him for thirty years. From his manners I supposed that he had been well born and brought up; but he frankly told me that he had never learned to read, that he was a sailor when he was made a slave, and that he was so happy in Yusuf's service that he would consider it a punishment if he gave him his freedom. I took great care not to ask him anything about his master's affairs. The man's discretion might have put my curiosity to shame.

Yusuf arrived on horseback, and after the usual compliments we went to dine, with no other company, in a pavilion from which we had a view of the sea and where we enjoyed a gentle wind which tempered the intense heat. This wind, which comes up every day at the same hour, is the northwest wind known as the "*maestrale*." [26] We ate well, though the only made dish was a *kavurma*.[27] I drank water and some excellent hydromel, assuring my host that I preferred it to wine. In those days I very seldom drank it. Praising his hydromel, I said that Mussulmans who broke the law by drinking wine deserved no mercy, since they could only be drinking it because it was forbidden; he assured me that many thought its use was justified since they considered it simply a medicine. He said that it was the physician to the Grand Turk who had brought it into fashion as a medicine and so had made his fortune and gained the complete confidence of his master, who really was always ill but only because he drank to excess. He was amazed when I told him that drunkards were very infrequent among us and that the vice was common only among the dregs of the populace. When he said that he did not understand how wine could be permitted by all other religions, since it deprived men of their reason, I answered that all religions forbade its excessive use and that the crime lay only in the excess. I persuaded him by saying that since the effect of opium was the same, and even more violent, his religion should have forbidden it too; he answered that he had never in all his life taken either opium or wine.

After our dinner, pipes and tobacco were brought. We filled them ourselves. In those days I smoked and enjoyed it, but I had the habit of spitting. Yusuf, who did not spit, said that the tobacco I was smoking was an excellent crab's-eye and that it was a pity I did not swallow its balsamic component, which must be in the saliva which I was wrong to discard in this fashion. He ended by saying that one should spit only when the tobacco was bad. Pleased with his reasoning, I said that he was right and that a pipe could not be considered a real pleasure unless the tobacco was perfect.

"Perfect tobacco," he answered, "is certainly necessary to the pleasure of smoking; but it is not the chief thing, for the pleasure which good tobacco gives is only sensual. True pleasures are those which affect only the soul, quite independently of the senses.''

''I cannot, my dear Yusuf, imagine pleasures which my soul can enjoy without the intervention of my senses.''

''Listen to me. When you fill your pipe, do you feel pleasure?''

''Yes.''

''To which of your senses will you attribute it, if you do not attribute it to your soul? Let us go on. Is it not true that you feel satisfied when you do not put it down until you have completely finished it? You are glad when you see that nothing remains but ashes.''

''True.''

''Then here are two pleasures in which your senses certainly have no share; but now please try to guess the third, which is the chief one.''

''The chief pleasure? The fragrance of the tobacco.''

''No, no. That is a pleasure of the olfactory organ; it is sensual.''

''I have no idea.''

''Then listen. The chief pleasure in smoking consists in the sight of the smoke. You must never see it coming out of the pipe, but entirely from the corner of your mouth, at just the right intervals which must not be too frequent. So true is it that this is the chief pleasure, that you will nowhere see a blind man enjoy smoking. Try smoking yourself at night in a room without a light, and no more than a minute after you have lighted your pipe you will put it down.''

''What you say is very true; but you will forgive me if I consider that a number of pleasures which affect my senses deserve my preferring them to those which affect only my soul.''

''Forty years ago I thought as you do. Forty years from now, if you succeed in attaining to wisdom, you will think as I do. The pleasures, my dear son, which stimulate the passions trouble the soul; and so you must admit that they cannot rightly be called pleasures."

"But it seems to me that if one sees them as pleasures, that is enough to make them so."

"Right. But if you would take the trouble to examine them after you have experienced them, you would find them impure."

"Possibly. But why should I trouble myself to do something which can only lessen the pleasure I have felt?"

"When you have grown old enough, you will find pleasure in going to that trouble."

"I think, my dear father, that you prefer maturity to youth."

"Say old age, and you will be right."

"You surprise me. Am I to suppose that you were unhappy in your youth?"

"Not at all. I was always healthy and happy and never the victim of my passions; but all that I saw among my equals in age was an excellent school to teach me to know mankind and show me the road to happiness. The happiest man is not the most pleasure-loving but the one who is wise enough to choose the greatest pleasures; and the greatest pleasures, I repeat, can only be those which, as they do not excite the passions, increase the peace of the soul."

"Those are the pleasures which you call 'pure.'"

"The sight of a great, grass-covered meadow is one such. The color green, so highly praised by our divine Prophet,[28] strikes my vision, and then I feel my mind bathed in a peace so delicious that I think I am drawing near to the Author of Nature. I feel the same peace, an equal calm, when I sit on the bank of a river and see the flowing water pass before me without ever disappearing from view and without its continual movement clouding its transparency. It shows me the image of my life, and the tranquillity which I wish it to have, so that, like the water I am watching, it will reach that end which I do not see but which must await it when its course is run.''

In such fashion did this Turk reason; and so we spent four hours together. He had had two wives, who had given him two sons and a daughter. His elder son, who had received his inheritance, lived in Salonica where he was a merchant, and was wealthy. The younger son was in the Grand Seraglio, in the Sultan's service, and his inheritance was in the hands of a guardian. His daughter, whom he called Zelmi, and who was fifteen years of age, was to inherit all his property at his death. He had given her all the education she could possibly need to make the husband God had destined for her happy. We shall speak of this girl a little later. His wives were dead, and five years ago he had taken a third wife, a very young girl, a native of Scio[29] and a perfect beauty; but he said that he could not hope to have either a son or a daughter by her, for he was already old. Yet he was only sixty. When I left, I had to promise him that I would come and spend at least one day a week with him.

At supper, when I gave Their Excellencies the Baili on account of my day, they said I was very fortunate to have the prospect of spending three months agreeably in a country where, as foreign diplomats, they could expect only boredom.

Two or three days later, Monsieur de Bonneval took me to dine at Ismail's residence, where I saw a great display of Asiatic luxury. But as the guests were numerous and for the most part spoke only in Turkish, I was as bored as I believed Monsieur de Bonneval to be. Ismail noticed this and, when we left, asked me to breakfast with him as often as I could, assuring me that I should be giving him a real pleasure. I promised to do so, and I went there some ten days later. The reader will learn the particulars when we reach that point. For the present, I must return to Yusuf, who on my second visit displayed a nature which made me conceive the highest esteem and the greatest fondness for him.

Dining alone together, as we had done on the first occasion, and the conversation turning to the arts, I expressed my opinion on a precept in the Koran which forbade the Ottomans the innocent pleasure of enjoying the productions of painting and sculpture. He answered that, as a true sage, Mahomet was obliged to keep all images from the sight of Islamites.

"Observe," he said, "that all the peoples to which our great Prophet imparted the knowledge of God were idolaters. Men are weak, and if they saw the same objects again they could easily relapse into the same errors."

"I am of the opinion, my dear father, that no people ever worshiped an image, but rather the divinity whom the image represented."

"I am willing to believe it, too; but since God cannot be matter, the minds of the vulgar must be kept from thinking that he can be. You Christians stand alone in believing that you see God."

"That is true; we are sure of it, but pray observe that what makes us sure is faith."

"I know it; but you are idolaters nonetheless, for what you see is only matter, and you are perfectly certain of what you see, unless you tell me that faith makes you less certain."

"God preserve me from saying any such thing, for on the contrary faith strengthens our certainty."

"That is an illusion for which, thank God, we have no need; and there is not a philosopher in the world who can prove to me that it is necessary."

"The proof, my dear father, does not lie in the province of philosophy but of theology, which is a far higher science."

"You speak the same language as our theologians, who, however, differ from yours in not using their science to make the truths we must know more obscure, but more evident."

"Consider, my dear Yusuf, that this is a mystery."

"The existence of God is a mystery, and so great a mystery that men dare add nothing to it. God can only be simple, and this is the God whom his Prophet announced to us. Admit that nothing can be added to his essence without destroying his simplicity. We say that he is one, which is simplicity itself. You say that he is one and at the same time three; such a definition is contradictory, absurd, and impious."

"It is a mystery."

"Do you mean God, or the definition? I mean the definition, which must not be a mystery, and a mystery which reason must reject. Common sense, my dear son, can see no relevance in a statement whose very substance is an absurdity. Prove to me that three is not a compound, or that it can possibly not be one, and I will instantly become a Christian."

"My religion commands me to believe without arguing, and I tremble, my dear Yusuf, when I think that a strong argument might lead me to renounce the religion of my dear father. I should first have to be convinced that he lived in error. Tell me if, respecting his memory as I do, I can be so presumptuous as to set myself up as his judge to pronounce his condemnation."

After this remonstrance I saw that the good Yusuf was touched. After two minutes of silence he said that, thinking as I did, I could not but be dear to God and hence predestined;[30] but that if I was wrong, only God could set me right, for he knew no just man who would undertake to refute the sentiment I had expressed to him. We then talked pleasantly of lighter things, and toward evening I left, but not before he had given me endless assurances of the purest friendship.

On my way home I reflected that all that Yusuf had said to me concerning the essence of God could well be true, for certainly the *being of beings* must be essentially the simplest of all beings; but that I could not, because of an error in the Christian religion, let myself be persuaded to embrace the Turkish creed, which might have an extremely just conception of God but at which I could only laugh because it owed its entire doctrine only to the most arrant of all impostors. But I did not think that Yusuf had had any intention of making me a convert.

It was when I was dining with him for the third time, and the conversation, as it always did, had turned to religion, that I asked him if he was certain that his religion was the only one which could lead mortal man to eternal salvation. He answered that he was not sure it was the only one, but he was sure that the Christian religion was false, because it could not be universal.

"Why?"

"Because there is neither bread nor wine in two thirds of our globe. Note that the Koran can be obeyed everywhere."

I was at a loss for an answer, and I declined to fall back on evasions. When, continuing the discussion, I said that since God was not matter, he must be spirit, he answered that we knew what he was not, but not what he was, hence we could not affirm that he was spirit, for we could have only an abstract idea of him.

"God," he said, "is immaterial; that is all that we know of him, and we shall never know more."

I remembered that Plato says the same thing, and Yusuf had certainly not read Plato.

On the same day he said that the existence of God could be useful only to those who did not doubt it, and hence the most wretched of mortals were the atheists.

"God," he said, "made man in his likeness so that, among all the animals he created, there should be one capable of doing homage to his existence. Without man God would have no witness to his own glory; hence man must understand that his first duty is to glorify him by practicing justice and trusting in his Providence. Note that God never abandons the man who bows down to him in his adversities and implores him for help, and that he leaves the wretch who does not believe in prayer to perish in despair.''

''Yet there are atheists who are happy.''

''True; but despite their peace of soul, I think they are to be pitied, for they hope for nothing after this life and do not consider themselves superior to the brute beasts. In addition, they must languish in ignorance if they are philosophers, and if they do not think at all, they have no resource in adversity. God, in short, made man such that he cannot be happy unless he does not doubt his divine existence. Whatever his condition, he has an indispensable need to admit it, for without that need man would never have admitted a God who created all things.''

''But I should like to know why atheism has never existed except in the system of some philosopher, whereas we have no example of its existence in the system of an entire people.''

''It is because the poor man feels his needs much more strongly than the rich man. Among us there are many godless men who laugh at the believers who put all their faith in the pilgrimage to Mecca. Woe unto them! They ought to respect our ancient monuments which, by exciting the devotion of the faithful, foster their religion and encourage them to bear their adversities. Without these consoling objects, the ignorant masses would give way to all the excesses of despair.''

Delighted by the attention with which I listened to his views, Yusuf yielded more and more to his inclination to teach me. I began spending the day with him uninvited, which made him still fonder of me.

One morning I had my janissary take me to Ismail Effendi's, so that I could breakfast with him, as I had promised to do; but after receiving and treating me with the utmost politeness the Turk invited me to take a walk with him in a small garden where, when we had entered a summerhouse, he suddenly proposed something which was not to my taste; I smiled and said that I was not of that persuasion, then, wearying of his fond assiduity, I rose rather abruptly. Ismail then pretended to approve my repugnance and said that he had only been joking. After addressing the usual compliments to him, I left, intending not to visit his house again; but I had to return there, and we shall speak of it when the proper time comes. When I recounted this little incident to Monsieur de Bonneval, he said that, according to Turkish manners, Ismail had wished to give me proof of his great friendship for me, but that I could be sure he would make no such proposal to me again if I returned there for, in all other respects, Ismail was a thorough gentleman, who owned a number of most beautiful slaves. He said that politeness demanded that I visit him again.

Five or six weeks after the beginning of our friendship, Yusuf asked me if I was married, and upon my answering no, the conversation turned to chastity, which, he maintained, could be considered a virtue only in so far as it represented a form of abstinence, but that, far from being pleasing to God, it must be displeasing to him, since it violated the first law he had given to man.

''But I should like to know,'' he said, ''what is meant by the chastity of your Knights of Malta.[31] They take a vow of chastity. This cannot mean that they will abstain from all the work of the flesh, for if that is criminal, all Christians took the same vow when they were baptized. Hence the vow of chastity can only consist in an undertaking not to marry. It follows that chastity can be violated only by marriage, and I observe that marriage is one of your sacraments. So all that these gentlemen promise is that they will never perform the work of the flesh when the law of God would make it permissible for them, while they remain free to perform it to their heart's content illegitimately, even to the point of legally recognizing children whom they can only have had by a twofold crime. They call them 'natural children,' as if the offspring of the conjugal union which Christians consider a sacrament were not natural. In short, the vow of chastity can be pleasing neither to God nor to men nor to the individuals who take it."

He asked me if I was married. I answered that I was not and that I hoped circumstances would never compel me to contract that obligation.

"What!" he answered. "Then I must either believe that you are not a complete man or that you want to damn yourself, unless you tell me that you are a Christian only in show."

"I am a complete man, and I am a Christian. I will further tell you that I love the fair sex and that I hope to enjoy many conquests among them."

"Your religion says that you will be damned."

"I am sure that I shall not, for when we confess our crimes to our priests they are obliged to absolve us."

"So I know. But admit that it is idiocy to claim that God will forgive you for a crime which you perhaps would not commit unless you were sure that by confessing it you would be forgiven for it. God forgives only the repentant."

"There is no doubt of that; and confession presupposes it. If there is no repentance, the absolution has no power."

"Is masturbation a crime among you too?"

"An even greater crime than unlawful copulation."

"So I know; and it has always surprised me, for any legislator who promulgates a law which cannot be enforced is a fool. A man who has no woman and who is in good health cannot but masturbate when imperious nature makes him feel the need for it. A man whose fear of sullying his soul by the act could give him the firmness to abstain from it would contract a mortal disease.''

''We Christians believe just the contrary. We claim that young men who indulge in the practice impair their constitutions and shorten their lives. In many communities they are closely watched, left absolutely no time to commit this crime on themselves.''

''Those who watch them are ignoramuses and those who pay them to do so are fools, for the prohibition itself must increase the desire to break a law so tyrannical and so contrary to nature.''

''Yet it seems to me that practicing this aberration to excess must be harmful to health, for it enervates and debilitates.''

''I agree; but there can be no excess here unless it is provoked; and those who forbid the thing provoke it. If you Christians lay no restraint on girls in this respect, I do not see why you should think it proper to restrain boys.''

''Girls do not run so great a risk, for they can lose only a very small amount of substance, and even that does not come from the same source from which the seed of life in man derives.''

''I know nothing about that, but we have doctors who maintain that pallor in girls comes from the practice.''

After this discussion, and several others in which, even when he found that I did not agree with him, he seemed to consider my arguments more than reasonable, Yusuf Ali made me a proposal which greatly surprised me, if not quite in the following words at least in something very like them.

''I have two sons and a daughter. I am not concerned about my sons, for they have already received their due share of my estates; but as for my daughter, when I die she will have all that I possess, and I am in a position to make a rich man of anyone who marries her while I am alive. I took a young wife five years ago, but she has not given me a child, and I am sure that she will not, since I am already old. My daughter, whom I call Zelmi, is fifteen years of age, she is beautiful, with dark eyes and dark hair like her late mother, tall, with a good figure, gentle in nature, and the education I have given her makes her worthy to possess the heart of our master.[32] She speaks Greek and Italian, she sings, accompanying herself on the harp, she draws, she embroiders, and she is always in good spirits. There is not a man on earth who can boast of having seen her face, and she loves me so dearly that she would never presume to have another will than mine. The girl is a treasure, and I offer her to you if you will go and live in Adrianople for a year with a relative of mine, in whose house you will learn our language, our religion, and our customs. At the end of a year you shall return to Constantinople, and here, as soon as you have declared yourself a Mussulman, my daughter shall become your wife, and you shall have a house, slaves of your own, and an income which will permit you to live in luxury. That is what I have to say. I do not want you to answer me now, or tomorrow, or at any set time. You shall answer me when you feel your Genius prompting you to answer me, and it will be to accept my offer, for if you do not accept it there is no use in our discussing it again. I do not advise you to think the matter over, for now that I have sown the seed of it in your soul you will find that you are no longer free either to consent to its realization or to oppose it. Neither hurrying, nor delaying, nor taking thought, you will but obey the will of God according to the irrevocable decree of your destiny. Such as I know you, you need only the companionship of Zelmi to make you happy. You will become—I foresee it—a pillar of the Ottoman Empire."

After this short harangue, Yusuf embraced me and to make certain that I would not answer him, he left me. I returned home with my mind so occupied with Yusuf's proposal that I was unconscious of making the journey. The Baili remarked that I was thoughtful, as did Monsieur de Bonneval two days later, and they asked me why; but I took good care not to tell them. I found that what Yusuf had said was only too true. This was a matter of such great importance that not only must I not confide it to anyone, I must myself abstain from thinking about it until the time came when I found my mind calm enough to be certain that the least breath could not affect the scales which were to decide my course. All my passions must be silent, and with them my preconceptions, my prejudices, and even some part of my self-interest. Waking the next morning and barely beginning to reflect on the subject, I realized that thinking about it could prevent me from deciding, and that if I was to decide it must be as the result of not having thought about it. It was a case of the Stoics' *sequere Deum* ("follow the God," "follow your destiny").[38] I did not go to see Yusuf for four days, and when I went on the fifth, we were very animated and did not even think of saying a word on the subject, which nevertheless could not but be in our minds. We spent two weeks in the same way; but since our silence on the matter arose neither from dissimulation nor from any determination incompatible with the friendship and esteem we felt for each other, he brought the conversation around to the proposal he had made me and said he imagined I had confided it to some wise man who would arm me with good counsel. I assured him that I had not, adding that in a matter of such importance I believed that I should take no one's advice.

"I have abandoned myself to God," I said, "and since I have perfect trust in him, I am sure that I shall make the right choice, whether I decide to become your son or to remain as I am. Meanwhile, reflection on the matter occupies my soul morning and night at those moments when, alone and communing with myself, it is most at peace. When I have made up my mind, it is to you alone, Pateramu,[34] that I will tell it, and from that moment you shall begin to exercise the authority of a father over me."

As I finished this exposition, I saw his eyes fill with tears. He put his left hand on my head and the second and third fingers of his right on the center of my forehead and told me to continue in the same course and I could be sure that I would not go wrong. I said that it might turn out that his daughter Zelmi did not like me.

"My daughter loves you," he answered; "she has seen you, and she sees you, in the company of my wife and of her governess, every time we dine together; and she greatly enjoys listening to what you say."

"But she does not know that you are thinking of making her my wife."

"She knows that I hope you will become a believer, so that I can unite her destiny with yours."

"I am very glad that you are forbidden to let me see her, for she might dazzle me, and then it would be passion which would tip the scales, and then I could not have the satisfaction of having decided in all the purity of my soul."

Yusuf's delight at my train of reasoning was extreme, and I was not speaking as a hypocrite but in perfect good faith. The mere thought of seeing Zelmi set me trembling. I felt certain that I should not have hesitated to become a Turk if she had made me fall in love with her; whereas I was no less certain that in a state of indifference I would never resolve upon a course which in any case did not appeal to me and which, on the contrary, presented me with a very unpleasant prospect both for the present and for my life in the future. For the sake of a wealth of which, if Fortune favored me, I could expect to find the equal anywhere in Europe without the disgrace of changing my religion, I thought that I should not be indifferent to the scorn of all those who knew me and whose esteem I sought. I could not bring myself to renounce the fair hope of achieving fame among polished nations, whether in the fine arts or in literature or in some other profession, and I could not bear the idea of abandoning to my equals triumphs which would perhaps fall to my share if I continued to live among them. I thought—and I was right—that the decision to assume the turban was such as only the desperate were justified in making, and I did not count myself among them. But what I could not stomach was the thought of going to live for a year in Adrianople to learn to speak a barbarous language for which I had no liking and which I therefore could have no hope of learning perfectly. I could not easily renounce my pride in being known as a fine conversationalist, a reputation which I had already acquired wherever I had stayed for any length of time. Then, too, it occurred to me that the charming Zelmi might prove not to be charming in my eyes; and that alone would be enough to make me unhappy, for Yusuf might live another twenty years, and I felt that respect and gratitude would never let me presume to mortify the good old man by ceasing to show his daughter the affection which was her due. Such were my thoughts, which Yusuf could not divine and which there was no need for me to impart to him.

Some days later I found Ismail Effendi also present when I dined with my dear Pasha Osman. He showed me friendly attentions, which I reciprocated, and I made light of the reproaches he addressed to me for not having come to breakfast with him again; but I could not avoid dining at his house once more, with Monsieur de Bonneval. I went on the appointed day, and after dinner enjoyed watching some handsome Neapolitan slaves of both sexes performing a farce in pantomime and dancing calabreselle.[35] Monsieur de Bonneval mentioned the Venetian dance called the furlana,[36] and Ismail wanting to know what it was like, I said that I could not show it to him without a woman of my own country to dance it with me and a fiddler who knew the tune. I then took a violin and played him the tune, but even if a dancing partner were found for me, I could not play and dance at once. Ismail then rose and spoke privately to a eunuch, who came back a few minutes later and whispered something to him. Ismail told me that my dancing partner was already found, and I answered that I would find the violinist too if he would send a note to the Venetian Embassy. It was soon done. I wrote the note, he sent it, and a half hour later one of the Bailo Donà's servants appeared with his violin. A moment later the door in the corner of the room opened, and I see a beautiful woman, her face concealed by an oval black velvet mask of the sort known in Venice as a *moretta.*[37] The appearance of the masker surprised and delighted the whole company, for it was impossible to imagine a more interesting object, both for the beauty of her figure and the elegance of her attire. The goddess strikes the opening pose, I join her, and we dance six furlane one after the other. I am now out of breath, for there is no national dance more violent; but the beauty still stands there, motionless and without the least sign of fatigue, as if to defy me. During the whirl, which is the most tiring part of the dance, she seemed to float; I was beside myself with amazement. I did not remember having seen the dance performed so well in Venice itself. After a brief rest, feeling a little ashamed of my weakness, I went to her and said: *"Ancora sei, e poi basta, se non volete vedermi a morire."* ("Six more, and an end, if you do not want to see me dying.") She might have answered me if she had been able, for with a mask of this sort it is impossible to utter a word; but a pressure of her hand which no one could see told me a great deal. After the second six furlane, the eunuch opened the same door and she vanished.

Ismail thanked me endlessly, but it was I who should have thanked him, for it was the only real pleasure I enjoyed in Constantinople. I asked him if the lady was a Venetian, but he answered only with a knowing smile. We all left toward nightfall.

"Our worthy host," Monsieur de Bonneval said, "was the dupe of his lavishness today, and I am sure he is already regretting that he had his beautiful slave dance with you. According to the Turkish notion, what he has done injured his dignity, and I advise you to be most careful, for you must certainly have found favor with the girl, who will therefore look for a way to draw you into an intrigue. Be prudent, for considering the stringency of Turkish customs, all intrigues are dangerous."

I promised him I would not enter into any intrigue, but I did not keep my word.

Three or four days later an old female slave whom I met in the street showed me a gold-embroidered tobacco pouch, offering to sell it to me for a piaster and putting it into my hands so that I could feel there was a letter inside it; I noticed that she avoided the eyes of my janissary, who was walking behind me. I paid her for the pouch; she made off, and I continued toward Yusuf's house, where, finding him not at home, I took a stroll in the garden. Since the letter was sealed and bore no address, and the slave might have made a mistake, my curiosity increased. Here is a translation of the letter, which was correctly written in good Italian: "If you are curious to see the person who danced the furlana with you, take a walk toward nightfall in the garden beyond the pool and make the acquaintance of the gardener's old servant by asking her for lemonade. You will perhaps see her without running any risk, even if you should happen to meet Ismail; she is Venetian; however, it is important that you tell no one of this invitation."

"I am not such a fool, my dear countrywoman," I exclaimed feelingly, as if she were present, and I put the letter in my pocket. But a handsome old woman appears from a shrubbery, comes up to me, asks me what I want and how I had happened to see her. I laughed and replied that I had been talking to myself, thinking that no one could hear me. She tells me point-blank that she is very glad to talk with me, that she is a Roman, and had brought Zelmi up and had taught her to sing and play the harp. She praises her pupil's beauties and fine qualities, and says that I would be sure to fall in love with her if I saw her, and that she was very sorry it was forbidden.

"She is watching us now," says she, "behind that green blind; and we have loved you from the time Yusuf told us that you could become Zelmi's husband as soon as you returned from Adrianople."

I asked her if I might tell Yusuf what she had just confided to me, and when she answered that I might not, I saw at once that if I urged her a little she would have decided to give me the pleasure of seeing her charming pupil. I could not tolerate even the thought of an action which could have displeased my dear host, but I was even more afraid of entering a labyrinth in which I could only too easily have lost my way. The turban which I seemed to see looming in the distance terrified me.

I saw Yusuf approaching me, and he showed no sign of being displeased at finding the Roman woman conversing with me. He congratulated me on the pleasure I must have taken in dancing with one of the beauties from the harem of the voluptuous Ismail.

"I suppose it must be a most unusual occurrence, since everyone is talking about it."

"It does not often happen, for the prejudice against exposing the beauties in our possession to the eyes of the envious is universal among us; but everyone may do as he chooses in his own house. And Ismail is a thorough gentleman and nobody's fool."

"Is it known with whom I danced?"

"That would be very unlikely. Besides, she was masked, and Ismail is known to have half a dozen slaves, all very beautiful."

We spent the day together as happily as usual; when I took my leave, I had my janissary conduct me to Ismail's house, which was on the same hillside.

I was known, so I was admitted. As I was making my way to the place indicated in the letter, the eunuch saw me and came to meet me, saying that Ismail had gone out but that he would be very glad when he learned that I had taken a walk in his grounds. I said I should like to drink a glass of lemonade, and he led me to the summer-house, where I recognized the old slave woman. At a word from the eunuch she handed me a glass of some delicious drink, but he would not let me hand her the silver piece I wanted to give her. After that we strolled about the pool; but the eunuch said we must turn back, pointing out three ladies whom good manners obliged us to avoid. I thanked him and asked him to convey my compliments to Ismail, then went home, not too dissatisfied with my excursion and hoping to have better luck another time.

No later than the next day I received a note from Ismail asking me to come the following day to go fishing with him with hook and line, coming toward evening so that we could fish by moonlight until late into the night. I immediately began hoping for what I desired. I imagined that Ismail was quite capable of arranging an interview with the Venetian girl for me, and my certainty that he would be present at it did not put me off. I asked the Cavaliere Venier for permission to spend the night away from the embassy, which he granted only with reluctance, for he feared an intrigue which might lead to some mishap. I could have calmed his fears by telling him the facts, but I thought that discretion was imperative.

So at the appointed hour I called at the house of the

Turk, who received me with the most cordial indications of friendship. I was surprised when, getting into the boat, I found that I was alone with him. He had two rowers and a steersman, and we caught a few fish, which we took to a summerhouse and ate there, grilled and seasoned with oil, in the moonlight which made the night brighter than day. Knowing his inclination, I was more subdued than usual; despite what Monsieur de Bonneval had told me, I was afraid he might take it into his head to give me the same sort of tokens of his affection as those he had tried to give me three weeks earlier and which I had received so ungraciously. His wanting to be alone with me seemed unnatural, and hence suspect. I could not get over my uneasiness. But here is the turn things took.

"Let us speak softly," he said suddenly. "I hear a certain sound from which I guess that something is about to happen which will amuse us."

He had scarcely said this when he dismisses his servants and, taking me by the hand:

"Let us conceal ourselves," he says, "in that garden house, of which I luckily have the key in my pocket; but let us not make the slightest sound. The garden house has a window which looks out on the pool, and I think that at this moment two or three of my young ladies have gone there to bathe. We will watch them, and it will be a very pretty sight, for they can have no idea that they are seen. They know that this place is inaccessible to anyone except myself."

So saying, and still leading me by the hand, he opens the door of the garden house; and we are in darkness. We see the whole length of the pool, lighted by the moon, which the shadow we were in prevented us from seeing; almost under our eyes we see three completely naked girls, now swimming, now coming out of the water to ascend some marble steps where, standing or sitting to dry off, they exhibited themselves in every conceivable posture. This charming spectacle could not fail to set me on fire at once, and Ismail, faint with delight, not only convinced me that I should not restrain myself, but encouraged me to surrender to the effects which the voluptuous sight could not but produce in my soul, by himself setting the example. Like him, I found myself reduced to making the best of the object beside me to extinguish the flame kindled by the three sirens, whom we saw now in the water, now out of it, and who, though they never looked at the window, seemed to be indulging in their voluptuous sports only to burn the spectators who were intently watching them through it. I chose to believe that such was the case, which gave me only the more pleasure, and Ismail triumphed when he found that his proximity condemned him to take the place of the distant object to which I could not attain. I also had to submit to his taking turnabout. It would have been impolite in me to refuse; then, too, I should have shown myself ungrateful, a thing which is not in my nature. Never in my life have I been so beside myself or so carried away. As I did not know which of the three nymphs was my Venetian, each of them had to play the part for me in turn, at the expense of Ismail, who seemed to have become calm. The worthy man refuted me in the pleasantest way possible and tasted the sweetest possible revenge, but if he wanted to be paid, he had to pay. I leave my reader the problem of calculating which of us profited most, for it seems to me that since Ismail had made all the expenditures the scales should tip to his side. For my part, I did not go back there again, and I told no one what had happened. The departure of the three sirens ended the orgy; as for us, since we did not know what to say to each other, we simply laughed. After pampering ourselves with some excellent preserves and drinking several cups of coffee, we parted. This was the only pleasure of the sort which I enjoyed at Constantinople, and imagination had a greater share in it than reality.

A few days later, having arrived at Yusuf's early and being prevented by a light rain from going to stroll in the garden, I entered the room where we usually dined and where I had never yet found anyone. On my appearance an attractive-looking woman rises and hastily covers her face with a heavy veil, letting it fall from where it was fixed above her forehead. A woman slave, who was seated with her back to us, working at an embroidery frame, does not stir. I apologize and make to leave; but she stops me, saying in good Italian and the voice of an angel that Yusuf, who had gone out, had charged her to entertain me. She tells me to sit down, pointing to a cushion placed on two larger ones, and I obey. At the same time she crosses her legs and seats herself on another, facing me. I felt certain that I was in the presence of Zelmi. I conclude that Yusuf must have resolved to convince me that he was no less daring than Ismail; but I am surprised that he should belie his principle by taking such a step, and should risk corrupting the purity of my consent to his plan by making me fall in love; but I felt I had nothing to fear for, to reach a decision, I had to see her face.

"I think," said the masker, "that you do not know who I am."

"I cannot even guess."

"I have been your friend's wife for five years, and I was born in Scio. I was thirteen when I was married to him."

Astonished though I was that Yusuf should have overcome his prejudices to the point of allowing me to converse with his wife, I felt more at ease and considered how I might best improve my good fortune, but I had to see her face. A beautiful clothed body, whose head is invisible, can only arouse desires which are easily satisfied; the fire it kindles is like burning straw. I saw an elegant and beautiful image; but I did not see its soul, for the veil concealed the eyes. I saw naked arms whose form and whiteness dazzled me, and hands like Alcina's, *dove ne nodo appar ne vena eccede* ("in which no knot appears nor vein stands out"),[38] and I imagined all the rest, of which the soft folds of the muslin could hide only the living surface from me, and knew that it must all be beautiful; but I needed to see in her eyes that all I was happily imagining was alive. The dress of the East delineates everything; indeed, it keeps nothing from desire, save as the fine glaze on a piece of Dresden china keeps the colors of the flowers and figures from being touched. The woman before me was not dressed in the garb of sultanas; like the Hyrcanians[39] of Scio she wore skirts which did not prevent me from seeing half of her legs, the shape of her thighs, the form of her swelling hips, which diminished into an admirably slender waist girt by a broad blue sash embroidered with silver arabesques. I saw a full bosom, whose slow and often irregular motion told me that the enchanting hillock was alive. The two small globes were separated by a narrow hollow, which seemed to me a rivulet of milk created to quench my thirst and for my lips to devour.

Beside myself with admiration, I almost involuntarily extend one arm, and my bold hand would have lifted her veil, if she had not pushed it away, risen to her full height, and, in a voice as imposing as her posture, reproached me for my perfidious temerity.

"Do you deserve Yusuf's friendship," she said, "when you violate hospitality by insulting his wife?"

"Signora, you must forgive me. Among us the lowest of men may fix his eyes on the face of a queen."

"But not tear away the veil which hid it from him. Yusuf shall avenge me."

Positive that her threat meant my ruin, I threw myself at her feet and talked to such purpose that she became calm, told me to sit down again, and sat down herself, crossing her legs in such a way that the disarrangement of her skirt gave me a moment's glimpse of charms which would have intoxicated me completely if they had been visible a moment longer. I now saw that I had made a mistake, and repented too late.

"You are on fire," she said.

"How can I be otherwise," I replied, "when you are burning me?"

Having learned wisdom, I was about to take her hand, dismissing any further thought of her face, when she says: "Here is Yusuf." He enters, we rise; he greets me with "Peace be with you," I thank him, the slave who was embroidering leaves, and he expresses his gratitude to his wife for having kept me entertained. At the same time he offers her his arm to take her back to her apartment. When she reaches the door she raises her veil and, kissing her husband, lets me see her profile, but she pretends not to be aware of it. I followed her with my eyes to the farthest room. Yusuf returns and says with a smile that his wife has offered to dine with us.

"I thought," I said, "that I was with Zelmi."

"That would have been too contrary to our rules of decorum. What I did is very little; but I cannot imagine a decent man thrusting his own daughter into the company of a stranger."

"I believe your wife is beautiful. Is she more beautiful than Zelmi?"

"My daughter's beauty is smiling and sweet. Sophia's is a haughty beauty. She will be happy after my death. The man who marries her will find her a virgin."

When I told Monsieur de Bonneval my adventure and dwelt on the risk I had run by trying to raise her veil,

"No," he answered, "you ran no risk, the Greek woman was only laughing at you with her tragicomic play-acting. Believe me, she was disappointed to find that she was dealing with a novice. You played a French farce when you should have played the man. What need had you to try to see her face? You should have gone straight to the point. If I were young I could probably avenge her and punish my friend Yusuf. You have given her a poor idea of Italian courage. The most reserved of Turkish women wears her modesty only on her face; as soon as that is covered, she is sure she will blush at nothing. I am sure this wife of Yusuf's keeps her face covered whenever he wants to have a little fun with her."

"She is a virgin."

"That is hardly possible, for I know these Scian women; but they have the skill to make people believe them virgins."

Yusuf did not pay me such a compliment again. A few days later he came into the shop of an Armenian as I was examining various articles which, thinking them too expensive, I was about to leave where they were. After looking at all the things which I had thought too expensive, Yusuf praised my taste; however, telling me that they were not at all too expensive, he bought the lot and left me. Early the next morning he sent them all to me as a present; but, to make it impossible for me to refuse them, he wrote me a charming letter saying that when I arrived at Corfu I would be informed to whom I was to deliver all the things he was sending me. There were rolls of Damascus cloth glazed with gold or silver, purses, portfolios, belts, scarves, handkerchiefs, and pipes. All together they were worth four or five hundred piasters. When I insisted on thanking him, I made him admit that he was making me a present of them.

The day before my departure I saw the good old man weep when I took leave of him; and my tears answered his. He said that by not accepting his offer I had so gained his esteem that he felt he could not have esteemed me more highly if I had accepted it. When I went on board ship with His Excellency the Bailo Giovanni Donà, I found a chest of presents from him. It contained two quintals of Mocha coffee, a hundred pounds of crab's-eye tobacco in the leaf, and two great flasks, one filled with Zapandi tobacco, the other with Camussades tobacco. Also a jasmine pipestem covered with gold filigree, which I sold in Corfu for a hundred zecchini. I could show him my gratitude only by a letter which I wrote him from Corfu, where the proceeds from the sale of his presents made me rich.

Ismail gave me a letter for the Cavaliere da Lezze, which I lost, and a cask of hydromel, which I also sold; Monsieur de Bonneval gave me a letter addressed to Cardinal Acquaviva, which I sent to him at Rome enclosed in one from me in which I told him the story of my journey; but His Eminence did not honor me with a reply. He also gave me a dozen bottles of malmsey from Ragusa and a dozen of genuine Scopolo wine.[40] The genuine Scopolo is very scarce. It provided a present which I made at Corfu and which was very useful to me, as will be seen in its proper place.

The only foreign minister whom I often saw in Constantinople, and who was extraordinarily kind to me, was His Lordship the Earl Marshal of Scotland, Keith,[41] who was in residence there for the King of Prussia. My acquaintance with him proved useful to me in Paris six years later. We will return to it.

We left at the beginning of September in the same warship by which we had come. We reached Corfu in two weeks, where His Excellency the Bailo declined to go ashore. He brought six splendid Turkish horses with him, one of which I found still alive at Görz in 1773.

Scarcely had I gone ashore with my few possessions and found a rather indifferent lodging before I waited on Signor Andrea[42] Dolfin, the Proveditor-General, who again assured me that I would be made a lieutenant at the first promotion. On leaving the Generalate,[43] I went to see Signor Camporese, my Captain. The general staff officers of my regiment were all away.

My third visit was to the Governor of Galleasses,[44] Signor D. R.,[45] to whom Signor Dolfin,[46] with whom I had arrived at Corfu, had recommended me. He at once inquired if I would come and serve him in the capacity of adjutant, and I did not hesitate for a moment before answering that I asked nothing better and that he would always find me obedient and quick to carry out his orders. He at once had me shown to the room he had designated for me, and no later than the next morning I was installed in it. My Captain gave me a French soldier[47] who had been a hairdresser, and with whom I was pleased because I needed practice in speaking French. He was a scapegrace, a drunkard and a debauchee, a peasant born in Picardy, who could scarcely write; but I did not care about that, all I needed was that he could speak. He was a clown, who knew any number of songs and funny stories, which made everyone laugh.

In three or four days I sold all the presents I had been given in Constantinople, and found myself possessed of almost five hundred zecchini. I kept only the wines. I recovered from the Jews all the things I had put in pawn when I was ruined by play before going to Constantinople, and sold them all; I was determined that I would no longer gamble as a dupe, but with all the advantages of which a prudent and intelligent young man can avail himself without being called a cheat. It is now time that I describe Corfu for my reader, to give him an idea of the life there. I will not speak of the place itself, about which anyone can obtain information.

In those days there was at Corfu the Proveditor-General, who exercises the authority of supreme ruler and lives magnificently; he was Signor Dolfin, then a septuagenarian, strict, stubborn, and ignorant; he was past caring for women, but he still liked having them pay court to him. He received every evening, and served supper at a table for twenty-four. There were three high officers of the light force[48] which is the force of galleys,[49] and three of the heavy force, as the force of ships is called. The light outranks the heavy. As each galley must have a commanding officer, called a *sopracomito,*[50] there were ten of these; and as each warship must have a commander, there were ten of these likewise, including the three *capi di mar.*[51] All these commanders were Venetian noblemen. Ten other Venetian noblemen, aged between twenty and twenty-two years, were noblemen of the fleet,[52] and were there to learn seamanship. Besides all these officers there were eight or ten other Venetian noblemen whose business on the island was to maintain order and administer justice; they were called high officers of "the Land." [53] Such of them as were married, if their wives were pretty, had the pleasure of seeing their houses frequented by the young men who aspired to their good graces; but there were no strong passions, for at Corfu in those days there were many courtesans, and since gaming was everywhere permitted, dalliance could not make much headway.

Among all the ladies the one who was most outstanding for her beauty and her intrigues was Signora F.[54] Her husband, the commander of a galley, had arrived at Corfu with her the year before; she dazzled all the officers and, considering that she had the right to choose, she gave the preference to Signor D. R. and their dismissal to all those who offered themselves as *cicisbei.*[55] Signor F. had married her the very day he had left Venice on his galley, and on the same day she had left the convent which she had entered at the age of seven. She was then seventeen. When I saw her across the table from me on the first day I took up residence in Signor D. R.'s house, she struck me with amazement. I thought I was seeing something supernatural, and so far above the women I had seen until then that I had no fear of falling in love with her. I thought that I was of a different species from hers and so much below her that I could see only the impossibility of my attaining to her. I at once thought that there was nothing between her and Signor D. R. except a cold friendship based on habit, and I concluded that Signor F. was right in not being jealous. In any case Signor F. was as stupid as possible. Such was the impression made on me by this beauty on the first day she appeared before my eyes; but it soon changed, and by a process which was wholly new to me.

My position as adjutant procured me the honor of eating with her; but that was all. My fellow adjutant, an ensign like myself and a fool of the first water, had the same honor; but we were not regarded as guests. Not only did no one ever speak to us, no one even looked at us. I could not put up with it. I knew perfectly well that it did not come from any conscious contempt; but even so I considered my situation very hard. I thought that Sansonio (such was my colleague's name) had no reason to complain of it, for he was an oaf; but I could not bear being treated in the same way myself. After a week or ten days, during which she never even glanced at my face, Signora F. began to displease me. I was the more piqued and angered and provoked because I could not suppose that she was avoiding my eyes deliberately. I should not have minded that. But I was convinced that, for her, I was nothing. It was too much. I knew that I was something, and I meant that she should know it too. At last an occasion arose when she thought it necessary to say a word to me, which naturally obliged her to look me in the face.

Signor D. R., having noticed the excellence of a roast turkey which had been placed before me, told me to carve it, and I set to work at once. I cut it into sixteen pieces and then saw that, having done it badly, I stood in need of indulgence; but Signora F., who could not suppress her laughter, looked at me and said that since I was not sure I could carve it properly, I should have let it alone. Not knowing what to answer, I blushed, I sat down, and

I hated her. One day, an occasion arising when she had to mention my name, she asked me what it was, though she ought to have known it since I had been living in Signor D. R.'s house for two weeks, to say nothing of the fact that my constant luck at cards had already made me well known. I had given my money to the town-major of the place, one Maroli, a professional gambler, who held the faro bank at the coffeehouse. I went halves with him, and I served him as croupier;[56] he did the same when I dealt, which happened very often since the punters did not like him. He held the cards in a way which made people afraid of him, whereas I did just the opposite; also, I was very lucky, and, in addition to that, my manner was easy and I smiled when I was losing and looked unhappy when I was winning. It was Maroli who had won all my money from me before I left for Constantinople; finding, on my return, that I was determined to play cards no more, he thought me worthy of being taught the wise precepts without which games of chance ruin all their devotees. However, since I was by no means confident of Maroli's good faith, I remained wary. Every night when we had finished dealing we made up the account, and the dealing box remained in the cashier's hands; after dividing the cash we had won, we went home to empty our purses.

Lucky at play, in good health, and liked by all my colleagues, who, when the occasion arose, never found me stingy, I should have been very content with my lot if I had only been a little more considered at Signor D. R.'s table and treated less haughtily by his lady, who, for no reason at all, seemed to take pleasure in humiliating me every now and again. I detested her and when, admiring her perfections, I reflected on the feeling of hatred she had inspired in me, I judged her not only impertinent but stupid, for I admitted to myself that it would have been completely in her power to conquer my heart, even without loving me. I wanted nothing but that she should stop obliging me to hate her. I thought it extraordinary, for if she was doing it deliberately, she could not possibly gain anything by it.

Nor could I attribute her behavior to a spirit of coquetry, for I had never given her the least indication of the extent to which I did her justice, or to a passion for someone which might have made me odious in her eyes, for even Signor D. R. did not interest her, while, as for her husband, she treated him like a nonentity. In short, the young woman was making me wretched, and I was angry at myself, for I concluded that, but for my feeling of hatred for her, I should never have given her a thought. This discovery that my soul was full of hatred made me dislike myself; I had never before found myself capable of such savagery.

"What do you do with your money?" she asked me point-blank one day after dinner when someone was paying me a sum which he had lost on his word.

"I keep it, Signora," I answered, "to offset my future losses."

"Since you spend no money, you would do better not to play, for you waste your time."

"Time spent in amusing oneself cannot be called wasted. The time to be shunned is time spent in boredom. A young man who is bored lays himself open to the misfortune of falling in love, and of being scorned."

"That may be so; but by finding your amusement in being the banker of your own money you declare yourself a miser, and a miser is no more to be esteemed than a lover. Why don't you buy yourself a pair of gloves?"

This brought a general burst of laughter, and I felt like a fool. She was right. It was an adjutant's duty to conduct a lady to her sedan chair or her carriage when she left, and in Corfu he did her this service by holding up her skirt with his left hand and putting his right under her arm. Without gloves the sweat from his hand might dirty her. I felt mortified, and the accusation of avarice pierced my soul. To attribute it to a faulty upbringing would have been to do me a kindness. To avenge myself, instead of buying gloves, I adopted the course of avoiding her, abandoning her to the stale gallantries of Sansonio, who had rotten teeth, a blond wig, a dirty complexion, and a stinking breath. But I remained chagrined and furious over my inability to stop hating this young woman, whom I could not dislike with a clear conscience, for in my calmer moments I could find no fault in her. She did not hate me and she did not love me, that was all; and, being very young and fond of a laugh, she had chosen me to amuse herself with, as she might with a jumping jack. Could I accept such a role? I wanted to punish her, to make her repent, and I hatched the most cruel schemes of revenge. The project of making her fall in love with me and then treating her like a trollop was one of them; but when I thought about it I dismissed it as beneath contempt, for I knew that I should not have the heart to resist the force of her charms, still less her advances if it should come to that. But now for a stroke of fate which changed my situation completely.

Immediately after dinner Signor D. R. sent me to Signor Condulmer, Captain of the Galleasses, to take him some letters and await his orders. This *Capo di mar* made me wait until midnight, so that when I got home, finding that Signor D. R. had already retired, I also went to bed. The next morning I entered his room when he woke to report to him on my errand. A minute later his valet comes in and hands him a note, saying that Signora F.'s adjutant was waiting outside for his answer. The valet gone, Signor D. R. unseals the note and reads. After reading, he tears it up and, in his fury, stamps on it, then walks up and down the room, and finally writes an answer, seals it, and rings for his valet to show in the adjutant, to whom he hands it. Then, to all appearances perfectly calm, he finishes reading what the *Capo di mar* had sent him, then orders me to copy out a letter. He was reading it when the valet entered and told me that Signora F. had occasion to speak with me. Signor D. R. said that I had no further business with him and that I might go and see what the Signora had to say to me. I leave, and he calls me back to warn me that it was my duty to be discreet. I did not need the warning. I hasten to Signora F.'s, at a loss to imagine why she had sent for me. I had been there several times, but never in answer to a summons from her. She kept me waiting only a minute. I enter, and am surprised to find her sitting up in bed, flushed, pretty as a picture, but with her eyes swollen and their whites reddish. She had been crying, there was no doubt of it. My heart was beating furiously, and I did not know why.

"Take that chair," she said, "for I must talk to you."

"I will listen to you standing, Signora, for I am unworthy of such a favor."

She did not press me, perhaps remembering that she had never shown me such politeness and had never received me when she was in bed. After thinking for a moment:

"My husband," she said, "last evening lost two hundred zecchini to your bank at the coffeehouse on his word, thinking that they were in my hands and that he could pay them immediately; but I have made use of the money and hence must find the sum for him. It occurred to me that you could tell Maroli that my husband had paid you the amount he lost. Here is a ring, keep it, and give it back to me the first of the year when I will pay you the two hundred ducati, for which I will now write you my note of hand."

"I will accept your note, Signora, but I do not want to deprive you of your ring. Permit me to tell you, furthermore, that Signor F. must pay the money directly to the bank, or send someone there with it, and in ten minutes I will be back here to put the amount in your hands."

After saying which, I did not wait for her to answer. I left, returned to Signor D. R.'s, put two rolls of a hundred in my pocket, and took them to her, pocketing the note in which she undertook to pay me that amount the first of the year.

When she saw me about to leave, she addressed me in these words:

"If I had foreseen that you would be so ready to oblige me, I believe I could not have brought myself to ask this favor of you."

"Well, Signora, in future you may foresee that there is not a man in the world who could refuse you so slight a favor, provided that you asked it of him in person."

"What you say is very flattering to me; but I hope I shall never again in my life be under the cruel necessity of making the experiment."

I left, thinking of the subtlety of her answer. She had not said that I was mistaken, as I expected her to do; that would have compromised her. She knew that I was in Signor D. R.'s room when her adjutant brought him her note, and that I must be certain that she had asked him for the two hundred zecchini, which he had refused her, and she said not a word to me about it. God! how that pleased me! I saw it all. I saw that she was jealous of her dignity, and I adored her. I became convinced that she could not love Signor D. R. and that he did not love her either, and my heart rejoiced in the discovery. From that day I began to fall desperately in love with her and to hope that I should succeed in winning her heart.

I had scarcely reached my room before I crossed out, in even blacker ink, everything that Signora F. had written in her note of hand except her name; then I sealed it, took it to a notary, and deposited it with him, having him give me a receipt in which he undertook to deliver the sealed note to no one but Signora F., upon her demand and into her own hands. That evening Signor F.

came to my bank, paid me the amount, played for cash, and won three or four dozen zecchini. What struck me in all this pretty adventure was that Signor D. R. continued to be as gracious as ever toward Signora F., and she toward him, and that he did not ask me what she had wanted of me when he next saw me after I got back; but from then on she changed her behavior toward me completely. She no longer sat opposite me at table without addressing a word to me, but often asked me questions which obliged me to make critical comments in a humorous style but keeping a straight face. The art of making people laugh without laughing myself was my great talent in those days. I had learned it from Signor Malipiero, my first master. *"To make people cry,"* he would tell me, *"one must cry oneself, and one must not laugh when one wishes to make people laugh."* In all that I did and all that I said when Signora F. was present, I thought of nothing but pleasing her; but as I never looked at her without some reason for it, I never gave her any certain evidence that my sole aim was to please her. I wanted to force her to become curious, to suspect the truth, to guess my secret. I needed to proceed cautiously, and I had all the time in the world. Meanwhile I was delighted to see that money and good behavior gained me a consideration which I could not expect either from my position or my age or from any talent in keeping with the profession on which I had embarked.

Toward the middle of November my French soldier came down with pneumonia. Captain Camporese had him taken to the hospital as soon as I notified him. On the fourth day he told me that he would not recover, and that he had already received the last sacraments; and toward evening I was at his house when the priest who had commended his soul to God came to announce that he had died, handing him a small packet which the dead man had entrusted to him before his last agony, stipulating that he should not deliver it to the Captain until he was dead. It contained a brass seal bearing a coat of arms surrounded by a ducal mantling, a baptismal certificate, and a sheet of paper on which, since the Captain did not know French, I read the following, written in a very poor hand and spelled any which way:

"I intend that this paper which I have written and signed with my own hand shall not be placed in the hands of my Captain until I am well and duly dead: otherwise my confessor may not make any use of it, for I entrust it to him only under the sacred seal of confession. I ask my Captain, then, to have me buried in a vault, from which my body can be exhumed if the Duke my father should ask for it. I further ask him to send the French Ambassador at Venice my baptismal certificate, the seal with the arms of my family, and a certificate of my death in proper form, for him to send to His Grace the Duke, my father; my right of primogeniture having now to pass to the Prince my brother. In testimony of which my signature, François VI, Charles, Philippe, Louis FOUCAULD, Prince of LA ROCHEFOUCAULD."

The baptismal certificate, issued at Saint-Sulpice,[57] gave the same name, and that of the ducal father was François V. The mother's name was Gabrielle du Plessis.

When I finished reading this I could not hold back a great burst of laughter; but seeing that my stupid Captain considered my merriment quite out of place and was preparing to hasten off and communicate the matter to the Proveditor-General, I left him and went to the coffeehouse, certain that His Excellency would scoff at him and that the extravagance of the joke would set everyone in Corfu laughing. At Cardinal Acquaviva's in Rome I had known the Abbé de Liancourt, great grandson of Charles, whose sister Gabrielle du Plessis had been the wife of François V; but that had been at the beginning of the preceding century. In the Cardinal's secretariat I had copied out an item which the Abbé de Liancourt needed to communicate to the Court of Madrid and in which there were some other particulars concerning the house of Du Plessis. In any case, I thought La Valeur's imposture as absurd as it was strange, for since the whole matter was not to be known until he was dead, it could be of no possible use to him.

A half hour later, just as I was opening a new pack of cards, Adjutant Sansonio enters and relates the important piece of news in the most serious tone. He had just come from the Proveditor-General's, where he had seen Camporese arrive breathless and hand over the dead man's seal and papers to His Excellency. His Excellency had immediately given orders that the prince should be buried in a private vault, with the funeral ceremonies suitable to his birth. A half hour later Signor Minotto, the Proveditor-General's adjutant, came to tell me that His Excellency wished to speak with me. At the end of the deal, I give the cards to Major Maroli and go to the Proveditor's. I find His Excellency at table with the ranking ladies and three or four naval commanders; I see Signora F. and Signor D. R.

"So!" the old General[58] said, addressing me, "your servant was a prince."

"I should never have guessed it, Monsignore, and even now I do not believe it."

"What! He is dead and he was not insane. You have seen his baptismal certificate, his arms, the document in his hand. When a man is on his deathbed he is not inclined to play jokes."

"If His Excellency believes that all this is true, the respect which I owe him makes it my duty to be silent."

"It cannot but be true, and I am amazed that you doubt it."

"The reason, Monsignore, is that I am well informed concerning both the La Rochefoucauld and the Du Plessis families; besides which, I knew the man too well. He was not insane, but he was an extravagant jester. I never saw him write, and he has told me twenty times that he never learned to.''

''The document in his hand proves the contrary. His seal with the ducal mantling—perhaps you are unaware that Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld is a duke and peer of France.''

''I beg your pardon, Monsignore, I know all that, and even more, for I know that François VI[59] married a Mademoiselle de Vivonne.''

''You know nothing.''

At this pronouncement I condemned myself to silence. It was with pleasure that I saw all the men present delighted to see me humiliated by the words: ''You know nothing.'' An officer said that the dead man was handsome, that he had a look of nobility and a fine intelligence, and that he had played his part with such discretion that no one could ever have imagined he was what he was. A lady said that if she had known him she would have unmasked him. Another toady said that he was always in high spirits, never haughty to his fellows, and that he sang like an angel.

''He was twenty-five years old,'' said Signora Sagredo, looking at me, ''and if it is true that he had these qualities, you must have seen them in him.''

''I can only describe him for you, Signora, as he appeared to me: Always in high spirits, sometimes extravagantly so, for he would turn somersaults, singing licentious songs, and commanding an amazing stock of popular tales of magic and miracles and marvelous feats which offended common sense and which for that very reason could raise a laugh. His faults were being a drunkard, dirty, licentious, quarrelsome, and a bit of a rogue; but I put up with him because he dressed my hair well, and because I wanted to accustom myself to speaking French idiomatically, in accordance with the genius of the language. He always told me that he was from Picardy, the son of a peasant, and a deserter. When he told me he could not write, he may have been deceiving me."

Just as I was saying this, in comes Camporese and tells His Excellency that La Valeur was still breathing. The General then looks at me and says he would be delighted if he recovered from his illness.

"So should I, Monsignore; but his confessor will certainly kill him during the night."

"Why should you think he will kill him?"

"To escape the galleys, to which Your Excellency will sentence him for violating the seal of confession."

There was a burst of laughter, and the old General drew down his black brows and scowled. When the gathering dispersed, Signora F., whom I had preceded to her carriage since Signor D. R. was giving her his arm, told me to get in, saying that it was raining. It was the first time she had done me so great an honor.

"I think as you do," she said, "but you have displeased the General in the highest degree."

"It is a misfortune I could not avoid, Signora, for I cannot lie."

"You might," said Signor D. R., "have spared the General your excellent joke about the confessor killing the prince."

"I thought he would laugh at it, as I saw Your Excellency and the Signora laugh. *Humor that rouses laughter is generally welcome.*"

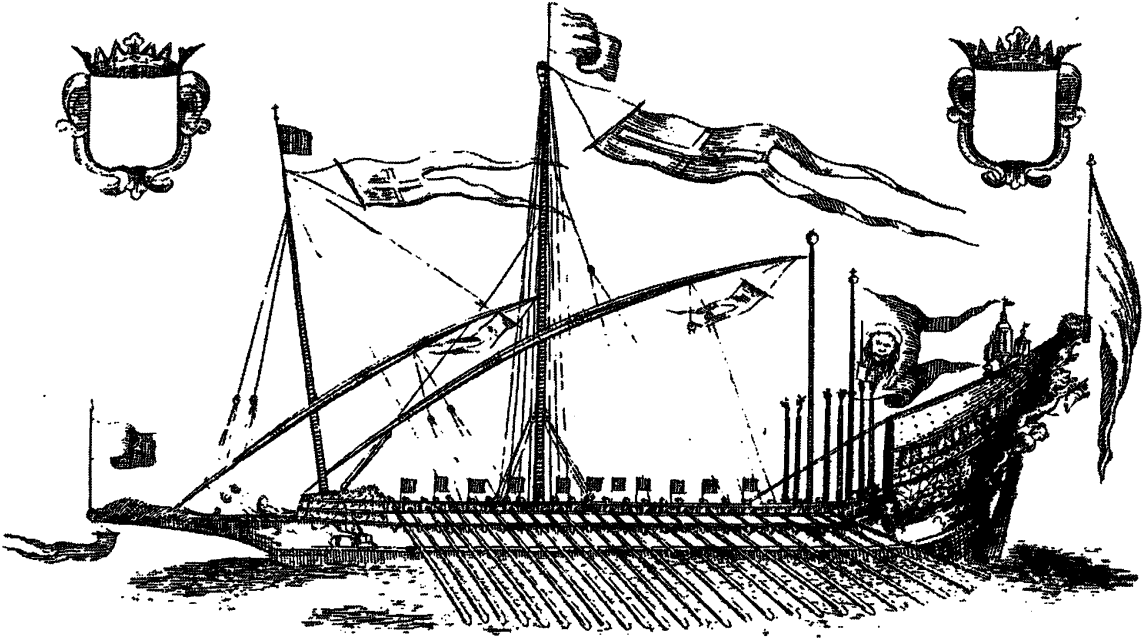
"But not to those who have no sense of humor."

"I wager a hundred zecchini that the clown will recover and that, having the General on his side, he will reap the benefits of his imposture. I can hardly wait to see him treated as a prince and paying court to Signora Sagredo."

On hearing the lady's name, Signora F., who did not like her, burst out laughing; and as we got out of the carriage Signor D. R. told me to come up. It was his habit, when he supped with her at the General's, to spend half an hour alone with her at her house, for Signor F. never put in an appearance. So it was the first time that this noble couple were admitting a third person; I was delighted with the distinction and was far from thinking it inconsequential. The satisfaction which I felt, and was obliged to hide, could not be allowed to keep me from giving a gay, humorous turn to all the subjects which the Signore and the Signora brought up. Our trio continued for four hours. We went back home to Signor D. R.'s at two in the morning. It was on this night that Signor D. R. and Signora F. came to know me. Signora F. told Signor D. R. that she had never laughed so much, or believed that words alone could arouse so much laughter.

The fact is that her laughing at everything I said made me find her infinitely witty, and that her vivacity roused such a passion in me that I went to bed convinced I could no longer play my role of indifference toward her.

When I woke the next morning the new soldier who had come to wait on me told me that not only was La Valeur better but the doctor at the hospital had pronounced him out of danger. The news was discussed at table, and I did not open my lips. The next day but one he was taken, at the General's order, to a very decent apartment, where he was given a lackey; he was provided with a suit and shirts, and after the too indulgent Proveditor-General paid him a visit, all the *capi di mar* did likewise, not excepting Signor D. R. Curiosity played a part in this. Signora Sagredo went, and after that all the ladies wanted to make his acquaintance, except Signora F., who laughed and told me that she would not go unless I would be so good as to present her. I begged her to excuse me. He was addressed as "Your Highness," and he called Signora Sagredo his princess. I told Signor D. R., who tried to persuade me to go, that I had said



Venetian Galley

too much to have either the courage or the baseness to recant. The whole imposture would have been discovered if anyone had had a copy of the French peerage book, which gives the genealogy of all the great French houses; but nobody owned one, and even the French consul, a blockhead of the first water, knew nothing about it. The fool began going out a week after his metamorphosis. He dined and supped at the General's table and attended his reception every evening, where he fell asleep because he was drunk. Despite all this he was still believed to be a prince, for two reasons: first, because he waited fearlessly for the answer the General was to receive from Venice, to which he had written at once; second, because he petitioned the Bishop's palace to inflict a severe punishment on the priest who, by violating the seal of confession, had betrayed his secret. The priest was already in prison, and the General did not have the strength of mind to defend him. All the *capi di mar* had invited him to dinner, but Signor D. R. did not dare to because Signora F. had told him in so many words that on that day she would dine in her own house. I had already respectfully informed him that on the day he invited him I should be absent from his table.

One day as I was coming out of the old fort, I met him[60] on the bridge which leads to the esplanade. He stops in front of me and makes me laugh by loftily reproaching me with never having come to see him. I stop laughing to tell him he should think of running away before the answer came from which the General would learn the truth and give him a bad time. I offer to help him and to arrange for the captain of a Neapolitan vessel, which was ready to sail, to take him aboard and hide him. Instead of accepting my offer, the wretched creature treats me to some insults.

The lady to whom the clown was paying court was Signora Sagredo, who, her pride soaring because a French prince had recognized her superiority to all the other ladies, treated him well. The same lady, at a large dinner party at Signor D. R.'s, asked me why I had advised the prince to run away.

"He told me about it himself," she said; "he is amazed at your obstinacy in considering him an impostor."

"I gave him the advice, Signora, because I have a kind heart and a clear head."

"Then we are all fools, including the General?"

"The conclusion is unsound, Signora. To hold a different opinion from someone else does not make one a fool. It is possible that in a week or ten days I shall find that I was wrong; but that will not make me think myself more of a fool than anyone else. In the meanwhile a lady of your intelligence may well have discovered whether the man is a prince or a peasant from his manners and his education. Does he dance well?"

"Not a step; but he does not care. He says he never wanted to learn."

"Is he mannerly at table?"

"He is no stickler for manners. He doesn't want his plate changed; he eats from the dish in the middle of the table with his own spoon. He does not know how to stifle a belch; he yawns, and he is the first to rise when he feels like it. It's perfectly simple, he has been badly brought up."

"But pleasant company, for all that, or so I must believe. Is he clean?"

"No, but he is not yet sufficiently provided with linen."

"I hear he is sober."

"You are joking. He gets up from the table drunk twice a day; but in that respect he is to be pitied. He cannot drink wine without its going to his head. He swears like a hussar, and we laugh; but he never takes offense at anything."

"Is he intelligent?"

"He has a prodigious memory, for he tells us new stories every day."

"Does he talk of his family?"

"A great deal about his mother, of whom he is very fond. She is a Du Plessis."

"If she is still alive she must, take or leave a year or two, be a hundred and fifty."

"What nonsense!"

"Yes, Signora. She was married in the days of Maria de' Medici." [61]

"But his baptismal certificate gives her name; but his seal[62] . . ."

"Does he know what arms his escutcheon bears?"

"Do you doubt it?"

"I believe he does not know the first thing about it."

The whole company rose from table. A moment afterward the prince is announced and arrives at the same instant, whereupon Signora Sagredo addresses him with:

"Casanova is certain, my dear Prince, that you do not know your arms."

At these words, he bears down on me, sneering, calls me a coward, and gives me a backhanded smack on the face which disorders my hair and astonishes me. I leave the room slowly, taking my hat and cane on the way, and go down the staircase, hearing Signor D. R. loudly ordering that the clown be thrown out of the window.

I leave the house and walk toward the esplanade to wait for him, but seeing him come out by the side door, I start down the street, certain that I shall meet him. I see him, I run up to him, and begin giving him blows fit to kill him in a corner formed by two walls which, affording him no escape, left him with no resource but to draw his sword; but it never occurred to him. I left him only when I saw him stretched on the ground and covered with blood. The crowd of onlookers divided to let me pass, and I went to the coffeehouse in the Spilea[63] quarter to wash down my bitter saliva with an unsugared lemonade. In four or five minutes I found myself surrounded by all the young officers of the garrison, who, since they did nothing but tell me with one voice that I should have killed him, began to annoy me; for I had handled him in such a manner that if he was not dead it was not my fault. I should perhaps have killed him if he had drawn his sword.

A half hour later, up comes one of the General's adjutants, with an order from His Excellency that I should put myself under arrest on board the *bastarda.*[64] This is the usual name for the flagship of the galleys, arrest on which means having one's feet chained like a convict. I answer that I had understood the message and he goes his way. I leave the coffeehouse; but when I reach the end of the street, instead of going toward the esplanade I turn to the left and proceed along the shore. After walking for a quarter of an hour I see a moored boat with two oars and no one in it. I get in; I untie it, and I row toward a big six-oared caïque[65] which was going to windward. Reaching it, I ask the *carabuchiri*[66] to sail with the wind and put me aboard a big fishing vessel which was in sight and heading for the rock island of Vido.[67] I leave my boat to drift. After paying liberally for my caïque, I board the big vessel and haggle with the captain for passage. As soon as we were agreed he spreads three sails and, with a fresh breeze, he tells me two hours later that we are fifteen miles from Corfu. The wind falling suddenly, I made him row against the current. Toward midnight they told me that they could not fish without a wind, and that they were exhausted. They say that I can sleep until dawn, I refuse. I pay a small sum and have myself put ashore, not asking what the place is for fear of arousing their suspicion. All I knew was that I was twenty miles from Corfu, and in a place where no one could suppose me to be. All that I saw by the moonlight was a small church adjoining a house, a long roofed shelter open at both ends, and, beyond a hundred paces of level ground, mountains. I stayed in the shelter until dawn, sleeping quite comfortably on straw despite the cold. It was the first of December; but despite the mildness of the climate, as I had no cloak and was wearing too light a uniform, I was chilled to the bone.

Hearing bells ringing, I go to the church. The long-bearded papa,[68] surprised at my sudden appearance, asks me in Greek if I am *Romeo,* Greek; I answer that I am *Fragico,* Italian;[69] and he turns his back on me and will hear no more. He goes into his house and shuts the door.

I turn toward the sea and see a boat leaving a tartan anchored a hundred paces from the island and making its way with four oars to disembark its passengers just where I was standing. I see a decent-looking Greek, a woman, and a boy ten or twelve years old. I ask the man if he has had a good journey and from where. He answers in Italian that he has come from Cephalonia[70] with his wife and son, the woman and the boy whom I saw before me, and is on his way to Venice; but that before going there he had come to hear mass at Our Lady of Casopo[71] to find out if his father-in-law is still living and if he will pay him his wife's dowry.

"How will you find that out?"

"From Papa Deldimopulo, who will faithfully transmit the Holy Virgin's oracle."

I bow my head; I follow him to the church. He speaks with the papa; he gives him money. The papa says mass, he enters the *sancta sanctorum,* he comes out a quarter of an hour later, goes up to the altar again, turns toward us, meditates, and, after setting his long beard to rights, he delivers his oracle in ten or twelve words. The Greek from Cephalonia, who was certainly no Ulysses, gives the impostor more money, looking completely satisfied, and leaves him. As I walk toward the boat with the Greek, I ask him if he is satisfied with the oracle.

"Perfectly satisfied. I know that my father-in-law is alive and that he will pay me the dowry if I will leave my son with him. I knew that it was his greatest desire, and I will leave him the boy."

"Does this papa know you?"

"Not even my name."

"Have you fine wares on your ship?"

"Fine enough. Come and breakfast with me and you shall see them all."

"Gladly."

Delighted to have learned that there are still oracles, and certain that there will be so long as there are Greek priests in the world, I accompany the worthy man aboard his tartan, where he orders a good breakfast. His merchandise consisted of cotton, linens, currants, oil, and excellent wines. He also had stockings, cotton nightcaps, cloaks with hoods in the Eastern fashion, umbrellas, and ration biscuits, which I liked very much since I then had thirty teeth, a finer set of which it would be hard to see. Of those thirty teeth, only two are left me today; twenty-eight have gone their way along with several other tools; but *"dum vita superest, bene est"* ("so long as life remains, all is well"[72]). I bought some of everything except cotton, with which I would not have known what to do; and, without haggling, paid him the thirty-five or forty zecchini he said it was worth. He then presented me with six magnificent botargos.[73]

Hearing me praise a wine from Zante which he called "Generoydes,"[74] he said that if I would accompany him to Venice he would give me a bottle of it every day, even during all our time in quarantine. Always a little superstitious, and so taking his invitation for a command from God, I was on the verge of accepting it for the most stupid of reasons: that this strange resolve would be wholly unpremeditated. Such I was, but unfortunately I am a different man today. The usual explanation is that age brings wisdom. I do not understand how anyone can like the effect of an accursed cause.

Just as I was on the point of taking him at his word, he offers me a fine gun for ten zecchini, assuring me that in Corfu anyone would offer me twelve for it. At the word "Corfu" I seemed to hear my same God ordering me to return there. I bought the gun, and the worthy Cephalonian gave me a beautiful Turkish gamebag, well supplied with lead and powder, into the bargain. I wished him a good voyage and, with my gun under an excellent cloak, and all that I had bought stowed in a sack, I went back to the beach, determined that the scoundrelly papa should lodge me, willingly or unwillingly. The lift which the Greek's wine had given me was to have consequences. In my pockets I had five or six hundred copper gazzette,[75] which I found very heavy; but I had had to get a supply of them. It was easy to foresee that I might need such small coins on the island of Casopo.

So, after putting my sack in the shelter, I proceed, with my gun on my shoulder, to the papa's house. The church was closed. But I must now give my readers a sufficient idea of what I was at that moment. I was calmly desperate. The three or four hundred zecchini I had in my purse could not prevent me from thinking that, where I stood, I did not have a leg to stand on; that I could not remain there long, that it would soon be discovered that I was there, and that, having deliberately defaulted to begin with, I should be treated accordingly. *I was unable to make a decision, and that alone is enough to make any situation intolerable.* I could not go back to Corfu of my own free will without being called a fool, for by going back I should give incontestable proof of inconsistency or of cowardice, and I did not have the courage to desert in good earnest. The chief cause for this moral impotence was neither the thousand zecchini I had entrusted to the cashier of the principal coffeehouse, nor my wardrobe, which was quite well stocked, nor fear of not being able to make a living elsewhere; it was Signora F. whom I adored, and whose hand I had not yet kissed. In this quandary I could only abandon myself to the demands of the moment. And at that moment I must think of finding a lodging and something to eat.

I knock loudly on the door of the priest's house. He comes to the window and, not waiting for me to speak, shuts it again. I knock again, I swear, I raise a racket, no one answers, and in my fury I fire my gun at the head of a sheep which was grazing with several others some twenty paces away. The shepherd shouts, the papa appears at the window, shouting "thieves," and at once orders the alarm rung. I see three bells ringing together. I foresee a general gathering, what will happen I have no idea. I reload my gun.

Eight or ten minutes later I see a great crowd of peasants coming down the mountain, armed with guns or pitchforks or long pikes. I withdraw into the shelter, and I do not feel afraid, for I think it unlikely that, since I am alone, these fellows will kill me without hearing what I have to say.

The first to come running up were ten or twelve youths with their guns at the ready. I stop them by pelting them with handfuls of gazzette, which they pick up and which amaze them, and I continue to do the same to the other squads as they come up, until I have no more gazzette and see no more people coming. The bumpkins stood there gaping, not knowing what action to take against a peaceable-looking young man who was throwing away his wealth in such a fashion. I could not speak until the deafening bells stopped ringing; but the shepherd, the papa, and his beadle interrupted me all the more easily because I was speaking Italian. All three of them talked at the same time to the mob. I sat down on my sack and remained there, perfectly calm.

One of the peasants, a sensible-looking man of advanced age, comes toward me and asks me in Italian why I had killed a sheep.

"To eat it after I have paid for it."

"But His Holiness can ask a zecchino for it."

"Here is a zecchino."

The papa takes it and goes, and the whole fracas is over. The peasant who had spoken to me tells me that he had served in the war of the year '16,[76] and had defended Corfu. I congratulate him, and ask him to find me a comfortable lodging and a good servant who can cook for me. He answers that he can get me a whole house and that he will cook for me himself, but that I shall have to climb. I accept, and we set off uphill, followed by two tall youths one of whom carries my sack and the other my sheep. I tell the man that I want twenty-four youths like those two in my service, under military discipline, and will pay them twenty gazzette a day, with forty for himself as my lieutenant. He answers that I have come to the right person and that he will raise me a military guard with which I will be well satisfied.

We come to a very comfortable house, where I had, on the ground floor, three rooms, a kitchen, and a long stable, which I at once transformed into a guardroom. He left me to procure everything I needed, first of all a woman to make some shirts for me at once. It all arrived during the course of the day: bedding, furniture, a good dinner, pots and pans, twenty-four youths each with his gun, and an aged seamstress with young apprentices to cut out and sew shirts. After supper I was in the best humor imaginable in this company of thirty people, who treated me like a king and were at a loss to understand what could have brought me to their island. The only thing which irked me was that the girls did not speak Italian: I knew too little Greek to hope to improve their ideas by speech.

I did not see my guard mounted until the next morning. God, how I laughed! My fine soldiers were all *palicari,*[77] but a company of soldiers without uniforms and without discipline is comic. It looks worse than a flock of sheep. However, they learned to present arms and to obey their officers' orders. I posted three sentinels, one at the guardroom, another at the door of my bedroom, and the third at the foot of the mountain, whence he could see the beach. He was to warn us if he saw any armed ship arriving. For the first two or three days I thought I was merely having some fun; but I ceased to think it a joke when I saw that the time must come when I should have to use force to defend myself against force. I considered making my men swear allegiance to me; but I decided against it. My lieutenant assured me that I had only to say the word. My generosity had won me the love of the whole island. The woman who cooked for me, the same who had found me seamstresses to make my shirts, expected that I would fall in love with one of them, but not with them all; I outdid her expectations, she procured me the favors of all the ones who took my fancy, and she found me grateful. I was living a life of pure bliss, for my table was exquisite too. I ate nothing but juicy mutton, and woodcock of which I did not eat the like again until twenty-four years later in Petersburg. I drank nothing but Scopolo wine and the best muscats from the islands of the Archipelago. My lieutenant was my only companion at table. I never walked abroad without him and without two of my *palicari,* who followed me to defend me from some youths who bore me a grudge because they imagined that their mistresses, who were my seamstresses, had left them for my sake. It occurred to me that without money I should have been unhappy; but there is no way of knowing if, without money, I should have dared to leave Corfu.

When a week had passed and I was at table three hours before midnight, I heard the challenge of my sentinel at the guardroom, "*Piosine aftou?*"[78] My lieutenant goes out, and returns a moment later saying that a reliable man who spoke Italian had come to tell me something important. I have him brought in and, in the presence of my lieutenant, he surprises me by gloomily uttering the following words:

"Day after tomorrow, which is Sunday, the most holy Papa Deldimopulo will blast you with the *cataramonachia.*[79] If you do not stop him, a slow fever will send you to the other world in six weeks."

"I have never heard of such a drug."

"It is not a drug. It is a curse, fulminated with the Blessed Sacrament in hand, which has such a power."

"What reason can the priest have for murdering me in this fashion?"

"You are troubling the peace and order of his parish. You have made off with several virgins, whom their former suitors no longer wish to marry."

After offering him a drink and thanking him, I wished him good night. I thought the matter of some consequence, for if I did not believe in the *cataramonachia,* I believed strongly in poisons. At daybreak the next day, which was Saturday, I set off without a word to my lieutenant and made my way alone to the church, where I surprised the papa with the following words:

"At the first touch of fever that I feel, I will blow out your brains, so mind what you are about. Put a curse on me that will kill me in a day, or make your will. Farewell."

After giving him this warning, I returned to my palace. Very early on Monday he came to return my visit. I had a headache. On his asking me how I felt, I told him; but I could not help laughing when I saw him hasten to assure me, on his oath, that it was caused by the heavy air of the island of Casopo.

On the third day after his visit, just as I was sitting down at table, the sentinel at the advanced post, who could see the seashore, raises the alarm. My lieutenant goes out, and four minutes later returns and tells me that an officer had disembarked from an armed felucca which had just arrived. After ordering my troop armed, I go out and I see an officer, accompanied by a peasant, coming up the mountain toward my quarters. His hat was pulled down, and he was busy with his cane, pushing aside the shrubs that blocked his way. He was alone; so, having nothing to fear, I go to my room and order my lieutenant to pay him the honors of war and show him in. I put on my sword and wait for him, standing.

He enters and I see that it is the same Adjutant Minotto who had ordered me to go to the *bastarda.*

"You are alone," I said, "so you come as a friend. Let us embrace."

"I cannot but come as a friend, for as an enemy I should not have men enough to play the part. But what I see seems a dream."

"Sit down and we will dine together. You will eat the best."

"Very well. We will leave together afterward."

"You will leave by yourself, if you wish to leave. I will not leave here until I am assured that I will not only not be put under arrest but that I will be given satisfaction. The General must sentence that clown to the galleys."

"Be sensible and come with me of your own free will. I have orders to take you back by force, but since I have not strength enough, I will go and make my report, and they will send a force to capture you to which you cannot but surrender."

"Never, my dear friend; I will die before I will be taken."

"You must have gone mad, then; for you are in the wrong. You have disobeyed the order I brought you to go on board the *bastarda.* That is where you are wrong, for in the other matter you are right a thousand times over. The General himself says so."

"So I should put myself under arrest?"

"Certainly. Obedience is our first duty."

"In my place you would have gone?"

"I don't know; but I do know that if I had not, I should have committed a crime."

"But if I surrender now, I shall be treated as far more guilty than I should have been if I had obeyed that unjust order. Shall I not?"

"I don't believe so. Come, and you will find out."

"Come without knowing what my fate will be? You are wasting your hopes if you are hoping for that. Let us dine. Since my guilt is so great that force is used against me, I will surrender to force; and it will not make me any guiltier, even though blood will be shed."

"Yes, you will increase your guilt. Let us dine. Perhaps a good dinner will make you reason more soundly."

Toward the end of our dinner we heard a noise. My lieutenant tells me that it is bands of peasants gathering about my house to receive my orders, the rumor having got about that the felucca had come from Corfu for no reason but to carry me off. I told him to set the good, sturdy fellows right, and to send them away with the gift of a cask of Cavalla wine.[80]

As they left they fired their guns into the air. The adjutant smiled and said that this was all very pretty, but that it would turn into an ugly matter if I let him go to Corfu without me, for he would have to be very truthful in his report.

"I will come with you if you will give me your word of honor to land me on the island of Corfu a free man."

"My orders are to deliver you into the custody of Signor Foscari on board the *bastarda.*"

"You will not carry out your orders this time."

"If the General does not find a way to make you obey, his honor is at stake, and, believe me, he will find one. But tell me, please, what would you do if the General should decide it would be a good joke to leave you here?

But you will not be left here. In view of the report I shall make, the decision will be to end this business without bloodshed.''

''It will go hard if there is not a massacre. With five hundred peasants here, I do not fear three thousand men.''

''Only one will be used, and you will be treated like a leader of rebels. All these men who are devoted to you cannot protect you from one man who will be paid to blow out your brains. I will say more. Of all the Greeks who surround you, there is not one who is not ready to assassinate you to earn twenty zecchini. Believe what I say. Come with me. Come and enjoy something not far from a triumph in Corfu. You will be applauded, made much of; you will tell the story of your escapade yourself, everyone will laugh and at the same time admire you for having yielded to reason as soon as I came and showed you a reasonable course. Everyone respects you. Signor D. R. thinks most highly of you for having had the courage not to run the clown through the body with your sword, out of respect for his house. The General himself must esteem you, for he must remember what you told him.''

''What has become of the wretch?''

''Four days ago Major Sordina's frigate arrived with dispatches which apparently gave the General all the information he needed to act as he has acted. He issued the necessary orders, and the clown has disappeared. Nobody knows what has become of him, and nobody dares mention him again before the General, whose blunder is only too obvious.''

''But after the caning I gave him, was he still received in society?''

''How can you ask? Don't you remember that he was wearing a sword? That was enough—no one would receive him. He was found with one forearm broken and his jaw shattered; a week later, for all his pitiable state, His Excellency arranged that he should disappear. The only thing that set people wondering in Corfu was your escape. For three days everyone believed that Signor D. R. was keeping you hidden in his house, and he was openly criticized for it, until he finally said at the General's table that he had no idea where you were. His Excellency himself was greatly concerned over your disappearance, until yesterday noon, when the whole story came out. The Protopapa[81] Bulgari had a letter from the Papa here complaining that an Italian officer had taken over the island and been indulging in every kind of violence for the past ten days. He accuses you of seducing all the girls and of having threatened him with death if he put the *cataramonachia* on you. When the letter was read aloud at the General's reception, he laughed; but that did not stop him from giving me orders this morning to take twelve grenadiers with me and capture you."

"Signora Sagredo is the cause of all this."

"That is true; and she has reason to regret it. You had better come and pay her a visit with me tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? Are you certain that I will not be arrested?"

"Yes, for I know that His Excellency is a man of honor."

"I know it too. Let us embrace. We will leave together after midnight."

"Why not now?"

"Because I do not want to risk spending the night on board the *bastarda*. I want to arrive in Corfu by broad daylight, so that your victory will be seen by everyone."

"But what shall we do for the next eight hours?"

"We'll go see some girls of a kind not to be found in Corfu, and afterwards we'll eat a good supper."

I then ordered my lieutenant to send food to the soldiers on board the felucca and to give us the best possible supper, sparing no expense, for I intended to leave at midnight. I made him a present of all my bulky stores, sending what I wished to keep to the felucca. My twenty-four soldiers, to whom I made a present of a week's pay, insisted on escorting me to the felucca under the command of my lieutenant, a spectacle which kept Minotto laughing all night. We reached Corfu at eight o'clock in the morning, alongside the *bastarda,* where he gave me into custody, assuring me that he would at once send all my belongings to Signor D. R.'s house and make his report to the General.

Signor Foscari, who was in command of the galley, gave me a very bad reception. Had he had the slightest nobility of feeling, he would not have been in such haste to order me put in chains. He could have put it off for a quarter of an hour by engaging me in conversation, and I should not have suffered that mortification. Without a word, he sent me off to the place where the *capo di scala*[82] made me sit down and hold out my leg to be fitted with the iron, which, however, is no dishonor in that country, unfortunately not even to galley slaves, who are more respected than soldiers.

The chain on my right foot was already fast, and my shoe was being unbuckled for the second to be attached, when one of His Excellency's adjutants arrived and ordered Signor Foscari to have my sword returned to me and to set me free. I asked permission to make my bow to the noble Governor; but his adjutant said that he excused me from doing so.

I at once went to pay my respects to the General, making him a low bow without saying a word. He gravely told me to behave more prudently in the future and to learn that my first duty in the profession I had chosen was to obey, and above all to be *discreet* and *modest*. The application of these two words was not lost on me, and I regulated my conduct accordingly.

When I made my appearance at Signor D. R.'s, I saw joy in every face. Happy moments have always made up to me for unhappy ones, and to such a degree that they make me love their cause. *It is impossible to relish to the full a pleasure which has not been preceded by pain, and pleasure is great only in proportion to the pain suffered.* Signor D. R. was so glad to see me that he embraced me. He told me, as he made me a present of a fine ring, that I had acted very rightly in not letting anyone, and particularly himself, know where I had gone into hiding.

"You can have no idea," he said, with noble candor, "what an interest Signora F. takes in you. You would please her greatly by going to call on her immediately."

What a pleasure to receive this advice from Signor D. R. himself! But the word "immediately" irked me, for I thought that, since I had spent the night on board the felucca, she would find my appearance shocking. Yet I had no choice but to go, tell her the reason for it, and even make her think it to my credit.

So I go; she was still asleep, and her maid lets me in, assuring me that she would soon ring and would be delighted to learn that I was there. During the half hour I spent with her the girl told me a great many of the things which had been said in the house on the subject of my encounter with the impostor and my flight. All that she told me could not but give me the greatest pleasure, for it convinced me that my behavior had been generally approved.

A minute after the maid went in, Signora F. summoned me. She ordered the curtains drawn, and I thought I beheld Aurora scattering roses, lilies, and jonquils. Having told her at once that if Signor D. R. had not ordered me to do so, I should never have dared to present myself before her in the condition in which she saw me, she answered that Signor D. R. knew what an interest she took in me, and that he esteemed me as highly as she did.

"I do not know, Signora, what I can have done to deserve such happiness, when all that I hoped for was indulgence."

"We all admired the self-control with which you refrained from drawing your sword and running it through the body of that clown, who would have been thrown out of the window if he had not run away first."

"I would have killed him, Signora, you may be sure, if you had not been there."

"You make me a very pretty compliment, but it is incredible that you should have thought of me at that trying moment."

At these words I looked down and turned my head away. She noticed my ring, and praised Signor D. R. when I told her how he had presented me with it, and then insisted that I give her a full account of the life I had been leading since my flight. I told her everything faithfully, except the chapter of the girls, which certainly would not have pleased her and would not have been to my credit. In social life one must learn to set a limit to one's confidences. The truths which must be left unspoken are far greater in number than the pretty truths which are fit for publication.

Signora F. laughed and, saying that she considered the whole of my behavior admirable, asked me if I should have the courage to tell my diverting story to the Proveditor-General in exactly the same terms. I assured her that I should if the General himself asked me to narrate it, and she replied that I should hold myself in readiness.

"I want him to like you," she said, "and to become your principal protector, so that you will be safe from injustices. Leave it to me."

I called on Major Maroli, to find out the state of our bank, and I was very glad to learn that he had not made me a partner from the time of my flight. I had four hundred zecchini in it, which I withdrew, reserving the right to go in again if the occasion arose.

It was almost evening when, having made my toilet, I joined Minotto to pay a visit to Signora Sagredo. She was the General's favorite and, with the exception of Signora F., the prettiest of the Venetian ladies then in Corfu. She was surprised to see me, since, having been the cause of the train of events which had made me take flight, she thought that I held it against her. I set her right, speaking with perfect candor. She answered in the most obliging manner and even asked me to spend the evening at her house now and again. I bowed, without either accepting or refusing the invitation. How could I have gone there, knowing that Signora F. could not abide her? In addition, the lady was fond of gambling and not fond of anyone who did not lose or did not manage to make her win. Minotto did not gamble, but he earned her good graces in the role of Mercury.

When I returned to Signor D. R.'s I found Signora F. there. She was alone, for he was busy writing. She asked me to tell her everything that had happened to me in Constantinople; and I had no reason to regret it. My encounter with Yusuf's wife interested her immensely, and the night I spent with Ismail watching his mistresses bathe stimulated her so greatly that I could not but see her excitement. I glossed over as much as I could; but when she found my account obscure she insisted on my explaining, and when I had done so she never failed to scold me, saying that I had been too clear. I felt certain that I should succeed in giving her a fancy for me by this course. He who rouses desires may well be destined to satisfy them; it was the reward to which I aspired, and for which I hoped despite the fact that I saw it only from very far off.

As it happened, Signor D. R. had that day invited a large company to supper, and I was naturally called upon to supply the entertainment by a circumstantial and detailed account of all that I had done after receiving the order to put myself under arrest on board the *bastarda,* whose commander, Signor Foscari, was seated beside me. My narrative delighted everyone, and it was decided that the Proveditor-General must have the pleasure of hearing it from my own lips. When I mentioned that Casopo had a good stock of hay, of which there was absolutely none in Corfu, Signor D. R. said that I should seize the occasion to deserve well of the General by hastening to inform him of the fact; I did so the next morning. His Excellency at once ordered the commanders of galleys each to send a sufficient number of galley slaves to cut it and bring it to Corfu.

Three or four days later Adjutant Minotto sought me out in the coffeehouse just before dark to tell me that the General wished to see me. I went at once.

CHAPTER V

Progress of my amour. I go to Otranto. I enter the service of Signora F. A fortunate injury.

THE reception room was crowded. I enter on tiptoe. His Excellency sees me, stops scowling, and draws the attention of the entire company to me with the words:

"There is a young man who knows his princes."

"What knowledge I have of them I have acquired by frequenting men of your stamp, Monsignore."

"These ladies are curious to know from your own lips all you have done since you disappeared from Corfu."

"Then I am condemned to make a public confession."

"Exactly. So be careful not to forget the least detail. Imagine that I am not present."

"On the contrary, it is only from Your Excellency that I can hope for absolution. But my story will be long."

"In that case, your confessor permits you to sit."

I thereupon told the whole story, omitting only my meetings with the shepherds' daughters.

"The whole experience," said the old man, "is instructive."

"Yes, Monsignore, it teaches that a young man is never in such danger of destruction as when, excited by some great passion, he is able to do as he will because he has a purse full of gold in his pocket."

I was about to leave, as the dishes were being brought in, when the major-domo told me that His Excellency "permitted" me to stay to supper. I had the honor of sitting at his table, but not of eating at it, for having to answer all the questions put to me made that impossible. As I was seated beside the Protopapa Bulgari, I asked him to excuse me if in my story I had ridiculed the Papa Deldimopulo's oracle. He answered that it was an ancient fraud to which it was difficult to put a stop.

At dessert the General, after Signora F. had whispered something to him, told me that he would be glad to hear what had happened to me in Constantinople with the wife of a certain Turk, and at the house of another one night at a bathing party. Greatly surprised by the question, I answered that they were mere pranks not worth recounting to him, and he did not press me; but what I thought incredible was the indiscretion of Signora F., who certainly should not be letting everyone in Corfu know what sort of stories I told her when we were alone together. As I cherished her reputation even more than her person, I could never have brought myself to compromise her.

Two or three days later, when I was alone with her on the terrace:

"Why," she asked, "would you not tell the General your adventures in Constantinople?"

"Because I do not want everyone to know that you permit me to tell you such stories. What stories I make bold to tell you, Signora, when we are alone together, I certainly would not tell you in public."

"Why not? On the contrary, it seems to me that if you are prompted by a feeling of respect, you owe me more respect when I am alone than when I am in company."

"Aspiring to the honor of amusing you, I took the risk of displeasing you; but it shall not happen again."

"I do not wish to read your intentions, but it seems to me that you are wrong to risk displeasing me in order to please me. We are to sup at the General's, who told Signor D. R. to bring you too; I am sure he will tell you that he would be glad to hear the two stories. You cannot decline."

Signor D. R. came to fetch her and we went to the General's. Despite the fact that she had tried to humiliate me in our dialogue on the terrace, I was glad that fortune had brought it about. By obliging me to justify myself, she had been obliged to hear a declaration which was not without significance.

His Excellency the Proveditor-General at once did me the favor of handing me a letter addressed to me, which he had found in the dispatch he had received from Constantinople. I was about to put it in my pocket, but he said that he delighted in anything new and that I might read it. It was from Yusuf, and gave me the unhappy news that Monsieur de Bonneval was dead. When the General heard me name Yusuf, he asked me to tell him the conversation I had had with his wife; whereupon, unable to decline, I told him a story which lasted an hour and which interested the whole company, but which I made up on the spot. By this story out of the blue I avoided injuring either my friend Yusuf or Signora F. or my own character. It did the greatest honor to my feelings; and I felt very happy when, stealing a look at Signora F., I saw that she seemed pleased, though a little surprised.

That same evening, when we had returned to her house, she said to Signor D. R. in my presence that the whole story I had told about my conversation with Yusuf's wife was a fabrication, but that she could not hold it against me because she had found it very pretty, but the fact remained that I had not done her the favor she had asked of me.

"He insists," she went on, "that telling the true story would have made everyone at the reception conclude that he amuses me with indecent tales. I want you to judge. Will you now," she asked me, "be so good as to relate your encounter in the same words that you used in telling it to me? Can you?"

"Yes, Signora, I can and I will."

Stung to the quick by an indiscretion which, my knowledge of women being still imperfect, I supposed to be unparalleled, I gathered myself together and, with perfect confidence in my powers, narrated the adventure in the most graphic detail, not forgetting to describe the feelings which the fire of love had roused in my soul at the sight of the Greek woman's beauties.

"And you think," Signor D. R. asked Signora F., "that he should have told his story at the reception in these same words?"

"If it would have been wrong for him to tell it at the reception in this manner, was it not wrong for him to tell it to me?"

"It is for you to judge if he did wrong. Did he displease you? I can tell you that he would have displeased me greatly if he had told the story as he has just told it to us."

"Then in future," she said to me, "I ask you never to tell me anything when we are alone together which you would not tell me in the presence of fifty people."

"I will obey you, Signora."

"But it goes without saying," added Signor D. R., "that the Signora remains free to countermand her order whenever she sees fit."

I concealed my vexation, and a quarter of an hour later we left. I was beginning to know what kind of woman she was; and I foresaw the cruel ordeals through which she would put me; but love promised me victory, bidding me hope. In the meanwhile I discerned that Signor D. R. was not jealous of me, whereas she seemed to be daring him to be so. These were two most important points.

A few days after she had laid this command on me, the conversation turned to the misfortune which had condemned me to enter the lazaretto at Ancona without a soldo.

"Nevertheless," I said, "I fell in love with a Greek slave girl who very nearly made me break the laws of quarantine."

"How was that?"

"Signora, you are alone, and I remember your order."

"Is it so very improper?"

"Not at all, but it is a story I would never tell you in public."

"Well then," she said with a laugh, "I countermand my order, as Signor D. R. said I would. Speak."

I told her the whole adventure in the most truthful detail; and seeing her thoughtful, I exaggerated my misfortune.

"What do you mean by *your* misfortune? I think the poor Greek girl was more unhappy than you. You did not see her again after that?"

"Excuse me, I dare not tell you."

"Out with it! You are being absurd. Tell me everything. I suppose it will be another of your atrocious performances."

"Far from it. It was pure delight, though incomplete."

"Tell it, but do not call things by their names; that is what matters."

At this new order I told her, though without looking her in the face, all that I had done to the Greek girl in Bellino's presence and, receiving no answer, I turned the conversation to another subject. I felt that I was on an excellent footing but that I must not hurry matters for, young as she was, I was sure that she had never entered into a misalliance, and an alliance with me could not but seem to her a misalliance of the worst sort. But now for the first favor I was granted, and a very strange one it was. She pricked her middle finger badly with a pin and, her maid not being present, asked me to suck it for her to stop the bleeding. If my reader has ever been in love, he can imagine how I carried out her request; for what is a kiss? It is nothing but the tangible effect of one's desire to imbibe from the object of one's love. After thanking me, she told me to spit the blood I had sucked into my handkerchief.

"I swallowed it, Signora, and God knows with what pleasure."

"Swallowed my blood with pleasure? Do you belong to the race of cannibals?"

"I only know that I swallowed it involuntarily, but with pleasure."

At the Proveditor-General's reception everyone was lamenting that there were to be no theatrical performances during the coming Carnival. There was no time to be lost. I offered to go to Otranto and engage a troupe of actors, on condition that all the boxes should be subscribed for in advance and I be granted the monopoly of the faro bank. My offer was eagerly accepted, and His Excellency gave me a felucca. In three days I sold all my boxes and my whole parterre[1] to a Jew, reserving for myself only two days a week.[2] The Carnival that year was a very long one.[3] The profession of a theatrical manager is said to be difficult, but this is not true. I left Corfu at nightfall and reached Otranto at dawn without my rowers having wetted their oars. From Corfu to Otranto is only fourteen short leagues.[4]

Dismissing any idea of landing, because of the quarantine, which is always in force in Italy for all travelers from the Levant, I at once went down to the visiting room, where one speaks from behind a grille to all who take their places behind another grille opposite and four yards[5] away. As soon as I said that I was there to raise a troupe of actors for Corfu, the managers of two which were in Otranto at the time came to talk with me. I began by telling them that I wanted to see all the actors at my leisure, one company after the other.

I immediately witnessed a strange and comical quarrel between the two managers. Each wanted to be the last to show me his actors. The port captain said that it was for me to end the dispute and declare which company I wished to see first, the Neapolitan or the Sicilian. As I knew neither, I said the Neapolitan, and Don Fastidio, who was manager of it, was chagrined, while Don Battipaglia[6] was just the opposite, for he felt certain that when the comparison was made I would give the preference to his company. An hour later I saw Don Fastidio arrive with all his henchmen.

My surprise was not small when I saw Petronio with his sister Marina; but it was far greater when I saw Marina cry out and jump over the barrier into my arms. A row at once began between Don Fastidio and the port captain. Since Marina was in Don Fastidio's employ, the port captain had no choice but to make me take her to the lazaretto, where she would have to go through quarantine at his expense. The headstrong girl wept, but there was nothing I could do. I broke off the quarrel by telling Don Fastidio to show me his characters one after the other. Petronio was one, playing the part of lover, and he told me he had a letter to deliver to me from Teresa. I saw a Venetian whom I knew who played Pantalone, three actresses who might well please, a Pulcinella, a Scaramuccia,[7] on the whole a passable company. I told Don Fastidio to tell me in a word how much he asked per day, adding that if Don Battipaglia made me a better bargain I would give him the preference. He said that I should have to provide lodgings for twenty persons in at least six rooms, give him a sitting room not otherwise occupied, ten beds, paid passages, and thirty Neapolitan ducati per day. As he made his proposal he sent me over a little book containing the repertory of all the comedies he could have his company perform, the choice of plays being left to me. Remembering at this point that Marina would have to be quarantined in the lazaretto if I did not take Don Fastidio's company, I told him to go and draw up the contract and that I wished to leave at once; but a comical scene ensued. Don Battipaglia called Marina a little wh..., telling her that she had broken the quarantine by prearrangement with Don Fastidio to force me to take his company. Petronio and Don Fastidio dragged him out, and they fought with their fists. A quarter of an hour later Petronio brought me the letter from Teresa, who was growing rich by ruining the Duke, and, constant as ever, was awaiting me at Naples.

Toward nightfall I left Otranto with twenty actors and six great packing boxes, which contained everything they needed to act their farces. A breeze from the south which was blowing as I set out would have brought me to Corfu in ten hours if after an hour my *carabuchiri* had not told me that he saw in the moonlight a vessel which, being a corsair, might capture us. Not wishing to take any risk, I ordered the sails lowered and returned to Otranto. At dawn we set out with a west wind which, even so, would have taken us to Corfu; but after two hours at sea the pilot told me he saw a brigantine which could only be a corsair, since it was trying to put us to leeward. I told him to take the tiller and go to starboard to see if she would follow us: he made the maneuver and the brigantine did likewise. Unable to return to Otranto and having no wish to go to Africa, I was obliged to reach land by rowing to the nearest point on the coast of Calabria.[8] The sailors instilled their fear into the actors, who began shouting and weeping and commending themselves to some saint, none of them to God. The grimaces of Scaramuccia and of the serious Don Fastidio would have made me laugh but for the urgent danger. Only Marina, who had no conception of it, laughed and made fun of everyone's fears. Toward evening, a strong south wind having come up, I gave orders to take it astern even if it should become stronger. To escape to safety from the corsair I was prepared to cross the Gulf.[9] After running in this fashion all night, I decided to reach Corfu by rowing; I was eighty miles from it. I was in the middle of the Gulf, and at the end of the day the crew of the felucca were exhausted, but I no longer had any fear. A north wind began to blow, and in less than an hour became so fresh that we were sailing close-hauled in a terrifying fashion. The felucca seemed to be capsizing at every moment. I myself held the tiller. Everyone kept still, for I had ordered silence on pain of death; even so, Scaramuccia's sobs could not but cause laughter. The wind being steady and my pilot at the helm, I had nothing to fear. At dawn we saw Corfu, and we landed at the *mandracchio*[10] at nine o'clock. Everyone was surprised to see us arrive from that direction.

As soon as my troupe was lodged all the young officers came to visit the actresses, whom they found ugly, except for Marina, who uncomplainingly received the news that I could not be her lover. I was certain that she would not be long without one. The actresses who looked ugly to all the young bloods were proclaimed pretty as soon as they were seen on the stage. The actress who had a great success was the wife of Pantalone. Signor Duodo, commander of a warship, having paid her a visit and found her husband unaccommodating, gave him a caning. Don Fastidio came the following morning to tell me that Pantalone refused to act again, as did his wife. I retrieved the situation by giving them a performance. Pantalone's wife was much applauded; but considering herself insulted because the audience applauded her by shouting "Bravo, Duodo," she came complaining to the General's box, where I was usually to be found. To console her the General promised her that I would give her another performance at the end of the Carnival; and I was obliged to consent; but to appease the other actors I had to share out all my seventeen performances among them. The one I gave to Marina, who danced with her brother, was because of Signora F.'s patronage. She had openly taken her under her wing as soon as she learned that Signor D. R. had breakfasted with her in a small house outside the city which belonged to Signor Cazzaetti.

1745.

This generosity cost me at least four hundred zecchini; but the faro bank brought me in more than a thousand. I never dealt, not having the time. What surprised me was that I did not want to have the slightest intrigue with any of the actresses. Signora F. told me she had not thought I was so well behaved, but throughout the Carnival I was too busy with the theater to think of love.

It was at the beginning of Lent, after the actors had left, that I began pursuing it in good earnest.

At eleven o'clock in the morning I wait on her, asking why she had sent for me.

"To return the two hundred zecchini which you so generously lent me. Here they are. Now please return my note."

"Your note, Signora, is no longer at my disposition. It is deposited in a sealed envelope with the notary XX... who, in accordance with this receipt, can deliver the envelope to no one but you."

She reads the receipt and asks me why I had not kept the note myself.

"I feared, Signora, that it would be stolen from me. I feared I might lose it; I feared that it would be found if I should die or meet with some other accident."

"Your disposition of it bespeaks your delicacy; but I think you should have retained the right to take it back from the notary yourself."

"I could not imagine that the circumstance would arise in which I should need to take it back."

"Yet the circumstance could easily have arisen. Then I may send and tell the notary to bring me the envelope himself?"

"Yes, Signora."

She sends her adjutant; the notary arrives, bringing the envelope; he departs; she unseals it, and finds a paper on which she saw nothing but her name; all the rest had been blotted out with very black ink so that it was impossible to make out what had been written on it before the deletion.

"This," she said, "bears witness to a behavior on your part which is as noble as it is delicate; but admit that I cannot be sure that this is my note, even though I see my name on it."

"That is true, Signora, and if you are not sure, I have done something inexcusable."

"I am sure, because I must be; but admit that I could not swear it is my note."

"I admit it, Signora."

During the next few days she seized every occasion to find fault with me. She no longer received me in dishabille, so I was left to cool my heels in the anteroom. When I said something amusing she pretended not to understand what the joke was, and often when I was speaking she did not look at me, which made me talk badly. Quite often when Signor D. R. laughed at something I had said she asked what it was, so I had to repeat it to her, whereupon she found it insipid. If one of her bracelets came unfastened, it would have been my part to fasten it again; but she would have none of it, she said I did not know how the spring worked and summoned her maid. Her behavior vexed me visibly, and she pretended not to notice it. Signor D. R. would urge me to say something amusing, I would not know what to say, and she would laugh and say I had emptied my bag. I admitted as much. I was drying up, in short I did not know to what to attribute a change of humor for which I had given no cause. To avenge myself I thought every day that I would begin to show her clear tokens of my dislike; but when the time came I could never bring myself to do it; when I was alone, I very often wept. One evening Signor D. R. asked me if I had often been deeply in love.

"Three times, Monsignore."

"Always happily, no doubt?"

"Always unhappily. The first time, perhaps, because, being then an abate, I did not dare speak out. The second, because an unlucky event forced me to leave the object of my love just as I had reached the moment when I should have succeeded. The third time, because the pity I aroused in the person I loved, instead of inducing her to make me happy, gave her the notion of curing me."

"And what medicine did she use to cure you?"

"She ceased to be kind."

"I understand: she treated you badly. And you attribute that to pity? You are mistaken."

"Absolutely mistaken," Signora F. added. "One pities the person one loves; and one does not wish to cure him by making him unhappy. The woman never loved you."

"I cannot believe that, Signora."

"But are you cured?"

"Completely. For when I remember her I feel indifferent; but my convalescence took a long time."

"It lasted, I imagine, until you fell in love with another woman."

"Another? Did you not hear me say, Signora, that my third love was my last?"

Three or four days later, as we left the table, Signor D. R. said that the Signora was unwell and alone and that he could not go to keep her company; he told me to go, adding that he was sure she would be glad of my visit. I go, and repeat the compliment to her in the same words. She was lying on a chaise longue. She answered, not looking at me, that she thought she had a fever and that she would not ask me to stay because she was sure I would be bored.

"I cannot go, Signora, except by your express command, and in that case I shall spend the next four hours in your anteroom, for Signor D. R. told me to wait for him."

"In that case, you may sit down if you wish."

The harshness of this address roused my indignation; but I loved her, and I had never seen her so beautiful. I did not think her indisposition feigned; she was flushed. I had been there for a quarter of an hour, worse than mute. After drinking half a glass of lemonade she rang for her maid, asking me to leave for a moment. When she sent for me again she asked me where on earth my gaiety had gone to.

"If my gaiety, Signora, has gone somewhere, I believe it has gone only at your command: call it back, and you will find it always happy in your presence."

"What must I do to call it back?"

"Be the same as you were when I returned from Casopo. You have been displeased with me for these four months, and as I do not know why, I am in despair."

"I am the same. In what do you find me changed?"

"God in Heaven! In everything, except in your person. But I have decided on my course."

"What course?"

"To suffer in silence, never permitting the respect you have inspired in me to diminish, insatiably determined to convince you of my complete submission, always ready to seize any occasion to give you fresh proofs of my devotion."

"I thank you; but I do not know what you can be suffering in silence on my account. I am interested in you, I always enjoy listening to your adventures; if I did not I should not now be as curious as I am to hear about the three loves you mentioned to us."

In proof of my readiness to oblige, I invented three little romances in which I made a great display of fine feelings and perfect love, never mentioning fruition, though I saw that she expected it. Delicacy, respect, duty always stood in the way of that; but a true lover, I said, has no need of being thus convinced in order to call himself happy. I saw that she surmised how matters must really have stood; but I also noticed that my reserve and discretion pleased her. Knowing her well, I could not see a surer way of bringing her to the point. On the subject of the last lady I had loved, and who because of the pity she felt for me undertook to cure me, she made a reflection which went to my soul; but I pretended not to understand it at all.

"If it is true," she said, "that she loved you, it may be that she was not thinking of curing you but of curing herself."

The next day after this sort of reconciliation, Signor F. asked Signor D. R. to permit me to go to Butrinto[11] in place of his adjutant, who was seriously ill. I should be back in three days.

Butrinto lies opposite to Corfu, about seven miles away. It is the nearest point on the mainland to the island. It is not a fort, but a village in Epirus, or Albania as it is now called, belonging to the Venctians. The political maxim that "Neglected right is lost right" makes the Venetians send four galleys there every year; the galley slaves go ashore and cut wood, which they load on barks for transport to Corfu. A detachment of regular troops forms the garrison of the four galleys and at the same time escorts the galley slaves who, if they were not guarded, could easily escape and turn Turk. As one of the four galleys was the one commanded by Signor F., he needed an adjutant, and he thought of me. I reached there in two hours in Signor F.'s felucca. The cutting had already been done. During the following days the wood was loaded; and on the fourth day I was back in Corfu, where, after making my bow to Signor F., I returned to Signor D. R.'s whom I found alone on the terrace. It was Good Friday. His Excellency, whom I found more pensive than usual, addressed me in the following words, which are not easy to forget.

"Signor F., whose adjutant died yesterday evening, needs one until he can find another; he thought of you and this morning approached me on the subject of my transferring you to him. I answered that I do not consider that I have the right to dispose of you, and that such being the case, he should apply to you directly. I assured him that if you asked my permission, I would make no difficulty over granting it to you, despite the fact that I need two adjutants. Did he say anything to you this morning?"

"Not a word. He thanked me for going to Butrinto on his galley, and that is all."

"Then he will speak to you today. What will your answer be?"

"That I will never leave Your Excellency's service except by your order, of course."

"I will never give you such an order, so you will not go to him."

Just then the sentinel raps twice, and in come Signor F. and his lady. I leave them with Signor D. R., and a quarter of an hour later I am summoned. Signor F. addresses me in a confident tone:

"Is it not true, Casanova, that you would be glad to come and live in my house as my adjutant?"

"Do I take it that His Excellency is dismissing me from his service?"

"Not at all," says Signor D. R., "I simply leave the decision to you."

"In that case, I cannot do what would prove me ungrateful."

I remained standing where I was, visibly out of countenance, and unable to conceal a mortification which could only be due to my situation. Keeping my eyes fixed on the ground, I would have torn them out before I would have raised them to look at Signora F., who must be seeing into my soul. A moment later her husband coldly remarked that, true enough, as I should be alone in his house I should have much more to do than I had at Signor D. R.'s and that in any case there was more honor in serving the governor of the galleys than a mere *sopracomito.*

"Casanova," Signora F. added as if summing up, "is right."

The conversation turned to other things, and I retired to the anteroom and threw myself into an easy chair, determined to get to the bottom of the matter and see it for what it was.

I concluded that Signor F. could not have asked Signor D. R. for me without having first obtained his lady's consent, and that it was even possible that he had only asked for me at her prompting, which would be supremely flattering to my passion. But my honor did not permit me to accept his proposal unless I was sure that by doing so I should please Signor D. R. How, then, could I accept it? "I will accept it when Signor D. R. tells me in so many words that my going to live with Signor F. will please him. It lies with Signor F."

At the great evening procession, in which the whole nobility goes on foot in honor of Jesus Christ dead on the cross, it fell to me to give my arm to Signora F., who never said a word to me. My despairing love kept me sleepless in my bed the whole night through. I feared that she had taken my refusal as a proof of disesteem, and the thought of it pierced my soul. The next day I could not eat and that night at the reception I did not speak. I went to bed with chills, fever followed and kept me in bed the whole of Easter day. On Monday I was so weak that I would not have left my room if a valet of Signora F.'s had not come with a message that she wished to speak with me. I ordered him to say nothing about having found me in bed and to assure her that I would wait on her in an hour.

I entered her boudoir looking like a corpse. She was searching for something with her maid. She sees that I look ill, and does not ask me how I am. Her servant leaves the room, then she looks at me and thinks for a moment, trying to remember why she had sent for me.

"Ah yes. You know that, our adjutant having died, we need to find another. My husband, who likes you and has made sure that Signor D. R. leaves you free to decide, has taken it into his head that you would come if I asked you the favor myself. Is he wrong? If you will come, you shall have that room there."

She pointed from her window to those of a room next to the one in which she slept, which was beside it around a corner; so that to see the whole inside of hers I should not even need to go to my window. Seeing that I was hesitating to answer, she said that Signor D. R. would like me none the less and that as he would see me at her house every day, he would not forget my interests.

"So tell me: Will you come or not?"

"Signora, I cannot."

"You cannot. That is very strange. Sit down. How is it that you cannot when, by coming to us, you are certain to please Signor D. R. as well?"

"If I were sure of that, I would not hesitate for an instant. All that I have heard him say himself is that he leaves me free to decide."

"Then you are afraid you will displease him if you come to us?"

"It is possible."

"I am sure that you will not."

"Have the goodness to make him tell me so."

"And then you will come?"

"Oh, my God!"

As my exclamation perhaps expressed too much, I quickly looked away for fear of seeing her blush. She asked for her cloak to go to mass, and as we went down the stairs she for the first time rested her bare hand on mine. Putting on her gloves, she asked me if I had a fever, for my hand was burning.

Coming out of the church, I helped her into Signor D. R.'s carriage, which we happened upon; then I hurried to my room to draw breath and surrender to all the joy of my soul, for Signora F.'s intervention at last showed me clearly that I was loved. I felt certain that I should go to live in her house at the command of Signor D. R. himself.

What is love? For all that I have read every word that certain self-styled sages have written concerning its nature, for all that I have philosophized on it myself as I have grown older, I will never admit that it is either a trifle or a vanity of vanities. It is a kind of madness over which philosophy has no power; a sickness to which man is prone at every time of life and which is incurable if it strikes in old age. Inexpressible love! God of nature! Bitterness than which nothing is sweeter, sweetness than which nothing is more bitter! Divine monster which can only be defined by paradoxes!

The next day but one after my brief conversation with Signora F., Signor D. R. told me to go and put myself under Signor F.'s orders on board his galley, which was to sail for Govino[12] where he was to stay for five or six days. I pack in haste and fly to present myself to Signor F., adding that I am delighted to be in his service. He says that he is very well pleased to have it so, and we leave without seeing Signora F., who was still asleep.

Five days later we return to Corfu, and I accompany him to his room, expecting to return to Signor D. R.'s after asking him if he had any further orders for me. But at the same moment in comes Signor D. R., booted, and after greeting him with *benvenuto,*[13] asks him if he has been content with me. He then puts the same question to me and, finding that we are both content, tells me that I can be certain I will be gratifying him by remaining with Signor F. I consent, in a manner which mingles obedience with satisfaction, and Signor F. at once has me shown to my room, which was the same one Signora F. had pointed out to me. In less than an hour I have my few possessions brought to it, and toward evening I went to the reception. As she saw me come in, Signora F. said to me, with no attempt to lower her voice, that she had just learned that I was now one of her household and was very well pleased. I made her a deep bow.

So now, like the salamander, I am in the fire in which I longed to be. No sooner up than in dutiful attendance in Signor F.'s anteroom, often at the Signora's orders, attentive and obedient, making no show of any claim and seeming to ask nothing more, often dining alone with her, accompanying her everywhere when Signor D. R. could not be present, lodged next door to her, and within her sight when I was writing and at all times, as she was within mine.

Three weeks passed during which my new position brought my passion no relief. To keep my hope from failing, I only told myself that her love had not yet grown strong enough to master her pride. I hoped everything from a favorable moment, I waited for it, I counted on it, firmly resolved that I would not do the object of my love the injury of letting it slip. *The lover who is not ready to take Fortune by the forelock is lost.*

What distressed me was the marks of consideration she showed me in public, while in private she was chary of them: I wanted the opposite. Everyone believed that I had been granted her favors. But since my love was pure, vanity played no part in it.

"You have enemies," she said to me one day; "but last evening I took your side and silenced them."

"They are my enemies because they envy me, Signora; if they knew the truth they would pity me, and you, if you would, could deliver me from them."

"Why would they pity you, and how can I deliver you from them?"

"They would pity me because I am perishing, and you would deliver me from them by showing me dislike. No one would hate me then."

"So you would suffer less from my dislike than from the hatred of the malicious?"

"Yes, Signora, provided that the dislike you showed for me in public were compensated by your kindness in private; for in my happiness at being yours I find no trace of any feeling of vanity. Let them pity me; I am content provided that they are wrong."

"That is a part I can never play."

I often stood behind the curtains of the window farthest from those of her bedroom so that I might see her when she believed that she was seen by no one. I could have seen her getting out of bed and have possessed her in my amorous imaginings; and she could have granted my passion that relief without compromising herself in any way, for there was no need for her to guess that I was keeping watch. Yet this was just what she did not do. It seemed to me that she had her windows opened only to torture me. I saw her in her bed. Her maid came to dress her, and stood in front of her in such a way that I could no longer see her. If after getting out of bed she came to the window to see what sort of day it was, she never looked at my windows. I was certain that she knew I saw her; but she would not give me the slight pleasure of making a gesture which could have led me to suppose she was thinking of me.

One day when her maid was cutting off the split ends of her long hair, I picked up and put on her toilet table all of them which had fallen on the floor, except a little bunch which I put in my pocket, convinced that she had not noticed. As soon as her maid left, she ordered me, gently but a trifle too gravely, to produce the hairs I had picked up and pocketed. I thought this too much; I felt that such sternness was unjust, cruel, and out of place. Trembling with resentment even more than with anger, I obeyed, but throwing the hairs on her toilet table with the utmost scorn.

"Signore, you forget yourself."

"This time, Signora, you could have pretended not to see my theft."

"It is tiresome to pretend."

"What black design could you suspect my soul to harbor on the evidence of this childish theft?"

"No black design, but feelings for me which you are forbidden to entertain."

"They can be forbidden me only by hatred or by pride. If you had a heart you would be the victim of neither; but you have only a mind, and it must be a malicious one for it delights in humiliating. You have surprised my secret, but in return I have learned to know you. My discovery will be more useful to me than yours. I will perhaps become wiser."

After this outburst I left the room and, not hearing myself called back, went to mine where, hoping that sleep might calm me, I undressed and went to bed. In such moments a man in love finds the object of his love unworthy, hateful, and detestable. When I was called to supper I said that I was ill; I could not sleep and, curious to see what would happen to me, I did not get up, and continued to say that I was ill when I was called to dinner. By nightfall I was delighted to find myself extremely weak. When Signor F. came to see me, I got rid of him by saying that it was a very bad headache, to which I was subject and of which fasting alone would cure me.

About eleven o'clock in come the Signora and Signor D. R.

"What is the matter with you," she said, "my poor Casanova?"

"A bad headache, Signora, which will be cured tomorrow."

"Why wait till tomorrow? It should be treated now. I have ordered a broth for you and two fresh eggs."

"It is no use, Signora. Only fasting can cure me."

"He is right," said Signor D. R., "I know this complaint."

She seized the moment when Signor D. R. was looking at a drawing which happened to be on my table to tell me that she would be glad to see me take some broth, for I must be exhausted. I answered that those who forgot themselves in her presence should be left to die. She answered only by putting a small packet into my hand; then she went to look at the drawing.

I open the packet, and I feel hairs. I quickly put it under my coverlet; but the blood rushes to my head so fast that it terrifies me. I ask for cold water. The Signora comes with Signor D. R. and they are surprised to see me flushed when only a moment earlier I looked like a corpse. She puts a little *eau des Carmes*[14] into the water I was to drink, I drink it, and instantly vomit it up, mixed with some bile. I feel better at once, and ask for something to eat. She laughs; her maid comes in with a dish of soup and two eggs, which I eat ravenously, then I laugh with them and, the occasion reminding me of it, I tell them the story of Pandolfin.[15] Signor D. R. thought that he was witnessing a miracle, and in Signora F.'s face I saw love, pity, and repentance. But for Signor

D. R.'s presence this would have been the moment of my good fortune; but I felt certain that it was only deferred. After I had kept them amused for half an hour with choice stories, Signor D. R. remarked to the Signora that if he had not seen me vomit he would have thought my sickness feigned, for it was impossible, he insisted, to change so quickly from melancholy to gaiety.

"It is the effect of my *eau des Carmes,*" said Signora F., looking at me, "and I will leave you my bottle."

"Take it away, Signora, for without your presence the potion has no virtue."

"I think so too," says Signor D. R. "So I shall leave you here with the patient."

"No, no. He must be allowed to sleep."

I slept deeply; but it was with her, in one continuous dream, so intense that the reality itself could not have been more delicious. I felt that I had progressed very far. Thirty-four hours of fasting had won me the right to speak of love to her openly. The gift of her hair could not mean anything but that she was willing I should continue to love her.

In the morning, after having made my bow to Signor F., I went and sat beside the maid, for the Signora was still asleep. I had the pleasure of hearing her laugh when she was informed that I was there. She sent for me to tell me, without giving me time to pay her the slightest compliment, that she was delighted to see me in good health and that I should go and wish Signor D. R. good morning on her behalf.

It is not only in a lover's eyes that a beautiful woman is a thousand times more attractive when she is waking from sleep than after she has made her toilet, but in those of anyone who can see her at such a moment. As Signora F. told me to go, she flooded my soul with the rays which issued from her divine face with the same speed as those of the sun shedding his light through the universe. For all that, the more beautiful a woman is, the more devoted she is to making her toilet. One always wants more than one has. In her order to leave her, I read the assurance of my imminent good fortune. "She sent me away," I reflected, "because she foresaw that if I was left alone with her I would have asked for a recompense, or at least for some payments on account, which she could not have refused me."

Rich in the possession of her hair, I consulted the spirit of my love to decide what to do with it. To make up for the fault she had committed by depriving me of the snippets I had picked up, she had given me hair enough to make a braid. It was an ell and a half long. After conceiving my plan, I went to the shop of a Jewish confectioner whose daughter did embroidery. I instructed her to embroider the four initial letters of our names in hair on a green satin armband, and I used all the rest to make a long braid in the form of a very thin cord. At one end there was a black ribbon and as the ribbon at the other end was sewn on doubled upon itself, it made a loop which was a real running noose, admirably suited to strangle me if love reduced me to despair. I put this cord on my neck next to the skin, winding it four times around. From a small quantity of the same hair I made a sort of powder by cutting it into very small bits with fine scissors. I had the Jew make a paste of it in my presence with sugar combined with essences of ambergris,[16] angelica, vanilla, alkermes,[17] and styrax.[18] I did not leave until he had my sweetmeats, composed of these ingredients, ready to deliver to me. I had others made of the same shape and materials except that they contained no hair. I put the ones with hair in a beautiful rock crystal box and the others in a box of light tortoise shell.

After the gift of her hair, I spent no more of my time with her telling her stories; I talked to her only of my passion and my desires. I put it to her that she should either banish me from her presence or make me happy;

but she did not agree. She said that we could make ourselves happy only by refraining from disregarding our duty. When I threw myself at her feet to obtain a full pardon beforehand for the violence I was about to do her, she restrained me by using a force superior to that which the most muscular of women could have summoned to repel the attacks of the most enterprising lover. She showed no anger and used no tone of command, she scarcely even defended herself but said with divine sweetness and eyes full of love:

"No, my dear friend, restrain yourself, do not abuse my fondness for you; I do not ask you to respect me but to spare me, for I love you."

"You love me, and you will never bring yourself to make us happy? That is neither credible nor natural. You force me to think that you do not love me. Let me press my lips to yours for but a moment, and I promise you I will demand nothing more."

"No, for our desires would become greater, and we would be left all the more unhappy."

So she drove me to despair, and afterwards she complained that in company everyone said I had lost both the wit and the gaiety with which I had so delighted her on my return from Constantinople. Signor D. R., who often made good-natured fun of me, told me that I was growing visibly thinner.

She told me one day that she did not like it, because malicious people, observing the fact, might conclude that she was treating me badly.

A strange thought, which seems unnatural, yet which was the thought of a woman in love. I composed an idyl on it in the form of an eclogue, which still makes me weep today every time I read it.

"What!" I said. "Then you see the injustice of your behavior, it seems, since you fear that the world will divine it? Strange fear of a heavenly mind which cannot reconcile itself to its own heart being in love! By the same token, you would be delighted to see me fat and blooming, even if everyone supposed it resulted from the divine food with which you were nourishing my love!''

''Let them suppose so, as long as it is not the truth.''

''What a contradiction! Could I possibly not love you, when I find you so transcendently inconsistent? But you are growing thin too, and I must tell you what will follow from your sophisms. We will both die soon, you of a consumption, I of inanition, for I am reduced to enjoying your phantom day and night, always, everywhere, except in your presence.''

Seeing her astounded and softened by this declaration, I thought that the moment of happiness had come; and I was already tightening my right arm around her waist and my left was about to lay hold . . . when the sentinel rapped twice. I readjust my clothing. I rise, I stand before her, Signor D. R. enters. This time he found me in such good spirits that he stayed with us until an hour after midnight.

My confections were beginning to be talked of. The Signora, Signor D. R., and I were the only people whose comfit boxes were filled with them; I was sparing of them, and no one dared ask me for one, for I had said that they were expensive and that there was not a chemist in Corfu who could determine their composition. But those in my crystal box I gave to no one, and Signora F. had noticed the fact. I certainly did not believe them to be a love philter, any more than I believed that the hair in them could make them more exquisite, but love made them dear to me. I enjoyed thinking that I was eating something that was herself. Signora F. was mad about them. She said they were a universal remedy, and knowing that she could command their inventor, she had no need to know what they were made of; but having noticed on several occasions that I only offered other people the ones in the tortoise-shell box, and myself only ate those in the crystal box, she asked me why. I answered, without thinking, that the ones I ate contained something which compelled love of her.

"I don't believe a word of it; but are they different from the ones I eat myself?"

"They are exactly the same, except that the ingredient which compels one to love you is only in mine."

"Be so good as to tell me what the ingredient is."

"That is a secret which I cannot reveal to you."

"Then I will eat no more of your comfits."

So saying, she rises, empties her comfit box and fills it with nonpareils,[19] then sulks; and she does the same on the following days, allowing me not one opportunity to be alone with her. This grieves me; I become melancholy; but I cannot bring myself to tell her that I enjoy eating her hair.

Four or five days later she asks me why I am sad.

"Because you no longer eat my comfits."

"You are free to keep your secret, and I to eat what I please."

"So this is my reward for confiding something to you."

So saying, I open my crystal box, empty its entire contents into my mouth, then say:

"Twice more, and I shall die mad with love for you. So you will be avenged for my silence. Farewell, Signora."

She calls me back, tells me to sit down, and says that I must not commit some mad act which would grieve her, for I knew that she loved me and she was sure it was not perforce of these drugs.

"And to convince you," she says, "that you do not need them to make me love you, here is a pledge of my affection."

After these words she offers me her mouth and abandons it to mine until I had to draw away in order to breathe. Recovering from my ecstasy, I throw myself at her feet and, my cheeks wet with tears of gratitude, I tell her that if she will promise to forgive me, I will confess my crime.

"Crime? You frighten me. I forgive you. Now confess everything."

"Everything. My comfits are made with your hair reduced to powder. Look! this armband I wear has our names written in your hair, with this cord around my neck I will strangle myself when you no longer love me. These are all my crimes. I would not have committed one of them if I did not adore you."

She laughs, makes me rise, she tells me that I am indeed the greatest of criminals, she dries my tears and assures me that I will never strangle myself.

After this conversation, in which Love first brought me to taste the nectar of a kiss from my goddess, I had the firmness to behave entirely differently toward her. She saw that I was ardent; and, perhaps on fire herself, she admired the firmness I showed in refraining from making an attack.

"What is it," she asked me one day, "that has made it possible for you to control yourself?"

"After the sweetness of the kiss which you granted me of your own accord, I saw that I must aspire to nothing but what it may be your pleasure to give freely. You cannot imagine the sweetness of that kiss."

"How can I help knowing its sweetness? Ungrateful man! Was it you or I who gave it?"

"You are right, my angel, neither of us; it was love."

Without further words, we kissed each other a thousand times, she holding me so tightly to her breast that I could not use my arms, let alone my hands. Despite this duress, I felt happy. At the end of our delightful struggle, I asked her if she believed we would always leave it at that.

"Always, my dear one, never any further. *Love is a child to be pacified with trifles, a full diet can only kill it.*"

"*I know love better than you do. It wants solid food, and if that is stubbornly withheld, it withers away.* Allow me to hope."

"Hope, if hope helps you."

"What should I do without it? I would not hope, if I did not know that you have a heart."

"Speaking of that, do you remember the day when you were angry and told me I only had a mind, thinking that you were insulting me? Oh, how I laughed when I thought of it afterward! Yes, my dear one, I have a heart, and without that heart I should not now be happy. Let us remain in the state of happiness we now enjoy, and be content with it, asking no more."

Ready to accept what she was pleased to decree, and loving her more every day, I put my trust in *nature, which in the end is always stronger than prejudice.* But, besides nature, luck also helped me on. I owed my success to an accident. Here is the story.

Signora F., walking in the garden on Signor D. R.'s arm, struck her foot against the stem of a rose tree with such force as to scrape two inches of skin from her ankle. Signor D. R. at once bandaged the wound, which was bleeding, with a handkerchief, and from my window I saw her carried into the house by two servants in a sort of palanquin.

Leg wounds are extremely dangerous in Corfu; if they are not given the most careful attention, they do not close. People often have to go elsewhere to get them to heal over.

The surgeon at once decreed that she must stay in bed, and my fortunate position decreed that I should always be at her orders. I saw her constantly; but the frequent visits paid her during the first three days never left me alone with her. In the evening, after everyone had left, we supped, her husband retired, Signor D. R. did so an hour later, and decency demanded that I retire too. I was better off before she was wounded: I told her so, half jokingly; but the next day she contrived a pleasure for me.

An old surgeon came every day at five in the morning to dress her wound, only her maid being present. When the surgeon came, I at once went to the maid's room in my nightcap, so that I should be the first to learn how my goddess was.

The day after my brief remonstrance, the maid came and told me to come in while the surgeon was bandaging her.

"Please look and tell me if my leg really is less red."

"To know that, Signora, I should have had to see it yesterday."

"You are right. I feel pain, and I am afraid of erysipelas."

"You have nothing to fear, Signora," said the old Machaon.[20] "Stay in bed, and I am sure I shall cure you."

He having gone to the table by the window to prepare a cataplasm, and the maid having gone to fetch some linen, I asked her if there were any hard lumps in the calf of her leg and if the redness went up in streaks as far as her thigh; as I asked these questions it was natural that I should accompany them with my hands and my eyes; I neither felt lumps nor saw redness; but the sensitive patient laughingly dropped the curtain at once, yet not without letting me reap from her lips a kiss of whose sweetness, after four days of abstinence, I sorely needed to refresh my memory. After the kiss, I licked her wound, firmly believing that my tongue would be balm for it; but the maid's return forced me to give over this sweet remedy, which my love as doctor made me believe infallible at the moment.

Left alone with her and burning with desires, I implored her at least to make my eyes happy.

"I cannot hide from you the pleasure my soul felt at the sight of your beautiful leg and a third of your thigh; but, my angel, I feel humiliated when I think that my pleasure was due to a theft."

"You may be wrong."

The next morning, after the surgeon had gone, she asked me to arrange her bolster and pillows and, making an effort herself to spare mine, she took hold of her coverlet and raised it. As my head was then bent down behind hers, I saw two ivory columns, forming the sides of a pyramid, between which I should have been happy to draw my last breath at that moment. A jealous fabric concealed the apex of the pyramid from my eyes; it was upon that happy angle that all my desires were concentrated. What gratified me in my momentary joy was that my idol did not complain that I was taking too long over arranging her pillows.

When I had finished I dropped into a chair absorbed in thought. I contemplated the divinity who, in all innocence, never offered me a pleasure which did not at the same time promise me a greater.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked.

"Of the great happiness I have enjoyed."

"You are a cruel man."

"No, I am not cruel; for loving me as you do, you should not blush to be indulgent to me. Consider, too, that, to love you completely, I must believe that it was not by chance that I saw ravishing beauties, for if I believed that it was, I should have to think that chance might have granted a dastard, a coward, a blackguard the same happiness which I have enjoyed. Let me be grateful to you for having taught me this morning how happy a single one of my senses can make me. Can you be angry with my eyes?"

"Yes."

"Tear them out."

The next day, after the surgeon had gone, she sent her maid out to make some purchases.

"Oh!" she said, "she forgot to change my chemise."

"Too bad! Let me take her place."

"Gladly, but remember that only your eyes are permitted to take part."

"I agree."

At that, she unlaces her corset, removes it, then takes off her chemise and tells me to hand her the clean one. I was as if in ecstasy, admiring this beautiful third of her body.

"Hand it to me, will you? It is on the small table."

"Where?"

"There, at the foot of the bed. I'll get it myself."

She bends forward and, reaching toward the small table, lets me see the greater part of all that I longed to possess; and she does not hurry. I was at death's door. I take the chemise from her hands, and she sees my hands shaking exactly like those of a paralytic. I move her to pity, but only for my eyes: she abandons all her charms to them, and she intoxicates me by a new marvel. I see her staring at herself, lost in herself, and in a way which convinced me that she was delighting in her own beauty. At last she bends forward, and I slip on her chemise; but, throwing myself on her, I clasp her in my arms and she restores me to life, letting me devour her with kisses and not preventing my hands from touching all that of which my eyes had seen only the surface. Our mouths cling together and so we remain, motionless and not breathing, until a few moments after our amorous swoon, inadequate to our desires but sweet enough to give them an outlet. She kept herself in a position which made it impossible for me to enter the sanctuary, and she was always alert to stop my hands from making any movement which would have put before her eyes what would have made her defenseless.

CHAPTER VI

Appalling misfortune, which crushes me. Cooling of love. My departure from Corfu and my return to Venice. I abandon the military profession and become a fiddler.

HER wound was healing over, and the time was drawing near when, leaving her bed, she would return to her former course of life.

Signor Renier, Commandant-General of the galleys, had ordered a review at Govino. Signor F. had gone there the previous day and had ordered me to leave in the morning in the felucca. Supping alone with the Signora, I bewailed the fact that I should not see her the next day.

"Let us make up for it," she said, "and spend the night talking. Go to your room and come back here through my husband's, here are the keys to it. Come as soon as you see from your windows that my maid has left me."

I carried out her orders to the letter; and there we were, face to face, with five hours before us. It was June and very hot; she was in bed; I go and clasp her in my arms, she clasps me in hers; but exercising the most cruel of tyrannies over herself, she considers that I have nothing to complain of if I am in the same condition as she is. My remonstrances, my pleadings, all my words are of no avail; love has to suffer us to bridle it and then to laugh when, despite the harsh law we imposed upon it, we nevertheless reached the sweet crisis which calms it.

After the ecstasy our eyes, our mouths open together, and our heads draw apart to enjoy the satisfaction that could not but shine from our faces. Our desires were about to revive, and we were preparing to fulfill them, when I see her glance at my state of innocence, which was entirely exposed to her view; she seems to become angry, and after throwing off all that could only make the heat more oppressive and diminish my pleasure, she flings herself on me. I seemed to see something more than ardor, I saw a furious desire. I think the moment has come, I share her ardor, it is impossible for human strength to embrace her more closely; but at the decisive instant she struggles, she escapes me and, smiling sweetly, comes to the rescue with a hand which I think of ice, to quench my fire which, checked in the moment of explosion, was threatening dire havoc.

"My dear," say I, "you are all wet."

"Wipe me off."

"God, what charms! The supreme pleasure brought me a sudden death whose delights you did not share. Permit me, O highest object of my adoration, to make you entirely happy. Love keeps me alive only to enable me to die again; but nowhere save in that paradise which you always forbid me to enter."

"Oh, my dear! There is a furnace there. How can you keep your finger there without its being burned by the fire which devours me? Ah, my dear! Stop! Embrace me with all your strength. Come close to the vault; but take care that you do not bury yourself in it. In its stead you are free to take all that I have—my heart, my soul. Ye gods! My soul is leaving me! Catch it in your lips, and give me yours."

The period of silence was a little longer; but this imperfect enjoyment distressed me.

"How can you complain of it," she said, "when our abstinence makes our love immortal? I loved you a quarter of an hour ago, and now I love you even more; I should love you less if you had exhausted my joy by crowning all my desires."

"You are wrong, my dear; desires are truly torments, torments which would kill us if hope did not lessen their murderous power. The torments of Hell, believe me, can be only vain desires."

"But desires are always accompanied by hope."

"No, in Hell there is no hope."

"Then there are no desires, for no one but a madman can desire without hoping."

"Answer me, will you? If you desire to be wholly mine, and if you hope to be, how can you raise an obstacle to your own hope? My dear, you must stop blinding yourself with sophisms. Let us give each other complete happiness, and let us be sure that as many times as we satisfy our desires, they will each time be born anew."

"What I see convinces me of the contrary. I see you alive. If you had buried yourself in the fatal vault, I know from experience that you would not be showing a sign of life, or only at long intervals."

"Oh, my dear! Enough! I beg you! Stop believing in your experience. You have never known love. This which you call your vault is its house of delights; the only abode which can make it immortal. In short, this is its true paradise. Let me enter there, my angel, and I promise you I will die there; but then you will learn that there is a great difference between the death of Love and the death of Hymen. Hymen dies to relieve himself of life, while Love is pleased to perish only to enjoy life. Mistake no longer, my charmer, and be certain that when once we have enjoyed each other perfectly we shall but love each other the more.''

''Very well. I am willing to believe you; but let us wait. Meanwhile, let us indulge in all the games which can delight our senses; let us give the rein to all our faculties. Devour me; but in exchange, let me do just as I will with you; and if we find tonight too short we will bear it uncomplainingly tomorrow, certain that our love will find a way to give us another.''

''And if our mutual affection is discovered?''

''Do we hide it? Everyone sees that we love each other; and those who believe that we do not make each other happy are precisely those whom we should need to fear if they thought the opposite. Let us try only to prevent their ever catching us in the criminal moment; but Heaven and Nature are bound to protect us, those who love as we love are not guilty. Ever since I have been conscious of my existence I have always been carried away by amorous feelings. When I saw a man, I was delighted to see the being who was the half of my species which was born for me, as I was made for him and could not wait to be joined to him by the bond of marriage. I believed that what was called love came after the union; and I was surprised when my husband, making me a woman, made me know it only by a pain uncompensated by any pleasure. I saw that my imaginings in the convent had stood me in better stead. And so we became only good friends, seldom sleeping together and arousing no curiosity in each other; yet on good terms, for whenever he wants me, I am at his service; but since the dole is not seasoned with love, he finds it tasteless; and so he never demands it except when he thinks he needs it. As soon as I saw that you loved me, I was pleased, and I gave you every opportunity to fall more in love with me, being certain that, for my part, I would never love you; but when I found that I was wrong, and that I was falling in love too, I began treating you badly, as if to punish you for having awakened my heart. Your patience and persistence astonished me at the same time that they showed me I was wrong, and after our first kiss I found that I had no more power over myself. I did not know that one kiss could matter so much. I was certain that I could only become happy myself by making you happy. That both flattered me and pleased me, and tonight especially I have realized that I am happy only to the degree to which I see you happy."

"That, my dear, is the most refined of all the feelings which spring from love; but you will never make me completely happy until you bring yourself to house me here."

"No, not here; but you are free of all the walks and summerhouses. Would that I had a hundred!"

We spent the rest of the night indulging in all the transports to which our exasperated desires stimulated us and, on my part, acquiescing to all those to which she herself urged me in the ever fruitless hope that they would make up to her for her abstinence.

At daybreak I had to leave her to go to Govino; and she wept for joy when she saw that I left her as a conqueror. She had thought it beyond the power of nature.

After that night so rich in delights, ten or twelve days had passed during which we could not find an opportunity to quench the least spark of the fire with which we were burning, when the fatal event occurred which caused my downfall.

After supper, and after Signor D. R.'s departure, Signor F. told his wife in my presence that he would write two short letters and then come to bed with her. He is no sooner gone than she sits down on the foot of the bed; she looks at me, I fall into her arms, on fire with love; she surrenders herself, she lets me enter the sanctuary, and my soul is at last weltering in happiness; but she keeps me only for an instant. She allows me no time to enjoy the inexpressible pleasure of knowing that I am in possession of the treasure; she suddenly pulls away and pushes me from her, she rises and sinks into a chair, completely distraught. Motionless and astounded, I look at her, shaking, trying to understand what could have precipitated her unnatural action; and I hear her say, as she looks at me with her eyes alight with love:

"My dear, we were on the verge of our ruin."

"Ruin? You have killed me. Alas! I feel that I am at death's door. You may never see me again."

After these words, I leave the room, then the house, and make my way to the esplanade in search of fresh air, feeling that I was literally dying. He who has not himself experienced the anguish of such a moment cannot imagine it; and I am powerless to describe it. In my torment, I hear myself called from a window, I answer, I approach, and in the bright moonlight I see Melulla on her balcony.

"What are you doing there," I ask her, "at this hour?"

"I am alone, and I don't feel like going to bed. Come up for a minute."

This Melulla was a courtesan from Zante, whose extraordinary beauty had enchanted all Corfu for the past four months. Everyone who had seen her praised her charms, she was the talk of the city. I had seen her several times and, though she was beautiful, I should have thought her less so than Signora F. even if I had not been in love with her. In the year 1790, in Dresden, I saw a woman who looked the very image of Melulla. Her name was Magnus. She died two or three years later.

She shows me into a voluptuous boudoir where, after reproaching me for being the only man who had never come to see her, the only man who had scorned her, and the only man she wanted for a lover, she says that she has me now, that I shall not escape her, and that she will have her revenge. My coldness does not abash her. Skilled in her profession, she displays her charms to me, she lays hands on me, and I ignobly let myself be dragged to my ruin. Her beauties were a hundred times beneath those of the divine woman whom I was desecrating; but the infamous creature whom Hell had set there to fulfill my dark destiny attacked me at a moment when what had just happened to me left me without power over myself.

It was neither love, nor imagination, nor any merit in the woman before me, who was certainly unworthy to possess me, which led me to break my faith, but indolence, weakness, and compliance at a moment when my angel had offended me by a capricious act which, if I had not been a scoundrel unworthy of her, ought to have made me twice as much in love with her. Melulla, certain that she had pleased me, let me go two hours later, absolutely refusing to take the gold coins I tried to give her.

I went home to bed, loathing her and hating myself. After four hours of broken sleep I dress and go to wait on Signor F., who had sent for me. I do his errand, I return to the house, I enter the Signora's room, I see her at her toilet table, and I bid her good morning in the mirror. I see gaiety in her face and the peace of candor and innocence. Her lovely eyes meet mine, and I suddenly see her celestial countenance darkened by a cloud of sadness. She lowers her lids; she says nothing; a moment later she raises them and gazes at me as if trying to make me out and to read in my very soul. After that she falls into a silence which she does not break until she is left alone with me.

"There can be no dissimulating between us, my dear, either on my part or on yours. I felt very unhappy last night when you left; for I realized that what I had done could produce a dangerous shock to a man's constitution. So I resolved that in the future I will do as I should. I supposed that you had gone out to take the air, and I did not hold it against you. To make certain, I went to the window, and stayed there for a whole hour without ever seeing a light in your room. The Signore coming in, I had to go to bed with the grief of knowing that you were not in your room. Regretting what I had done and still filled with love, I slept little and badly. This morning the Signore ordered a subaltern to tell you he wanted to speak with you, and I heard the man answer that you were still sleeping because you had come home late. I am not jealous, for I know that you could not love any woman but myself.

"This morning when, thinking of you, I was preparing to let you know how much I repented of what I had done, I hear you come into my room, I look at you, and, in all truth, I think I am seeing a different man. I study you further, and despite myself my soul reads in your face that you are guilty of having offended me, deceived me, though I know not how. Now tell me, my dear, if I read rightly; in Love's name, tell me the truth; and if you have betrayed me, tell me so without prevaricating. In my determination to admit that I am the cause of it all, it is myself whom I will not forgive; but for your part, you are sure of forgiveness."

In the course of my life I have more than once found myself under the bitter necessity of telling a lie to the woman whom I loved; but after such a speech, could I preserve my self-respect and lie to this angel? I was so little able to lie to her that, overcome with feeling, I could not answer her until after I had dried my tears.

"My dear," she says, "you are weeping. Tell me quickly if you have made me unhappy. What black revenge can you have taken on me, who am utterly incapable of doing anything to offend you? I can have hurt you only in the innocence of my loving heart."

"I have had no thought of revenge, for my heart has never ceased to adore you. It is against myself that my weakness has led me to commit a crime which makes me unworthy of your favors for all the rest of my life."

"You have given yourself to some strumpet."

"I spent two hours in an orgy at which my soul was present only as the witness to my grief, my remorse, and my wrongdoing."

"In grief and overwhelmed by remorse! I believe it. It is my own fault, my dear, it is I who must ask you to forgive me."

Seeing her tears, I could no longer restrain mine from flowing unimpeded. Noble soul! Divine soul, under whose influence the worst of men could not but become good! Courageously taking all the guilt upon herself, she impelled me to use every resource of my mind to persuade her that the thing would never have happened if I had been a man really worthy of her love. And it was true.

We spent the day quietly, giving no outlet to the sorrow in our hearts. She insisted on knowing all the details of the wretched story, and she assured me that we must both consider what had happened as inevitable, for, she said, the same thing would have befallen the most circumspect of men. As she thought I was only to be pitied, she found it no reason to love me less. We were certain that we would seize the first opportunity to give each other fresh proofs of our unaltered affection. But Heaven, which is often just, did not permit it. It had found me guilty, and I had to undergo the punishment it decreed.

On getting out of bed on the third morning, I have a disagreeable sensation: an intense smarting. I tremble, imagining what it may be. I want to know the truth, and I am stupefied to see that I have been infected with Melulla's poison. I am aghast. I go back to bed and surrender to the most distressing reflections. But what was not my horror when I thought of the disaster which could have befallen me the previous evening! What would have been my state if Signora F., to convince me of her unchanged love, had granted me her favors completely? What should I have done after I had made her wretched for the rest of her life? Could anyone who should know my story condemn me if I had freed myself from my remorse by a voluntary death? No, for a philosopher would not have seen me as a wretch who kills himself in despair, but as justly inflicting the punishment my crime would have deserved. I should certainly have killed myself.

Sunk in depression, for the fourth time a victim of this pestilential scourge, I prepared to give myself a course of treatment which would have restored me to health in six weeks without anyone being the wiser; but I was wrong again. Melulla had infected me with all the disasters of her hell, and within a week I saw all their miserable symptoms. So I had to put myself in the hands of an old doctor, who, from his long experience, assured me that he would cure me in two months, and he kept his word. I was in excellent health at the beginning of September, the time when I returned to Venice.

My first resolve was to inform Signora F. of my misfortune. I must not wait for the moment when my confession would have accused her of imprudence and weakness. I must not give her occasion to reflect that the passion she had conceived for me exposed her to such terrible dangers, or to what fate it could have doomed her. Her affection was too dear to my heart for me to run the risk of losing her through failing to have confidence in her. Knowing her intelligence, the candor of her soul, and the generosity with which she had thought me only to be pitied, I must at least show her, by my sincerity, that I deserved her esteem.

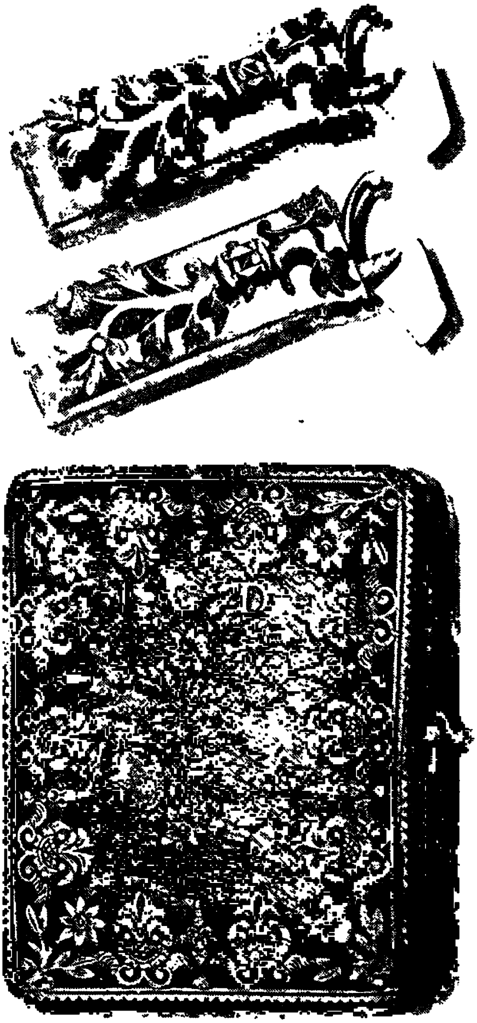
I therefore gave her an exact account of my condition, and feelingly described the state of my soul when I thought of the fearful consequences which our love would have had if we had surrendered ourselves to amorous transports after I had confessed my crime to her. I saw her shudder at the thought, I saw her turn pale and tremble later when I said I would have avenged her by killing myself. During my narrative she kept exclaiming that Melulla was an infamous hussy. Everyone in Corfu knew that I had paid her a visit, and everyone was surprised that I seemed to be in good health, for the number of young men whom she had treated as she had treated me was not small.

But in addition to my illness, I had several other troubles. It was decided that I should return to Venice, and with the same rank of ensign with which I had left it. The Proveditor-General had failed to keep his promise to me because in Venice the bastard son of a patrician had been given the preference over me. I thereupon resolved to leave the service. A still greater vexation was that my luck forsook me completely. To lighten my sorrows I had gone back to play, and I lost every day. From the moment when I had been ignoble enough to surrender to Melulla every curse had descended on me. The last misfortune, though I accepted it as a mercy, was that a week or ten days before the departure of the entire army Signor D. R. took me back into his service. Signor F. had had to find a new adjutant. Signora F. told me sadly that at Venice we could not see each other, for a number of reasons. I asked her not to explain them to me, being certain that I should only find them mortifying. I saw into her soul one day when she told me that she pitied me. She could not have that feeling toward me unless she no longer loved me; besides, *scorn infallibly follows close upon the dreary sentiment of pity.* From that moment on, I never found myself alone with her. Still loving her, I could easily have made her blush by reproaching her with the undue ease with which she had recovered from her passion. She had scarcely returned to Venice before she fell in love with Signor F. R.,[1] and she loved him faithfully until he died of a consumption. She went blind twenty years later and I think she is still living.

During the last two months I spent in Corfu I saw something worthy to be placed before the inmost eyes of my dear readers. I learned what it meant for a man to be out of luck.

Before I knew Melulla, my health was good, I was rich, lucky at cards, generally liked, and adored by the prettiest woman in the city. When I spoke, everyone took my side. After becoming acquainted with that ill-omened creature, I quickly lost health, money, credit, good humor, consideration, wit, the ability to express myself, and, with it, my power of persuasion; besides all this, I lost my influence over Signora F., who almost insensibly became the most indifferent of women to all my concerns. I left without money and after having sold or pawned everything I possessed. In addition, I contracted debts which I never thought of paying, not from malice prepense but from sheer carelessness. What I thought strange was that, once I had grown thin and was obviously without money, no one showed me the least consideration. No one listened when I talked, or, if anyone did, it was only to find me dull instead of the wit he would have proclaimed me if I had still been rich. *Nam bene nummatum decorat Suadela Venusque* ("For Persuasion and Venus adorn the man of money").[2] People shunned me as if my bad luck were infectious; and perhaps they were right.

We left at the end of September, with five galleys, two galleasses, and several small vessels under the command of Signor Renier, sailing along the coast of the Adriatic in the northern part of the Gulf,[3] which is as rich in ports on that side as it is poor on the other. We made port every evening, so that I saw Signora F. every day when she came to sup with her husband on board the galleass. We made a prosperous voyage. We dropped anchor in the port of Venice on October 14th, 1745, and after undergoing quarantine on the galleass, we left it on November 25th, and *two months* later galleasses were abolished.[4] They were a very old type of vessel,



Spring-lancets for Bloodletting and Case expensive to maintain, and of no apparent use. The galleass had the hull of a frigate and benches as in a galley, on which five hundred galley slaves rowed when there was no wind.

Before they were wisely abolished, there were great debates in the Senate. Those who were opposed advanced several arguments, the strongest of which was that everything old should be respected and preserved. This argument, which seems absurd, is nevertheless the most powerful argument in all republics. There is not a single republic which does not tremble at the mere mention of novelty, not only in what is important but in the lightest matters as well. *Miranturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit* ("They admire nothing but what Libitina [the goddess of funerals] has hallowed").[5] Superstition always plays a part.

What the Republic of Venice will never change is the galleys, not only because they are of great use in a narrow sea which must be navigated even when there is no wind, but because it would not know where to put, or what to do with, the criminals it sentences to the oar.

A strange thing which I observed at Corfu, where there are often three thousand galley slaves, is that those who are such in consequence of some crime which has earned them the punishment are held in contempt, while the *buonavoglia*[6] are in a certain measure respected. I thought it should have been exactly the opposite. In that country, moreover, the galley slaves are in every way better off than the soldiers, and enjoy several privileges; whence it follows that a great many soldiers desert and sell themselves to a *sopracomito*. The captain of the company from which the soldier has deserted can only submit, for any attempt on his part to reclaim the man would be vain. The Venetian Republic at that time considered itself more in need of galley slaves than of soldiers. At present it must think otherwise. (I write this in the year 1797.)

Among other privileges a galley slave has that of stealing without being punished. It is generally considered the least of the crimes for which he should be forgiven. ‘‘Be on your guard,’’ says the galley slave’s master, ‘‘and if you catch him beat him; but do not cripple him or you will have to pay me the hundred ducati he costs me.’’

Even a court of justice cannot send a criminal galley slave to the gallows without paying his master what he is out of pocket for him.

Scarcely was I in Venice, after finishing my quarantine, before I went to call on Signora Orio; but I found the house empty. A neighbor told me that the advocate Rosa had married her and that she had gone to live in his house. I went there at once, and was very well received. She told me that Nanetta had become the Countess R. and had gone to Guastalla with her husband. Twenty-four years later I saw her son a distinguished officer in the service of the Infante the Duke of Parma.[7] As for Marta, she had become a nun in Murano. Two years later she wrote me a letter in which she adjured me in the name of Jesus Christ and the Holy Virgin not to think of entering her presence. She said that she was bound to forgive me for the crime I had committed by seducing her, because in consequence of that very crime she was certain to save her soul by spending her whole life in repentance for it. She ended her letter by assuring me that she would never cease to pray to God for my conversion. I never saw her again, but she saw me in 1754. My reader shall hear the rest when we have reached that point.

I found Signora Manzoni the same as ever. She had predicted to me, before I left for the Levant, that I would not remain in the military profession either, and she laughed when I told her I had already decided to give it up, since I could not stomach the unjust manner in which another had been preferred over me despite the promise I had been given. She asked me what profession I would take up after renouncing the trade of war, and I answered that I would practice as an advocate. She burst out laughing, and said it was too late.[8] I was only twenty years old.

When I waited on Signor Grimani, I was very well received; but great was my surprise when, on my asking him where my brother Francesco was living, he told me that he was keeping him in the fortress of Sant'Andrea, the very place in which he had had me confined before the arrival of the Bishop of Martorano.

"In the fortress," he said, "he works for the Major. He is copying battle paintings by Simonini,[9] for which the Major pays him; in this way he earns his living and is becoming a good painter."

"But he is not under arrest?"

"It amounts to that, for he is not free to leave the fortress. The Major, whose name is Spiridion, is on good terms with Razzetta, who found it easy to give him the pleasure of looking after your brother."

Horrified that the bloodthirsty Razzetta[10] should be the doom of my entire family, I ask him if my sister[11] was still in his house, and he says that she had gone to Dresden to live with her mother. Leaving Signor Grimani's, I go to the fortress of Sant'Andrea, where I find my brother brush in hand, in good health and neither content nor discontent with his situation.

"What crime did you commit," I asked him, "to be sentenced to live here?"

"Ask the Major—here he comes."

The Major enters, my brother tells him who I am, I bow to him and ask him by what authority he was keeping my brother under arrest. He answers that he is not accountable to me. I tell my brother to take his hat and cloak and come to dinner with me, and the Major bursts out laughing, saying that if the sentry let him pass he could go with me. I keep my own counsel and leave by myself, resolved to go and speak with the Savio alla Scrittura.

It was on the following morning that I presented myself at his office, where I found my dear Major Pelodoro, who had been transferred to the fortress of Chioggia. I informed him of the complaint which I wished to lay before the Savio in regard to my brother, and at the same time of my resolve to resign from the service. He answered that as soon as I had obtained the Savio's consent, he would arrange to have my commission sold for me at the price I had paid for it. The Savio arrived, and in half an hour everything was settled. He promised to approve my resignation as soon as he had assured himself that my replacement was a capable man; and, Major Spiridion happening to appear just then, the Savio ordered him to set my brother at liberty, after reprimanding him severely in my presence. I went to get him out after dinner and brought him to stay with me in San Luca in a furnished room in the Calle del Carbon.

A few days later I received my discharge and a hundred zecchini, and had to doff my uniform.

Obliged to think of doing something to earn my living, I thought of becoming a professional gambler; but Fortune did not favor my plan. In less than a week I found myself penniless; and thereupon I decided to become a fiddler. Doctor Gozzi had taught me enough so that I could scrape away in a theater orchestra. I applied to Signor Grimani for such a post, and he at once put me in the orchestra of his Teatro San Samuele, where, earning a scudo a day, I was able to maintain myself. Seeing myself for what I was, I deliberately stayed away from all fashionable gatherings and from the houses which I frequented before I took up this sorry profession. I knew that everyone must be calling me a bad lot, and I did not care. People were bound to despise me; but I consoled myself with the knowledge that I was not despicable. Seeing myself reduced to this condition after having enjoyed such splendid opportunities, I felt ashamed, but I kept it to myself. I felt humiliated, but not degraded. Not having abjured the goddess Fortune, I thought that I could still count on her. I knew that she exercises her sway over all mortals without consulting them, provided that they are young; and I was young.

CHAPTER VII

I go completely to the dogs. A piece of extraordinary good luck raises me from my low estate and I become a rich nobleman.

AFTER an education calculated to lead me into an honorable profession suitable for a young man who, in addition to a good grounding in letters, was endowed with promising qualities of mind and with those accidental personal advantages which always and everywhere produce an impression, here I am, at the age of twenty, become a menial journeyman of a sublime art in which, if he who excels is admired, the mediocrity is rightly despised. I became a member of a theater orchestra, in which position I could demand neither esteem nor consideration and must even expect the scorn of those who had known me as a doctor, then as an ecclesiastic, then as a soldier, and had seen me received and made much of in polished and noble circles.

All this I knew; but contempt, to which I could not have remained indifferent, was not shown me. I defied it, for I knew that it was deserved only by baseness, and with that in any form I could not reproach myself. As for esteem, I let my ambition sleep. Satisfied with being at no one's beck and call, I proceeded on my way without worrying about the future. Forced to become an ecclesiastic, and unable to succeed by any other course than that of hypocrisy, I should have been disgusted with myself; and to continue in the military profession, I should have had to practice a patience of which I had no reason to believe myself capable. I considered that the profession one adopts should produce an income sufficient to meet the necessities of life, and that the salary I should have received in return for serving in the troops of the Republic would not have sufficed me; for because of my upbringing, my needs were greater than others'. Playing the violin, I earned enough to keep myself without turning to anyone. *Happy are they who can boast that they are self-sufficient.* My profession was not a noble one, but I did not care. Calling everything prejudice, I soon acquired all the habits of my degraded fellow musicians. After the performance I went with them to a tavern, which we left only in a state of intoxication to spend the night in some house of ill fame. When we found it full, we forced the occupants to take to their heels, and we decamped without paying the unhappy women who had submitted to our brutality even the miserable recompense which the law accords them. These highhanded proceedings often exposed us to the most obvious dangers.

We often spent our nights roaming through different quarters of the city, thinking up the most scandalous practical jokes and putting them into execution. We amused ourselves by untying the gondolas moored before private houses, which then drifted with the current to one side of the Grand Canal or the other, and making merry over the curses the gondoliers would call down on us the next morning when they did not find their gondolas where they had moored them.

We often woke midwives and made them dress and go to deliver women who, when they arrived, called them fools. We did the same to the most celebrated physicians, whose slumbers we interrupted to send them to noblemen who, we told them, had suffered an apoplexy, and we routed priests from their beds and packed them off to pray for the souls of people in perfect health who, we said, were at death's door.

In every street through which we passed we relentlessly cut the bell cord hanging at every door; and when we happened to find a door open because someone had forgotten to shut it, we groped our way up the stairs and terrified all the sleeping inmates by shouting at their bedroom doors that the street door of the house was open. And then we decamped, leaving the house door as open as we had found it.

One very dark night we decided to overturn a big marble table which was a sort of monument. The table stood almost in the middle of the Campo Sant'Angelo.[1] In the days of the war which the Republic had fought against the League of Cambrai,[2] so the story ran, it was on this big table that the commissaries had counted out their pay to the recruits who enrolled in the service of St. Mark.

When we could get into bell towers, we thought it great sport to alarm the whole neighborhood by ringing the tocsin which announces a fire, or to cut all the bell ropes. When we crossed the canal, instead of all going together in a gondola, each of us took one, and when we got out on the other side we all ran away, to make the gondoliers, whom we had not paid, run after us.

The whole city was complaining of our nocturnal malefactions, and we laughed at the investigations which were made to discover the disturbers of the public peace. We had to keep our secret most carefully, for if we had been discovered the authorities might well have given themselves the pleasure of sentencing all of us to spend some time on board the galley of the Council of Ten, which is moored opposite the two tall columns in the Piazzetta San Marco.

We were seven, and sometimes eight, for as I was very fond of my brother Francesco I often took him along with us. But fear finally tempered, and even ended, our excesses. Here is the story.

In each of the seventy-two parishes of the city of Venice, there is a big tavern called a *magazzeno,*[3] where wine is sold at retail, which stays open all night, and where one can drink more cheaply than at the other taverns in the city, where food is also provided. One can also eat at the *magazzeno* by sending out for what one wants to the pork butcher's shop, which is also regularly to be found in each parish and which is open all night. The pork butcher also keeps a cook-shop, where he prepares execrable food; but since he sells everything cheaply his establishment is of great use to the poor. In the *magazzeno* itself one never sees either members of the nobility or citizens in good circumstances, for cleanliness is not to be found there. These places are frequented only by the common people. They have small rooms containing only a table surrounded by benches instead of chairs.

It was during one Carnival, midnight had struck, we were eight, all masked, roving through the city, each of us trying to gain distinction in our comrades' eyes by thinking up some new kind of practical joke. Passing the *magazzeno* of the parish named Santa Croce,[4] we are tempted to go in for a drink. We enter, we walk about, and we find no one except three men peaceably drinking with a rather pretty woman. Our leader, who was a Venetian nobleman belonging to one of the Balbi families, said it would be a fine trick, and a new one, to carry off the poor topers in one direction and the woman in another, so that we could use her afterward at our good pleasure. He tells us his plan in detail, we approve it, he gives us our roles, and, well concealed by our masks, he leads us into the room, where, taking off his mask, certain that even so he will not be recognized, he addresses the startled men in the following words:

"On pain of death, and by order of the heads of the Council of Ten,[5] *come with us at once, not making the slightest sound; as for you, my good woman, you have nothing to fear. You will be taken home."*

He had scarcely finished his speech before two of our band took the woman and immediately conducted her to the place where our leader had told them to go and wait for us, and we seize the three trembling men, whose last thought is to resist us. The waiter comes running up to be paid, and our leader pays him, ordering him to say nothing, still on pain of death. We take the three men on board a large boat; our leader gets up on the poop, ordering the boatman to row at the bow. The boatman is forced to obey, not knowing where he may go, for the course depends on the man on the poop. None of us knew where our leader was going to take the three poor devils.

He takes a course to leave the canal, leaves it, and in a quarter of an hour arrives at San Giorgio,[6] where he disembarks the three prisoners, who are glad to be left there, for they must have been fearing they would be murdered. Then our leader, feeling tired, has the boatman go up on the poop and orders him to take us to San Geremia,[7] where after paying him liberally, he leaves him in his boat.

From San Geremia we go to the Campiello del Remer, in San Marcuola,[8] where my brother and another of our band were waiting for us in a corner, sitting on the ground with the woman, who was crying.

"Don't cry, my beauty," said our leader, "no harm will come to you. We will go and drink a glass in Rialto and then we will take you home."

"Where is my husband?"

"You will see him back at home tomorrow morning."

Relieved by his answer, and docile as a sheep, she came with us to the inn of the "Two Swords,"[9] where we made a good fire in an upstairs room and where, after having food and drink brought, we sent the waiter away. We then removed our masks, and we saw the woman we had carried off become all amiability at the sight of our faces and the way in which we behaved. After we had encouraged her with words and glasses of wine there befell her what she could not but be expecting. Our leader, as was only right, was the first to pay her his amorous duty, after most politely overcoming her reluctance to yield to him in the presence of us all. She chose the sensible course of laughing and letting him do as he pleased.

But I saw that she was surprised when I came forward to be the second; she thought herself obligated to show her gratitude; and when, after my turn, she saw the third, she no longer doubted of her happy fate, which promised her all the members of the band. She was not mistaken. My brother was the only one who pretended to be ill. He had no other choice, for the law among us irrevocably demanded that each of us do what another did.

After this fine exploit, we resumed our masks, paid the innkeeper, and took the happy woman to San Giobbe,[10] where she lived, leaving her only when we saw her opening her door. None of us could keep from laughing when she thanked us most sincerely and in the most perfect good faith. After that we separated and all went home.

It was not until two days later that our escapade began to be talked of. The young woman's husband was a weaver, as were his two friends. He joined with them in approaching the heads of the Council of Ten with a complaint in which he presented a completely truthful account of our action, the atrocity of which was, however, diminished by a circumstance which must have set the three judges laughing, as it did the whole city. The document said that the eight maskers had subjected the woman to no ill treatment. The two maskers who had carried her off had taken her to such-and-such a place where, the six others having arrived an hour later, they all went to the "Swords," where they spent an hour drinking. They had then taken her home, begging her to excuse them for having played a trick on her husband. The three weavers had not been able to leave the island of San Giorgio until daybreak, and when the husband reached home he found his wife in bed fast asleep; upon waking she had told him the whole story. She complained only of the great fear she had felt, and she demanded justice and exemplary punishment for it. Everything about the complaint was comical, for the husband said that the eight maskers would not have found them so easy if their leader had not used the respected name of the Council.

The complaint had three results. The first was to set the whole city laughing. The second was to send every idler to San Giobbe to hear the heroine herself tell the story. The third was to make the tribunal issue a decree promising five hundred ducati to anyone who should reveal the guilty parties, even if it were one of themselves, except only their leader. The reward would have made us tremble, if our leader, the only one among us whose character would have let him turn informer, had not been a Venetian nobleman. This rank of our leader's made me certain that, even had one of us been capable of reporting the facts to gain the five hundred ducati, the tribunal would have done nothing, since it would have had to punish a patrician. No such traitor was found among us, though we were all poor. But we were so frightened that we all mended our ways and our nocturnal expeditions came to an end.

Three or four months later the Cavaliere Nicolò Tron, who was then a State Inquisitor, astonished me by telling me the whole story of the escapade, and naming all my companions in it, one after the other.

In the middle of the spring of the following year, 1746, Signor Girolamo Cornaro, the eldest son of the house of Cornaro della Regina,[11] married a daughter of the Soranzo di San Polo family, and I was one of the fiddlers making up one of the several orchestras for the balls which were given for three days in the Palazzo Soranzo[12] on the occasion of the marriage.

On the third day, when the festivities were nearly over, I leave the orchestra an hour before dawn to go home, and as I go down the stairs I notice a senator in his red robe[13] about to get into his gondola. I see a letter drop to the ground beside him as he is drawing his handkerchief from his pocket. I advance and pick up the letter and, catching up with the imposing Signore just as he is going down the steps, I hand it to him. He thanks me, he asks me where I live, I tell him, he insists upon taking me home, I accept the courtesy he was kind enough to offer me, and take a place on the bench beside him. Three minutes later he asks me to shake his left arm: "I feel," he said, "such a numbness that I seem not to have this arm at all." I shake it with all my might, and I hear him tell me, in ill-articulated words, that he felt as if he were losing his whole leg too and that he thought he was dying.

Greatly alarmed, I open the curtain, take the lantern, look at his face, and am terrified to see that his mouth was drawn up toward his left ear and his eyes were losing their luster.

I call to the gondoliers to stop and let me get out to find a surgeon who will come at once and bleed His Excellency, who had certainly been struck by apoplexy.

I disembark. It was at the bridge by the Calle Bernardo, where three years earlier I had given Razzetta a cudgeling. I run to the coffeehouse, someone shows me where a surgeon lives. I knock loudly, I shout, the door opens, the man is wakened, I urge him to hurry, I will not let him dress, he takes his case and comes with me to the gondola, where he bleeds the dying man, and I tear up my shirt to make him a bandage.

We quickly reach his palace in Santa Marina;[14] the servants are awakened, he is removed from his gondola, carried to his apartment on the second floor, undressed, and put to bed almost dead. I tell a servant to run for a physician, he goes, the physician arrives and bleeds him again. I station myself beside his bed, considering it my duty not to leave.

An hour later a patrician who is a friend of his arrives, then I see another, they are in despair, they question the gondoliers, who tell them that I am better able to answer them than they are. They question me, I tell them all that I knew; they do not know who I am, they do not dare to ask me, and I tell them nothing. The patient lay motionless, with no sign of life but his breathing. Fomentations were applied, and the priest who had been fetched expected him to die. No visitors were admitted, the two patricians and I were the only persons who remained with him. I join them at noon in a light dinner without leaving the room. Toward evening the elder of the two patricians tells me that I may leave if I have business to attend to, since they intended to stay with the sick man all night, lying down on mattresses which they would order brought. I answer that I will sleep in the chair in which I was, since I felt certain that if I left, the patient would die, just as I felt certain that he could not die so long as I remained there. I see them exchange looks, astonished at my answer.

I learn from them as we are eating supper together that the dying nobleman was Signor Bragadin, only brother of the Procuratore of the same name.[15] This Signor Bragadin was celebrated in Venice not only because of his eloquence and his talents as a statesman but also because of the love affairs which had signalized his stormy youth. He had committed extravagances for women who had likewise committed them for his sake; he had gambled a great deal and lost a great deal, and his brother the Procuratore was his bitterest enemy because he had taken it into his head that he had tried to poison him. He had accused him of the crime before the Council of Ten, which, eight months later, had unanimously declared him innocent; but the Procuratore had not changed his opinion. This innocent man, oppressed by his unjust brother, who despoiled him of half his income, nevertheless lived the life of an amiable philosopher in the bosom of friendship. He had two friends, the men whom I saw with him: one was of the Dandolo and the other of the Barbaro family, both of them as upright and amiable as himself. He was handsome, learned, fond of a joke, and meek in disposition. His age at the time was fifty.

The physician who had undertaken to cure him, whose name was Ferro, was persuaded for reasons all his own that he could restore him to health by applying an ointment of mercury to his chest; and he was given his way. The rapid effect of this remedy, which was well received by his two friends, alarmed me greatly. Its rapidity appeared in the fact that in less than twenty-four hours the patient was troubled by a violent brain fever. The physician said that he knew the ointment would produce this effect, but that the next day its action on the brain would diminish and proceed to the other parts of the body, which needed to be stimulated both artificially and by an equilibrium in the circulation of the fluids.

At midnight Signor Bragadin was on fire and in a dangerous state of agitation; I get up, and I see him with lusterless eyes and scarcely able to breathe. I rouse the two friends from their mattresses, saying that the patient must be relieved of what would kill him. Not waiting for them to answer, I uncover his chest, I remove the plaster, then wash him with warm water, and within three or four minutes he has recovered from his agitation and is resting easy in the gentlest of sleep. We go back to bed.

The physician arrives very early in the morning and is delighted to find his patient in good condition. Signor Dandolo tells him what had been done, as the result of which he found his patient improved. The physician complains of such a liberty having been taken and asks who has played havoc with his treatment. Signor Bragadin tells him that the person who had delivered him from the mercury which was about to kill him was a physician who knew more than he did; and so saying points to me.

I do not know which of us was the more surprised, whether the physician at seeing a young man he had never seen before declared more learned than himself, or I, who did not know that I was so. I maintained a modest silence, though finding it difficult to stifle my laughter, while the physician looked at me and rightly concluded that I was a brazen charlatan who had dared to supplant him. He coldly informed the sick man that he surrendered his place to me, and he was taken at his word. He leaves, and leaves me promoted physician to one of the most illustrious members of the Venetian Senate. All in all, I was delighted. I then told my patient that all he needed was to diet and that nature would do the rest in the mild weather which would soon be upon us.

Thus dismissed, Doctor Ferro told the story all over the city; and since the patient felt better every day, one of his relatives who came to visit him said that everyone was amazed that he had been pleased to make a fiddler from a theater orchestra his physician. Signor Bragadin laughed and replied that a fiddler might well know more than all the physicians in Venice.

His Excellency listened to me as if I were an oracle. His two surprised friends accorded me the same attention. Encouraged by this obsequiousness, I spoke as a physician, I dogmatized, and I cited authors whom I had never read.

Signor Bragadin, who had the weakness to dabble in the abstruse sciences, told me one day that he thought me too wise for a young man, and hence I must have some supernatural gift. He asked me to tell him the truth. It was then that, in order not to offend his vanity by telling him he was wrong, I hit upon the strange expedient of making him, in the presence of his two friends, a confidence as false as it was extravagant, namely, that I was in possession of a numerical calculus which, when I put it a written question which I reduced to numerals, returned me an answer, likewise in numerals, which gave me the information I wanted and which no one on earth could have imparted to me. Signor Bragadin said that it was the Key of Solomon,[16] known to the uninitiated as the cabala. He asked me from whom I had learned the science, and when I answered that the person who had taught it to me was a hermit who was living on Monte Carpegna[17] when I was under arrest in the Spanish army, he said that the hermit must have bound an invisible spirit to the calculus without my knowledge, for mere numbers could not have the power to reason.

"You are in possession," he said, "of a treasure, and it rests with you to derive the greatest advantage from it."

I answered that I did not know how I could derive any great advantage from it, and the more so since the answers my calculus gave me were so obscure that I had become disgusted with it of late and almost never put any questions to it.

"Yet it is true," I added, "that if I had not constructed my pyramid [18] three weeks ago, I should not have had the happiness of knowing Your Excellency."

"How is that?"

"Having asked my oracle, on the second day of the festivities in the Palazzo Soranzo, if I should meet anyone at the ball there whom I did not wish to meet, it answered that I must leave the festival at exactly ten o'clock.''[19]

Signor Bragadin and his two friends were as if turned to stone. Signor Dandolo then asked me to answer a question which he would ask me himself, and which he alone was able to interpret, since he alone knew the facts. He writes the question, he hands it to me, I read it, I understand neither the question nor the subject to which it refers, but it does not matter, I have to give an answer. If the question is so obscure to me that I cannot understand the first thing about it, I ought not to understand the first thing about the answer either. So I answer in four verses in ordinary figures, which he alone could interpret, displaying complete indifference as to the interpretation. Signor Dandolo reads them, reads them over again, shows surprise, he understands it perfectly, it is divine, it is unique, it is a heavenly treasure. The numbers are merely the vehicle, but the answer can only have come from an immortal intelligence. After Signor Dandolo, Signor Barbaro and Signor Bragadin ask questions on all sorts of subjects, they find all my answers divine, I congratulate them, and say that I am happy to be in possession of something which I had scarcely valued until then but which I would now value highly, since I saw that it put me in a position to be useful to Their Excellencies.

They then all three asked me together how long it would take me to teach them the rules of the calculus. I answered that it was a matter of very little time, and that I would do it even though the hermit had told me that if I taught it to anyone before I had reached the age of fifty I would drop dead three days afterward. ''I do not,'' I said, ''believe in his threat.'' Signor Bragadin then told me in the most serious tone that I ought to believe in it, and from then on none of the three again asked me to teach him the art of the cabala. They considered that if they could attach me to them, it would be the same as being in possession of the cabala themselves. Thus I became the hierophant [20] of these three men who, with all their worth and their amiability, were lacking in wisdom, since they dabbled in what are known as the chimeras of knowledge: they believed in the possibility of what was morally impossible. With me at their orders, they saw themselves in possession of the philosophers' stone, the universal medicine,[21] communication with the elemental spirits[22] and all the celestial intelligences, and of the secrets of all the governments of Europe. They also believed in magic,[23] to which they gave the specious name of occult physics.

After convincing themselves of the divinity of my cabala by questions concerning things which had happened in the past, they proceeded to make it of use to them by always consulting it concerning the present and the future, and I did not find it hard to practice divination, since I never gave an answer which did not have two meanings, one of which, however, known only to me, was not revealed until after the event. My cabala was never wrong. I now understood how easy it had been for the ancient priests of paganism to impose on the ignorant and credulous universe. But what has always amazed me is that the Holy Fathers of the Christian Church, who were not simple, ignorant men like our Evangelists, thinking that they could not deny the divinity of oracles, attributed them to the devil. They would not have thought in this fashion if they had known the art of the cabala. My three friends were like the Holy Fathers: seeing the divinity of my answers, and not being ill-natured enough to think me a devil, they believed that my oracle was animated by an angel.

These three noblemen were not only Christians perfectly loyal to their religion, they were pious and scrupulous: all three of them were unmarried, and all three had become irreconcilable enemies of women, after renouncing them. They held that such a renunciation was the chief condition which the elemental spirits enforced upon those who wished to have commerce with them. The one excluded the other.

What struck me as extremely strange when I first began to know these three patricians was that they were all highly endowed with what is known as intelligence. But a prejudiced intelligence reasons badly, and what is essential is to reason well. I often laughed to myself when I heard them talk of the mysteries of our religion and deride people whose intellectual faculties were so limited that those mysteries were incomprehensible to them. The incarnation of the Word was mere play to God, and the Resurrection was so trifling a matter that they could not think it a miracle, for the flesh being accessory, and it being impossible that God should be dead, Jesus Christ naturally had to return to life. As for the Eucharist, the real presence and transubstantiation were for them (*praemissis concessis* [''the premises being granted'']) the most obvious things possible. They went to confession every week, without feeling the least diffidence in the presence of their confessors, whose ignorance they lamented. They thought it their duty to confess only what they believed to be a sin, and on this point their reasoning was perfectly correct.

With these three noblemen who, eccentric as they were, deserved and enjoyed respect for their probity, their birth, their prestige, and their age, I thoroughly enjoyed myself, despite the fact that in their avidity for knowledge they often kept me busy for eight or ten hours a day, with the four of us shut up together and no visitors admitted. I made them my intimate friends by telling them the whole story of my life until then, which I did quite frankly, though not in every detail as I have just set it down, in order not to lead them into any mortal sins.

I know that I deceived them, and that hence I did not act toward them as a man of honor in all the rigor of the term; but if my reader is a man of the world, I ask him to think a little before considering me unworthy of his indulgence.

If I wanted my morality to be perfectly pure, I should —I am told—either not have become intimate with them or have disabused them. Disabused them? No—I answer —for I did not think myself capable of it. I should only have made them laugh; they would have called me an ignoramus and sent me packing. They would not have paid me for it, and I felt no vocation to set myself up as an apostle. As for my making a heroic resolve to leave them, as I might have done, as soon as I learned that they were visionaries, I will answer that to make it I should have had to have the morality of a misanthrope, an enemy of mankind, of nature, of good manners, and of himself. As a young man who needed to live well and to enjoy the pleasures which my constitution demanded at that age, should I have run the risk of leaving Signor Bragadin to die, should I have had the barbarity to leave these three worthy men open to the deceits of some dishonest scoundrel who might have contrived to make their acquaintance and ruined them by inducing them to undertake the chimerical operation of the Great Work?[24] In addition, an invincible self-esteem prevented me from showing myself unworthy of their friendship by my ignorance, or my pride, or my bad manners, of which I should have given them unmistakable proof if I had rejected their acquaintance.

I took the most creditable, the noblest, and the only natural course. I decided to put myself in a position where I need no longer go without the necessities of life; and what those necessities were for me no one could judge better than I. With the friendship of these three eminent persons, I became a man who would enjoy consideration and prestige in his own country. In addition, I should have the very flattering pleasure of becoming the subject of conversation and of the speculations of those who in their idleness insist on divining the causes of all the moral phenomena which they observe. No one in Venice could understand how an intimacy could exist between myself and three men of their character, they all heaven and I all earth; they most severe in their morals, and I addicted to every kind of dissolute living.

At the beginning of the summer Signor Bragadin was well enough to return to the Senate. The following is the discourse he addressed to me on the eve of the day on which he went out for the first time.

"Whoever you are, I owe you my life. Your patrons who wanted to make you a priest, a scholar, an advocate, a soldier, and then a violinist were fools who did not know you. God commanded your angel to bring you to me. I have come to know you; if you wish to be my son, you have only to recognize me as your father and from thenceforth I will treat you as such in my house until I die. Your apartment is ready, have your things brought to it, you will have a servant, and a gondola at my expense, you will eat at our table, and have ten zecchini a month. At your age my father did not give me a larger allowance. You need not think of the future; think of amusing yourself, and take me as your counselor in whatever befalls you and whatever you wish to undertake, and you will always find me your good friend."

I instantly threw myself at his feet to assure him of my gratitude, and addressed him by the sweet name of father. I swore to obey him as his son. The two other friends, who were staying in the palace, embraced me, and we swore eternal brotherhood.

That, my dear reader, is the whole story of my metamorphosis, and of the happy period which raised me at one bound from the base role of a fiddler to that of a nobleman.

CHAPTER VIII

I lead a dissolute life. Zawoiski. Rinaldi. L'Abadie. The young Countess. The Capuchin Don Steffani. Ancilla. La Ramon. I take a gondola at San Giobbe to go to Mestre.

FORTUNE, she who had been pleased to give me a taste of her despotism in leading me to happiness by a road unknown to wisdom, had not the power to make me adopt such a system of conduct as would put me in a position to be dependent on no one in my life to come. I began to behave in complete disregard of anything which could set bounds to my inclinations. Once I obeyed the laws, I thought I could scoff at prejudices. I believed I could live in perfect freedom in a country which was under an aristocratic government. I should have been wrong even if Fortune had made me a member of the government. The Republic of Venice, knowing that its first duty is self-preservation, is itself the slave of the all-overriding interest of the state. The occasion arising, it is bound to sacrifice everything to this duty, in the face of which the laws themselves cease to be inviolable. But enough of this now all too familiar subject. The whole of mankind knows that true freedom exists, and can exist, nowhere. I have touched on the subject only to give my reader some idea of my conduct in my native country, where in this year I entered on a path which was to end in a state prison as inscrutable as it was impenetrable, and both precisely because it was unconstitutional. At no loss for money, endowed by nature with a striking exterior, a resolute gambler, a spendthrift, a great talker with a sharp tongue, completely without modesty, fearless, running after pretty women, supplanting rivals, and thinking no company good except such as amused me, I could not but be hated. As I was always ready to risk my own skin, I felt that I was entitled to do whatever I pleased, for anything that stood in my way I considered an evil to be challenged.

This behavior on my part could not but be displeasing to the three sages whose oracle I had become; but they dared not say a word to me. Signor Bragadin laughingly told me I was showing him the wild life he had led when he was my age, but that I must be prepared to pay the price for it, and to find myself punished as he had been when I should have reached his. Without failing in the respect I owed him, I made a joke of his dire prophecies and went my way. But here is the first sample of his character which he gave me, in the third or fourth week of our acquaintance.

At the casino[1] of Signora Avogadro,[2] a woman whose wit and charm belied her sixty years, I met a young Polish gentleman named Gaetan Zawoiski.[3] He was waiting for money from his country and, while he waited, the women of Venice, enchanted by his handsome face and Polish manners, kept him well supplied. We became good friends; I opened my purse to him; and he opened his to me even more generously twenty years later in Munich. He was a man of honor, with only a modicum of intellect but enough to keep him happy. He died five or six years ago in Dresden, having become minister to the Elector of Trier.[4] I will speak of him in his proper place.

This charming young man, whom everyone liked and who was believed to be a freethinker because he was seen with Signor Angelo Querini[5] and Signor Lunardo Venier,[6] one day when we were in a garden on La Giudecca[7] introduced me to a beautiful foreign countess, who attracted me. We went to call on her the same evening at the Locanda del Castelletto[8] where, after introducing me to her husband, Count Rinaldi, she asked us to stay for supper. The husband made a faro bank, at which, punting with the Countess as partner, I won some fifty zecchini. Delighted to have made this brilliant acquaintance, I went to call on her by myself the next morning; her husband, after asking me to excuse her for still being in bed, had me shown in. In the conversation between us she had the art to leave me hoping for everything while granting me nothing, and when she saw me about to leave she invited me to supper. I went, I won as on the previous evening, still in partnership with her, and I returned home in love. I believed she would be kind to me the next morning; but when I went I was told she had gone out. I went again in the evening, and after she had offered me her excuses, we played, and I lost all the money I had, still in partnership with her.

After supper the outsiders left, and I remained there alone with Zawoiski, since Count Rinaldi had offered to give me my revenge. I played on my word, and he put down the cards when he found that, according to the tally, I owed him five hundred zecchini. I went home in a profound melancholy. Honor demanded that I pay my debt the next day, and I had not a soldo. Love increased my despair; I saw myself on the verge of being exposed as a pauper. My state of mind, which was visibly imprinted on my face, did not escape Signor Bragadin the next morning. He sounded me out and was so encouraging that I told him the whole story; I ended it by saying that I saw myself on the verge of dishonor and that it would kill me. He relieved me by saying that he would pay my debt that very day, if I would promise him never again to play on my word. I swore that I would not; I kissed his hand, and went out for a walk feeling very happy. I was sure that this heaven-born man would give me five hundred zecchini that afternoon, and I was delighting in the thought of the credit my promptness would bring me in the eyes of the lady, who would no longer put off granting me her favors. This was the only reason which kept me from regretting the amount; but greatly affected by my dear master's generosity, I was completely resolved not to play on my word again.

I dine very cheerfully with him and my two other friends, never mentioning the matter. A moment after we got up from the table, a man came bringing a letter and a package for Signor Bragadin. He read the letter: "Well and good!" The man left; and he told me to come to his room with him.

"Here," he said, "is a package which belongs to you."

I open it, and I find thirty or forty zecchini. Seeing my surprise, he laughs and hands me the letter to read.

"I assure Signor di Casanova that our playing last night on his word was only for fun: he owes me nothing. My wife sends him half of the gold which he lost in cash. —Count Rinaldi."

I look at Signor Bragadin, who was dying with laughter at my amazement. I understand the whole thing. I thank him. I embrace him; and I promise to be wiser in the future. My soul sees the light; I am cured of my love, and I feel ashamed at having been duped by both the husband and the wife.

"Tonight," said my wise physician, "you will sup very cheerfully with the charming Countess."

"Tonight I will sup with you. You have given me a lesson such as only a master teacher can give."

"The first time you lose on your word, your best course will be not to pay."

"That would dishonor me."

"Never mind. The sooner you dishonor yourself, the more you will save, for you will have to dishonor yourself when you find that you absolutely cannot pay. So it is better not to wait for that inevitable moment."

"But it will be still better to avoid it by henceforth playing only for cash."

"Certainly, for you will save both your honor and your money; but since you are fond of gambling, I advise you never to punt. Deal. You will have the advantage."

"A small one."

"As small as you like, but you will have it. The punter is a fool. The banker reasons. 'I wager,' he says, 'that you will not guess.' The punter answers, 'I wager that I shall guess.' Which one is the fool?"

"The punter."

"Then in Heaven's name be sensible. And if you find yourself punting, and beginning to win, know that you are still only a fool if you end by losing."

"A fool? Luck changes."

"Stop as soon as you see it change, even if you have only won a soldo. You will still have won."

I had read Plato, and I was amazed to find a man who reasoned like Socrates.

The next day Zawoiski called on me very early to tell me I had been expected at supper, and that I had been praised for the promptness with which I had paid the amount I had lost. I let him believe it; and I did not see the Count and Countess again until sixteen years later in Milan. Zawoiski did not learn the whole story from my own lips until forty years later at Carlsbad. He had become deaf.

Two or three weeks after this specimen, Signor Bragadin gave me an even more telling example of his character. Zawoiski had introduced me to a Frenchman named L'Abadie, who was applying to the government for the post of inspector of all the land forces of the Republic. His appointment depended on the Senate. I presented him to my master, who promised to vote for him; but here is what happened to prevent him from keeping his word.

Needing a hundred zecchini to pay some debts, I asked him to give them to me. He asked me why I did not ask Monsieur de l'Abadie to do me the favor.

"I should not dare."

"Do not be so timid; I am sure he will lend them to you."

"I very much doubt it; but I will try."

I go to see him the next day and, after some polite opening remarks, I put the request to him; and, with no less politeness, he begs to be excused, saying all the things one says when one either will not or cannot do favors of the sort. Zawoiski arrives, I leave them, and go and tell my kind patron that my attempt had availed me nothing. He smiled and said that the Frenchman was lacking in intelligence.

1746.

It was on that particular day that the decree making him inspector of the Venetian armies was to be brought before the Senate. I pursue my usual occupations, I come home at midnight and, learning that Signor Bragadin has not yet come in, I go to bed. In the morning I go to wish him good morning, and I tell him I am on my way to congratulate the new inspector. He answers that I can spare myself the trouble, since the Senate had rejected the proposal.

"How can that be? Three days ago he was certain of the contrary."

"He was not wrong, for the decree would have been approved if I had not decided to speak against it. I demonstrated to the Senate that a sound policy would not allow us to give the post to a foreigner."

"I am surprised to hear it, for Your Excellency did not think so day before yesterday."

"I did not know him well. I discovered yesterday that the man did not have brains enough for the post he was soliciting. Can he be a man of good judgment and refuse you a hundred zecchini? His refusal loses him an income of three thousand scudi which he would be enjoying at this moment."

I go out, and come upon Zawoiski with L'Abadie, who was furious.

"If you had warned me," he said, "that the hundred zecchini would have kept Signor Bragadin quiet, I would have found a way to let you have them."

"If you had the brains of an inspector, you would have guessed it."

The man proved useful to me by telling everyone the story. Those who later needed the Senator's voice learned the means of obtaining it. I paid all my debts.

About this time my brother Giovanni came to Venice with the ex-Jew Guarienti,[9] a great connoisseur of pictures who was traveling at the expense of the King of Poland, Elector of Saxony. It was he who had arranged the acquisition of the Duke of Modena's collection for one hundred thousand zecchini. They went to Rome together, where my brother remained to study under the celebrated Mengs.[10] I will speak of him fourteen years hence. Now, as a faithful historian, I must relate an event upon which depended the happiness of one of the most charming women in Italy, who would have been plunged into misery if I had been cautious.

1746.

At the beginning of October, the theaters being open, I came out of the posthouse for Rome masked and was proceeding on my way when I saw the figure of a girl, with her head wrapped in the hood of her cloak, getting out of the Ferrara packet boat, or *corriere*,[11] which had just arrived. Seeing that she was alone, and noticing her uncertainty, I feel impelled by an occult force to approach her and offer her my services if she needed them. She answers in a timid voice that she only needed a direction. I say that the quay where we are is not a suitable place to stand about. I invite her to a *malvasia*[12] where she could talk to me freely. She hesitates, I insist, and she gives in. The shop was twenty paces away; we enter, and in a moment are sitting alone together, face to face. I unmask, and politeness obliges her to open her hood. A full coif which envelops her entire head allows me to see only her eyes, her nose, her mouth, and her chin; but I need no more to discern with the utmost clarity youth, beauty, sadness, nobility, and candor. This strong letter of recommendation interests me in the highest degree. After wiping away a few tears, she tells me that she is of noble birth and had fled from her father's house alone to find a Venetian who had destroyed her happiness by seducing and abandoning her.

"You must hope that you can recall him to his duty. I suppose he promised to marry you."

"He gave me his promise in writing. The favor I ask of you is to take me to his house, to leave me there, and to be discreet."

"You may count, Signora, on the sentiments of a man of honor. I am such, and I already take a deep interest in all that concerns you. Who is this man?"

"Alas! I yield to my fate."

So saying, she draws a paper from her bosom and gives it to me to read. I see that it was written by Zanetto Steffani,[13] whose hand I knew, and only a short time before. He promised the Contessina A. S. to marry her in Venice within the week. I hand it back to her, I tell her that I know him very well, that he had a post in the Chancellery,[14] was a great libertine, and would be rich when his mother died but at the moment was much in discredit and burdened with debts.

"Take me to his house."

"I will do whatever you tell me to; but listen to me and have complete confidence in me. I advise you not to go to his house. If he has already failed you, you cannot expect to be graciously received if you find him there; and if he is not at home, you can only expect to be badly treated by his mother if you let it be known who you are. Trust me, and believe that it was God who sent me to help you. I promise you that no later than tomorrow you shall know if Steffani is in Venice, what he means to do about you, and what he can be made to do. Before that is accomplished, you should not let him know that you are in Venice nor where you are staying."

"Where shall I go tonight?"

"To a place above suspicion."

"To your house, if you are married."

"I am a bachelor."

I decide to take her to the house of a widow whom I knew to be respectable, who had two furnished rooms, and who lived in a street which was a cul-de-sac. She yields to persuasion and takes a gondola with me. I order the gondolier to take me where I wished to go. On the way she tells me that a month since, Steffani had stopped in her native city to have repairs made to his carriage, which had broken down, and that he had made her acquaintance the same day in a house to which she had gone with her mother to congratulate a new bride.

"It was on that day," she said, "that I had the misfortune to inspire him with love. He gave up all thought of continuing his journey. He remained in *C.* for four weeks, never leaving his inn by day and spending all his nights in the street under my window, from which I talked to him. As he always said that he loved me and that his intentions were honorable, I told him to make himself known to my parents and ask my hand in marriage; but he plied me with good or bad arguments, all of them intended to prove that I could not make him happy unless I had unlimited confidence in him. I must make up my mind to go with him, unknown to everyone: my honor, he said, would not suffer for, three days after my flight, the whole city should know that I was his wife, and he promised to bring me back there publicly. Alas! Love blinded me; I believed him, I consented. He gave me the document you have seen, and the next night I let him enter my room by the window at which I talked to him. I consented to a crime which was to be blotted out three days later. He left, assuring me that the next night he would come to the same window to receive me in his arms. Is it likely that I should doubt it after the great error I had committed? I packed my things and waited for him; but in vain. The next morning I learned that the monster had set off in his carriage with his servant one hour after he had assured me again, as he left by my window, that he would come to take me away at midnight. Imagine my despair! I took the step to which it prompted me. It could not but be bad. An hour before midnight I left my house alone, thus completing my dishonor, but resolved to die if the cruel ravisher of my dearest possession, whom I felt sure I should find here, did not keep his word to me. I walked all night and most of the following day, without taking the least nourishment until a quarter of an hour before I boarded the packet which brought me here in twenty-four hours. Five men and two women who were on board neither saw my face nor heard the sound of my voice. I remained seated, dozing, holding this prayer book always in my hands. I was let alone. No one spoke to me, and I thanked God for it. I had no sooner disembarked on the quay than you left me no time to consider how I should set about finding my way to Steffani's house in the Via Garzoni in San Samuele. Imagine the effect upon me of the presence of a masked man who, as if he had been waiting for me there and knew my wretched condition, told me to command him if there was anything I needed. Not only did I feel no aversion to answering you, I thought it my duty to show myself worthy of your readiness by entrusting myself to you, despite the counsel of prudence which should make me deaf to your eloquence and to your invitation to accompany you to the place where you have brought me. I have told you all. I beg you not to let my pliancy incline you to think ill of my intelligence. I ceased to be rational only a month ago, and education and reading have given me a knowledge of the world. Love made me succumb, together with lack of experience. I am in your hands, and I do not repent of having entrusted myself to them.''

This speech was what was needed to reinforce the interest she had inspired in me. I brutally told her that Steffani had seduced and deceived her deliberately and that she must think of him no more except to avenge herself. She shuddered and sank her head in her hands. We reached the widow's house. I arranged that she should have a good room, I ordered a small supper for her, and instructed the good landlady to show her every attention and to let her want for nothing. I left, assuring her that she would see me the following morning.

The first step I took after leaving her was to go to Steffani's house. I learned from one of his mother's gondoliers that he had come home three days before and had set off alone twenty-four hours later, and that no one knew where he was, not even his mother. That same night at the theater I obtained information about her family from a Bolognese abate who happened to know them intimately. She had a brother who was serving in the papal army.

Early the next morning I went to see her. She was still asleep. The widow told me that she had eaten a fair supper, without addressing a single word to her, and afterwards had shut herself in her room. As soon as I could hear that she was up, I went into her room and, cutting short all the apologies she insisted on making me, I told her everything I had learned. I found her looking well, sad, but less uneasy. I admired her judgment when she said it was not likely that Steffani had left again to go back to *C*. I offered to go there and do all that was necessary to return her to her home at once; and I saw that she was delighted when I told her all that I had learned about her respectable family. She said nothing against my proposal to go to *C*. immediately, but she asked me to wait. She believed that Steffani would soon return and that she was cool-headed enough to reach a sound decision. I supported her in this idea. I requested her to let me breakfast with her, and when I asked her how she amused herself when she was at home, she said that she read and that, since she loved music, her harpsichord was her delight. I came back toward nightfall with a small basket of books, a harpsichord, and several new airs. I saw that she was surprised; but she was far more so when I took from my pocket three pairs of slippers of different sizes. She thanked me, blushing furiously. Her long walk must have made holes in her shoes; so she let me put them on the chest of drawers, without trying them on to find out which pair would fit her. Seeing her filled with gratitude, and having no design on her which could alarm her virtue, I found my satisfaction in the favorable feelings toward me which my behavior could not but inspire in her. I had no other purpose than to reassure her heart and to obliterate the opinion which Steffani's base procedure might have implanted in her concerning men. I had not the least idea of inspiring love in her, and I was very far from thinking that, on my side, I could fall in love with her. I flattered myself that she would never be of concern to me except as an unfortunate girl who deserved all the friendship of a man who, though unknown to her, was honored with all her trust. Besides, I could not believe that she was open to a new love in her terrible situation, and the idea of reducing her to the point of surrender by my attentions would have horrified me if it had entered my mind.

I stayed with her only a quarter of an hour. I left her to relieve her from the state of embarrassment in which I saw her to be: she was completely at a loss to find words in which to express her gratitude to me.

I had, so I realized, assumed a delicate obligation, the outcome of which I could not foresee; but I did not care. Being at no loss to play my part in it, I had no wish to see it end. This heroic intrigue, with which Fortune was honoring me for the first time, was flattering to me in the highest degree. I was performing an experiment on myself, in the conviction that I did not know myself well enough. I was curious to learn more. It was on the third day that, after repeated expressions of gratitude, she said that she did not understand how I could have so good an opinion of her when I had found her so ready to enter a *malvasia* with me. I saw her smile when I answered that, for my part, I did not understand how, masked as I was, she could have taken me for a man who cherished a virtue of which appearances would have suggested that I was the enemy.

"But in you, Signora," I went on, "and especially in your beautiful face, I saw nobility, sensibility, and virtue in distress. The divine imprint of truth in your very first words showed me that what had seduced you is love, and that it was honor which made you leave your family and your country. Your error arose from a heart seduced, over which your reason had lost all power, and your flight was the act of a great soul which, clamoring for vengeance, justifies you completely. Steffani must expiate his crime with his life, not by marrying you. He is not worthy to obtain possession of you after what he has done, and by forcing him into it instead of punishing him for his crime, you would be granting him a recompense.''

''All that you say is true: I hate the monster; and I have a brother who will kill him in a duel.''

''You are mistaken. He is a coward who will never make himself worthy of an honorable death.''

At this she put her hand in her pocket and, after thinking for a moment, drew out a ten-inch stiletto and put it on the table.

''What is that?''

''It is a weapon which, until this moment, I counted on using against myself. You have opened my eyes. Be so good as to take it away; and I rely on your friendship. I feel certain that I shall owe you my honor and my life.''

It was at this moment that she conquered me. I took the stiletto, and I left in a state of perturbation which showed me the weakness of a heroism which I was very near to pronouncing ridiculous. Yet I managed to maintain it until the seventh day.

Here is an incident which, as it gave me occasion to entertain a suspicion injurious to the lady, troubled me; for, had my suspicion proved justified, it would have obliged me to admit that I had allowed myself to be duped. That would have been humiliating. When she had told me that she was a musician, I had the same day given her a harpsichord, and now three days had passed without her even opening it. The old woman assured me of the fact. I thought she owed me the present of a sample of her musicianship. Could she have lied to me? It would be her ruin. Deciding not to pass judgment at once, I nevertheless resolved to settle my doubts.

It was on the next day that, contrary to my usual custom, I went to see her after dinner, resolved to ask her to give me a sample of her skill. I caught her unawares in her room, sitting in front of a mirror with the old hostess behind her combing out a head of very long pale blond hair of a fineness which words are powerless to describe. She excused herself, saying that she was not expecting me, and continued the operation. "I was," she said, "in absolute need of it." For the first time I see the whole of her face, her neck, and half of her arms; I am lost in admiration and say nothing. I praise the perfume of her pomatum, and the old woman says that, what with the pomatum and powder and combs, she had spent all of the three lire the Signora had given her. I am overwhelmed with confusion. She had already told me that she had left *C.* with only ten paoli; I should have thought of that; but I take refuge in silence.

After combing out her hair, the widow goes to make coffee for us. I take up a portrait set in a ring which was still on her toilet table, I look at it, and I laugh at the fancy which had taken her to have herself painted as a man with black hair. She tells me that it is a portrait of her brother, who looked that much like her. He was two years her senior, and was a military officer in the service of the Most Holy Father, as I had been told.

I indicate that I wish to put her ring on her finger; she holds it out and after slipping the ring on it, I yield to the gallantry which had become part of my nature and make to kiss her hand; but she quickly withdraws it, blushing. I then most sincerely ask her to forgive me if I have given her any reason to believe that I could fail to treat her with respect. She answers that in her situation she must rather think of defending herself from herself than from me. I found the compliment so subtle and so much to my advantage that I thought best to let it pass unacknowledged. She could not but read in my eyes that no circumstance would ever arise under which she would either entertain desires to which I would be unresponsive or find me ungrateful. But at that moment my love grew out of childhood, and I could no longer conceal it from myself.

Thanking me for the books which, divining her taste, I had brought her, for she did not care for novels, she asked me to excuse her if, knowing that I was fond of music, she had never offered to sing me an air, as she was able to do. I breathed again. So saying, she sat down at the harpsichord and played several pieces by heart in the most accomplished manner; then, after refusing several times, she accompanied herself in an air, which she read at sight, in such a fashion that Love instantly bore me up to his heaven. Then, looking at her with languishing eyes, I asked her to give me her hand to kiss, and she did not give it to me; but she let me take it. Nevertheless I managed to keep from devouring it. When I left her I was in love and almost resolved to declare myself. Restraint becomes stupidity when a man reaches the point of knowing that the object of his love shares his feeling. But I needed to be convinced of it.

All of Steffani's acquaintances were discussing his flight all over the city. I heard it all, and I said nothing. It was generally agreed that his mother's refusing to pay his debts was the reason for it. This was very probable. But whether he came back or not, I could not resign my soul to losing the treasure which I held in my hands. Yet not knowing under what colors or in what manner I could best arrive at the enjoyment of it, I found myself trapped in a maze. When the idea of consulting Signor Bragadin in the matter occurred to me, I rejected it with horror. I had found him too much the empiric in the case of Rinaldi, and even more so in that of L'Abadie. I was so afraid of his remedies that I preferred being ill to being cured by using them.

I was stupid enough to ask the widow one morning if the Signora had asked her who I was. I was aware of my mistake as soon as, instead of answering, she asked me:

"Does she not know who you are?"

"Answer me, do not question me."

But she was right. Now nothing could stop her from prying into the affair; now nothing could halt the gossip which would inevitably start, and by my own fault. It is never so necessary to be on one's guard as when one puts questions to the half ignorant. During all the twelve days she[15] had been in my custody, she had never shown any curiosity to know who I was; but was that any reason for me to believe she had none? It was no reason at all. What I should have done was to tell her who I was the very first day. I told her about myself that evening, and better than anyone else could have done it, and begged her to forgive me for not having fulfilled the duty sooner. She thanked me, confessing that she had at times been very curious to know my circumstances; but she assured me she would never have been so stupid as to ask the hostess for information about me.

Our conversation turning to the incomprehensibility of Steffani's long absence, she said that her father must certainly suppose that he had gone into hiding somewhere with her.

"He must have known," she said, "that I talked to him through the window every night; and he could easily have found out that I took passage in the *corriere* from Ferrara. I believe he is in Venice, and I am sure he is making every effort to find me, though secretly. He usually puts up at Boncousin's.[16] Try to find out if he is there."

She no longer spoke of Steffani except with hatred, and her only idea was to shut herself up in some convent far from her native country, where no one would know her shameful story.

I did not need to make inquiries. At supper that day Signor Barbaro spoke as follows:

"A gentleman, a subject of the Pope, has been recommended to me with the request that I use my influence to help him in a difficult and delicate matter. One of our citizens has abducted his daughter, and must have been

with her somewhere for the last two weeks; no one knows where. The matter ought to be brought before the Council of Ten. The mother of the abductor claims to be related to me: I do not intend to take any steps in it."

I pretended to be completely uninterested in the matter. Very early the following morning I called on the young Countess to tell her this interesting news. She was still asleep but, as I was pressed for time, I sent the widow to tell her that I needed only two minutes to inform her of something important. She received me still in bed, with the covers drawn up to her chin.

As soon as she heard all that I had to tell her, she begs me to persuade Signor Barbaro to act as mediator between her father and herself, for she would choose death rather than become the wife of the monster. However, she thinks it best to give me the promise of marriage which he had employed to seduce her, so that I could show her father the depth of the scoundrel's perfidy. To take it from her pocket, she had to expose her whole bare arm to my sight. What made her blush could only have been the shame she felt at showing me that she did not have on a chemise. I promised to see her again toward evening.

To persuade Signor Barbaro to accede to her wish, I should have had to tell him that she was in my custody, and I felt that to confide the fact to him would be injurious to her. I could make up my mind to nothing. I saw myself on the verge of losing her, and I did not want to hasten the moment.

After dinner Count A. S. was announced to Signor Barbaro. I saw him with his son in uniform, the living portrait of his sister. They went into his private room with him to discuss the affair, and an hour later they left. When they had gone he asked me, as I expected he would, to question my angel[17] to learn if it were proper for him to intervene in Count A. S.'s favor. He wrote out the question himself. With the greatest indifference I answered him in figures that *he should intervene in the matter only to persuade the Count to forgive his daughter, abandoning any idea of marrying her to the scoundrel, for God had sentenced him to death.*

This answer was received with amazement, while I was no less amazed at having dared to give it. I had a feeling that Steffani was destined to die at someone's hands. It was love which made me think so. Signor Bragadin, who believed my oracle to be infallible, said that it had never spoken so clearly, and that Steffani had certainly died at the moment the oracle had prophesied it to us. He told Signor Barbaro that he ought to invite the father and son to dinner the next day. It was necessary to go slowly, for before persuading them to forgive the young lady, her whereabouts must be discovered. Signor Barbaro almost set me laughing when he told me that, if I wished to, I could reveal her hiding place on the spot. I promised to ask his question on the following day. I thus gained time to find out beforehand what was in the minds of the father and son. I laughed to myself when I saw that I would have to get Steffani assassinated in order not to throw doubt on my oracle.

I spent the whole evening visiting the young Countess, who no longer had any doubt of her father's indulgence or of the complete confidence which she should have in me.

How glad she was to learn that I was to dine the following day with her father and brother, and that I would come the same evening to repeat to her all that they said about her! But how glad I was, too, to find her persuaded that she should love me dearly and that, without me, she would infallibly have been ruined in a city where the policy of the government is only too willing to let libertinism serve as a simulacrum of the liberty which ought to reign there! We agreed that the coincidence of our meeting each other on the quay of the Roman post was the most fortunate of coincidences, and the accord between us little short of a miracle. We observed with delight that mere physiognomical attraction had played no part either in her willingness to accept my invitation or in the urgency with which I had pressed her to follow me and entrust herself to my advice. I was masked, and her hood performed the same function. Finding that it was all miraculous, we imagined, though without admitting it to each other, that it was all a direct intervention of eternal Providence, of the divine power of our guardian angels; and so we fell in love with each other. I should like to know if in the whole world there is one reader audacious enough to maintain that our reasoning smacked of superstition. It was based upon the most profound philosophy, despite the fact that it was plausible only in respect to ourselves.

"Confess," I said in a moment of enthusiasm, drawing my lips over her beautiful hands, "that if you found I was in love with you, you would fear me."

"Alas! The only thing I fear is that I shall lose you."

This answer, which was accompanied by a look which vouched for its truth, made me open my arms to clasp to my breast the fair object who had given it to me, and to kiss the mouth which had uttered it. Seeing in her eyes neither proud indignation nor a cold compliance arising from a base fear of losing me, I abandoned myself to my feelings. I saw only love and, with it, a gratitude which, far from diminishing its purity, made its triumph all the greater.

But scarcely have I let her go before she lowers her eyes and I hear a deep sigh. I suspect what I fear, and, throwing myself on my knees, I implore her to forgive me.

"For what offense," she replies, "am I to forgive you? You have misinterpreted my thought. Seeing you in love, I was reflecting on my happiness, and a cruel memory interposed and drew that sigh from me. Rise."

Midnight had struck. I say that her honor commands me to leave. I resume my mask and go. I was so overcome by the fear of losing what I thought I had not yet really deserved that my departure must have seemed abrupt to her. I did not sleep well. I spent one of those nights which a young man in love can contrive to make happy only by forcing his imagination to play the role of reality. It is a hard task; but love demands its performance and takes pleasure in it. Certain as I was that my happiness was imminent, hope played only the part of a supernumerary in my delightful drama. Hope, so much praised, is but a flatterer which reason holds dear only because it needs palliatives. Happy they who, to enjoy life, have no need either to hope or to foresee!

When I woke what struck me as something of a difficulty was the death sentence I had pronounced on Steffani. I should have been very glad to find a way of revoking it, both for the honor of my oracle, which I thought was imperiled, and even for Steffani, whom I could not thoroughly hate when I considered that he was as it were the ''efficient cause'' of the happiness which my soul was then enjoying.

The Count and his son came to dinner. The Count was a man of perfect simplicity, completely without affectation. He was visibly distressed by the affair and at a loss how to settle it. The son, who rivaled the God of Love in looks, was witty and had manners of the utmost refinement. His free bearing pleased me. In the hope of gaining his friendship I devoted all my attention to him.

At dessert, Signor Barbaro effectively persuaded the elder Count that we were four persons with a single soul, so that he spoke with complete freedom. After praising his daughter to us in every respect, he assured us that Steffani had never set foot in his house and that it was impossible to imagine by what witchcraft, since he could only talk to her at night from the street through a window, he had seduced her to the point of making her set off by herself on foot two days after he had set off in his carriage.

"Then it is impossible to state," Signor Barbaro objected, "that she was abducted, or to prove that she was seduced by Steffani."

"Though it cannot be proved, it is true nevertheless. It is so true that at the present moment no one knows where he is, he can only be with her. All that I demand is that he marry her."

"I think it would be better not to petition for a forced marriage which would make her unhappy, for Steffani is in every respect one of the worst scoundrels in our corps of secretaries."

"If I were in your place," said Signor Bragadin, "I would let myself be softened by the girl's repentance and I would forgive her."

"Where is she? I am ready to take her in my arms, but I cannot suppose that she is repentant since, I repeat, she must be with him."

"Is it certain that when she left *C.*, she came here?"

"I know it from the captain of the *corriere,* from which she disembarked at the usual landing place twenty paces from the Rome post. A masked man who was waiting for her immediately joined her, and no one knows where they went."

"It may have been Steffani."

"No, for he is short; and the masker was tall. In addition, I have learned that Steffani had left two days before my daughter arrived here. The masker with whom she went off must be a friend of Steffani's and have taken her to him."

"All this is mere conjecture."

"Four persons who saw the masker all claim to know who he is; but they give different names. Here is the list. However, I shall bring an accusation against all four before the heads of the Council of Ten, if Steffani denies having my daughter in his possession."

He then took from his portfolio a paper containing not only the various names which had been given for the masker but also those of the persons who had given them. Signor Barbaro reads it aloud, and the last name he reads is mine. When I heard my name I gave a start which set my three friends laughing hilariously. Signor Bragadin, who saw that the Count was surprised by their outburst, thought it necessary to explain it to him in the following terms:

"Casanova here is my son and I give you my word that if the Contessina your daughter is in his custody she is in a safe place, even though he does not have the look of a man to whom one would entrust girls."

The astonishment, the surprise, and the embarrassment of the father and the son were a picture. The good, tender father asked my pardon with tears in his eyes, begging me to put myself in his place. I calmed him by embracing him several times. The person who had recognized me was a pi[mp] whom I had cudgeled some weeks before for having tricked me into waiting in vain for a dancer he had promised to bring me. If I had delayed an instant before I spoke to the unfortunate Countess, he would have pounced on her himself and taken her to some b[rothel].

The end of it all was that the Count agreed to defer his application to the Council of Ten until Steffani's whereabouts became known.

"It is six months," I told him, "since I have seen him anywhere; but I promise you I will kill him in a duel the moment he appears."

To this the young Count replied, with a coolness which delighted me:

"*You shall not kill him until after he has killed me.*"

But at that Signor Bragadin could not refrain from saying:

"You will neither of you fight with Steffani, for he is dead."

"Dead!" said the Count.

"We must not," said the cautious Barbaro, "take that word in its literal meaning. The wretch is certainly dead to honor."

After this singular scene, from which I saw that the story was almost out, I went to visit the angel whom I had in my charge, changing gondolas three times. In the vast city of Venice this is the best way to foil the efforts of spies who follow a person to learn where he is going.

All that I have just recorded I repeated word for word to the curious Countess, who listened with a palpitating heart. She wept for joy when she learned that her father wished to take her in his arms, and she threw herself on her knees and gave thanks to God when I assured her that no one knew the scoundrel had been in her bedroom. But when I repeated to her the words *"You shall not kill him until after he has killed me"* which her brother had addressed to me with the greatest self-possession, she could not help embracing me, melting into tears, and calling me her angel, her savior. I promised to bring her dear brother to her on the next day but one at the latest. We ate supper gaily, without mentioning either Steffani or revenge.

After our little supper Love had his will of us. Two hours passed without our being aware of them, for our satisfactions left us no time to beget desires. I left her at midnight, assuring her that she would see me again seven or eight hours later. I did not spend the night there because, whatever the outcome, I wanted the hostess to be able to swear that I had never spent even one there.

But I should have been very sorry if I had done otherwise. I found my three noble friends still up and impatiently awaiting me to give me a surprising piece of news. Signor Bragadin had heard it at the Senate.

"Steffani," he said, "is dead, as our angel Paralis[18] told us in the language of angels. He has died to the world by taking the habit of a Capuchin, and the whole Senate naturally knows the fact. We, however, know that it is a punishment. Let us adore God and his hierarchies, who make us worthy to know what no one knows. We must now complete our work and console this excellent father. We must ask Paralis where the girl is; she certainly cannot be with Steffani, for she has not been doomed to become a Capuchin nun."

"I will not consult my angel," I answered, "for it is at his command that I have been obliged, until this moment, to make a mystery of the young Countess's whereabouts."

After this short introduction, I told them the whole story exactly as it had happened, omitting only what it was not prudent to tell them, for in the minds of these three excellent men, whom women had led into a vast number of follies, crimes of love had become appalling. Signor Dandolo and Signor Barbaro showed great surprise when they learned that the girl had now been in my hands for two weeks, but Signor Bragadin, taking the tone of an initiate, said that it was not surprising, that it was according to cabalism, and that, furthermore, he knew it.

"We must not fail," he added, "to make a mystery of it to the Count until we are sure that he will forgive her and take her back to *C.*, or wherever he sees fit."

"He cannot but forgive her," I retorted, "since the noble girl would never have left *C.* if her seducer had not left after giving her this promise of marriage which I show you. She went on foot as far as the *corriere*, she took passage on it, and she disembarked just at the moment when I was coming out of the Rome posthouse. An inspiration commanded me to approach her and tell her to come with me. She obeyed, and I took her to a secret refuge in the house of a God-fearing woman."

My three friends listened to me so attentively that they seemed to be statues. I told them to invite the two Counts to dinner on the next day but one, because I had to have time to consult Paralis *de modo tenendi* ("on the course to be followed"). I told Signor Barbaro to explain to the Count in what sense he was to understand that Steffani was dead. After sleeping four or five hours I went to the widow's house, instructing her not to bring us coffee until we should call for it, since we should have to be engaged in writing for four or five hours.

I enter, I see her in bed, and I am delighted to observe a smiling cheerfulness in a face in which for ten whole days I had seen nothing but sadness. We began as happy lovers do. Love had so purified her soul that it was no longer darkened by the slightest feeling engendered by prejudice. When the object of his love is new, all its beauties are new to the greed of a lover. But everything could not but appear very new to the Countess, who had only tasted the pleasures of love once, and that inadequately, in darkness, and with a dwarf of a man not likely to inspire love in a woman.

It was only after long encounters that, my mind regaining its tranquillity, I gave her an account of the whole conversation I had held with my three friends before going to bed. Love had so transformed the Countess that the business which had been her first concern was now only secondary.

The news of Steffani, who, instead of killing himself, had become a Capuchin, took her completely aback for a moment. She made some very philosophical reflections on it. She even pitied him. When one pities, one no longer hates; but this happens only to great souls. She was very glad I had told my good friends that she was in my custody, and left it to me to decide how best to present her to her father.

But when we remembered that the time when we must separate was drawing near, our consternation was visible.

The Countess was perfectly certain that if my rank had been equal to hers, she would never leave my custody. She said that it was not her knowing Steffani which had made her unhappy, but her knowing me. After a union which makes two hearts happy, can they be other than unhappy when they are parted?

At table Signor Barbaro told me he had paid a visit to Signora Steffani, who claimed to be related to him, and that she did not seem to regret the step her only son had taken. She had said that his only choice had been between killing himself and becoming a Capuchin, so that his decision had been wise. Her words were those of a good Christian; but if she had not been a miser, he would neither have killed himself nor become a Capuchin. The world is full of such cruel mothers. They think they are righteous only when they are trampling on nature. They are evil women.

However, the ultimate cause of Steffani's desperation (the man is still alive) was known to no one. My memoirs will make it public when it will no longer be of interest to anybody.

This turn of events, which strangely surprised the Count and his son, left them wanting nothing but to recover the young Countess and take her back to *C.* with them.

To find out where she might be, her father had decided to summon before the heads of the Council of Ten the persons whose names had been given him, except myself. So we were left with no choice but to inform him that she was in my custody, and Signor Bragadin undertook to do it.

It was to be done the following day. The Count had invited us all to supper; but Signor Bragadin had declined. This supper was the reason why I did not go to see the Countess; but I did not fail to do so the following morning at dawn, and since it had been decided that her father should be told on that same day that she was in my custody, we did not part until noon. We had no hope that we could be together again. I promised to come back after dinner, with the Count her brother.

What a surprise for the father and the son when Signor Bragadin, as we rose from table, told them that the young lady had been found! He took from his pocket the written promise of marriage which Steffani had given her, and, laying it before them:

"This," he said, "is what made her lose her head when she learned that he had left *C.* without her. She left on foot, all by herself, and she had scarcely arrived here before, by the purest chance, she met that tall young man over there, who persuaded her to let him take her to a most respectable house, which she has never left and which she will not leave except to return to your arms as soon as she is certain that you will forgive her for the fault she has committed."

"Let her have no doubt of my forgiveness," the father answered, and, turning to me, begged me not to delay affording him a satisfaction on which the happiness of his life depended. I embraced him and said that he should see her the following day but that I would take his son there at once to prepare her mind for the interview which, dear as the thought of it was to her, she yet feared. Signor Barbaro insisted on joining us and the young Count, delighted with the arrangement, swore eternal friendship with me.

We at once embarked in a gondola, which conveyed us to a *traghetto*[19] where I took another gondola in which we went to the place where I was keeping my treasure safely guarded. I got out and asked them to wait. When I told the Countess that I had brought her brother and Signor Barbaro and that she would not see her father until the following day:

"Then," she answered, "we can spend a few more hours together. Go quickly and bring them up."

What a scene for the stage! The love of a brother and sister expressed on two angelic faces cast in the same mold. A pure joy shining from the most tender embraces, followed by a speaking silence which ends in a few tears. Forgotten politeness reasserting itself and covering the young lady with confusion for having neglected her duty to a nobleman of commanding presence whom she had never seen. Myself, the chief architect of this noble edifice, left to be a silent spectator, completely forgotten.

At last we sit down, the young lady on a couch between Signor Barbaro and her brother, and I on a stool in front of her.

"To whom," her brother asked her, "do we owe the happiness of having found you?"

"To my angel," she answered, giving me her hand, "to this man, who was waiting for me not knowing that he was waiting for me, who saved me, who guarded me from a hundred shames of which I had no conception, and who, as you see, is now kissing this hand for the first time."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes to check her tears, which were accompanied by ours. Such is true virtue, which is still virtue even in the act of lying! But the young Countess had no notion at the time that she was lying. What spoke was her pure and virtuous soul, and she gave it free rein. Her virtue obliged her to portray it, as if it wished to tell her that despite her follies she had never strayed from virtue. *A girl who surrenders to love mingled with feeling cannot have committed a crime, for she cannot feel remorse.*

At the conclusion of this affectionate visit, she said that she longed for the moment when she could throw herself at her father's feet, but that she wished it to be deferred until nightfall to avoid setting the neighbors gossiping. So the interview which was to be the last act of the play was arranged for the next day.

We went to supper at the inn with the elder Count, who, acknowledging that he owed his honor to all that I had done for his daughter, looked at me with admiration. However, he rather plumed himself on having found out, before I admitted it, that it was I who had been the first person to speak to her when she left the *corriere*. Signor Barbaro invited them to dinner again for the following day.

There was some danger in spending the whole morning alone with the angel who was about to leave me; but what would love be if it did not defy dangers? Our certainty that these hours were our last impelled us to try to make them the last of our lives; but happy love has never turned into suicide. She saw my soul sweating blood, and she chose to believe that some part of her soul was mingled with it.

After dressing she put on her shoes, and she kissed her slippers, which she was determined to keep for the rest of her life. I asked her for some of her hair, so that I could have it made into a braid like the one I still kept to remember Signora F. by.

She saw me again at nightfall with her father, her brother, and Signor Dandolo and Signor Barbaro, who wished to be present at this noble interview. When the father appeared, the daughter threw herself on her knees at his feet. He raised her, embraced her, and spoke to her with all the kindness she could have asked. An hour later we all left together and went to Boncousin's inn, where, after wishing the three noble foreigners a happy journey, I returned with my two friends to Signor Bragadin's.

The next morning we saw them arriving at the palace in a six-oared peota. They wanted to offer their final thanks to Signor Barbaro, to me, and to Signor Bragadin, who otherwise would not have seen and admired the amazing resemblance between the charming sister and brother.

After drinking a cup of coffee, they took their leave and we saw them return to their peota, which in twenty-four hours took them to Pontelagoscuro,[20] the point at which the River Po marks the boundary between the Papal State and the Republic of Venice. Only with my eyes could I tell the Countess all that I felt at this cruel parting, and I read all that her soul had to tell me in hers. Never had a letter of recommendation proved more effective than the one the Count had brought to Signor Barbaro. It served to save the honor of his family, and spared me the unpleasant consequences which would have ensued for me should I have been convicted of taking the young lady away with me and hence been obliged to explain what had become of her.

After this we all set out for Padua to remain there until the end of autumn.[21] Doctor Gozzi was no longer there. He had become the parish priest of a village[22] where he lived with his sister Bettina, who had been unable to live with the scoundrel who had only married her to strip her of all that she had brought him as her dowry.

With nothing to do in that great and quiet city, I fell in love with one of the most celebrated of all the Venetian courtesans of the time. Her name was Ancilla, the same Ancilla whom the dancer Campioni married and took with him to London, where she caused the death of a most charming Englishman. Four years hence I shall speak of her at greater length. At present I only owe my reader an account of a little incident which was the reason why my love lasted only three or four weeks.

The person who introduced me to the girl was Count Medini,[23] a young man as harebrained as myself and with the same tastes, but a constant gambler and an inveterate enemy of luck. There was always play at Ancilla's, whose favored lover he was, and he introduced me to her only in order to make me his dupe at cards. Having never noticed anything questionable, I played the role until the fatal moment when, seeing myself being cheated in the most obvious fashion, I told him so, at the same time putting a pistol to his chest. Ancilla fainted; he gave me back my money and challenged me to come out and measure swords with him. I accepted his invitation and followed him, after leaving my pistols on the table. We went to the Prato della Valle,[24] where, in the moonlight, I had the good fortune to wound him in the shoulder. He had to ask me for quarter, as he could no longer raise his arm. I went home to bed; but in the morning I thought I ought to follow Signor Bragadin's advice to leave Padua at once, and go to Venice and wait for him there. This Count Medini was my enemy all the rest of my life, and I shall have occasion to speak of him when my reader finds me back in Naples.

I spent all the remainder of the year at my usual occupations, now satisfied and now dissatisfied with fortune. The Ridotto[25] being open, I spent the greater part of the night there gambling and pursuing love affairs.

1747.

About the end of January I received a letter from the young Countess A. S., who no longer bore that name. She wrote to me from one of the finest cities in Italy, where she had become the Marchesa X. She begged me to pretend that I did not know her if chance brought me to the city where she was living happily with a husband who had won her heart after she had granted him her hand.

I had already learned from her brother that she had scarcely reached home before her mother took her to the city from which she had written me to stay with a relative in whose house she had met the man who had made her happy. It was in the course of the following year, 1748, that I saw her. But for the letter in which she had warned me, I would have arranged to be introduced to her husband. The sweetness of peace is preferable to love; but one does not think so when one is in love.

At this same period a very pretty Venetian girl, whom her father Ramon presented to the admiration of the public by making her dance in ballets, bound me in her chains for a fortnight; I should have remained in them longer if marriage had not broken them. Signora Cecilia Valmarana, her patroness, found her a husband as talented as herself in the person of a French dancer named Binet, who thereupon called himself Binetti. His wife was thus dispensed from becoming French instead of Venetian, which enabled her to exert her energies in several adventures which made her famous. She brought about quite a number of mine, which my reader will find related in detail in their proper place. Nature had granted La Binetti the rarest of gifts. Age never appeared in her face with an indiscretion of which women know none more cruel. She always seemed young not only to all her lovers but to those who were most skilled in detecting the ravages of time. Men ask nothing more, and they are right in not wearying themselves making inquiries and calculations which would convict them of being duped by appearances; but women who age visibly are equally right in crying down a woman who does not age. La Binetti always made light of this kind of backbiting, going her way and finding lovers. The last one she killed by the pleasures of love was a Pole named Moscynski, whom his fate brought to Venice eight years ago. La Binetti was then sixty-three.

The life I was leading in Venice would have pleased me well enough if I could have kept from punting at basset. No one was allowed to deal at the Ridotto except noblemen, who must not be masked and must wear the patrician robe and the great wig which became obligatory at the beginning of the present century. I gambled, and it was a great mistake, for I had neither the strength of mind to give up when luck was against me nor to stop throwing good money after bad. What made me gamble was a certain streak of the miser in me; I loved spending lavishly, and I was unhappy when it was not gambling which had supplied me with the necessary money. I felt that money won at gambling had cost me nothing.

At the end of this same month of January, when I found myself in need of two hundred zecchini, Signora Manzoni persuaded another lady to lend me a diamond worth five hundred. I decided to pawn it in Treviso, where the city maintains a pawn office[26] which makes loans on pawned objects at 5 per cent. Treviso is fifteen miles from Venice. This admirable institution is not to be found in Venice, because the Jews are powerful enough to prevent its establishment. So I rise at a fairly early hour and put my *bautta*[27] in my pocket, since it was forbidden to go masked on that day. It was the eve of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, otherwise known as Candlemas.

I walk to the end of the Canal Regio,[28] intending to take a gondola to Mestre, where I could take a post carriage which, in a matter of two hours, would bring me to Treviso, from which I should set out the same day, after pawning my diamond, on my return journey to Venice.

Walking along the quay toward San Giobbe, I see a two-oared gondola and in it a girl wearing a country headdress but a very costly one. I am so taken by her face that I stop to look at her more carefully. The gondolier at the bow, seeing that I had stopped, thought I wanted to take the opportunity of going to Mestre cheaply and told the man on the poop to make for the quay. I do not hesitate an instant. I get into the boat and give him three lire in return for his promise that he would take on no more passengers. An old priest, who was sitting in the best seat beside the beauty, starts to give it up to me; but I insist on his staying where he is.

CHAPTER IX

I fall in love with Cristina and find her a husband worthy of her. Her wedding.

1747.

"THESE gondoliers," the old priest remarked to me, "are in luck. They took us aboard at Rialto for thirty soldi on condition that they might pick up passengers along the way; and here is one already. They will find more."

"When I am in a gondola, Your Reverence, there are no more seats for sale."

So saying I give the gondoliers another forty soldi, which satisfies them. They thank me, addressing me as "Your Excellency." The abate asks me if he had failed to give me my title; I reply that, not being a Venetian gentleman, I have no claim to the title, and the girl said she was very glad of that.

"Why, Signorina?"

"Because when I am in a gentleman's presence—I don't know why, I feel afraid. I suppose you are a Lustrissimo." [1]

"Not even that; I am a law clerk."[2]

"Then I'm all the gladder, for I like to be in company with people who don't think they're above me. My father was a tenant farmer, brother of my uncle here, the parish priest of Pr.[3] where I was born and brought up, without a brother or a sister to my name. I inherit everything, and all my mother's property too, who's always ill and can't live much longer, for which I'm very sorry; but that's what the doctor said. So to come back to what we were talking about, I don't think there's much difference between a law clerk and a rich farmer's daughter. I'm really just talking, for I know very well that when you travel you are with all sorts of people and it doesn't mean anything—isn't that so, dear Uncle?"

"Yes, my dear Cristina. And to prove it, here is this gentleman who came with us not knowing who we are."

"But do you think," I asked the good priest, "that I would have come with you if your niece's beauty had not conquered me?"

At these words the priest and his niece began laughing with all their might, while for my part, as I did not think what I had said was especially funny, I saw that my traveling companions were a bit stupid, which I thought all to the good.

"Why are you laughing so hard, my beautiful young lady? Is it to show me your teeth? I admit I have never seen any teeth so beautiful in Venice."

"I would never do that—though it's true that in Venice everybody paid me the same compliment. I assure you that in Pr. all the girls have teeth as pretty as mine. Isn't that so, Uncle?"

"Yes, niece."

"I was laughing," she went on, "at something I'll never tell you."

"Oh, tell me, I beg you!"

"No, I won't. Never, never!"

"I'll tell you myself," said the priest.

"I won't have it," said his niece, scowling with her dark brows. "If you do, I'll go away."

"I defy you to do that," said her uncle. "Do you know what she said when she saw you on the quay? 'There's a handsome young man there looking at me and he's very sorry he's not with us.' And when she saw you stop our gondola she was very pleased with herself."

Indignant at his giving her away, the niece was hitting him on the shoulder.

"Why," I asked her, "are you put out at my learning that you liked my looks, when I am charmed that you know I found you attractive?"

"Charmed for a moment. Oh, I know Venetian men now. They all told me I charmed them; and none of the ones I could have liked would make me a proposal."

"What kind of proposal did you want?"

"The kind of proposal I'm entitled to, Signore—for a proper marriage in church, and before witnesses. Yet we were in Venice for two weeks. Weren't we, Uncle?"

"This girl here," said the uncle, "whatever she may seem to be, is a good match, for she has three thousand scudi. She does not want to marry in Pr., and she may be right. She has always said that the only husband she wanted was a Venetian, and so I took her to Venice to give her a chance to meet people. A woman with excellent connections put us up for two weeks and took her to several houses where marriageable young men saw her; but the ones she was taken with were not interested in marriage, and she in turn did not like the ones who proposed."

"But do you think," said I, "that a marriage is made like an omelet? Two weeks in Venice is nothing. Six months there is the least time it would take. I myself, for example, think your niece is as pretty as a picture, and I should consider myself fortunate if the woman God intends for me looked like her; but if she were to give me fifty thousand scudi this minute to marry her at once, I would refuse. Before he takes a wife a sensible young man must know her character, for what makes happiness is neither money nor beauty.''

''What do you mean by 'character'?'' she asked. ''Is it a beautiful handwriting?''

''No, my angel. You make me laugh. It means the qualities of the heart and mind. I have to marry one of these days, and I have been looking for a wife for the last three years, but to no purpose. I have known several girls almost as pretty as you are and all of them with good dowries; but after talking with them for two or three months I saw they were not for me.''

''What was wrong with them?''

''I can tell you, because you do not know them. One, whom I would certainly have married because I was very much in love with her, was intolerably vain. I found that out in less than two months. She would have ruined me in clothes and fashions and luxuries. If you can believe it, she paid her hairdresser a zecchino a month and she spent at least another zecchino on pomatums and perfumes.''

''She was out of her mind. I spend only ten soldi a year on wax, which I mix with goat's grease, and I have a fine pomatum, which I use to keep my forelock in place.''

''Another whom I would have married two years ago had an ailment which would have made me miserable. I learned of it in the fourth month, and I stopped seeing her.''

''What ailment?''

''Her condition was such that I should never have had children; and that is a terrible thing, for I would not marry except to have them.''

''That is as God wills; but for my part I know I'm in good health. Isn't that so, Uncle?''

''Another one was too pious, and I can't put up with that. She was so scrupulous that she went to confession every three or four days. I want my wife to be a good Christian as I am. Her confession took at least an hour."

"She was either a great sinner or a great ninny. I only go," she interrupted me, "once a month, and I tell everything in two minutes. Isn't that so, Uncle? If you didn't ask me questions, I shouldn't know what to say to you."

"Another always thought she knew better than I did, another was gloomy, and the one thing I must have in a woman is cheerfulness."

"Do you hear that, Uncle? You ought to, for you and my mother are always at me for being too cheerful."

"Another, whom I dropped at once, was afraid to be alone with me, and if I kissed her she ran and told her mother."

"She was a simpleton. I haven't listened to a lover yet, because at Pr. there are nothing but unmannerly peasants; but I know very well that there are some things I wouldn't go running to tell my mother."

"Another had a bad breath. And the last of all, whose complexion I thought was perfectly natural, painted. Almost all girls have that nasty fault, and so I fear I shall never marry—for example, I insist that the woman who is to be my wife shall have black eyes, and nowadays almost all girls have learned the secret of dyeing them; but they won't catch me, because I know better."

"Are my eyes black?"

"Ha-ha!"

"You're laughing?"

"I'm laughing because they look black, but they aren't. But for all that, you're a charming girl."

"Now that's funny. You think my eyes are dyed, and you say you know all about it. My eyes, Signore, whether they're pretty or ugly, are the way God gave them to me. Isn't that so, Uncle?"

"At least I've always believed so," the uncle answered.

"And you don't believe it?" she came back at me sharply.

"No, they're too beautiful for me to believe they are natural."

"By God! That's a funny thing to say."

"Excuse me, my fair young lady, I am sincere but I see that I have been too outspoken."

This falling out was followed by a silence. The priest smiled from time to time, but his niece could not get over her vexation. I stole a look at her, I saw that she was on the verge of tears, and it made me sorry, for her face could not have been more captivating. Dressed in country fashion, her hair was done up in plaits held in place by the array of gold pins which is the pride of the rich peasant girl; the ones she was wearing in her ebony-black braids must have been worth at least a hundred zecchini. Her long, solid-gold earrings and a thin gold chain which was wound more than twenty times around a neck as white as Carrara marble reflected a sheen on her rose and lily complexion which arrested me. It was the first time in my life that I had seen a village beauty so arrayed. Six years earlier at Pasiano Lucia had captivated me in an entirely different way. The silent girl beside me must be in despair, for her eyes were precisely her most beautiful feature, and I had been cruel enough to tear them from their sockets. I knew that in her heart she must hate me bitterly, and that she was keeping silent because she must be furious; but I had no intention of setting her right, for it was best not to hurry matters.

Soon after we entered the long Marghera[4] Canal I asked the priest if he had a carriage to take him to Treviso, for he had to pass through there to reach Pr.

"I shall walk, for my parish is a poor one; as for Cristina, I can easily find her a seat in some carriage."

"I should be most happy if you would both come with me in mine, which seats four."

"That would be as welcome as it is unexpected."

"On the contrary," said Cristina. "I do not wish to go with the Signore."

"But why not, my dear niece? I shall be with you."

"Because I don't want to."

"That," I said, not looking at her, "is how sincerity is usually rewarded."

"Sincerity!" she burst out; "I call it arrogance and spite. After this, no eyes in the world will look black to you, but since they're what you like, I'm very glad of it."

"You are wrong, my beautiful Cristina, for I have a way of finding out the truth."

"What way?"

"Washing them with lukewarm rose water is one way; or if the young lady cries all the artificial coloring vanishes at once."

As I said this, I enjoyed a most charming sight. Cristina's face, which had been flaunting anger and scorn, changed to a picture of serenity and satisfaction. She gave a smile which pleased the priest, for he had set his heart on having the use of a carriage without paying for it.

"Just cry, then, my dear niece, and the Signore will do your eyes justice."

And cry she did, but it was from laughing. My soul, which delighted in proofs of this sort, was in a ferment of joy. As we went up the steps at the landing place, I apologized to her, acknowledging that I had been completely wrong, and she accepted my offer of a carriage. I at once ordered a *vetturino* to harness up while we breakfasted; but the priest told me he must first say mass.

"Go quickly, we will attend, and you shall say it for my intention. Here is my usual offering."

It was a ducato d'argento,[5] which surprised him so much that he tried to kiss my hand. He starts toward the church and I offer my arm to Cristina, who, in doubt whether she should take it or not, asks me if I think she cannot walk by herself.

"Of course I don't, but people would say either that I am impolite or that the difference in rank between us is too great."

"And now that I'm taking it, what will they say?"

"That we may well be in love, and someone is sure to say we look as if we are made for each other."

"What if whoever says that goes and tells your mistress you were seen with a girl on your arm?"

"I have no mistress, and I won't have another, for there isn't a girl with a figure like yours in all Venice."

"I'm sorry for that, for your sake. As for me, I shall certainly not go back to Venice; and even if I did, how could I manage to stay there six months? For you said, didn't you, that it took you six months to know a girl well?"

"I should be glad to pay all the expenses."

"Really? Then tell my uncle and he'll consider it, for I can't go all by myself."

"And in six months," I said, "you would know me too."

"Oh, if you're thinking about me, I know you already."

"Then you would adapt yourself to my character?"

"Why not?"

"You would love me?"

"That too, once you're my husband."

I looked at the girl in amazement. She seemed a princess disguised as a peasant. Her dress of blue *gros de Tours*[6] laced with gold was of the richest, for it must have cost twice the price of a city dress, and the gold chain bracelets on her wrists, which matched her necklace, made a set of the costliest ornaments. Her figure, which I had not been able to examine in the gondola, was that of a nymph, and since the fashion of cloaks was unknown among peasant women, the line of the front of her dress, which was buttoned up to the chin, showed me the beauty of her bosom. The bottom of her dress, likewise laced with gold and coming down only to her ankles, allowed me to see her small feet and to imagine the slimness of her leg. The artless grace with which she was keeping pace with me was an enchantment in itself. Her face seemed to be sweetly telling me: "I am very glad you think me pretty." I could not imagine how such a girl could have been in Venice for two weeks and not found a man to marry her, or to seduce her. Another charm which intoxicated me was her country dialect and her frankness, which, accustomed as I was to life in the city, I took for stupidity: it was a flaw in the polishing which showed me all the value of the jewel. When in the rawness of her anger she had come out with that "By God!" my reader cannot imagine how much she had delighted me.

Absorbed in these thoughts, and determined that I would summon all my resources to do proper justice to this masterpiece of nature in my particular fashion, I waited impatiently for the mass to be over.

After breakfast I had the greatest difficulty in persuading the priest to precede me into the carriage; but I had no difficulty, once we had reached Treviso, in persuading him to stay for dinner and then to sup with me at an inn which was almost always unfrequented. He consented as soon as I promised him he could set out immediately after supper in a carriage which I would provide for him and which, on that fine moonlight night, would take him to Pr. in less than an hour. What made him in such a hurry was the solemnity of the festival, which obliged him to sing mass in his own church.

So we alight at the inn where, after having a fire lighted and ordering a good dinner, it occurs to me that the priest could go and pawn the diamond for me, which would give me an hour alone with the innocent Cristina. I ask him to do me the favor, explaining that I could not go myself as I did not wish to be recognized, and he is delighted at my giving him an opportunity to do something for me. He leaves, and I am in front of the fire, alone with the charming creature. I spent an hour with her, directing the talk to such subjects as would enable me to revel in her simplicity and inspire her with as strong an inclination for me as that which I felt for her. I had the firmness never to take her dimpled hand, which I was dying to kiss.

The priest came back with the ring, saying that I could not pawn it and be given a receipt for it until the next day but one, on account of the festival of the Virgin. He told me that he had talked with the cashier at the pawn office, who had said that if I wanted to I could obtain twice as much for it as I had asked. To this I replied that he would put me under a great obligation if he would come back from Pr. and do me the favor himself, since suspicion might be aroused if, after he had offered the diamond, it was offered by someone else. I said that I would pay for his carriage, and he promised me he would come back. I hoped to arrange matters so that he would bring his niece with him.

During dinner, finding Cristina increasingly worthy of my attention, and fearing to lose her trust if I precipitated an imperfect enjoyment in the course of a few minutes which I might contrive to spend with her during the day, I decided that my only course was to cajole the priest into bringing her back to Venice to stay for five or six months. It was there that I flattered myself I could bring love to birth and give it the food it required. So I broached the subject to the priest, saying that I would undertake to defray all the expenses and would find a highly respectable family where Cristina's honor would be as safe as if she were in a convent. I could not, I continued, marry her without knowing her, but that would inevitably follow. The priest replied that he would bring her himself as soon as I wrote him that I had found a house in which he could safely leave her. I saw that Cristina was in raptures over the arrangement; and perfectly certain that I would keep my word, I promised her that the matter would be settled in a week at the most. But I was a little surprised when, to my promise that I would write to her, she replied that her uncle would answer for her because she had never wanted to learn, though she could read perfectly well.

"You cannot write? How can you expect to become the wife of a Venetian if you can't write? I would never have believed anything so strange."

"Strange! There's not a girl in our village who can write. Isn't that so, Uncle?"

"It is true," he answered; "but none of them is thinking of marrying in Venice. The Signore is right. You must learn."

"Indeed you must," I said, "and even before you come to Venice, for everyone would laugh at me. You look sad. I am sorry you don't like the idea."

"I don't like it because it's impossible to learn in a week."

"I will undertake," said her uncle, "to teach you in two, if you will study as hard as you can. You will learn enough to be able to go on by yourself."

"It's a lot to do, but never mind—I promise I'll study day and night and I'll start tomorrow."

At dinner, I had told the priest that, instead of leaving after supper, his best course would be to go to bed and not set off with Cristina until an hour before dawn. He did not have to be in Pr. until thirteen o'clock.[7] He agreed when he saw that the idea appealed to his niece, who was feeling sleepy after a good supper. So I immediately gave orders for the carriage, and asked the priest to summon the hostess and arrange for another room for me and for a fire to be lighted in it.

"That is not necessary," said the old and saintly priest, to my great astonishment, "there are two big beds in this room and there is no need to have another one made up, for Cristina sleeps with me. We won't undress; but you are perfectly free to do so since, as you are not leaving with us, you can stay in bed as late as you please."

"Oh," said Cristina, "I shall have to undress, otherwise I can't sleep; but I won't delay you, for it will only take me a quarter of an hour to get ready."

I said nothing, but I could not get over my amazement. So the charming Cristina, who would turn Xenocrates[8] himself from the path of virtue, was in the habit of sleeping undressed with the priest her uncle, an old man, it was true, pious, very far from anything which could make the arrangement improper, and whatever you please; but the priest was a man, and he must once have acted the man and have known that he was exposing himself to danger. My carnal mind found it inconceivable. The thing was perfectly innocent, I had no doubt, and so innocent that they not only made no attempt to hide it but never even supposed that anyone who knew of it would find anything wrong in it. I saw all this, but I still could not get over my amazement. In the course of time I found that it was common practice among the good people of every country in which I traveled; but, I repeat, among good people. I do not count myself such.

Since we had had a fast-day dinner, and none too good a one at that, I went downstairs to see the hostess and tell her I did not care about the expense but I wanted a choice supper, suitable for a fast day of course, but with excellent fish, truffles, oysters, and the best that the market in Treviso could provide but, above all, good wine.

"If you do not care about the expense, leave it to me. You shall have Gatta wine."[9]

"I want supper served at three o'clock."[10]

"That gives me time enough."

I go back upstairs and find Cristina bending over her seventy-five-year-old uncle and stroking his cheeks. He was laughing.

"Do you know what this is all about?" he asked me. "My niece is begging me to leave her here until I come back. She tells me that you spent the hour I left you alone with her this morning as a brother would have spent it with his sister, and I believe her; but it doesn't seem to occur to her that she might be inconveniencing you."

"On the contrary, you may rest assured that it would be a pleasure, for I find her delightful. As for my duty and hers, I believe you can trust us."

"I have no doubt of it. So I will leave her in your care until day after tomorrow. I will be back here at fourteen o'clock[11] to do your errand."

I was so astonished by this arrangement, which was so unexpected and entered into with so little ado, that the blood rushed to my head; my nose bled copiously for a quarter of an hour, at which I felt no concern, for it had happened to me before, but to the great concern of the priest, who feared a hemorrhage. He went off on some business, saying that he would be back at nightfall. As soon as we were alone, I thanked Cristina for the trust she had in me.

"Really," she said, "I can't wait to have you know me well. You will see that I have none of the faults that displeased you in the young ladies you knew in Venice, and I promise I'll learn to write at once."

"You are an adorable girl and a model of sincerity; but I beg you to be discreet in Pr. No one must know that there is an understanding between us. You must do just as your uncle tells you; I will write everything to him."

"You can be sure that my mother herself will know nothing until you say she may."

I spent the whole day with her, doing nothing but what sufficed to make me fall in love with her. I kept her interested with little love stories of which I did not tell her the end. She could not guess it; but she pretended she had, not wanting to show her curiosity for fear of appearing ignorant. I told jokes not too subtle for her to understand, which would have bored a city girl spoiled by too much education but which were bound to please a peasant girl because they did not make her blush. When her uncle arrived, I was already laying plans to marry her and had got as far as deciding that I would put her up in the same house in which I had kept the Countess.

At three o'clock, Italian time, we sat down at table, and our supper was exquisite. Gatta wine does not intoxicate, it enlivens. It is drunk without water and is a wine which keeps scarcely a year. We went to bed an hour before midnight, and I did not wake till broad daylight. The priest had left so quietly that I had not heard him.

I look at the bed, and I see Cristina asleep in it alone. I say good morning, she opens her eyes, remembers where she is, laughs, props herself up on her elbow, looks at me, and says:

"My uncle has left."

I tell her she is as beautiful as an angel, she blushes, and draws the cover a little higher over her bosom.

"I am dying, my dear Cristina, to come and give you a kiss."

"If you are, my dear friend, come and give me one."

I spring out of bed, and modesty demands that I hurry to hers. It was a cold morning. Whether from politeness or from timidity, she moves away; but as she could not move away without making room for me, I feel that I am invited to take it. The cold, nature, and love combine to bring me under the coverlet, and nothing makes me think I should oppose them. So Cristina is in my arms, and I am in hers; in her face I read surprise, innocence, and content; in mine she could see only fond gratitude and the fire of a love rejoicing in a victory which it is gaining without a struggle.

In the bliss of our coming together, which had been brought about by pure chance and in which, since nothing had been premeditated, we could boast of nothing and accuse ourselves of nothing, we spent several minutes unable to speak. The harmony between us was such that our mouths only gave and received kisses. But we still had nothing to say to each other when, after our storm of kisses, we grew serious and remained in a state of inactivity which would have made us doubt we were alive if it had continued. It was only momentary. Nature and love, in perfect harmony, ended the shameful suspense by a single impulse, and we surrendered to each other. An hour later we seemed calmed, and we look at each other. Cristina is the first to break the silence, by saying, with the most perfect tranquillity and sweetness:

"What have we done?"

"We have married each other."

"What will my uncle say tomorrow?"

"He will not know it until he has himself given us the nuptial benediction in his parish church."

"When?"

"When we have completed all the preparations necessary for a public marriage."

"How long will that take?"

"About a month."

"It is forbidden to marry in Lent."

"I will get permission."

"You won't deceive me?"

"No, because I adore you."

"You don't need to know me any better?"

"No, because I know you completely and I am sure that you will make me happy."

"As you will make me. Let's get up and go to mass.

Who would have thought that, to find a husband, I didn't need to go to Venice, but to leave there for home!"

We got up, had breakfast, and went to mass. Then we ate a light dinner. Looking at Cristina attentively and seeing that her face wore a different expression from the one I had seen on it the day before, I asked her why; she answered that it must be the same reason that made me look thoughtful.

"My thoughtful look, my dear Cristina, is the look of Love conferring with Honor. The situation has become very serious, and Love, to his astonishment, finds that he must think. The problem is that we want to be married by the Church, and we cannot do that before Lent because the time before the Carnival ends is too short, and we cannot put it off until after Easter, for that would make the time too long. We need a legal dispensation to celebrate our marriage in Lent. Am I not right to think about it?"

To rise and cross the room and kiss me, tenderly and gratefully, was her answer. What I had answered her was perfectly true, but I could not tell her everything which had made me thoughtful. I found myself under an obligation which was not disagreeable to me, but which I wished had not been quite so pressing. I could not hide it from myself that a beginning of repentance was creeping serpentlike into my loving and honest soul, and it made me sad. Yet I was certain of one thing: this faultless creature should never become unhappy on my account.

She had told me that she had never seen a play or a theater, and I immediately resolved to afford her the pleasure. The host sent me a Jew who provided me with everything necessary to disguise her, and we went. A lover can have no greater pleasure than that which comes from doing something to please the object of his love. After the play I took her to the casino, where her first sight of a faro bank astonished her. I did not have money enough to play myself, but enough for her to amuse herself by staking a little. I gave her ten zecchini and told her what to do, though she did not know one card from another. She was given a seat, and in less than an hour was the proud possessor of nearly a hundred zecchini. I told her to stop, and we went back to the inn. When she counted all the money she had won and I told her that it belonged to her, she thought it was all a dream. "What will my uncle say?" After a light repast, we retired to spend the night in the arms of Love. We parted at dawn so that we should not be surprised by the priest, who was due to arrive.

He found us asleep in our respective beds. Cristina did not wake. I gave him the ring, and two hours later he brought me two hundred zecchini and the receipt. He found us dressed and sitting by the fire.

How surprised the good man was when Cristina spread out all her gold coins before him! He thanked God. He thought it all a miracle and concluded that we were born to make each other happy.

When he set off with his niece, I promised to visit him at the beginning of Lent, but on condition that when I arrived I should find no one knowing my name or anything about our affairs. He gave me his niece's birth certificate and an accounting of her dowry. After seeing them off I returned to Venice in love and firmly determined not to break my word to the girl. All I had to do was to produce oracles enough to convince my three friends that my marriage was written in the great book of destiny.

Unaccustomed as they were to going three days without seeing me, my appearance delighted them. They feared that some misfortune had overtaken me, except for Signor Bragadin, who said that with Paralis to guard me, no evil could befall me.

No later than the next day I decided to make Cristina happy without marrying her. I had had the idea when I still loved her more than myself. After I enjoyed her, the scales had swung to my side so far that my self-love proved to outweigh the love her charms had inspired in me. I could not bring myself, by marrying, to give up all the hopes which depended on my remaining in my state of freedom. Nevertheless, I found I was invincibly enslaved to sentiment. To abandon this innocent girl was an act whose turpitude put it beyond my power; the mere thought turned me cold. She might be pregnant; and I shuddered to imagine her become the shame of her village, loathing me, hating herself, and with no hope of finding a husband worthy of her since she had become unworthy of finding one to marry her. I set about the task of getting a husband who would be better for her in every way than myself. A husband such that she would not only forgive me the wrong I had done her, but be glad of my perfidy and love me the more for it. The business of finding him could not be difficult, for aside from the fact that Cristina was perfectly beautiful and enjoyed a spotless reputation, her dowry amounted to four thousand Venetian ducati correnti.[12] So I set to work at once.

Shut up with the three worshipers of my oracle, I took pen in hand and asked it a question on the matter near to my heart. It answered that I should entrust it to Serenus. This was Signor Bragadin's cabalistic name. He declared himself ready to do whatever Paralis ordered him to do. I had only to tell him what it was.

I explained that it was a matter of immediately obtaining from Rome a dispensation from His Holiness the Pope in favor of a most worthy girl, which would permit her to be married publicly in her parish church during the coming Lent. She was a peasant. I gave him her baptismal certificate and told him that it was not yet known who the husband would be, but that the omission could cause no difficulty. He answered that he would himself write to the Ambassador that day, and arrange for the Savio for the week[13] to send the letter on for him by express messenger.

"Leave it to me," he said, "to make this business look like an affair of state. Paralis shall be obeyed. I think I foresee that the husband will be one of us four, and we must be ready to render him obedience."

It took me no little effort to keep from bursting out laughing. I saw that it was in my power to make Cristina a Venetian noblewoman; but I did not really consider it. I asked Paralis who the girl's husband was to be, and he answered that Signor Dandolo should undertake to find the man, who must be young, handsome, of good morals, and a citizen[14] able to serve the Republic in the ministry of either domestic or foreign affairs; however, he was to conclude no arrangement until after he had consulted me. He took heart when I told him that the girl would bring her husband a dowry of four thousand ducati correnti, and that he had two weeks in which to make his choice. Signor Bragadin, who was delighted that he had escaped the task, was dying with laughter.

Taking these two steps set my heart at rest. I was morally certain that the kind of husband I wanted would be found. I thought of nothing but getting through the Carnival in proper style and at the same time so ordering my life as not to be caught with my purse empty when I should be particularly in need of money.

A benignant Fortune brought me to the beginning of the Carnival with nearly a thousand zecchini in my purse after paying all my debts, and the dispensation from Rome arrived ten days after Signor Bragadin had asked the Ambassador for it. I gave him the hundred Roman scudi which had been paid to the Roman Dataria.[15] The dispensation permitted Cristina to marry in any church she chose; but it had to receive the seal of the diocesan episcopal chancellery, which would also suspend the requirement to publish the banns. All that

I needed to be completely happy was the husband. Signor Dandolo had already proposed three or four, whom I had rejected for sufficient reasons; but at last he found the right man.

As I had to retrieve the ring from the pawn office and did not wish to appear there myself, I wrote to the priest to be at Treviso at an hour which I specified. I was not surprised to see him arrive with Cristina. As she felt sure that I had come to Treviso only to arrange everything for our marriage, she did not stand on ceremony but embraced me most affectionately and I did the same. Farewell to my heroism! If her uncle had not been there, I would have given her new reasons to believe that I and none other would be her husband. I saw her radiant with joy when I gave the priest the dispensation which allowed her to marry anyone she wished to during Lent. She could not imagine that I could have been forwarding another's cause, and as I was still not sure of anything I did not think it necessary to disabuse her just then. I promised her I would come to Pr. in a week or ten days, and there we would settle everything. After a supper at which we were all in good spirits, I gave the priest the receipt and the money to retrieve the ring, and we went off to bed; fortunately, the room in which we were had only one bed. I had to go and sleep in another.

The next morning I entered Cristina's room while she was still in bed. Her uncle had gone to say his mass and to retrieve my diamond from the pawn office. It was on this occasion that I made a discovery about myself. Cristina was charming and I loved her; but regarding her as one who could no longer belong to me and whom I must persuade to give her heart to another, I thought I ought to begin by abstaining from giving her the proofs of affection which she had a right to expect. I spent an hour with her, holding her in my arms and letting my eyes and lips devour all her beauties, but never quenching the fire which they kindled in my soul. I saw that she was in love with me and surprised, and I admired her virtue in the feeling which forbade her to make advances to me. Yet she got dressed without showing any sign of being either angry or mortified. She would have been both if she could have attributed my restraint to disregard.

Her uncle came back, gave me the diamond, and we dined. After dinner he showed me a little miracle. Cristina had learned to write, and to prove it she wrote from my dictation in my presence.

I left before they did, repeating my previous promise to see them again within a few days.

It was on the second Sunday in Lent that Signor Dandolo, just back from church, triumphantly told me that the happy husband had been found and that he was sure I would approve of him. He went on to name Carlo XX,[16] whom I knew by sight. He was a very handsome young man whose morals were good and who rejoiced in the auspicious age of twenty-one. He was a clerk *di ragionato*[17] to Saverio Costantini[18] and he was a godson of Count Algarotti, one of whose sisters[19] was the wife of Signor Dandolo's elder brother.

"The young man," he went on, "is an orphan, and I am certain that his godfather will stand surety for the dowry which a wife will bring him. I sounded him out, and he told me he would be glad to marry a respectable girl with a dowry large enough to enable him to buy a post which he already holds, but only as an employee."[20]

"An excellent prospect, but I cannot say anything yet. I must hear what he has to say first."

"He is coming to dine with us tomorrow."

The following day I found the young man well worthy of the praise Signor Dandolo had bestowed on him. We became friends. He was fond of poetry; I showed him some of mine. I called on him the next day and he showed me some of his. He introduced me to his aunt, in whose house he and his sister lived, and I was enchanted with the two ladies' characters and with the welcome they gave me. When I was alone with him in his room I asked him how he felt about love, and after answering that he had no interest in it he said he wanted to marry and repeated all that Signor Dandolo had told me about him. That same day I told Signor Dandolo that he could negotiate, and he began by putting the matter to Count Algarotti, who immediately discussed it with Carlo. His answer had been that he would not say yes or no until after he had seen the proposed bride and talked with her and had found out all about her. Signor Algarotti answered for his godson and was ready to guarantee the bride four thousand scudi if her dowry was worth that amount. After these preliminaries it was my turn.

Carlo came to my room with Signor Dandolo, who had already told him that, so far as the bride was concerned, the whole matter was in my hands. He asked me when I could do him the favor of introducing him to her, and I named a day, warning him that he would have to give me the whole of it since she lived twenty-two miles from Venice. I told him that we would dine with her and be back in Venice the same day. He promised to be at my disposition at dawn. I at once sent an express to the priest to inform him of the time when I would arrive at his house with a friend to dine with him, adding that Cristina was to make the fourth.

On my way to Pr. with Carlo I told him only that I had met her by chance when I was traveling to Mestre scarcely a month before, and that I would have offered to become her husband myself if I had been in a position to guarantee her four thousand ducati.

We reached the priest's house in Pr. two hours before noon, and a quarter of an hour later Cristina came in, looking completely self-possessed as she wished her uncle good morning and frankly told me that she was very glad to see me again. She only bowed slightly to Carlo and asked me if he was a law clerk as I was. He answered for himself that he was a clerk *di ragionato.* She pretended to know what that was.

"I want," she said, "to show you the writing I've done, and after that we will go to see my mother, if you please. Dinner won't be till nineteen o'clock;[21] isn't that so, dear Uncle?"

"Yes, Niece."

Delighted by Carlo's praise of her handwriting when he was told that she had only been practicing for a month, she told us to follow her. On the way Carlo asked her why she had waited till she was nineteen before learning to write.

"What is that to you? But you're wrong—I'm only seventeen."

Carlo begged her pardon, though he smiled at her bluntness. She was dressed in the costume of her village, but very neatly, with her gold chains around her neck and her wrists.

I told her to take our arms, and she did so after giving me a look which showed her willingness to obey me. We found her mother confined to bed by an attack of sciatica. A respectable-looking man who was sitting beside the patient rises and embraces Carlo. I am at once told that he is a physician, and I am glad to hear it.

After the appropriate compliments to the good woman, all of them on the subject of the merits of her daughter, who was sitting on her mother's bed, the physician asked Carlo for news of his sister's and his aunt's health. Speaking of his sister, who was suffering from a mysterious disease, Carlo asked him to tell him something privately. They went out; and I am left alone with the mother and daughter. I begin by praising the young man; I speak of his good conduct, his position, and the happiness which will fall to her whom God has destined to be his wife. They vie in confirming my praises, saying that his countenance declared all the qualities which I attributed to him. Having no time to lose, I tell Cristina to be on her good behavior at dinner, for my young friend might be the man whom God had destined for her.

"For me?"

"For you. He is one in a thousand. You would be happier with him than with me, and since the physician knows him, you can learn from him all that I have not time to tell you now."

My reader can imagine how painful I found it to make this explanation *ex abrupto,* and how surprised I was to see Cristina calm and not in the least disconcerted. This phenomenon checks the emotion which was about to make me shed tears. After a moment of silence, she asks me if I am certain that the handsome young man would want her. The question, which at once shows me the state of her heart, both reassures and consoles me. I did not really know Cristina. I answer that, being what she was, she could not but be attractive to any man, and that I will talk to her at greater length upon my next visit to Pr.

"It will be at dinner, my dear Cristina, that my friend will observe you, and it rests with you to display all the adorable qualities which God has granted you. See to it that he never guesses how intimate our friendship has been."

"This is all very strange. Does my uncle know about the change?"

"No."

"And if he likes me, when will he marry me?"

"In a week or ten days. I will attend to everything. You will see me here again before the week is out."

Carlo came back with the physician, and Cristina got up from her mother's bed and sat down facing us.

She was at no loss to answer all of Carlo's remarks with the greatest good sense, often arousing laughter by her ingenuousness, but never by stupidity. Charming ingenuousness, child of intelligence and ignorance! Its graces are enchanting. It alone has the privilege of saying anything at all without offending. But how ugly it is when it is not natural! By the same token, it is the highest accomplishment to feign it and make it appear genuine.

At dinner I said nothing, and to prevent Cristina from looking at me I never gave her a glance. Carlo occupied all her attention, and she never left him unanswered. The last thing she said to him, when we were leaving, went to my soul. He having told her that she was fit to make the happiness of a prince, she answered that she would be satisfied if he found her fit to make his. At these words he blushed to the roots of his hair, he embraced me, and we left. Cristina was simple, but her simplicity was not simplicity of mind, which I maintain is stupidity; her simplicity was in her heart, where it is a virtue despite the fact that it is only a matter of temperament; she was simple in manner, too, hence sincere, completely without self-consciousness, incapable of false modesty, and without even a trace of what is called affectation.

We returned to Venice, and through the whole journey Carlo talked of nothing but the happiness of possessing such a girl. He said he would go to see Count Algarotti the next day, and that I might write to the priest and tell him to come to Venice with all the documents necessary for a marriage contract, which he was eager to sign. He laughed when I told him that I had made Cristina the gift of a dispensation from Rome to marry during Lent; he said that in that case there was no time to be lost. The upshot of the conference on the following day between Signor Algarotti, Signor Dandolo, and Carlo was that the priest should be brought to Venice with his niece. I undertook to see to it, and went back to Pr., leaving Venice two hours before dawn. I told him that we must go to Venice at once with his niece to hasten the final preparations for her marriage to Signor Carlo, and he asked only for time enough to say his mass. In the meanwhile, I went to see Cristina and told her everything, preaching her a fond and fatherly sermon, the advice in which was directed to making her happy all the rest of her life with a husband who would daily prove himself more worthy of her regard and love. I laid down a course of conduct toward Carlo's aunt and sister by which she could not fail to gain their undivided affection. The conclusion of my discourse was moving, and at the same time mortifying to myself, for when I came to inculcating the duty of fidelity I had to ask her to forgive me for having seduced and deceived her. Here she interrupted me to ask if when I promised to marry her the first time, after we had been weak enough to surrender to love, I had intended to break my word, and, hearing me reply that I had not, she said that in that case I had not deceived her but that, on the contrary, she could only be grateful to me because, having looked at my situation coolly and seen that our marriage could make us unhappy, I had thought of finding her a more reliable husband and had succeeded so well in doing so.

She calmly asked me what she could answer him if on the first night he asked her the name of the lover who had made her other than a virgin. I answered that it was most unlikely that Carlo, with his good manners and discretion, would ask her such a cruel question; but that if he did ask she must answer that she had never had a lover and that she did not know that she was different from any other girl.

"Will he believe me?"

"Yes, I am sure he will, for I would believe it too."

"And if he doesn't believe me?"

"He would deserve your contempt; and his punishment would be that he had earned it. A man of intelligence and education, my dear Cristina, never risks asking such a question, for he is certain not only to displease but also not to be told the truth, for if the truth is prejudicial to the good opinion every woman wishes her husband to have of her, only a woman who was a fool could bring herself to tell it to him.''

''I understand it all. So let us embrace for the last time.''

''No, for we are alone, and my virtue is weak. Alas! I still love you.''

''Don't cry, my dear friend, for I really don't care one way or the other.''

It was this declaration which, by setting me laughing, made me stop crying. She attired herself like the village princess she was and, after a good breakfast, we set out. Four hours later we reached Venice; I put them up at a good inn, and went to Signor Bragadin's, where I told Signor Dandolo that the priest and his niece were at such-and-such an inn, and that he should arrange to meet Signor Carlo the next morning so that I could present them at the hour he would appoint, whereupon I would turn the whole matter over to him, for the honor of the couple, of their relatives and friends, and my own, did not permit me to take any further part in it.

He understood how right I was and acted accordingly. He fetched my dear Carlo, I presented them both to Cristina and the priest, then I bade them a sort of farewell. I learned later that they all called together on Signor Algarotti, then on Carlo's aunt, then went to the notary's to draw up the contract for the marriage and the dowry; and that finally the priest and his niece left for Pr., accompanied by Carlo, who set a day on which he would return there to marry her in the parish church.

On returning from Pr., Carlo paid me a most courteous visit. He told me that the beauty and the character of his intended had charmed his aunt and his sister and his godfather Algarotti, who had undertaken to defray all the expenses of the wedding, which was to take place at Pr. on a day which he named. He invited me to attend, and remonstrated to such good effect when he saw me preparing to decline that I could not but give in. What pleased me greatly was his description of the effect produced on his aunt by Cristina's village finery, her dialect, and her ingenuousness. He did not deny that he was completely in love with her and proud of the compliments which were paid her. As for the peasant dialect which Cristina spoke, he was sure that she would get rid of it, for in Venice envy and malice would damn her for it. As all this was my doing, I felt sincerely pleased; but I was secretly jealous of his good fortune. I praised him highly for having chosen Signor Algarotti as his sponsor.

Carlo invited Signor Dandolo and Signor Barbaro, and it was with them that I went to Pr. on the appointed day. At the priest's house I found a table set for twelve by the Count's house servants, for he had sent his cook and everything necessary for the repast. When I saw Cristina I went into another room so that no one should see my tears. She was as beautiful as a star in her peasant dress. Her husband, and even the Count, could not persuade her to go to church dressed in the Venetian fashion and with her black hair powdered. She told Carlo she would put on Venetian dress as soon as she was with him in Venice; but that she would never show herself in Pr. except dressed as she had always been, otherwise all the girls with whom she had been brought up would laugh at her.

To Carlo, Cristina seemed something supernatural. He told me he had asked the woman in whose house she had stayed during her two weeks in Venice who were the two men she had refused and that he had been surprised, for they possessed every quality to make them acceptable. "This girl," he said, "is a boon which Heaven destined for my happiness, and it is to you that I owe its precious possession.'' His gratitude pleased me, and I certainly did not think of turning it to account. I rejoiced in seeing that I had succeeded in making people happy.

Entering the church an hour before noon, we were surprised to find it so full that we could not find room to sit down. Many of the nobility of Treviso had come to see if it was really true that the marriage of a peasant girl was being solemnly celebrated during a time when ecclesiastical discipline forbade it. Everyone marveled, for a month's wait would have made a dispensation unnecessary. There must be some secret reason for it, and people were put out at not being able to penetrate it. But when Cristina and Carlo made their appearance everyone agreed that the charming couple deserved a special distinction and an exception to all rules.

A Countess Tos.,[22] of Treviso, Cristina's godmother, came up to her after the mass, as she was leaving the church. She embraced her like an affectionate friend, and modestly reproached her with not having informed her of the happy event, since she had passed through Treviso. With all her native ingenuousness, Cristina answered modestly and sweetly that she must lay the omission to a haste which, as she saw, was approved by the head of the Christian Church himself. After making this sensible answer, she at once presented her husband to her and begged the Count her godfather to persuade the Countess her godmother to honor the wedding repast. The invitation was instantly extended. This mannerly behavior, which should have been the fruit of a refined upbringing and a considerable experience of society, was in Cristina purely the result of a natural sense of propriety and the frankness of a mind which would have shone all the less if art had been employed to polish it.

The new bride had scarcely entered the room before she fell to her knees before her mother, who, weeping with joy, blessed her and her husband. The good mother received the compliments of the company seated in an armchair from which her illness prevented her from stirring.

We sat down at table, at which etiquette demanded that Cristina and her husband should take the highest places. I sat in the lowest, with the greatest pleasure. Though all the dishes were exquisite, I ate very little and spoke not at all. Cristina's only concern was to give each member of the company his due attention, either by way of answer or address, stealing a look at her dear husband whenever she spoke to see if he approved of what she was saying. Two or three times she said such charming things to his aunt and his sister that they could not help rising and kissing first her and then her husband, whom they called the happiest of men. My soul rejoiced when I heard Signor Algarotti tell Signora Tos. that he had never had a greater pleasure in all his life.

At twenty-two o'clock[23] Carlo whispered something to her, in response to which she bowed to Signora Tos., who rose. After the customary compliments, the new bride went into the next room, where the girls of the village were gathered, and distributed a big basketful of cornucopias filled with sweetmeats among them. She took leave of them, kissing them all without the slightest trace of pride. After coffee Count Algarotti invited the entire company to spend the night at a house of his in Treviso and for dinner on the day after the wedding. The priest excused himself, and it was, of course, out of the question for the mother, who, her condition growing steadily worse after the happy day, died two or three months later.

So it was that Cristina left her home and her village, to find herself with a husband whom she made happy. Signor Algarotti set off with the Countess Tos. and my two noble friends; Carlo and his wife traveled alone; and his aunt and his sister came with me in my carriage.

The sister was a widow aged twenty-five and not unattractive; but I preferred the aunt. She said that her new niece was a veritable jewel, with all the qualities necessary to make everyone adore her; but that she would not let her be seen until she had learned to speak Venetian.

"All her gaiety and ingenuousness," she added, "are simply intelligence; like her person, it must be dressed in the fashion of our country. We are most satisfied with my nephew's choice; and he has incurred an eternal obligation to you, with which no one should find fault. I hope that in future you will make one of our circle."

I did exactly the opposite; and it was duly appreciated. Everything was happy in this charming marriage. Cristina did not give her husband a son until a year had passed.

At Treviso we were very well lodged, and after drinking a few flagons of lemonade we all went to bed.

The next morning I was in the drawing room with Signor Algarotti and my friends when the bridegroom entered, handsome as an angel and looking fresh. After wittily replying to all the usual compliments, he asked his aunt and his sister to go and wish his wife good morning. They disappeared at once. I was looking at him closely, and not without anxiety, when he embraced me cordially.

People think it surprising that there are pious scoundrels who commend themselves to their saints and who thank them after some successful piece of knavery. They are mistaken; it is a state of mind which cannot but be good, for it combats atheism.

An hour later the bride appeared, beautiful and radiant, between her new aunt and her sister-in-law. Signor Algarotti went to meet her and asked if she had had a good night, and her only answer was to go and kiss her husband. Then, turning her beautiful eyes toward me, she said that she was happy and that it was to me that she owed it.

The visits began with one from Signora Tos. and continued until we sat down at table.

After dinner we went to Mestre and from there to Venice in a large peota, from which we disembarked the couple at their house, then went to amuse Signor Bragadin with a full account of our happy expedition. That strangely learned man made a quantity of profound and absurd reflections on the marriage. They all struck me as comic, for, being based on imperfect knowledge, they became a fantastic mixture of worldly policy and false metaphysics.

CHAPTER X

Trifling misadventures which force me to leave Venice. What befalls me in Milan and in Mantua.

1747.

ON THE first Sunday after Easter Carlo paid us a visit with his wife, who seemed to me a completely different person. It was the effect of her clothes and her coiffure. I thought they both looked completely happy. Yielding to Carlo's friendly reproach that I had never come to see him, I went there on St. Mark's Day[1] with Signor Dandolo; but in the meanwhile I derived the greatest satisfaction from learning from his own lips that Cristina was the idol of his aunt and the intimate friend of his sister, who both found her always accommodating, accepting whatever suggestions they made, and gentle as a lamb. She was already beginning to get rid of her dialect.

On St. Mark's Day we found her in her aunt's room; her husband was not at home. One thing leading to another, the aunt praised her for the progress she was making in writing and at the same time asked her to show me her book. She rose, and I followed her. She said she was happy, and that she saw more clearly every day that her husband had an angelic nature. He had told her, without a trace of suspicion or displeasure, that he knew she had spent two days alone with me, and that he had laughed in the face of the ill-disposed person who could have given him the information only to trouble him.

Carlo had all the virtues, and twenty-six years after his marriage he gave me generous proof of his friendship by opening his purse to me. I never frequented his house, and he was grateful to me for it. He died a few months before my last departure from Venice,[2] and left his wife in very easy circumstances, and three sons, all in good positions, with whom she is perhaps still living.

In June at the Fair of St. Anthony at Padua I made friends with a youth of my own age who was studying mathematics under Professor Succi. His family name was Tognolo,[3] though about this time he changed it to Fabris. He is the Count Fabris who died eight years ago in Transylvania, where he was in command as lieutenant-general in the service of the Emperor Joseph II. This man, who owed his success to his qualities, would perhaps have died in obscurity if he had kept his old name of Tognolo, which is unmistakably a peasant name. He was from Oderzo, a large town in Venetian Friuli. His brother the Abate,[4] a wit and a great gambler, having changed his name to Fabris, made his younger brother change his too, to bear him out. He saw that he had done well when, under his new name of Fabris, he was decorated with the title of Count in consequence of a fief which he purchased from the Venetian Senate. Become a Count and a citizen, he was no longer a peasant; become Fabris, he was no longer Tognolo. The name would have injured him, for he could never have uttered it without reminding his hearers of his low birth, and the proverb which says that a peasant is always a peasant is but too well based on experience. A peasant, in the general opinion, is incapable of sound reasoning, of pure feeling, of gentility, and of any heroic virtue. That the new Count made others forget what he was, is not, by the way, to say that he should either have forgotten it himself or denied it. On the contrary, he should always have remembered it, so that he would never be in his actions what he was before his transformation. And in fact in all his public contracts he never abandoned his former name.

His brother the Abate offered him two noble professions and told him to choose. The thousand zecchini which it would cost to obtain him a place in one or the other were ready. It was a matter of choosing between Mars and Minerva. He could either buy him a company in the troops of *H.I.R.M.A.*[5] outright or, by influence, procure him a chair at the University of Padua. In the meanwhile he was studying mathematics, for he had to have a thorough education no matter which profession he adopted. He chose the army, imitating Achilles, who preferred fame to long life. And indeed he lost his life. To be sure, he was no longer young and he did not die in battle, on the field of honor as it is called; yet but for the pestilential fever which he caught in the death-ridden country to which his august master sent him, he might well still be alive, for he was no older than I.

The air of distinction, the sentiments, the varied knowledge, and the high qualities of Fabris would have roused laughter if he had continued to call himself Tognolo.[6] Such is the power of an appellation in the stupidest of all possible worlds.[7] Those who bear an ill-sounding name, or one which suggests an absurd idea, should abandon it and take another if they aspire to the honors and wealth which the sciences and the arts bestow. Nobody can deny them this right, so long as the name they take is not someone else's. I believe they should make it up. The alphabet is public, and everyone is at liberty to use it to create a word and make it his own name;[8] Voltaire would not have attained immortality with the name of Arouet.[9] To deny him entrance to the temple, the door would have been slammed shut in his face. He would have lost all self-respect if he had constantly heard himself called *à rouer* ("whipping boy"). D'Alembert would not have become illustrious and famous under the name of Lerond[10] ("fatty"); and Metastasio would not have cut a figure under the name of Trapasso[11] ("death"). Melanchthon[12] under the name of "Red Earth" would not have dared to discuss the Eucharist, and Monsieur de Beauharnais[13] would have been laughed at if he had kept the name of Beauvit ("fine cock"), even if the founder of his ancient family had owed his fortune to it. The Bourbeux ("muddies") chose to be called Bourbon,[14] and the Caraglios ("testicles") would certainly take a different name if they went to settle in Portugal. I feel sorry for King Poniatowski, who—so I have heard—when he renounced his crown and the title of King also renounced the name of Augustus which he took when he ascended the throne.[15] Only the Colleoni ("testicles") of Bergamo would find it hard to change their name, for since the glands necessary to their propagation appear on their shield, they would at the same time have to renounce their coat of arms, thus detracting from the glory of the heroic Bartolomeo.[16]

Toward the end of the autumn my friend Fabris introduced me to a family than which none could better enrich the heart and the mind. It was in the country, in the direction of Zero.[17] There was gaming, lovemaking, and much amusing practical joking. Some of the jokes were atrocious, but it was a point of pride to stand them and laugh. Taking offense at anything was not allowed. One had to see the joke or be written off as a fool. Beds were made to fall. Ghosts struck terror; one young lady was given diuretic pills, and another comfits which produced uncontrollable farts. There was nothing for it but to laugh. I was no less daring than anyone else, both actively and passively; but here is a trick which was played on me and which cried for revenge.

We usually took a walk to a farm which was half an hour away; it could be reached in a quarter of an hour by crossing a ditch on a narrow plank which bridged it. I always chose to take this shorter way, in spite of the ladies, who were afraid to cross the narrow plank even though I went over first to encourage them. One fine day I was going first, and when I was halfway across, the piece of plank on which I had set my foot suddenly gives and drops with me into the ditch, which was full not of water but of dirty, liquid, stinking mud. I was buried in filth up to the neck and obliged to join in the general laughter, which, however, lasted only a minute, for the joke was foul and the whole company thought it so. Peasants were called and dragged me out in a pitiable state. My new fall suit embroidered with spangles was ruined, as well as my stockings and shoes; but what of it? I laughed, though I was determined to take a cruel revenge, for the joke was cruel. To find out who had perpetrated it, I had only to keep my head. The broken piece had clearly been sawn. I was taken back to the house and lent a suit and a shirt, for as I had only meant to spend twenty-four hours there, I had nothing with me.

I leave the next morning as I had planned, and that evening am back among the charming company. Fabris, who felt the thing as keenly as I did, told me that the originator of the joke remained impenetrably unknown. The promise of a zecchino to a peasant woman if she could tell me who had sawn the plank did everything. It was a young man, whose lips I was sure I could open at the cost of another zecchino. My threats, rather than my zecchino, made him confess to me that he had sawn the plank at the instigation of Signor Demetrio. He was a Greek spice merchant between forty and fifty years of age, an excellent and kindly man on whom the only joke I had played was to appropriate Signora Lin's chambermaid, with whom he was in love.

I never racked my brain so hard as on this occasion when I was trying to think up a joke to play on the malicious Greek. I had to find one which, if not worse, would at least be equal to the one he had played on me both in inventiveness and in the pain it would cause him. The more I thought the less I found, and I was in despair, when I saw a dead man being buried. As I looked at the corpse I laid a plan, and this is how I carried it out:

After midnight I went to the graveyard alone with my hunting knife, I uncovered the dead man, I cut off his arm at the shoulder, not without great difficulty, and after covering the corpse with earth again, I returned to my room carrying the dead man's arm. The next day when I leave the table after supping with all the others I go and get my arm, then ensconce myself under the bed in the Greek's room. A quarter of an hour later he comes in, undresses, puts out the light, gets into bed, and when I think he is asleep I pull down the covers at the foot until he is bare to the hips. I hear him laugh and say: "Whoever you are, go away and let me sleep, I don't believe in ghosts." So saying, he pulls the covers back over him and tries to go to sleep.

Five or six minutes later I do the same thing, he repeats the same words; but when he goes to pull back the covers I make him feel some resistance. The Greek then reaches out to catch the hands of the man or woman who was holding his covers; but instead of letting him find my hand I make him find the dead man's, whose arm I was holding firmly. The Greek pulls as firmly at the hand he is holding, thinking that he would pull the person too; but suddenly I let go of the arm, and I hear not another word from my man's lips.

My play being over, I go to my room, sure that I had given him a great fright but had done him no other harm.

The next morning I am waked by sounds of coming and going the reason for which I do not understand; I get up to see what it is, and the mistress of the house herself tells me that what I had done was too much.

"What did I do?"

"Signor Demetrio is dying."

"Did I kill him?"

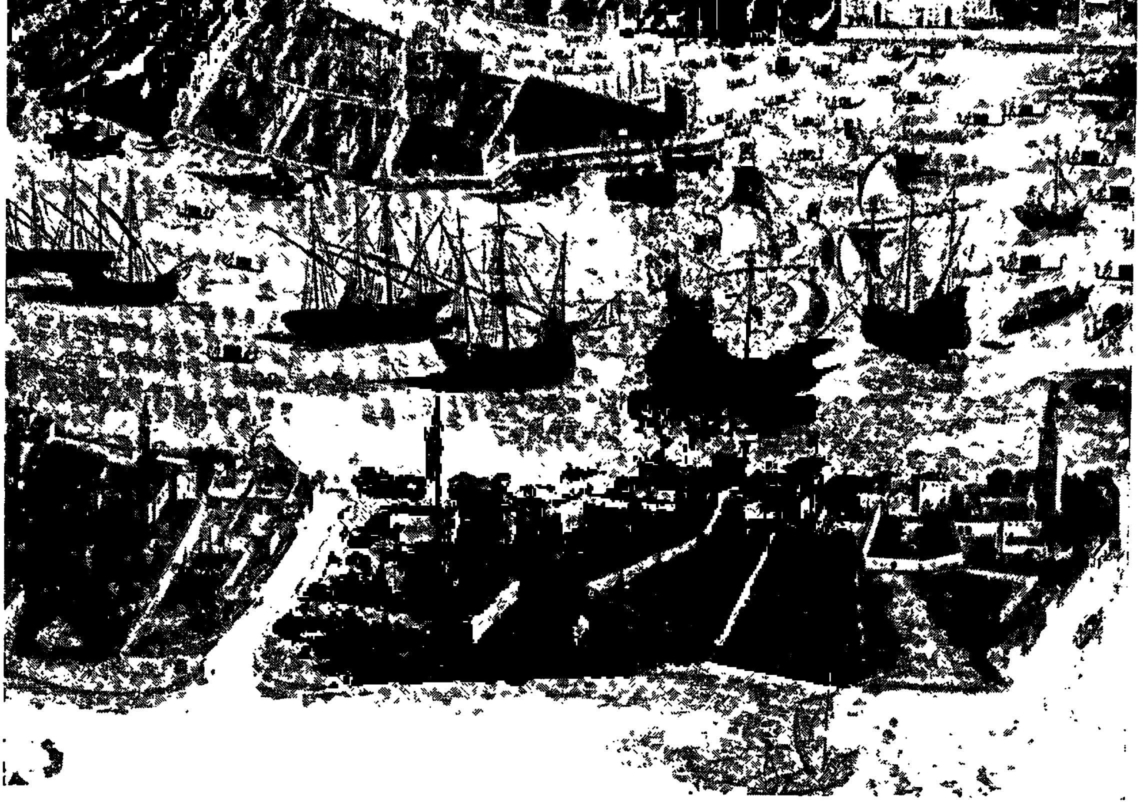
She goes off without answering me. I dress in some alarm, determined in any case to feign complete ignorance; I go to the Greek's room, where I find the entire household, the archpriest, and the beadle, who is arguing with him because he does not want to bury the arm, which I saw there, over again. They all look at me with horror, and only laugh when I insist that I know nothing about the matter and am amazed that they should so rashly find me guilty. "It is you, you're the only one here who would dare do such a thing, it's just like you," they all answer me together. The archpriest tells me I have committed a great crime and that he must report it at once. I reply that he is free to do whatever he pleases, but that I have nothing to fear, and walk off.

At table I am told that the Greek had been bled, that he had recovered the ability to move his eyes, but not his speech, nor control over his limbs. The next day he spoke; after I left I learned that he remained in a stupor and spasmodic. He passed the rest of his life in the same condition. The archpriest had the arm buried the same day, drew up his report, and sent an indictment for the crime to the episcopal chancellery at Treviso.

Tired of listening to reproaches, I returned to Venice, and two weeks later, on receiving a summons to appear before the magistrate against blasphemy,[18] I asked Signor Barbaro to find out why, for he is a magistrate to be feared. I was astonished that I was being indicted as if it were known for certain that I had cut off the dead man's arm. I thought I ought to be given the benefit of the doubt. But it turned out not to be that at all. In the evening Signor Barbaro informed me that it was a woman demanding that I be punished for having taken her daughter to La Giudecca and there raped her; in witness whereof, the complaint alleged, she was sick in bed from the blows I had given her, which had bruised her all over.

This business was of the sort which brings expense and trouble to anyone into whose lap it falls even if he is innocent. I was innocent so far as the charge of raping her was concerned; but it was true that I had beaten her. Here is my defense, which I asked Signor Barbaro to convey to the magistrate's clerk.

"On such-and-such a day I saw such-and-such a woman with her daughter. There being a *malvasia* in the street where I met them, I invited them to go in. The girl having refused my caresses, the mother told me she was a virgin and that she was right not to abandon herself without making something from it. Having taken the liberty of convincing myself of the fact with my hand, I saw that it might be true, and I offered her six zecchini if she would bring her to me on La Giudecca after dinner. My offer was accepted, and the mother left her daughter with me at the end of the garden of La Croce.[19] She took the six zecchini and left. The fact is that the girl, when I wanted to proceed to business, began fencing with me, so that I was constantly thrown off. At first the game made me laugh, then growing tired and bored, I turned serious and told her to stop it. She said gently that if I couldn't it was not her fault. Knowing this trick, and having been stupid enough to pay in advance, I could not consent to be duped. After an hour I put the girl in a posture in which she could not play her game; she immediately changed her position.



The Giudecca with Its Gardens

" 'Why do you not stay as I put you, my pretty child?'

" 'Because that way I won't.'

" 'You won't?'

" 'No.'

"At that, without making the slightest sound, I took the broomstick which was within reach and gave her a good beating. She screamed like a pig; but we were on the lagoon, where no one could come running. I know, however, that I broke neither her arms nor her legs, and that the welts from my blows can only be on her buttocks. I made her get dressed, I got her into a boat which happened to go by, and I put her ashore at La Pescheria.[20] The girl's mother received six zecchini, the girl kept her detestable flower. If I am guilty, I can be guilty only of having beaten the infamous daughter and pupil of a still more infamous mother."

My document had no effect, for the magistrate was certain that the girl was not a virgin and the mother denied having received six zecchini and even having made the bargain. Influence was of no avail. I was summoned, I did not appear, and a warrant for my arrest was about to be issued, when the complaint against me stating that I had dug up a dead man and all the rest of it was laid before the same magistrate. It would have been better for me if it had been presented to the Council of Ten, for one tribunal would perhaps have saved me from the other. The second crime, which at bottom was only a joke, was a crime of the utmost gravity. I was summoned to appear in person within twenty-four hours, after which a warrant for my arrest would certainly be issued at once. It was at this point that Signor Bragadin told me I should bow to the storm. So I immediately packed my things.

I have never left Venice with such great regret, for I had two or three long-standing involvements all of which were dear to me, and I was lucky at cards. My friends assured me that the two cases against me would be quashed by the end of a year at most. Anything can be smoothed over in Venice once everyone has forgotten it.

After packing my trunk I set out at nightfall; the next day I slept in Verona, and two days later in Milan, where I lodged at the Albergo del Pozzo.[21] I was alone, well outfitted, well supplied with jewels, without letters of recommendation, but with four hundred zecchini in my purse, a complete stranger in the great and beautiful city of Milan, in excellent health, and at the happy age of twenty-three. It was January in the year 1748.

After eating a good dinner, I set out by myself, I go to a coffeehouse, then to the opera,[22] and after admiring the principal beauty of Milan in the fact that no one paid any attention to me, I am delighted to see Marina in the role of a comic dancer receiving general applause, and deserving it; I see her grown up, filled out, and in short all that a pretty girl of seventeen could be; I decide to resume my relation with her if she is not otherwise involved. At the end of the opera I take a carriage to her house. She had just sat down at table with someone; but as soon as she sees me she throws down her napkin and runs into my arms with a rain of kisses, which I return, supposing that her companion at table was a person of no importance. The servant sets a third place without waiting to be told, she invites me to sup with her; but before sitting down I ask her who the gentleman is. If he had been polite, I would have asked Marina to introduce me; but as he saw fit not to stir, I could not sit down until I knew who he was.

“This gentleman,” said Marina, “is Count Celi,[23] of Rome, and, what is more, my lover.”

“I congratulate you. You will not take offense at our transports, Signore, for she is my daughter.”

“She is a wh....”

"Very true," said Marina, "and you can believe him, for he is my pi..."

The brute throws a knife at her face, she ducks it and runs; he starts to run after her; but I stop him by putting the point of my sword to his throat. At the same time I tell Marina to have her servant light me out. Marina picks up her cloak, takes my arm, I sheathe my sword, and willingly lead her toward the stairs. The self-styled Count challenges me to come alone the next day to the Cascina dei Pomi[24] to hear what he had to say to me. I answer that he will see me there at four in the afternoon. I took Marina to my inn, where I at once procured the room next to mine for her and ordered supper for two.

At table Marina, seeing me rather thoughtful, asked me if I was displeased that she had escaped from the brute to come with me. After assuring her that I was very glad of it, I asked her to give me a full account of the man.

"He is," she said, "a professional gambler who calls himself Count Celi. I met him here; he made advances to me, he invited me to supper, he got up a table at cards, and having won a considerable sum from an Englishman whom he invited to supper, assuring him that I would be there, he gave me fifty guineas the next morning, saying that he had given me a share in the bank. He had scarcely become my lover before he made me accept the advances of all the men he intended to dupe. He came to live with me. The reception I gave you apparently offended him, he called me wh..., and you know the rest. Here I am, and I mean to stay here until I leave for Mantua, where I am engaged as prima ballerina. I have told my servant to go and fetch me whatever I needed for tonight, and tomorrow I will send for all my possessions. I will not see the scoundrel again. I wish to be yours alone, if you want me. At Corfu you were involved, I hope that is not the case here, tell me if you still love me.''

''I adore you, my dear Marina, and I think we will go to Mantua together; but you must be mine alone.''

''My dear, you will make me happy. I have three hundred zecchini and I will give them to you tomorrow at no other interest than to be in possession of your heart.''

''I do not need money. I want nothing from you except that you should love me, and by tomorrow night we shall be more at our ease.''

''Perhaps you think you will have to fight a duel tomorrow. Don't worry about it, my dear, he is a coward, I know him. I understand that you must go there; but you will find you have nothing to do, and so much the better.''

She then told me that she had broken with her brother Petronio, that Cecilia was singing at Genoa, and that Bellino-Teresa was still in Naples, where she was getting rich by ruining dukes.

''I am the only unlucky one of us.''

''How can you say that? You have become a beauty and an excellent dancer. Be less prodigal of your favors, and you too will find a man to provide for you.''

''To be chary of my favors is hard, because when I love I must give myself, and when I am not in love I am awkward. The man who gave me fifty zecchini won't come back. It is you I want.''

''I am not rich, my dear; and my honor—''

''Say no more. I understand.''

''Why, instead of a manservant, do you not keep a chambermaid?''

''You are right; I would make a better impression; but the ugly devil serves me well and is loyalty itself.''

''He is at least a pi. .''

''Yes, but only when I tell him to be. Believe me, he is one in a thousand.''

I spent a very pleasant night with the girl. In the morning all her things arrived. We dined together in high spirits, and after dinner I left her dressing for the theater. At three o'clock I put all my valuables in my pocket and told a coachman to take me to the Cascina dei Pomi, where I immediately dismissed him. I felt sure that one way or another I should put my scoundrelly challenger out of action. I saw very well that I was being foolish and that I could break my word to a man of such low reputation without any risk; but I hankered for a duel, and I thought this one was just the thing for me, since all the right was on my side. A visit to a dancer; an impudent self-styled nobleman calls her wh... in my presence; then he tries to kill her; I take her away from him; he puts up with it, but issues a challenge which I accept. I thought that if I did not go, I gave him the right to proclaim me a coward everywhere.

Going into a coffeehouse to wait until four o'clock, I fall into talk with a Frenchman whose appearance I liked. Enjoying his conversation, I warned him that upon the arrival of someone who was to be alone my honor demanded that he should find me alone too, for which reason I must ask him to disappear when he appeared. A quarter of an hour later I see him arrive with a companion, I tell the Frenchman that I should be glad if he would stay.

He comes in, and I see that the fellow with him was wearing a sword at his side a good forty inches long and looked a perfect cutthroat. I rise, saying coldly to the bas.... :[25]

"You told me you would come alone."

"There's no harm in having my friend along, since I have only come to talk with you."

"If I had known that, I would not have gone to the trouble. But let us make no disturbance and go and talk where no one can see us. Follow me."

I go out with the Frenchman, who, knowing the place, takes me where there is no one, and we stop to wait for the two men, who were coming slowly along, talking together. When I see they are ten paces away, I draw my sword, telling Celi to be quick and draw his, and the Frenchman unsheathes his sword too.

"Two against one?" says Celi.

"Send your friend away and this gentleman will leave too. Besides, your friend has a sword, so we are two against two."

The man with the long sword said he would not fight with a dancer; my second replies that a dancer is as good as a bas...., and so saying he advances on him, gives him a blow with the flat of his sword, I pay the same compliment to Celi, who falls back with his friend, saying that he only wanted to have a word with me and that he would fight after that.

"Speak."

"You know me and I do not know you. Tell me who you are."

It was then that I began to hit him in good earnest, as my brave dancer did the other; but only for a moment, for they ran away as fast as their legs could carry them. So the whole pretty affair was over and done with. My brave second was expecting company, so I went back to Milan alone after thanking him and asking him to sup with me after the opera at the "Pozzo," where I was lodging. For that purpose I told him the name I had given for the register.

I found Marina just going out; when she had heard how the whole thing had gone off she promised me she would tell it to everyone she saw; but what delighted her was that she was certain that if it was true that my second was a dancer it could be no one but Balletti,[26] who was to dance with her at Mantua.

After putting my papers and my jewels back in my trunk, I went to the coffeehouse, then took a place in the parterre of the theater, where I saw Balletti pointing me out as he told our comical story to all his acquaintances. At the end of the opera he met me and we went to the "Pozzo" together. Marina, who was in her room, came into mine as soon as she heard me speak, and I enjoyed Balletti's surprise when he saw his future dancing partner, on whose account he had to prepare to dance *demi-caractère* parts. Marina simply could not risk appearing as a serious dancer. When we sat down at table these fair votaries of Terpsichore, who had never met before, declared an amorous war which kept me amused throughout supper, for confronted with a dancer, Marina, who knew what she was about in matters of love, adopted an entirely different behavior from that which her catechism instructed her to use with "gulls." In any case, Marina was in excellent spirits because of the extraordinary applause which greeted her appearance in the second ballet, by which time the story of Count Celi was known to the whole parterre.

There were only to be ten more performances, and Marina having decided to leave on the day after the last one, we settled that we should leave together. Meanwhile, I invited Balletti to come to dinner and supper with us every day. I took a great liking to the young man, which developed into a firm friendship which greatly influenced much of what has befallen me during my life, as the reader will see at the proper time and place. Balletti was highly gifted in his profession, but that was the least of his qualities. He was virtuous, his feelings were noble, he had gone to school and had received all the education that a well-born man in France can be given.

Not later than the third day I saw that Marina was trying to make Balletti fall in love with her, and realizing how useful this could be to her in Mantua, I resolved to help her. She had a post chaise with two seats, I easily persuaded her to take Balletti with her, for a reason which I could not tell her and which made it necessary for me not to arrive in Mantua with her, for it would be said that I was in love with her, and word of it would reach a quarter where I did not want it believed. Balletti agreed; but he insisted on paying half the hire for post horses, and Marina would not hear of it. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading Balletti to accept such a present from Marina, for the reasons he gave me were all excellent. I promised to wait for them for dinner and supper; so on the appointed day I set off an hour before them.

Reaching Cremona early, where we were to sup and spend the night, instead of waiting for them at the inn I went to while away the time at a coffeehouse. There I saw a French officer, who at once picked up an acquaintance with me. We having gone out together to stretch our legs a little, he stopped to speak to a charming woman who ordered her carriage to stop as soon as she saw him. After talking with her he rejoined me, and when I asked him who the beautiful lady was, he gave the following answer, which I think worthy of being recorded in history:

"You will not think me indiscreet in telling what I am about to tell, for the circumstance which you will learn is known to the whole city. The charming lady whom you have just seen has a rare wit, and here is an example of it. A young officer, one of several who were paying court to her when the Maréchal de Richelieu was in command at Genoa,[27] flattered himself that he was more in her favor than any of the others. One day in this same coffeehouse he advised one of his fellow officers not to spend his time courting her, as he would never have any success. The other told him to keep his advice for himself, since he had already obtained from her all that a lover could desire. The other answered that he was sure he was lying and told him to come outside. 'What is the use,' the blabber objected, 'of fighting a duel over a fact whose truth cannot depend on a duel? The Signora has made me perfectly happy, and if you do not believe me I will get her to tell you so herself.' The skeptic replied that he would wager twenty-five louis[28] that he would not get her to tell him so; and the self-styled happy lover having accepted the wager, they at once went to call on the lady whom you have just seen, who was to decide which of the two had won the twenty-five louis.

"They found her making her toilet.

"'What good wind, Signori, brings you here together at this hour?'

"'A wager, Signora,' answered the skeptic, 'which you alone can decide. The Signore boasts that you have granted him the greatest favors to which a lover can aspire, I told him he was lying, and to avoid a duel he said that you would yourself tell me that he was not; I offered to wager him twenty-five louis that you would not admit it, and he has accepted. So now, Signora, decide.'

"'You have lost,' she answered, 'but I now ask you both to leave, and I warn you that if you ever set foot in my house again you will find a very bad reception.'

"The two young fools left, equally mortified; the skeptic paid; but, cut to the quick, he treated the winner in such a fashion that a week afterward he gave him a sword thrust from which he died. Ever since then the lady goes to the casino and everywhere; but she refuses to receive anyone in her house, where she lives on excellent terms with her husband."

"How did her husband take it?"

"He says that if his wife had declared the other the winner he would have obtained a divorce, for then no one would have doubted the fact."

"Her husband is intelligent. It is certain that if the lady had said that the one who had boasted had lied, he would have paid the wager; but he would have gone on amusing himself by saying he had had her favors, and everyone would have believed him. By declaring him the winner, she put a stop to that, and avoided the contrary opinion, which would have dishonored her. The braggart was doubly in the wrong, as the outcome proved, for he paid with his life; but the skeptic was very wrong too, for in matters of this sort good manners forbid wagers. If the man who bets on the affirmative is shameless, the one who bets on the negative is a great ninny. I am much taken with the lady's presence of mind."

"But what do you believe?"

"I believe she is innocent."

"I agree with you, and such is the general opinion. If you stay here tomorrow I will take you to the casino and you shall make her acquaintance."

I invited the officer to sup with us, and we found him most entertaining. After he left, Marina gave a proof of her intelligence which pleased me. She had ordered a separate room for herself, for she thought that her respectable dancing partner would take it ill if she slept with me.

As I had told Marina that I wanted to see her only occasionally in Mantua, she went to live in the quarters which the manager had provided for her, and Balletti went to his. I went to lodge at the Albergo della Posta, in the San Marco quarter.

The same day, having gone out too late to take a walk outside the city, I entered a bookstore to see if the bookseller might have anything new. Night having fallen, and seeing that I was making no move to leave, he says he wants to close his shop. I go out, and at the end of the arcade am stopped by a patrol. The officer tells me that as two o'clock (Italian time) had struck, and I had no lantern, he must take me to the guardpost. I vainly protest that since I had arrived only that day I did not know the laws of the city; he answers that it is his duty to put me under arrest, and I give in. He presents me to the captain, a tall, handsome young man,[29] who brightens up when he sees me. I ask him to send me to my inn, as I needed sleep, and my request sets him laughing. He answers that he will show me a very amusing night, and in good company, and orders my sword returned to me, saying that he wishes to consider me only a friend who is going to spend the night with him.

He gave some orders to a soldier, addressing him in German, and an hour later a table for four is laid, two officers arrive, and we have a gay supper. At dessert three or four other officers arrive, and a quarter of an hour later two disgusting prostitutes. What takes my interest is a small bank at faro which one of the officers makes. I punt, to do as the others were doing, and after losing a few zecchini I get up to take a breath of air, having drunk too much. One of the two whores lays hands on me, sets me laughing, I let her go on, I go on myself. After the sordid performance I return to the bank.

A very likable young officer who had lost fifteen or twenty ducati was swearing like a grenadier because the banker was picking up his money and ending the game. He had a quantity of gold coins in front of him, and he said that the banker should warn him that it was the last deal. I said politely that he was wrong, for faro was the freest of all games, at the same time asking him why he did not make the bank himself since he had so much gold in front of him. He answers that he would be bored because all these gentlemen punted too stingily; and he says with a smile that if it would amuse me I could make the bank myself. I ask the guard officer if he will go in for a fourth and, on his answering yes, I announce that I will make only six deals. I ask for new cards, I count out three hundred zecchini, and the officer writes "Good for a hundred zecchini, O'Neilan" on the back of a card and puts it on top of my money.

Well satisfied, the young officer jokingly says that my bank might well die before I could get to the sixth. I made no answer.

At the fourth deal my bank was at death's door; the young man was crowing. I rather surprised him by saying that I was delighted to lose, for when he was winning I found him much more likable. There are compliments which bring bad luck to those to whom they are addressed. Mine made him lose his head. At the fifth deal a flood of bad cards made him lose all he had won; and on the sixth he plunged, and lost all the gold he had before him. He asked me to give him his revenge the next day, and I answered that I played only when I was under arrest.

Counting my money, I found that I had won *two hundred and fifty* zecchini after giving his fourth to Captain O'Neilan, who made himself responsible for fifty zecchini which an officer named Laurent had lost on his word. At dawn he let me go.

When I woke I saw before me the same Captain du Laurent who had lost the fifty ducati to my bank. Thinking he had come to pay them, I said that he owed them to Signor O'Neilan. He answered that he knew it, and ended by asking me to lend him six zecchini on a note in which he would pledge his honor to repay me within a week. I agreed, and he wrote the note. He asked me to mention it to no one, and I gave him my word on condition that he would keep his.

The next morning I found that I was sick from the bad quarter of an hour I had spent with the whore at the guardpost on the Piazza San Pietro. I cured myself completely in six weeks simply by drinking a decoction of saltpeter, but at the same time observing a diet which I found extremely monotonous.

On the fourth day Captain O'Neilan paid me a visit; and I was surprised to see him laugh when I showed him the state in which I had been put by one of the prostitutes he had summoned to the guardpost.

"Then you must have been well," he said, "when you reached Mantua?"

"Never better."

"It is a pity you lost your health in such a sewer. If I had guessed what you were about, I would have warned you."

"Then you knew?"

"I had good reason to know, for it is only a week since I did the same thing with her, and I believe that at that time she was in good health."

"So it is to you that I owe the present she gave me?"

"It is nothing, and in any case you can be cured, if that entertains you."

"Aren't you entertaining yourself doing just that?"

"Not a bit of it. A diet would bore me to death. Besides, what's the use of curing a cl. .[30] when you're scarcely cured before you catch another? I went through that rigmarole ten times; but two years ago I resigned myself."

"I am sorry for you, because, with your presence, you are a man to have the greatest successes in love."

"What do I care about that? The effort they entail is much more of a burden than the slight inconvenience I put up with."

"I do not agree with you. The pleasure of love without love is flat. Do you think that ugly wench is worth the pain I am suffering at this moment?"

"And I am very sorry for it. I could have introduced you to some wenches who would be worth the trouble."

"There's not a wench in the world who is worth my health. Only love deserves that sacrifice."

"So you want women who are worthy to be loved; there are some such in this city. Stay here, and when you are cured you can hope to make conquests."

O'Neilan was twenty-three years of age, his father[31] had died with the rank of general, the beautiful Countess Borsati was his sister; he took me to see a Countess Zanardi Nerli, who was even more beautiful; but I burned incense to none of them. My condition humiliated me; I thought that no one was unaware of it.

I never met a more debauched young man than O'Neilan. I spent my nights with him, going from one house of ill fame to another; and he always astonished me by everything he did. When he found the place occupied by some townsman, he ordered him to hurry up, and if he made him wait he had him cudgeled by a manservant whom he kept for no other purpose than to carry out orders of this kind. He served him exactly as a mastiff serves an assassin by bringing down the man he means to kill. The poor lecher whom I saw treated in this fashion moved me to laughter rather than to pity. After thus disposing of him, he punished the whore by profaning the most essential of human acts with her; and then he left without paying her, laughing at her tears.

Despite all this O'Neilan was noble, generous, brave, and a man of honor.

"Why," I asked him, "don't you pay these wretched creatures?"

"Because I'd like to see them all dead from starvation."

"But what you do to them must convince them that you love them, and certainly a well-set-up man like yourself cannot but give them pleasure."

"Pleasure? I am certain that I give them none. Do you see this ring and this little spur on it?"

"Yes, I see it. What is it for?"

"To make them cavort by pricking them with it betwixt and between. Do you think that tickles them?"

One day he rides into the city at full gallop. An old woman who was crossing the street did not have time to get out of his way, and there she lies with her head split open; he submitted to arrest, but he was freed the next morning after proving that it was an unfortunate accident.

One morning we go to call on a lady and are waiting in the anteroom for her to get up. He sees ten or twelve dates on the harpsichord and eats them. The lady appears and a moment later asks the maid where her dates are; O'Neilan says he ate them; she is annoyed; she takes him to task. He asks her if she wants him to give them back, and she answers yes, thinking that he had them in his pocket. The shameless villain then makes a slight movement of his mouth and instantly vomits up the dates in front of her. She ran out of the room, and the rake did nothing but laugh. I have seen several other men who had the same ability, principally in England.

The officer who had given me the note for six zecchini had not come back to redeem it within the week and, meeting him one day in the street, I told him I no longer considered myself obliged to keep his secret; he answered rudely that he did not care. Deeming his answer an insult, I was considering how to obtain satisfaction for it when O'Neilan told me, as a piece of news, that Captain du Laurent had gone mad and had already been locked up. He recovered afterward; but his bad behavior resulted in his discharge.

O'Neilan, the brave O'Neilan, perished some years later at the Battle of Prague.[32] Being the man he was, he was bound to perish the victim either of Venus or of Mars. He might still be alive if his courage had been that of the fox, but his was the courage of the lion. In an officer this is a fault, in a soldier it is a virtue. Those who brave danger knowing what it is may deserve praise; but those who have no sense of it escape from it only by a miracle. Yet these great warriors deserve respect, for their indomitable courage springs from greatness of soul and from a virtue which sets them above humankind.

Every time I think of Prince Charles de Ligne[33] I weep. His courage was the courage of Achilles; but Achilles knew that he was invulnerable. He would still be alive if in battle he could have remembered that he was mortal. Who that knew him did not mourn at his death? He was handsome, gentle, polite, learned, a lover of the arts, gay, witty in conversation, and always unruffled. Fatal and infamous revolution! A cannon shot took him from his illustrious family, his friends, and his future glory.

So too Prince Waldeck[34] lost his arm because of his courage; I am told that he takes comfort in the fact that the loss of an arm cannot prevent him from commanding an army. O you who scorn life, tell me if you believe you are worthier of it for scorning it?

The opera began after Easter. I never missed a performance. I was completely cured. I was delighted to see that Balletti put Marina forward. I did not go to see her, but Balletti came to breakfast with me nearly every morning. As he often talked about an old actress who had been his father's mistress[35] and had retired from the stage twenty years since, his account of her character made me want to make her acquaintance.

Her clothes did not surprise me as much as her person. Despite her wrinkles she used powder and rouge; and she dyed her eyebrows black. She displayed one half of her flaccid bosom, which aroused disgust precisely because it showed what it might have been, and two rows of teeth which were obviously false. Her hair was nothing but a wig which adhered very imperfectly to her forehead and temples; and her shaking hands set mine shaking when she pressed them. She smelled of ambergris, as did the whole room, and the fawning in which she indulged to show me that she found me attractive very nearly overcame the effort I was making to keep from laughing. Her extremely elaborate attire was of a fashion which must have been outmoded twenty years earlier. I saw with terror the marks of hideous old age on a face which, before time had ruined it, must have made many a man a lover. But what put me in a sort of daze was the childish effrontery with which this relic of time played up her supposed attractions.

Balletti, who feared that my astonishment would offend her, said that what rendered me speechless was that time had not had power to lessen the beauty of the bright strawberry mark on her chest.

"That strawberry mark," said the matron with a smile, "is what gave me my name. I still am, and I shall always be, La Fragoletta."[36]

At that name I trembled.

The phantom before me was the cause of my existence. I saw the object whose magic had seduced my father thirty years earlier, the being but for whom he would never have left his father's house and never have begotten me on a Venetian woman. I have never shared the opinion of the antique writer who says that *nemo vitam vellet si daretur scientibus* ("no one would accept life if he knew what life is").[37]

Seeing me lost in thought, she politely asked Balletti what my name was; and seeing her surprised when she heard him say "Casanova,"

"Yes, Signora," I said, "and my father, whose name was Gaetano, was from Parma."

"What do I hear? What do I behold? I adored your father. Unjustly jealous, he abandoned me. But for that, you would have been my son. Let me embrace you like a mother."

I expected as much. Fearing she would fall, I went to her and submitted to her tender memories. Always the actress, she put a handkerchief to her eyes and pretended to wipe away her tears, saying that I must not doubt what she had told me, despite the fact that she did not look old enough for it to be true. She said that my father's only fault was ingratitude; and she was to find the same fault in his son, for despite all the obliging offers she made me I did not set foot in her house again.

Master of a purse full of gold, I resolved to leave Mantua in order to have the pleasure of seeing my dear Teresa, Donna Lucrezia, Don Gennaro Palo and his son Paolo, Don Antonio Casanova, and all my old acquaintances once again; but my Genius disapproved of my plan. I would have left three days later if I had not taken it into my head to go to the opera.

During the two months I spent in Mantua I can say that I lived wisely as a result of the folly which I committed on the first day I was there. I gambled only that one time, and I won; my lost health, which forced me to follow a regimen, perhaps saved me from the misfortunes which would have befallen me if I had not been entirely taken up with recovering it.

CHAPTER XI

I go to Cesena to take possession of a treasure. I stay in Francia's house. His daughter Genoveffa.

1748.

AT THE opera I was approached by a young man who, without further introduction, told me that I was at fault, as a foreigner, in not having gone to see the natural history collection of his father Antonio de Capitani, commissary and presiding judge for canon law. I answered that if he would be so good as to call for me at the Albergo San Marco I would repair the omission and cease to be at fault. The canonical commissary turned out to be as strange an eccentric as I have ever encountered. His collection of rarities consisted in the genealogy of his family, books of magic, saints' relics, antediluvian coins, a model of Noah's Ark, numerous medals, including one of Sesostris[1] and one of Semiramis,[2] and an old knife[3] of a very curious shape and covered with rust. What he kept under lock and key was the paraphernalia of Freemasonry.

"Be so good as to tell me," I said, "what there is in common between natural history and your collection, for I see nothing which has any connection with the three kingdoms.''[4]

''What! Do you not see the antediluvian kingdom, the kingdom of Sesostris, and that of Semiramis?''

At this answer, I embraced him, whereupon he displays his erudition over each of his possessions, ending by telling me that the rusty knife was the one with which St. Peter had cut off Malek's[5] ear.

''You own this knife,[6] and you are not a very rich man?''

''How could the knife make me rich?''

''In two ways. First, by putting you in possession of all the hidden treasures in the territories belonging to the Church.''

''That follows, for St. Peter has the key to them.''

''God be praised. Secondly, by selling it to the Pope himself, if you have the chirographs which prove its authenticity.''

''You mean the certificate. I should not have bought it otherwise. I have all that.''

''Very good. To obtain this knife, I am certain that the Pope would make your son a cardinal; but he would want the sheath too.''

''I haven't it; but it is not needed. In any case, I will have one made.''

''It must be the very one in which St. Peter himself put the knife when God commanded him: *Mitte gladium tuum in vaginam*[7] (''Put up thy sword into the sheath''). It exists, and it is in the hands of someone who would sell it to you cheaply, unless you wish to sell him the knife, for the sheath without the knife is useless, as is your knife without the scabbard.''

''How much would the sheath cost me?''

''A thousand zecchini.''

''And what would he give me if I would sell him the knife?''

"A thousand zecchini."

The commissary looks at his son in amazement and asks him if he would ever have believed that anyone would offer him a thousand zecchini for his old knife. So saying, he opens a drawer and unfolds a document written in Hebrew on which there was a drawing of the knife. I pretend to be greatly impressed, and I advise him to buy the sheath.

"It is not necessary," he says, "either for me to buy the sheath or for your friend to buy the knife. We can dig up the treasures on half shares."

"Certainly not. The magistery demands that the owner of the knife *in vaginam* ['in its sheath'] be one person. If the Pope had it he could, by a magical operation of which I have knowledge, cut off one ear of any Christian king who tried to encroach on the rights of the Church."

"Very strange. It is true that the Gospel says St. Peter cut off somebody's ear."

"The ear of a king."

"Oh, not a king!"

"A king, I tell you. Inquire if Malek or Melek does not mean king."[8]

"And if I decided to sell my knife, who would give me the thousand zecchini?"

"I would. Five hundred in cash tomorrow, and the remaining five hundred in the form of a bill of exchange payable one month from date."

"That is what I call talking! Do me the honor to come and eat a dish of macaroni with us tomorrow, and we will discuss a very important matter with all the secrecy which it demands."

I accepted his invitation, and I went. The first thing he told me was that he knew where there was a treasure in the Papal State, so he would decide to buy the sheath. Certain that he would not believe me on my mere word, I took a purse from my pocket and showed him five hundred zecchini; but he replied that the treasure was worth millions. We sat down at table.

"You will not be served," he said, "on silver, but on dishes by Raffaello."[9]

"Signor Commissario, your munificence becomes your exalted rank. A fool would think that this was ugly earthenware."

"A man in very good circumstances," he told me after dinner, "who is domiciled in the Papal State, where he owns a country house in which he resides with his family, is certain that there is a treasure in his cellar. He has written to my son that he is prepared to spend whatever is necessary to obtain possession of it if he can find him a skillful magician capable of unearthing it."

The son then drew from his pocket a letter, several parts of which he read to me, asking me to excuse him for not giving me the whole letter to read, since he had promised secrecy; but without his noticing it I had already seen "Cesena," which was the name of the city from which it had been written.

"So the thing is," the canonical commissary resumed, "to arrange for me to buy the sheath on credit, for I have no ready money. You would risk nothing by endorsing my bills of exchange, for I own property; and if you know the magician you could go halves with him."

"The magician is all ready. It is myself; but if you do not begin by paying me five hundred zecchini in cash, we will proceed no further."

"I have no money."

"Then sell me the knife."

"No."

"You are making a mistake, for now that I have seen it I have the power to take it from you. However, I am too honest to want to play you such a trick."

"You have the power to take my knife? I should like to see proof of that, for I do not believe a word of it."

"Very well. Tomorrow you will no longer have it; but don't expect me to give it back to you. An elemental spirit which is at my command will bring it to me in my room at midnight, and the same spirit will tell me where the treasure is."

"Make him tell you, and you will convince me."

I thereupon called for pen and paper; I questioned my oracle in their presence, and I made it answer that the treasure was beside the Rubicon, but outside of the city. They did not know what the Rubicon[10] was; I told them it was a stream which had formerly been a river; they went for a dictionary, I saw that they were amazed when they found it was at Cesena. I then relieved them of my presence, to give them time to reason falsely. I had taken a fancy, not to steal five hundred zecchini from the poor fools, but to go with the young man and at his expense dig him up the treasure which the other fool at Cesena believed he had in his cellar. I could not wait to play the role of magician.

So when I left the good man's house I went to the public library,[11] where, with the help of a dictionary, I wrote the following piece of mock erudition: "The treasure is seventeen and one half fathoms underground, where it has lain for six centuries. Its value amounts to two million zecchini, and the treasure itself is contained in a wooden chest, the same which Godfrey of Bouillon[12] took from Matilda[13] Countess of Tuscany in the year 1081 when he came to help the Emperor Henry IV[14] to win his battle against that princess. He buried the chest where it is now before he went to besiege Rome. Gregory VII,[15] who was a great magician, having learned where the chest was buried, resolved to go and recover it in person; but death thwarted his plan. After the death of Countess Matilda in the year 1116, the Genius who presides over hidden treasures[16] set seven guards over it.

On a night when the moon is full a learned philosopher can bring it to the surface of the earth by standing in the Great Circle." [17]

The next day, as I expected, I see both the father and the son in my room. I give them the history of the treasure which I had composed, and at the height of their amazement I say that I am determined to recover the treasure, of which I offer them one fourth if they will buy the scabbard. Otherwise I again threaten them that I will take the knife. The commissary says that he will decide when he sees the sheath, and I undertake to show it to him the next day. They left well satisfied.

I spent the day putting together a sheath, and a more ridiculous one would be hard to find. I boiled the thick sole of a strong boot, and I made a slit in it which the knife could not fail to enter. Then by rubbing it with sand I gave it the proper look of antiquity. The commissary could not get over his astonishment when I went to see him the next morning and had him put the knife in it. We dined together, and after dinner we settled it that his son should go with me to introduce me to the owner of the house in which the treasure was; that I should receive a bill of exchange on Bologna for one thousand Roman scudi drawn to the order of his son; but that he would not make it over to my order until I had brought up the treasure; and that the knife in the sheath should not be put into my hands until I needed it to perform the great operation. Until then his son would keep it in his pocket.

We bound ourselves to these conditions by exchanging agreements in writing, and we stipulated that we should set out on the next day but one. When we set out the father blessed his son, at the same time telling me that he was a Count Palatine[18] and showing me the certificate issued by the reigning Pope.[19] I thereupon embraced him, addressing him as Count, and I received the bill of exchange.

After saying good-by to Marina, who had become Count Arconati's[20] mistress, and to Balletti, whom I was sure I should see at Venice the following year, I went to sup with my dear O'Neilan.

In the morning I took ship and traveled to Ferrara, and from there to Bologna and Cesena, where we lodged at the Albergo della Posta. Very early the next day we proceeded, on foot, to the house of Giorgio Francia, a rich peasant and the owner of the treasure, who lived a quarter of a mile outside the city and was not expecting such a fortunate visit. He embraced Capitani, whom he knew, and, leaving me with his family, went off to discuss the business with him.

The first thing I noticed, which I instantly recognized as *my* treasure, was the man's elder daughter. I saw her ugly younger sister, a booby of a son, a wife who ruled the roost, and three or four serving-women.

When the elder daughter, the one who attracted me at once, and who was named Genoveffa, like almost all the peasant women of Cesena, heard me say that she must be eighteen, she answered very seriously that she was only fourteen. The house had an excellent exposure and was isolated for a distance of four hundred paces in every direction. I saw with pleasure that I should be well lodged there. What troubled me was a stinking exhalation, which could not but infect the air. I ask Francia's wife where the stench comes from, and she answers that it is the smell of hemp being macerated.

"How much is your hemp worth?"

"Forty scudi."

"Here they are. The hemp is mine, and I will tell your husband to have it taken far away."

My companion called me, and I went down. Francia treated me with the respect he would have shown to a great magician, even though I did not look like one. We agreed that he should have one fourth of the treasure, the second fourth would belong to Capitani, and the remaining two fourths to me. I told him that I needed a room to myself with two beds and an antechamber in which there must be a tub for bathing. Capitani must be lodged at the opposite end of the house from mine, and in my room I must have three tables, two small and one large. In addition I ordered him to procure me a virgin seamstress between fourteen and fifteen years old. The girl must keep the secret, as must all the people in the house, for if the Inquisition[21] learned what we were about, all would be lost. I said that I would come to lodge with him the next day, that I ate two meals a day, and drank no wine but Sangiovese.[22] For breakfast, I would bring my own chocolate with me. I promised to pay him whatever expense he incurred if I failed in my attempt. The last order I gave him was to have the hemp taken away and to purge the air the same day with gunpowder. I told him to find a trustworthy man to go to the Albergo della Posta early the next morning and fetch all our luggage. He was to have a hundred candles and three torches at my disposition in the house.

We had not gone a hundred steps before Francia comes running after me to give me back the forty scudi I had given his wife for the hemp. I would not take them until he assured me that he was certain to sell it the same day for the same price. At this behavior on my part the man conceived the greatest respect for me, which became even greater when, despite Capitani, I refused the hundred zecchini he wanted to give me to pay for my journey. I saw that he was delighted when I said that on the eve of acquiring a treasure one does not even consider such trifles. The next morning we found that we were very well lodged, with all our paraphernalia at hand.

Dinner having been too copious, I told him to economize and give me only some good fresh fish for supper. After supper he came and said that he had consulted with his wife and that I could be sure of his daughter

Genoveffa. After telling him to come back with her, I asked him what grounds he had for believing that he had a treasure in his house.

"In the first place," he replied, "the tradition handed down by word of mouth from father to son for eight generations. In the second place, the loud knocking underground which goes on all night. Thirdly, my cellar door opening and shutting by itself every three or four minutes, which is the work of demons we see moving about the countryside every night in the form of pyramidal flames."

"If all this is so, it is as sure as that two and two make four that you have a treasure in your house. God preserve you from putting a lock on the door which opens and shuts, you would have an earthquake which would open an abyss in the same spot, for the spirits want to be able to go in and out freely to attend to their affairs."

"Thank God that a learned man whom my father brought here forty years ago said the same thing. Great man that he was, he needed only three more days to bring up the treasure, when my father learned that the agents of the Inquisition were about to take him. He got him out of the way in a hurry. Tell me, please, why magic cannot resist the Inquisition."

"Because the monks have more devils in their service than we have. I am sure that your father had already spent a great deal with that learned man."

"Two thousand scudi or very nearly."

"More, more."

I told them to follow me; and to do something by way of magic, I dipped a napkin in water, and uttering frightful words in no known language, I washed their eyes, their temples, and their chests, though Genoveffa might not have surrendered hers to me if I had not begun with her father's hairy one. I made them swear, on a portfolio which I took from my pocket, that they had no impure diseases, and Genoveffa that she had her maidenhead. Since she blushed very red as she swore it, I was so cruel as to explain to her what the word "maidenhead" meant, and I was delighted when, telling her to repeat her oath, she said, blushing even more deeply, that she knew what it was and so did not need to swear over again. I ordered them to give me a kiss, and having smelled an insufferable stench of garlic coming from my dear Genoveffa's mouth, I instantly forbade it to them. Giorgio assured me that there would be no more of it in his house.

Genoveffa was not a perfect beauty so far as her face was concerned, for she was tanned and her mouth was too big; but her teeth were fine and her lower lip protruded in a way which made it seem intended to gather kisses. She had begun to interest me when, in washing her chest, I found that her breasts were of a firmness of which I had no conception. She was also too blonde, and her hands were too fleshy to appear soft, but I was prepared to overlook all that. My plan was not to make her fall in love with me, for that would have taken too long with a peasant girl, but to make her obedient and submissive. I decided to make her feel ashamed of showing any antagonism, and thus to assure myself of encountering no opposition. In default of love, the chief thing in undertakings of this kind is submissiveness. Grace, vice, and ecstasy are sure to be wanting; but their absence is almost made up for by the exercise of absolute domination. I told them that each of them was to sup with me in turn, the eldest first, and that Genoveffa would always sleep in my anteroom, where there would be a tub in which I would bathe my guest an hour before he sat down at table and that he must be fasting.

I gave Francia a written list of all the things he was to buy for me in Cesena the next day, but without haggling. They were a piece of white linen twenty or thirty ells long costing eight or ten zecchini, thread, a pair of scissors, needles, storax, myrrh, sulphur, olive oil, camphor, a ream of paper, pens, ink, twelve sheets of parchment, fine paintbrushes, an olive branch which could be made into a staff a foot and a half long.

Delighted with the role of magician which I was about to play, and in which I had not thought that I was so well versed, I went to bed. The next morning I ordered Capitani to go to the principal coffeehouse in Cesena every day, to listen to what people might be saying so that he could report it to me. Francia came back before noon with all the things I had ordered him to get. He assured me he had not haggled, and that the shopkeeper who had sold him the cloth would certainly go about saying that he was drunk, for he had paid at least six scudi more for it than it was worth. I told him to send me his daughter and to leave me alone with her.

I had her cut four pieces six feet long, two two feet long, and a seventh two and a half feet long to make the hood of the surplice I needed [23] for the great conjuration. I ordered her to sit down near my bed and start sewing.

"You will eat dinner here," I said, "and stay here until evening. When your father arrives you will leave us; but you will come back to sleep here after he goes."

So she ate dinner beside my bed, where her mother served her all the things I sent her, and drank only Sangiovese wine. Toward evening when her father arrived, she disappeared.

I had the patience to bathe the good man in the tub and to sit with him at the supper table, where he ate like a wolf, assuring me that it was the first time in his life he had gone twenty-four hours without eating. Drunk on Sangiovese wine, he slept until his wife appeared, bringing me my chocolate. His daughter came and sewed until evening,[24] then disappeared on the arrival of Capitani, whom I treated as I had treated Francia. The next day was Genoveffa's turn. I had awaited it with the greatest impatience.

At the appointed hour I told her to get into the tub, and to call me when she had done so, because I had to bathe her as I had bathed her father and Capitani. She went off at once without answering me, and called me a quarter of an hour later. I went to the end of the tub, looking as gentle and as serious as possible. She was on her side; I told her to lie on her back and to look at me while I pronounced the formula for the rite. She obeyed with perfect docility, and I washed her all over, in every position. As I had to give a faultless performance in my role, I found it more trying than enjoyable, and she must have found it no less trying to display indifference and to conceal the emotion which must have been aroused in her by my hand which kept washing her just where she must have felt its touch more acutely than anywhere else. I made her get out of the bath to dry her; and it was then that my zeal to do the thing properly ordered her to assume postures which very nearly made me step out of my role. A modicum of relief which I contrived to give myself at a moment when she could not see me having calmed me, I told her to get dressed.

As she was fasting she ate with a ravenous appetite, and the Sangiovese wine which she drank like water heated her so much that I no longer saw she was tanned. As soon as we were alone I asked her if she had disliked what I had made her do and she answered that, on the contrary, she had enjoyed it.

"Then I hope," I said, "that tomorrow you won't mind getting into the bath after I do, and washing me as I have washed you."

"I'll be glad to; but how will I know what to do?"

"I will tell you, and in future you will sleep in my room every night, for I must make certain that on the night of the great operation you are still a virgin."

After this announcement, Genoveffa began to be at ease with me, she looked at me with assurance, she often smiled, and she showed no more embarrassment. She went to bed, and having nothing more which could be new to me, she did not need to overcome any feeling of modesty. To offset the heat, she stripped naked, and she went to sleep. I did likewise, but feeling sorry that I had undertaken not to make the great sacrifice until the night on which I was to bring up the treasure. The operation would fail, I knew; but I knew that it would not fail because I had failed to take her maidenhead.

Genoveffa got up very early and set to work. When she had finished the surplice she spent the rest of the day making me a parchment crown with seven points, on which I painted terrifying characters.

An hour before supper I got into the tub, she came in as soon as I told her it was time, and she performed the same ablutions on me which I had performed on her the evening before, and with the same zeal and the same gentleness, giving me the same tokens of the most ardent affection. I passed a charming hour, during which I respected only the sanctuary. Having been kissed all over, she thought she should do as much for me when she found that I did not forbid it.

"I am delighted," I said, "to see that you are taking pleasure in all this. Know, my dear child, that the perfect success of our operation hangs upon nothing but the pleasure you can obtain from my presence, without the slightest constraint."

So instructed, she completely surrendered to nature, doing unbelievable things to convince me that the pleasure she experienced was beyond expression. Despite abstaining from the forbidden fruit, we feasted sufficiently to be able to sit down at table thoroughly pleased with each other. It was she who, as she was going to her bed, asked me if our sleeping together would ruin the undertaking. She came joyously into my arms when I answered that it would not, and we went at it until love itself demanded sleep. I had occasion to admire the richness of her temperament in her wonderful inventiveness.

I spent most of the following night with Francia and Capitani observing with my own eyes the phenomena of which the peasant had told me. Standing on the balcony which gave on the courtyard of the house, I heard the door opening and shutting every three or four minutes by itself, I heard subterranean knockings which followed one another regularly at the rate of three or four a minute. The sound was like that which would be made by a great bronze pestle pounded into a mortar of the same material. Taking my pistols, I stationed myself by the moving door with a lantern in my hand. I saw the door open slowly and thirty seconds later shut with a bang. I opened and closed it myself, and finding no hidden physical reason for the strange phenomenon, I decided that some trickery was afoot. I took care not to say so.

Back on the balcony again, I saw shadows coming and going in the courtyard. It could only be masses of dense, humid air; and as for the pyramidal flames which I saw gliding about the countryside, they were a phenomenon with which I was already acquainted. I let them go on believing that they were spirits guarding the treasure. The whole countryside of southern Italy is full of will-o'-the-wisps which the common people take to be devils. This is the origin of the name *spirito folletto.*[25]

It was at night . . .[26]

Volume Three

CHAPTER I

I attempt my magical operation. A terrible storm comes up. My fear. Genoveffa remains pure. I give up, and sell the sheath to Capitani. I meet Giulietta again, with the pretended Count Celi, now Count Alfani. I decide to go to Naples. What puts me on a different road.

Anno 1748,[1]
the 23rd of my age.

IT WAS on the next night that I was to perform the great operation, for otherwise we should have had to wait for the full moon of the following month. I was supposed to compel the gnomes to bring the treasure to the surface at the place where I would put my conjurations on them. I knew that the operation would fail, but that it would be easy for me to explain the reason; meanwhile I must continue to give a flawless performance in my role of magician, which I very much enjoyed. I made Genoveffa work all day at sewing together a circle of thirty sheets of paper on which I had painted characters and terrifying figures in black. This "Great Circle,"[2] as I called it, had a diameter of three paces. I had made a sort of scepter from the olive branch which Giorgio Francia had brought me. So, having everything I needed, I warned Genoveffa that at midnight, when I came out of the circle, she must be ready for anything. She could not wait to give me such a proof of her obedience; but that did not lessen my feeling that I was still in her debt.

So, having instructed her father Giorgio and Capitani to station themselves on the balcony, not only to be ready to carry out my orders if I called to them but also to prevent the household from seeing what I was about to do, I take off all my profane garments; I put on the great surplice which had been touched only by the pure hands of the innocent Genoveffa; then I let my long hair hang loose, I set the seven-pointed crown on my head and take the great circle on my shoulders, and with one hand holding the scepter and the other the very knife with which St. Peter once cut off Malek's ear, I go down to the courtyard and, after spreading out my circle on the ground and walking around it three times, I jump into it.

After crouching inside it for two or three minutes, I rise and stand motionless, watching a heavy black cloud which was coming up on the western horizon while thunder rumbled violently in the same direction. How I should have been admired if I had dared to predict it! The lightning grew more frequent as the cloud ascended, leaving the celestial vault without a glimmer of light; that from the lightning was enough to make the terrible darkness brighter than day.

As all this was perfectly natural, I had no reason to be surprised at it; nevertheless a beginning of terror made me wish I were in my room, and I began to shudder when I heard and saw the thunder and lightning which were following one another with the greatest rapidity. The flashes, which were all about me, froze my blood. In the terror which overtook me I persuaded myself that if the flashes of lightning I saw did not strike me down it was because they could not enter the circle. For this reason I did not dare leave it and take to my heels. But for my false belief, which was only the product of fear, I should not have remained in the circle for as long as a minute, and my flight would have convinced Capitani and Francia that, far from being a magician, I was an utter coward. The force of the wind, its frightful howling, my fear, and the cold combined to set me shaking like a leaf. My philosophical system, which I thought was proof against any assault, was gone. I recognized an avenging God who had lain in wait for me there to punish me for all my misdeeds and thus end my unbelief by death. What convinced me that my repentance was of no avail was that I absolutely could not move.

But now down comes the rain, I hear no more thunder, I see no more lightning, I feel my old courage reborn. But what a rain! It was a torrent falling from the sky through the air, which would have flooded everything if it had lasted for more than a quarter of an hour. When the rain ended both the wind and the darkness were gone. High in the absolutely cloudless sky I saw the moon, more beautiful than ever. I gathered up my circle, and after ordering Capitani and Francia to go to bed without speaking to me, I went to my room, where one glance showed me Genoveffa looking so beautiful that she frightened me. I let her dry me off without looking at her, and then in piteous tones told her to get into her bed. She said in the morning that, seeing me shivering despite the heat of the season, she had felt afraid for me.

After sleeping for eight hours I was sick of the comedy. When Genoveffa appeared I was astonished that she seemed a different person. She no longer seemed to be of a different sex from mine, since I no longer felt that mine was different from hers. At the moment an idea whose superstitiousness took nothing from its power made me believe that the girl's innocence was protected and that I should be struck dead if I dared to assail it. In the resolve which I made I had no other thought than that her father Francia would be less gulled and she less unhappy, unless, that is, the same thing happened to her which had happened to poor Lucia at Pasiano.

As soon as Genoveffa became an object of sacred terror in my eyes I determined to leave immediately. What made my resolve irrevocable was a panic yet very reasonable terror. Some peasants might have seen me in the circle and, convinced that the storm had been the effect of my magical operation, might go and accuse me to the Inquisition,[3] which would lose no time in seizing my person. Shaken by the possibility, which would have destroyed me, I sent for Francia and Capitani and told them in Genoveffa's presence that I had to put off the operation because of an agreement I had made with the seven gnomes who guarded the treasure, of which they had given me as full an account as I could wish. I left it with Francia in writing, drawn up in the following terms, and the same as the one I had given Capitani in Mantua:

"The treasure which lies here at seventeen and one half fathoms underground has been there for six centuries. It consists of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and a hundred thousand pounds of powdered gold. All this is contained in one chest, which is the same one which Godfrey of Bouillon took from Matilda Countess of Tuscany in the year 1081, when he went to help the Emperor Henry IV win his battle against that princess.[4] He buried the chest where it now is before he went to besiege Rome. Gregory VII,[5] who was a great magician, having learned where the chest was buried, determined to go and recover it in person; but he died before he could carry out his plan. In the year 1116, immediately upon the death of the Countess Matilda, the gnome who is the Genius presiding over hidden treasures gave it seven guardians."

After giving him this document I made him swear to wait for me, or to believe no one who did not give him an account of the treasure exactly like the one I was leaving him. I had the crown and the circle burned, ordering him to keep the other things until I should return, and I sent Capitani to Cesena at once to wait at the Albergo della Posta for the man whom Francia would send him with all our baggage.

Seeing that Genoveffa was inconsolable, I took her aside and assured her that she would see me soon. Some scruples of conscience made me feel obliged to tell her that, since her innocence was no longer necessary to the raising of the treasure, she was under no further obligation and was free to marry if the opportunity arose.

I went on foot to Cesena and to the inn, where I found Capitani ready to return to Mantua after having visited the fair at Lugo.[6] He shed tears as he told me that his father would be in despair when he saw him come back without St. Peter's knife. I gave it to him, and offered him the sheath as well if he would buy it for the 500 Roman scudi stipulated in the bill of exchange he had given me; and considering it a very good bargain he agreed at once and I gave him back the bill. I made him sign an agreement by which he undertook to return my sheath to me whenever I sent him the same sum of 500 Roman scudi.[7]

I had no use for the sheath, and no need of money; but I thought that to let him have it for nothing would dishonor me and give him an idea that I set no value on it. Chance decreed that we should not see each other until long afterward and when I was not able to give him the 250 zecchini.[8] So, as it turned out, my escapade made me the richer by that amount, while at the same time it never entered Capitani's head to complain or to believe that I had gulled him; for, with the sheath in his possession, he believed that he was master of all the treasures which might be hidden in all the Papal States.

Capitani left the next day, and for my part I would have set off for Naples without losing any time, had not something immediately happened which caused me to put off following my plan.

The innkeeper handed me a printed bill announcing four public performances of Metastasio's *Didone*[9] at the Teatro Spada.[10] Reading the names of the actresses and actors and seeing that none of them is known to me, I decide to wait and see the first performance and to leave at dawn the next morning by the post. A nagging fear of the Inquisition still urged me to be off, and I felt that I already had spies on my track.

I enter the theater before the opera begins and see the actresses dressing, and the leading lady strikes me as most attractive. She was from Bologna and went by the name of Narici.[11] After making her a bow I ask her if she is at liberty; she answers that her only engagement is to the managers, Rocco and Argenti. I ask her if she has a lover, she answers that she has not; for politeness' sake I offer myself; she laughs at me and invites me to subscribe two zecchini for four tickets to the four performances. I give her two zecchini, I take the four tickets, and I give them to the girl who was dressing her hair and who was prettier than she was. After that I leave; she calls me back, and I pay no attention. I go to the door; I take a parterre ticket, and go and sit down. After the first ballet, having found everything bad, I am thinking of leaving, when to my great astonishment I see in the principal box the Venetian Manzoni[12] with Giulietta, "La Cavamacchie," whom my reader may remember. Seeing that I am not noticed, I ask the man beside me the name of the beautiful lady who shone more than her diamonds. He answers that she is Signora Querini, a Venetian lady, whom General Count Bonifazio Spada,[13] the owner of the theater, whom I saw beside her, had brought from Bologna and from Faenza, her native city. Delighted to learn that Signor Querini had finally married her, I have no thought of approaching her. I should have had to address her as "Your Excellency," I did not wish to be known; then, too, I might be badly received. The reader may remember our falling out when she made me dress her as an abate.

But at the very moment when I am leaving she sees me and beckons to me with her fan. I go to her and say in a whisper that, as I do not wish to be known, I am using the name of Farussi.[14] Signor Manzoni likewise whispers to me that I am speaking to Signora Querini. I tell him that I knew it from a letter I had received from Venice.

Giulietta, who is waiting for me, instantly creates me a baron and presents me to Count Spada. The nobleman invites me into his box, and after inquiring whence I had come and where I was going asks me to supper.

Ten years earlier[15] he had been Giulietta's lover in Vienna, at the time when the Empress Maria Theresa, seeing the bad influence exercised by her charms, had turned her out. She had later renewed her acquaintance with him in Venice, where she had induced him to take her to visit Bologna; Signor Manzoni, her erstwhile fancy man, who told me all this, was traveling with her so that he could certify her good conduct to Signor Querini. At Venice she tried to make everyone believe that he had married her secretly; but fifty leagues from home she did not feel constrained to secrecy. The General had already announced her as Signora Querini Papozze[16] to the entire nobility of Cesena. In any case, Signor Querini would have been wrong to be jealous of the General, for it was an old acquaintance. Women maintain that any current lover who says he is jealous of an old acquaintance must be an utter fool. Giulietta had quickly called me over, fearing that I would be indiscreet; but seeing that I must be equally afraid that she would be so, she felt reassured. I at once began to treat her with all the respect which was due to her rank.

I found a large company at the General's, and some quite pretty women. I look in vain for Giulietta; Signor Manzoni tells me she is at the faro table, where she is losing her money. I go there and see her sitting at the left of the banker, who, seeing me, turns pale. It was the self-styled Count Celi.[17] He immediately offers me cards,[18] which I politely refuse, at the same time accepting Giulietta's offer to go halves with her. She had fifty zecchini in front of her. I give her another fifty and take a place beside her. At the end of the deal she asks me if I know the banker, and I see that he has heard her; I answer no, and the lady who was seated on my left tells me that he is Count Alfani. A half hour later Signora Querini, who was losing, had a *sept et le va*[19] for ten zecchini; it was crucial. I rise and fix my eyes on the banker's hands; but it makes no difference: he cheats, and the Signora loses her card. Just then the General comes to take her to supper, and she stops, leaving the rest of her money on the table. At dessert she returns to the game and loses it all.

The amusing stories with which I enlivened supper gained me everyone's friendship, but especially that of the General, who, having heard me say that I was only going to Naples to satisfy an amorous fancy, begged me to spend a month with him instead; but in vain for, my heart being empty, I could not wait to be with Teresa and Donna Lucrezia, whose charming faces I could only remember dimly after five years. However, I consented to remain in Cesena to pay my respects to him for the four days he had decided to stay there.

The next morning while my hair was being dressed, I see the swindler Alfani. I receive him with a smile, saying that I expected him. He does not answer, for the hairdresser is there; but no sooner is he gone than he asks me what reason I could have to expect him.

"My reasons were probabilities which you shall hear at length after giving me back a hundred zecchini this instant."

"Here are fifty. You cannot ask more."

"I accept them on account; but warning you out of the kindness of my heart not to come to the General's this evening, for you will not be admitted, and the company will have me to thank for it."

"I hope that before you do anything so malicious you will think it over."

"I have already thought it over. Now go, and quickly."

What may also have made him leave was a visit from the first castrato of the opera, who came to ask me to dine at La Narici's. The invitation having set me laughing, I accepted it. His name was Niccolò Peretti,[20] he claimed to be descended from a natural son of Sixtus V. We shall speak of this mountebank, whom I met again in London fifteen years later, when we come to that time.

Arriving at La Narici's for dinner, I see Count Alfani, who certainly did not expect to see me there. He at once asked me to let him speak with me in private.

"If I give you another fifty zecchini," he said, "as a man of honor you cannot take them except to give them to Signora Querini, and you cannot give them to her without telling her that you made me give them back to you. You see what the consequences will be."

"I will give them back to her when you are no longer here; in the meanwhile I will be discreet; but take care that you do not improve upon fortune in my presence, for I will do you a bad turn."

"Double my bank, and you shall have a half share."

His proposal made me laugh. He gave me the fifty zecchini, and I promised to say nothing. The company at La Narici's was largely made up of young men, who after dinner lost all their money. I did not play. She had invited me only because she thought I was of the same stamp as the others. Remaining a spectator, I saw how wise Mohammed was in forbidding games of chance in his Koran.

After the opera he made the bank, and I played and lost two hundred zecchini; but I had nothing to complain of except fortune. Signora Querini won. The next day before supper I almost broke his bank; and after supper I went to bed.

The next morning, which was my last day, I learned at the General's that his Adjutant had thrown the cards in his face and was to meet him at midday somewhere to receive or give him a sword thrust. I went to his room to offer him my company, assuring him at the same time that no blood would be shed. He thanked me; and when I came to dinner he told me with a laugh that I had prophesied rightly. Count Alfani had left for Rome. I promised the distinguished company that I would make a bank for them myself. But this is what Signora Querini answered me when, taking her aside, I tried to give her the fifty zecchini which in honor I owed her, after telling her how I had made the scoundrel return them to me.

"By means of this fairy tale," she said, "you wish to make me a present of fifty zecchini; but permit me to tell you that I do not need your money, and besides I am not such a fool as to let myself be cheated."

Philosophy forbids the wise man to repent of having performed a good action; but he is at liberty to regret it when a malevolent interpretation makes it appear a bad one.

After the opera, of which this was the last performance, I dealt at the General's, as I had promised to do, and I lost a little; but I was liked. That is sweeter than to win, when need does not drive the player to be on the watch for money.

Count Spada invited me to go to Brisighella[21] with him, but to no avail, for I could not wait to set off for Naples. I promised him I would pay him my respects again the next day at dinner.

The next morning at daybreak I am awakened by an extraordinary uproar in the public room and almost at the door of my bedroom. A minute later I hear the noise in the room next to mine. I get out of bed and quickly open my door to see what is going on. I see a troop of *sbirri*[22] at the open door of the room and in the room I see a decent-looking man sitting up in bed and shouting in Latin at the ruffians and at the innkeeper, who was there and who had dared to open his door for them. I ask the innkeeper what it was all about.

"This gentleman," he answers, "who apparently speaks only Latin, is in bed with a young woman, and the Bishop's constables have come to find out if she is his wife. It is perfectly simple: if she is, he has only to prove it to them by some certificate, and the thing will be over; but if she is not, he must put up with going to prison with the girl; but that won't happen to him, for I will undertake to patch the matter up for two or three zecchini. I will speak to their captain, and they will all go away. If you speak Latin, go in and make him see reason."

"Who forced the door of his room?"

"It was not forced; I opened it myself; it is my duty."

"It is the duty of a highway robber."

Surprised by such infamous proceedings, I cannot refrain from interfering. I enter, and I tell the man in the nightcap all the circumstances of the intrusion. He answers, with a laugh, that in the first place no one could know if whoever was in bed with him was a girl, for the person had been seen only in male attire, and that in the second place he considered that no one on earth had the right to force him to declare whether it was his wife or his mistress, always supposing that the person in bed with him was indeed a woman.

"Furthermore," he said, "I am determined not to spend a single paolo[23] to end the matter, and not to get out of bed until my door has been shut. As soon as I have dressed I will show you a pretty ending to this comedy. I will send all these robbers running with my saber."

I then see in the corner of the room a saber and a Hungarian coat which looked as if it belonged to a uniform. I ask him if he is an officer, and he answers that he had written his name and rank in the innkeeper's register. Absolutely astounded at this extraordinary state of affairs, I question the inkeeper,[24] who says that it is true, but that the ecclesiastical tribunal nevertheless had the right to inquire into any scandalous conduct.

"The insult you have just offered this officer," I tell him, "will cost you dear."

In answer to my threat they all laughed in my face. Much annoyed at being mocked by such riffraff, I ask the officer if he dares entrust his passport to me; he says that, since he has two, he can very well entrust me with one of them and, so saying, he takes it from a portfolio and hands it to me to read. It was from Cardinal Albani.[25] I see the officer's name and his rank as captain in a Hungarian regiment of the Empress-Queen. He tells me that he has come from Rome and is on his way to Parma to deliver to Monsieur Dutillot,[26] Prime Minister of the Infante the Duke of Parma, a package entrusted to him by Cardinal Alessandro Albani.

Just then a man enters the room asking me to tell the Signore in Latin that he wished to leave at once and had not time to wait for him; so that he should either settle matters with the constables immediately or pay him. He was the *vetturino*.[27]

Seeing it was obviously a plot, I asked the officer to leave the whole matter to me, assuring him that I would bring him off with honor. He told me to do whatever I pleased. I told the *vetturino* that he had only to bring up the Signore's trunk and he would receive his money. He brought up the trunk and received the eight zecchini from my hands, giving a receipt to the officer, who spoke only German, Hungarian, and Latin. The *vetturino* left at once; and the *sbirri* likewise, in great alarm, except for two, who remained in the public room.

I then advised the officer not to get out of bed until I returned. I said that I was going to the Bishop to tell him that he owed him the most complete satisfaction, and he had no doubt of it when I told him that General Spada was in Cesena; he answered that he knew him, and that if he had known he was there he would have blown out the innkeeper's brains for opening the door of his room to the *sbirri.* I quickly put on my redingote and not stopping to undo my curl-papers I went to the Bishop's palace and, raising a row, was conducted to the Bishop's room. A lackey told me he was still in bed; but not having time to wait I go in and I tell the prelate the whole story, exclaiming over the iniquity of such proceedings and railing at a police force which violated the law of nations.

He does not answer me. He calls, and orders me taken to the Chancellor's room.

I repeat the facts to the Chancellor, not measuring my words[28] and using a style calculated to irritate and not to gain favors. I threaten; I say that if I were the officer I would demand exemplary satisfaction. The priest smiles and, after asking me if I have a fever, tells me to go and talk with the captain of the *sbirri.*

Delighted that I had irritated him and so brought the matter to the point where only the authority of General Spada could, and must, end it to the honor of the insulted officer and the confusion of the Bishop, I go to the General's. I am told that he cannot be seen until eight o'clock, and I return to the inn.

The ardor with which I had embraced the affair appeared to spring from my innate sense of decency, which could not bear to see a foreigner treated in such a fashion; but what made me so hot in it was a far stronger motive. I imagined that the girl in bed beside him was very attractive; I could not wait to see her face. Shame had never permitted her to expose her head. She had heard me, and I was sure that I had made a good impression on her.

As the door of the room was still open, I enter and give the officer an account of all that I had done, assuring him that in the course of the same day he would be free to leave at the Bishop's expense, after receiving complete satisfaction at the behest of the General. I say that I cannot see him until eight o'clock. He expresses his gratitude; he tells me that he will not leave until the next day, and he pays me the eight zecchini I had given the *vetturino*. I ask him of what nationality his traveling companion was, and he answers that the person is French and understands no language but his own.

"Then you speak French?"

"Not a word."

"That's odd. Then you never talk to each other except by gestures?"

"Exactly."

"I am sorry for you. May I hope to breakfast with you?"

"Ask him if he wishes it."

So I address my request to him, and I see a tousled head appear from under the covers, revealing a smiling, fresh, attractive face which leaves me in no doubt of its sex, though the hair is cut like a man's.

Enchanted by the lovely apparition, I say that having taken up her cause without seeing her, the sight of her could only have increased my eagerness to be of use to her and my zeal. She refutes my reasoning as prettily as possible and with all the wit of her nation. I go out to order coffee and to give her time to sit up; for it had been settled that neither of them would get out of bed so long as the door of their room remained open.

The waiter having come, I go back, and I see the Frenchwoman in a blue redingote and with her hair awkwardly arranged like a man's. I am surprised by her beauty and sigh for the moment when I shall see her up. She drank coffee with us, never interrupting the officer, who was talking to me and to whom I did not listen in the ecstasy into which I was thrown by the face of this creature who did not look at me and whom the *pudor* *infans* ("silent shame")[29] of my dear Horace kept from uttering a single word.

At eight o'clock I go to the General's and I tell him the circumstances, exaggerating as much as possible. I say that if he does not deal with the situation, the officer considered that he must send an express to his patron the Cardinal. But my eloquence was not needed. Count Spada, after reading the officer's passport, said that, comedy though it was, he would treat it as a matter of the gravest importance. He ordered his Adjutant to go to the posthouse inn at once and invite the officer to dinner together with his companion, whose sex no one had been able to discover; and then to go and inform the Bishop officially that the officer would not leave until he had obtained whatever satisfaction he wished and whatever sum of money he considered proper as damages.

How I enjoyed witnessing this gratifying scene, of which, filled with justifiable vanity, I considered myself the author!

The Adjutant, preceded by me, waits on the Hungarian officer, gives him back his passport, and invites him to dinner with his companion; then tells him to put in writing the kind of satisfaction he wishes and what sum he asks in recompense for the time he has lost. I hurried to my room to provide him with ink and paper; and the brief document, in passable Latin for a Hungarian, was ready at once. The *sbirri* had vanished. The good Captain would ask for only thirty zecchini, despite all that I said to persuade him to ask for a hundred. On the score of satisfaction he was also too lenient. He insisted only upon seeing the innkeeper and all the *sbirri* asking his pardon together on their knees in the public room and in the presence of the General's Adjutant. Otherwise, if this was not done within two hours, he would send an express to Rome to Cardinal Alexander and would remain in Cesena until the answer came, with the Bishop paying his expenses at the rate of ten zecchini a day.

The Adjutant set off at once to take the document to the Bishop. A moment later in comes the innkeeper to tell the officer that he is free; but he left as fast as his legs could carry him when the officer told him he owed him a caning. After that I left them and went to my room to have my hair dressed and to change my clothes, as I was to dine with them at the General's. An hour later I saw them before me, well dressed in uniform. The lady's was simulated, and very elegant.

It was at this moment that I decided to leave for Parma with them. The girl's beauty reduced me to slavery on the spot. Her lover appeared to be sixty years of age; I thought their union very incongruous; and I imagined that I could settle everything amicably.

The Adjutant came back with a priest from the Bishop's palace, who told the officer that he would have all the satisfaction he desired in half an hour; but that he must be content with fifteen zecchini, since the journey to Parma took only two days. The officer answered that he would reduce none of his demands, and he was given the thirty zecchini, for which he refused to sign a receipt. So the matter was settled, and the welcome victory having been the fruit of my efforts, it gained me the unalloyed friendship of the couple. To see that the girl was not a man one had only to examine her figure. Any woman who thinks she is beautiful because, when she is dressed as a man, everyone takes her for a man, is not a beautiful woman.

When, toward the dinner hour, we entered the drawing room where the General was, he took pains to introduce the two officers to the ladies who were present and who laughed as soon as they saw the masquerader; but having already heard the whole story, they were surprised, for they had not expected to have the pleasure of dining with the heroes of the play. The women saw fit to treat the young officer as if he were a man, and the men paid him the homage they would have paid him if he had declared that he was a girl. The only woman who sulked was Signora Querini, for finding that she was receiving less attention, she thought that she was outshone. She addressed him only to show off her French, which she spoke fairly well. The only person who never spoke was the Hungarian officer, for no one cared to speak Latin, and the General had almost nothing to say to him in German.

An old abate who was at the table tried to justify the Bishop by assuring the General that the constables and the innkeeper had acted as they had done only by order of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. That, he told us, was why there were no bolts in rooms in inns, because foreigners were not permitted to lock themselves in. Nor were two persons of different sex permitted to sleep together unless they were husband and wife.

Twenty years later[30] in Spain I found that all rooms in inns had a bolt on the outside, so that foreigners who slept in them could be to all intents and purposes imprisoned.

CHAPTER II

I buy a fine carriage and leave for Parma with the old Captain and the young Frenchwoman. I see Genoveffa again and present her with a fine pair of gold bracelets. My perplexities concerning my female traveling companion. Monologue. Conversation with the Captain. Private interview with the Frenchwoman.

"IT IS strange," said Signora Querini to the masquerader, "that you can live together and never speak to each other."

"Why strange, Signora? We understand each other none the worse, for speech is not necessary in the business we do together."

This answer, which the General translated into good Italian for the whole company at the table, provoked a burst of laughter; but Signora Querini affected the prude: she thought it too revealing.

"I do not know," she said to the pretended officer, "of any business in which speech, or at least writing, is not necessary."

"I beg your pardon, Signora. Is not gaming a business?"

"Then you do nothing but play cards?"

"Nothing else. We play faro, and I keep the bank."

This time the laughter lasted until everyone was out of breath; and Signora Querini could not help laughing too.

"But does the bank," asked the General, "win a great deal?"

"Hardly. The stakes are so small that it's not worth counting up."

No one took the trouble to translate this answer for the worthy officer. Late in the afternoon the company broke up, and everyone wished the General, who was leaving, a good journey. He likewise wished me a good journey to Naples; but I told him that I wanted first to see the Infante, the Duke of Parma, and at the same time serve as interpreter to the two officers who could not understand each other: he answered that if he were in my place he would do the same. I promised Signora Querini that I would let her hear from me at Bologna, not intending to keep my promise.

The officer's mistress had begun to interest me when she was hidden under the bedclothes; she had attracted me when she put her head out, and far more when I saw her up; but she added the finishing touch at dinner, when she displayed a kind of wit which I greatly admired, which is seldom found in Italy and often found in France. As her conquest seemed to me no difficult matter I considered how to go about achieving it. Assuming, without the least conceit, that I was better suited to her than the officer, I did not imagine that I should find him making any difficulties. I thought him one of those natures who, considering love a trifle, yield easily to circumstances, adapt themselves, and accept whatever compromises chance may offer. Fortune could not possibly provide me with a better opportunity to push my attack than making me the couple's traveling companion. There was no likelihood that I would be refused; indeed, I thought my company would be very welcome to them.

As soon as we were back at the inn I asked the officer if he intended to go to Parma by post or by carriage. He answered that, having no carriage of his own,[1] he would prefer to go by post.

"I have a carriage," I said, "and a very comfortable one; and I offer you the two back seats in it, if my company is not distasteful to you."

"It falls out perfectly. Please propose your excursion to Henriette."[2]

"Will you, Madame Henriette, grant me the honor of conducting you to Parma?"

"I should be delighted, for we will talk; but your part will not be easy since you will often have to play a lone hand."

"I shall do so with the greatest pleasure, only regretting that our journey is a very short one. We will discuss it at supper. In the meanwhile permit me to go and finish some business."

The "business" was a carriage, which I owned only in imagination. It was to the Caffè della Nobiltà[3] that I immediately went to ask where there might be a good carriage for sale. I at once heard that there was an English carriage for sale at Count Dandini's[4] and that no one would buy it because the price was too high. He asked two hundred zecchini for it, and it was only a two-seater, with a folding seat. It was just what I wanted. I find someone to guide me to the coach house, the carriage is to my liking; the Count had gone out to supper, I promise to buy it the next day, and I return to the inn well satisfied. During supper I talked to the officer only to settle it that we would leave the next day after dinner and would each pay for two horses. The long dialogues were between Henriette and myself on any number of pleasant topics, in which I admired a wit in her which was entirely new to me, for I had never conversed with a Frenchwoman. Finding her always charming and unable to suppose her anything but an adventuress, I was surprised to find her entertaining sentiments which I thought could only be the fruit of a most refined education; but when the idea came to me I dismissed it. Every time I tried to make her talk about her lover the officer she evaded my question, but in the most gracious way possible. The only question I asked her to which she felt it necessary to give me an answer was that he was neither her husband nor her father. The good man had fallen asleep. When he woke I wished them good night, and I went off to bed very much in love and very much delighted with the promising adventure, which I imagined would be full of charm and whose demands upon me I was certain that I could meet, since I had plenty of money and was completely my own master. What crowned my happiness was that I was sure I should see the culmination of the intrigue within two or three days.

The next morning very early I went to Count Dandini's. Passing a jeweler's shop, I bought a pair of gold bracelets made with Spanish links[5] such as are worn in Venice, five ells long and unusually fine. I at once thought that I would make Genoveffa a present of them.

When Count Dandini saw me he recognized me. He had seen me at Padua, in the house of his father, who, when I was a student in the university there, held the chair of Roman Civil Law. I bought the carriage, which must have cost twice as much, on condition that he would at once send for a harness maker who would bring it to me at the inn door in perfect order an hour after noon.

From there I went to Francia's, where I delighted Genoveffa beyond measure by giving her the bracelets, of which no girl in Cesena had a pair as beautiful. By this present I paid ten times more than all the expenditure the good man had made during the ten or twelve days I had passed in his house. But a present of far greater value which I gave him was to make him swear to wait for me and never trust any other magicians to bring up the treasure, even if ten years should pass before he saw me again. I assured him that at the first operation undertaken by another philosopher,[6] the guardian gnomes would make it go down twice as far, and that at thirty-five fathoms even I should find it ten times as difficult to bring it up. I said frankly that I could not tell him exactly how soon he would see me again; but that he must wait for me, for it was decreed that only I could bring up his treasure. I accompanied his oath with maledictions which, if he broke it, would bring certain ruin to his whole family. Thus, far from having to reproach myself with having deceived the good man, I became his benefactor. He did not see me again, for he died; but I am sure that his descendants are still waiting for me, for the name of Farussi by which they knew me must have remained immortal in their house.

Genoveffa saw me off to within thirty paces of the city of Cesena, and in the course of hearty embraces with which I took leave of her I saw that my fear of lightning had only had a temporary effect on me; but I was too glad not to have committed that particular piece of villainy to think of returning to it. The present I made her in twenty words was of greater consequence than the bracelets. I told her that if I put off coming back for more than three months she could set about finding herself a husband without any fear that her marriage would prevent acquiring the treasure, which I could not bring up until the Great Science should allow me to. After shedding a few tears she assured me that she would act in accordance with what I had just told her.

So ended the business of the Cesena treasure, in which instead of being a swindler I was a hero; but I dare not boast of it when I consider that if I had not been master of a purse full of gold I would have ruined poor Francia with a light heart; and I believe that any young man with a modicum of intelligence would have done the same thing. As for Capitani, to whom I sold the sheath for St. Peter's knife at rather too high a price, I have never felt any remorse over it, and I should consider myself the stupidest of men if I repented of it now; for Capitani himself thought that he had gulled me when he accepted it as security for the two hundred and fifty zecchini he gave me; and the canonical commissary, his father, valued it to his dying day more than he would have valued a diamond worth a hundred thousand scudi. Dying in that conviction, the man died rich; and I shall die poor. I leave it to the reader to decide which of us was better off.

Back at the inn I arranged everything for the short journey, the thought of which was enough to make me happy. Each time Henriette said anything to me I thought her more charming, and her intelligence enslaved me more than her beauty. I had the impression that the officer was well pleased that I should fall in love with her; and I thought I saw very clearly that the girl asked nothing better than to change lovers. I could assume as much without conceit, for aside from the fact that on the physical side I had all that an acceptable lover could have in order to hope to please, I also appeared to be very rich, even though I had no servant. I told her that, to have the pleasure of not having one, I spent twice as much and that by serving myself I was always sure to be well served; in addition, I was sure I should not be robbed and should not have a spy at my heels. Henriette understood me perfectly; and in short my future happiness intoxicated me.

The worthy officer was determined to give me the money which his share of the posts to Parma would have cost him. We dined, had our trunks put on and securely tied, and then set off after a contest of politeness over the seat beside Henriette, which he wanted me to take. He did not see that the folding seat was the one which my budding love could not but prefer to his; but I had no doubt that Henriette saw it perfectly. Seated facing her, my eyes saw her without my having to turn my head to give them that pleasure, which is certainly the greatest a lover can have among those which he cannot be denied.

In a happiness which I felt to be so great I had to endure one trial. When Henriette said amusing things which made me laugh, seeing the Hungarian distressed because he could not laugh at them too I undertook to explain the joke to him in Latin; but it often turned out that I explained it so badly that it became flat. The officer did not laugh, and I was mortified, for Henriette must suppose that I did not speak Latin as well as she spoke French; and it was the truth. In all the languages in the world what one learns last is their wit; and it is very often idiom which makes the joke. I did not begin to laugh over reading Terence, Plautus, and Martial[7] until I was thirty.

Some repair being needed to my carriage, we stopped at Forlì.[8] After a very gay supper I insisted on going to sleep in another room. During the day's journey the girl had struck me as so unpredictable that I was afraid she would leave her lover's bed and get into mine. I did not know how the Hungarian, who seemed a man of strict honor, might have taken it. I wished to obtain possession of Henriette in peace and quiet, as the result of an amicable and honorable arrangement. The girl had nothing but the male attire she was wearing, not a scrap of woman's clothing, not even a shirt. When she changed hers, she put on a fresh one of her lover's. This was something as new to me as it was puzzling.

It was at Bologna, when we were in high spirits over our supper, that I asked her by what strange chance she had become the mistress of this worthy man, whom one would expect to hear was her father rather than her husband. She answered with a smile that I should get him to tell me the story himself, in all its circumstances and perfectly truthfully. I at once told him that I was curious to hear it, and that she was willing. After making certain that it would not distress her, and making her say again that he should tell me everything, he addressed me as follows:

"An officer who was a friend of mine in Vienna having to go to Rome on a mission, I obtained a six months' leave and went with him. I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity to see the great city, assuming that the Latin language must be at least as well known there as it is in Hungary. But I was very much mistaken, for even among churchmen no one speaks it more than badly. Those who know it only claim to be able to write it; but it is true that they write it purely.

"After a month Cardinal Alessandro Albani gave my friend dispatches for Naples; and we parted; but before he left he introduced me to the Cardinal, giving me such a good recommendation that His Eminence told me that within a few days he would give me a packet and a letter addressed to Monsieur Dutillot, Minister to the Infante, the new Duke of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla, paying me, of course, for the journey. As I wanted to see the port which the ancients called 'Centum cellae'[9] and which is now called 'Civitavecchia,' I decided to devote these days to it and went there with my guide, who spoke Latin.

"Visiting the port, I saw an old officer disembark from a tartan[10] with this girl, dressed as you see her. She made a great impression on me. But I should not have thought of her again if the same officer had not arrived with her and put up not only in the same inn where I was lodging but in a room so situated that from my windows I saw the whole inside of it. The same evening I saw the girl eat supper with him without ever seeing them exchange a single word. At the end of their supper I saw the girl get up and leave the table, while the officer never raised his eyes from a letter he was reading. A quarter of an hour later he closed his windows, and when I saw the room in darkness I supposed he had gone to bed. The next morning I saw him go out; and this girl here, left alone in the room with a book in her hand, interested me even more strongly. I went out, and coming back an hour later, I saw the officer speaking to her, while she only answered him by a word or two at intervals, in great dejection. At that I ordered my guide to go and tell the girl masquerading as an officer that if she could give me only an hour's meeting I would give her ten zecchini. Doing my errand at once, he came back and told me that she had answered in French that she was leaving for Rome after having eaten something, and that at Rome it would be easy for me to find out how I could arrange to talk with her. My guide assured me that he would learn where she would lodge from the *vetturino* who was driving her. She left after breakfasting with the same officer; and I left the next day.

"Two days after I returned to Rome I received from the Cardinal the packet, the letter for Monsieur Dutillot, and a passport with the money for my journey, which I was free to pursue at my leisure. So I took a carriage which was going back to Parma, for eight zecchini.

"I was really no longer thinking of the girl when, two days before my departure, my guide told me that he knew where she was lodging with the same officer. I told him to try to make her the same proposal, informing her that I was leaving on the next day but one and so the thing must be done quickly. He answered me the same day that, if she knew the hour of my departure and the gate by which I would leave, she would be on my road two hundred paces outside the city and that, if I were alone, she could get into my carriage, in which we could go somewhere and talk.

"Thinking this a very happy arrangement, I sent her word of the hour and the place, which would be outside the Porta del Popolo in the direction of the Ponte Molle.[11]

"She kept her promise in every detail. As soon as I saw her I stopped the carriage, and she seated herself beside me, saying that we should have plenty of time to talk since she had decided to come and dine with me.

You cannot imagine what efforts it took before I could understand her and how hard she tried to make herself comprehensible. It was by gestures. I agreed, and with great pleasure.

"So we dined together; and she refused me nothing I could ask of her; but she surprised me not a little when she would not take the ten zecchini I tried to give her, managing to make me understand that she would rather go with me to Parma, where she had something to do. Finding the adventure very much to my liking, I consented, only regretting that I could not warn her that, if she had been followed to force her to return to Rome, I was not in a position to protect her against such an attempt; I also regretted that, in our mutual ignorance of each other's language, I could not hope to entertain her with amusing talk nor entertain myself by learning of her adventures. Hence I can tell you nothing about her situation. All I know is that she wishes to be called Henriette, that she must be a Frenchwoman, that she is as gentle as a lamb, that she seems to have had a most excellent education, that she is in perfect health, and that she must be both intelligent and courageous, as appears from the examples of those qualities which she gave me in Rome and you at the General's table in Cesena. If she will tell you her story and allow you to translate it into Latin for me, say to her that she will give me the greatest pleasure, for I find that in these few days I have become sincerely her friend. To tell the truth, I shall be very much distressed when we have to part in Parma. Say to her that, instead of the ten zecchini I owe her, I will give her the thirty which, but for her, I should never have received from the Bishop of Cesena. Tell her that, if I were rich, I would give her a great deal more. Be so good as to make all this clear to her in her language."

After asking him if a faithful translation of all that he had just said to me would satisfy him and hearing him answer that he wished it to be perfectly faithful in every detail, I repeated to her word for word all that the officer had said to me.

Henriette, with a noble frankness in which there was, however, a trace of shame, substantiated everything. As for satisfying our curiosity by relating her vicissitudes to us, she asked me to tell him that he must excuse her.

"Tell him," she said, "that the same principle which forbids me to lie does not allow me to tell the truth."

As for the thirty zecchini which he had decided to give her when he left her, she asked me to tell him that she absolutely would not accept a single scudo and that he would distress her if he tried to insist.

"I want him," she said, "to let me go and lodge by myself wherever I see fit, and so far to forget me that he will not try to find out what has become of me in Parma and will pretend not to know me if he happens to meet me anywhere."

After speaking these terrible words to me in a tone as serious as it was gentle, and without any emotion, she embraced the old man in a way which expressed far more compassion than love. The officer, who did not know what words had led to the embrace, was greatly mortified when I translated them to him. He asked me to tell her that, to be willing to obey her order, he must be sure that in Parma she would have whatever she might need. Her only answer was to tell me to ask him not to feel any anxiety about her.

After this declaration we all became equally sad. We stayed there a good quarter of an hour, not only without speaking but without looking at one another. Getting up from the table to leave and wishing them good night, I saw that Henriette's face was fiery red.

As I went to bed I began talking to myself, as I always do when something by which I am greatly interested excites me. Silent thought is not enough for me. I must speak; and possibly at such moments I believe I am conversing with my demon. Henriette's unequivocal declarations confused me completely. "Who can this girl be," I asked the air, "who combines the finest feelings with an appearance of the greatest libertinism? In Parma she insists upon becoming her own mistress, and I have no reason to flatter myself that she will not impose the same law on me that she has decreed for the officer to whom she has already given herself. Farewell my hope! Who can she be? Either she is sure she will find her lover, or she has a husband in Parma, or respectable relatives, or, in a wild spirit of unbridled libertinism, she means to defy fortune to plunge her into the most terrible abyss if it will not raise her to the pinnacle of happiness by bringing her a lover who can lay a crown at her feet: that would be the project of a madwoman or a woman in despair. She has nothing, and as if she needed nothing she refuses to take anything from the officer from whom she could, without blushing, accept a small sum which in a manner of speaking he owes her. Since she does not blush for the favors she granted him without being in love with him, what shame can she feel at receiving thirty zecchini? Can she believe that it is less base to yield to the passing fancy of a man whom she does not know than to receive assistance of which she is absolutely in need to save her from destitution and the risk of finding herself in the street in Parma? Perhaps she thinks that her refusal will justify her misstep in the officer's eyes. She wants him to conclude that she took it only to escape from the man who had her in his power in Rome; and the officer could not think otherwise, for he could not suppose that he had made her fall irretrievably in love with him when he saw her at the window in Civitavecchia. So she might be right and believe that she has justified herself in his eyes; but not in mine. With her intelligence, she must have known that if she had not made me fall in love with her I would not have set off with her, and she could not have been unaware that she had only one means of deserving my forgiveness too. She might have virtues; but not the virtue which could have prevented me from claiming the usual reward which a woman owes to the desires of a lover. If she thought she could play the prude with me and make me her dupe, I ought to show her that she was mistaken."

After this monologue I decided, before I fell asleep, that I would have it out with her no later than the following morning, before we left. "I will ask her," I said to myself, "to grant me the same favors that she has granted the officer; and if she refuses I will avenge myself by showing her the most humiliating contempt even before we reach Parma." I thought it obvious that she could not refuse me tokens of real or feigned affection except by flaunting a virtue which she did not possess, and if her virtue was feigned I ought not to fall victim to it. As for the officer, I was certain, after what he had said to me, that he could have no reason to take offense at my declaration. As a sensible man, he could only be neutral.

With my mind both filled with this reasoning and convinced by it, for I thought it was framed and dictated by the ripest wisdom, I fall asleep and, in a dream which fell nothing short of the charms of reality, Henriette appears before me all smiles and, to my great surprise, with her hair dressed as a woman's. She pleads her case, and proves me wrong, in the following terms: "To demolish all the insulting sophisms you have heaped up, I have come to tell you that I love you and to prove it to you. I know no one in Parma, I am neither mad nor desperate, and I want to be only yours." After uttering these words she does not disappoint me; she yields to my amorous transports, which hers aroused.

In dreams of this sort the dreamer usually wakes an instant before the crisis. Nature, zealous for truth, will not let illusion go so far. A sleeping man is not wholly alive, and he must be alive at the moment when he can give life to a being like himself. But, oh miracle! I did not wake, and I spent the whole night with Henriette in my arms. But what a long dream! I could not know it was a dream until my waking at daybreak made it vanish. I lay there for a good quarter of an hour motionless and stupefied, going over the details of it in my astonished memory. I remembered that I had several times said in my sleep: "No, I am not dreaming"; and I should still have thought that I had not been dreaming if I had not found the door of my room bolted from inside. But for that, I should have believed that Henriette had left before I waked, after spending the night with me.

After this blissful dream I found that I was helplessly in love, and it could not be otherwise. Anyone who badly needs to eat and goes to bed without supper must, if he spends the night dreaming he is eating, wake in the morning ravenously hungry. I dressed quickly, determined to make certain of possessing Henriette before I got into the carriage, or to remain in Bologna, though letting her go on to Parma with the officer in my carriage. In order not to commit the slightest breach of good manners, I saw that before having it out with her I must talk frankly with the Hungarian Captain. I seem to hear even an intelligent reader laugh and exclaim: "Can anyone attach so much importance to such a trifle?" That reader, since he cannot be, and can never have been, in love, is right. For him it can be only a trifle.

After dressing I enter my traveling companions' room and after bidding them good morning and rejoicing with them over the good health which I saw depicted in their faces, I inform the officer that I have fallen in love with Henriette. I ask him if he would be offended if I tried to persuade her to become my mistress.

"If what obliges her," I said, "to ask you to leave her as soon as we reach Parma, and not even to inquire about her, is a lover she may have in that city, I flatter myself, if you will permit me to talk with her for half an hour alone, that I can persuade her to sacrifice her lover to me. If she refuses me I will remain here. You will go to Parma with her and leave my carriage at the posthouse, sending me a receipt here from the post master with which I can recover it at my convenience.''

''After we have breakfasted,'' he replied, ''I will go to see the Institute;[12] you will be left here alone with her; you shall speak to her. I hope that when I return in a couple of hours you will be able to tell me that you have persuaded her to do whatever you wish. If she persists in her resolve I can easily find a *vetturino* here; in that way you will keep your carriage with you. I should be infinitely happy to leave her in your custody.''

Delighted to have accomplished half of the business and to find that I am not far from the end of the play, I ask Henriette if she is curious to see what is worth seeing in Bologna, and she answers that she would like to if she were dressed as a woman; but that she did not care to go about showing herself to the whole city in men's clothes. We breakfast, then the officer leaves. I tell Henriette that he is leaving me alone with her until his return because I had told him that I needed to speak with her in private.

''The order,'' I said, after sitting down facing her, ''which you gave the Captain yesterday to forget you as soon as you have left him in Parma, to make no inquiries about you, and to pretend not to know you if he sees you anywhere—does it apply to me too?''

''It was not an order but an urgent request which I made of him, a favor which my circumstances forced me to ask of him and which, since he has no right to refuse it, I never supposed for a moment that he would make any difficulties about granting me. As for you, I would certainly not have failed to ask you to do me the same favor, if I could have supposed you were thinking of making indiscreet inquiries about me. You have shown me tokens of friendship and you can imagine that if, my circumstances being what they are, the protection which the Captain still wished to extend to me after my request to him would cause me distress because it might harm me, yours would harm me even more. If you were my friend, you should have understood all this.''

''Since I am your friend, you should likewise understand that I cannot possibly leave you alone, with no money and nothing you can sell, in the middle of the street in a city in which you cannot even converse. Do you suppose that a man whose friendship you have won can abandon you after he has become aware of your situation and has heard of it from your own lips? If you believe that, you have no notion of friendship; and if the man grants you the favor you ask of him, he is not your friend.''

''I am sure that the Captain is my friend, and you heard what he said. He will forget me.''

''I know neither of what nature the Captain's friendship for you may be, nor how much he can rely on his own will; but I know that if he can so easily grant you the favor you asked of him the friendship he feels for you is of an entirely different nature from mine. I am prepared to tell you that not only is it not easy for me to do you the strange favor of abandoning you in the state in which I see you, but that it is impossible for me to do what you wish if I come to Parma; for not only do I feel friendship for you, I love you, and I love you in such a way that it is absolutely necessary either that complete possession of your person should make me happy or that I should remain here, letting you go to Parma with the officer; for if I come to Parma, I should become the most unhappy of men, whether I see you with a lover, or a husband, or in the bosom of a respectable family, or, finally, if I cannot discover what has become of you. 'Forget me' is quickly said. Know, Madame, that a Frenchman may be able to forget, but that an Italian, to judge by myself, has no such strange power.

In short, I tell you that you must speak out now. Shall I come to Parma? Shall I remain here? One or the other. Decide. If I stay here that is the end of it. I will leave tomorrow for Naples; and I am sure that I shall be cured of the passion you have aroused in me. But if you tell me to accompany you to Parma you must, Madame, assure me that you will make me happy in the possession of your heart—no less. I wish to be your only lover, on condition, however, if you wish, that you will not make me worthy of your favors until I have been able to deserve them by my services and my attentions and by all that I will do for you with a submission of which you will never have seen the equal. Choose, before that worthy and only too fortunate man returns. I have already told him all."

"How did he answer you?"

"That he would be delighted to leave you in my care. What is the meaning of that sly laugh?"

"Let me laugh, I beg you, for I have never in my life conceived of a declaration of love being made in anger. Do you understand what it is to say to a woman in a declaration of love, which should be all tenderness: 'Madame, one or the other, choose this instant'?"

"I understand it very well. It is neither sweet nor touching as it ought to be in a novel; but this is history, and history which could not be more serious. I have never felt such an urgency. Do you realize the excruciating condition of a man in love at the moment when he must choose a course which can determine his very life? Consider that, despite all my passion, I treat you with perfect respect; that the course I will take if you persist in your resolve is not a threat but a heroic act which makes me worthy of all your esteem. The word 'choose' cannot sound harsh to you; on the contrary, it honors you, for it leaves you to decide your fate and mine. To be convinced that I love you must you see me come like an idiot weeping to you to have pity on me? No, Madame.

Sure that I have qualities to deserve your heart, I refuse to ask you for pity. Go where you will; but let me leave. If, prompted by a humane feeling, you want me to forget you, permit me, by going far from you, to make it less difficult for me to recover an unhappy mastery over myself. If I come to Parma I shall go mad. Consider now, I beg you, that you would be doing me an unforgivable wrong if you said to me at this moment: 'Come to Parma, even though I ask you not to try to see me.' Do you understand that in all decency you cannot say that to me?"

"I certainly understand it, if it is true that you love me."

"Thank God! Be sure that I love you. So choose. Decide."

"Still the same tone! Do you know that you appear to be in a rage?"

"Forgive me. I am not in a rage, but in a violent paroxysm, and at a decisive moment. I cannot but resent my too freakish destiny and the accursed *sbirri* of Cesena who waked me; were it not for them I should not have seen you."

"Then you are sorry you met me?"

"Have I not reason to be?"

"None whatever, for I have not yet chosen."

"I begin to breathe. I wager you tell me to come to Parma."

"Yes—come to Parma."

CHAPTER III

I set out from Bologna a happy man. The Captain leaves us at Reggio, where I spend the night with Henriette. Our arrival in Parma. Henriette resumes the dress of her sex; our mutual happiness. I encounter some of my relatives, but do not make myself known.

IT WAS then that the scene changed. I fell at her feet, I clasped her knees, kissing them a hundred times; no more anger, no more harsh tones, tender, submissive, grateful, ardent, I swear that I will never even ask to kiss her hands until I have deserved her heart. The divine woman, who was amazed to see me pass from despair to the utmost tenderness, tells me in a tone even more tender than mine to rise. She said that she was sure I loved her, and that she would do everything in her power to keep me faithful. If she had said that she loved me as much as I loved her, she would have said no more. I had my lips pressed to her beautiful hands when the Captain came in. He congratulated us. I told him happily that I would go and order the horses, and left him with her. We set off together, all three of us well satisfied.

Halfway through the post before reaching Reggio,[1] he put it to me that we ought to let him go on to Parma alone. He told us that if he arrived with us he would give occasion for talk, that he would be questioned, and that there would also be much more gossip about us if we arrived with him. We thought his view most prudent. We immediately decided to spend the night at Reggio and to let him go on to Parma alone in a postchaise. We acted accordingly. After having his trunk untied and put on the small carriage he left us, promising that he would come and dine with us the next day.

This procedure on the worthy man's part could not be as pleasing to Henriette as it was to me, for a certain delicacy, partly founded on prejudice, was felt on either side. After the new arrangement, how could we have lodged at Reggio? In all decency Henriette would have had to sleep in a bed alone, yet she could not have kept herself, or kept us, from realizing how absurd such a reserve would be, and the absurdity was unfortunately of a kind which would have made us all blush. Love is a divine child, to whom shame is so abhorrent that if he gives way to it he feels disgraced, and feeling disgraced makes him lose at least three quarters of his dignity. Neither Henriette nor I could feel perfectly happy unless we dismissed the worthy Captain's memory.

I at once ordered supper for Henriette and myself, finding the intensity of my happiness too much for my faculties; nevertheless I seemed downcast, and since Henriette seemed as downcast as I, she could not reproach me for it. We ate very little supper and talked scarcely at all, for our remarks seemed dull to us both; we vainly changed from one subject to another to find something interesting. We knew that we were going to sleep together; but we would have thought it indiscreet to say so to each other. What a night! What a woman she was, this Henriette whom I loved so greatly, who made me so happy!

It was not until three or four days after our union that I asked her what she would have done, without a scudo and knowing no one in Parma, if when I declared my love I had not gone on to tell her that I had decided to leave for Naples. She answered that in all likelihood she would have been in the most disastrous situation; but that, having been certain that I loved her, she could not but be equally certain that, unable to abandon her, I would have spoken my mind. She added that, impatient to make sure of what I thought of her, she had made me translate her resolution to the officer, knowing that he was not in a position either to oppose it or to continue to keep her with him. She said that, not having included me in the favor of forgetting her which she asked of the officer, she considered it impossible that I should not ask her if I could be of use to her, merely out of a feeling of friendship, and that then she would have made up her mind in accordance with the feelings she found that I entertained. She ended by saying that if she had gone wrong, her husband and her father-in-law were the cause of it. She called them monsters.

Entering Parma, I kept the name of Farussi; it was my mother's family name. Henriette herself wrote the name she took: "Anne d'Arci, Frenchwoman." Just as we were telling the customs officers that we had nothing new, a smart-looking young Frenchman offers me his services and says that instead of stopping at the post-house inn I would do better to let him show me the way to D'Andremont's,[2] where I would find everything French—apartment, cooking, and wines. Seeing that Henriette was pleased with the proposal I accept, and we go on to Andremont's, where we find that we are very well lodged. After engaging by the day the lackey who had taken us there, and concluded a detailed arrangement for everything with the proprietor, I went with him to put my carriage in a coach house.

After telling Henriette that we would meet again at dinnertime, and the hired lackey to wait for me in the anteroom, I went out by myself. Certain that in a city under a new government[3] spies must be everywhere, I wanted to go out alone, despite the fact that the city, my father's birthplace, was entirely unknown to me.

I did not feel that I was in Italy: everything seemed ultramontane. I heard passers-by speaking together in French or in Spanish, those who spoke neither talked in low tones. Going here and there at random, on the watch for a shop where linen was sold and not wanting to ask where I could find it, I see one in which I notice the fat proprietress sitting in a corner behind her counter.

"Madame, I want to buy all kinds of linen."

"Monsieur, I will send for someone who speaks French."

"There is no need, for I am Italian."

"God be praised! Nothing is so unusual nowadays."

"Why unusual?"

"Don't you know that Don Filippo has arrived? And that Madame de France,[4] his wife, is on the way?"

"I congratulate you. Money is bound to flow, and everything will be in good supply."

"True enough, but everything is expensive, and we can't get used to these new ways. It's a mixture of French freedom and Spanish jealousy, which makes us dizzy. What do you want in the way of linen?"

"I warn you to begin with that I don't haggle; so beware. If you overcharge me I will not come to your shop again. I need fine linen to make twenty-four chemises for a woman, dimity to make petticoats and corsets, muslin, handkerchiefs, and other things which I hope you have, for, being a foreigner, God knows into what hands I may fall."

"You will be in good hands if you trust to me."

"I think I may believe you; so I beg you to help me. I must also find seamstresses who will work in the lady's room, for she needs to have everything necessary made as quickly as possible."

"Dresses too?"

"Dresses, hats, mantles, in short everything, for as a woman you can imagine her stark naked."

"If she has money I promise you she shall lack nothing. I will see to it myself. Is she young?"

"She is four years younger than I am, and she is my wife."

"Ah! May God bless you! Have you children?"

"Not yet, my good woman."

"How fortunate I am! I will send out at once for the pearl of seamstresses. Meanwhile, you shall choose."

After having chosen the best she had among all the various things I asked her for, I paid the price and the seamstress arrived. I told the proprietress that I was staying at D'Andremont's, and that if she would send me a merchant with materials she would be doing me a favor.

"Are you dining at home?"

"Yes."

"That is all I need to know. Trust to me."

I told the seamstress, who was with her daughter, to follow me, carrying my linen. I stop only to buy both silk and cotton stockings, and as I enter my apartment I bring in the shoemaker, who was at the door. That was the moment of true pleasure! Henriette, to whom I had said nothing beforehand, watches everything being laid out on the table with a look of the most complete contentment, but with no other show of her satisfaction except in the praise she bestowed on the fine quality of the articles I had chosen. No heightened gaiety because of it, no base thanks or expressions of gratitude.

The hired valet had gone into my room in the apartment when I arrived with the seamstresses, and Henriette had quietly told him to go back to the anteroom in readiness to come when he was called. The linens are spread out, the seamstress begins cutting to make chemises, the shoemaker takes her measure, and I tell him to bring us up the slippers first, and he leaves. A quarter of an hour later he comes up with slippers for Henriette and for me, and the hired valet comes in with him unsummoned. The shoemaker, who spoke French, was telling Henriette comic stories. She interrupts him to ask the hired valet, who was standing there beside us, what he wanted.

"Nothing, Madame; I am here only to receive your orders."

"Didn't I tell you that when you were needed we would call you?"

"I want to know which of you is my master."

"Neither," I said, laughing; "here is your day's pay. Go."

Henriette went on laughing with the shoemaker, who, seeing that she spoke only French, proposes a language teacher. She asks him what his nationality is.

"Flemish. He is learned. His age is fifty. He is a wise man. He lodges at Bornisa's.[5] He charges three Parmesan lire[6] for a lesson if it lasts an hour and six for two hours; and he wants to be paid each time."

"Do you wish me to engage him?" she asked me.

"Please engage him; it will keep you occupied."

The shoemaker promised to send him to her the next morning at nine o'clock. While the elder seamstress was cutting, her daughter began to sew; but as only one could not do much sewing I told the woman that she would do us a favor if she would get another who could speak French. She promised to have her come the same day. At the same time she offered me her son as a hired valet, saying that he was already beginning to make himself understood in French and was neither a thief nor a gossip nor a spy. Henriette having told me that she thought I would do well to engage him, she immediately ordered her daughter to go and fetch him and also to fetch the seamstress who spoke French. So here was company to entertain my dear wife.

The woman's son was a lad of eighteen who had been to school; he was modest, and he looked honest. When I asked him his name I was much surprised to learn that it was Caudagna.

The reader knows that my father was a native of Parma, and he may remember that a sister of my father's had married a Caudagna.[7] "It would be odd," I said to myself, "if this seamstress were my aunt and if my valet were my cousin. Not a word!" Henriette asked me if I wanted the seamstress to dine with us; but I begged her not to mortify me in future by deferring to me in such trifling matters. She laughed and promised that she would not. I then put fifty zecchini in a small purse and gave it to her, saying that with it she could herself buy all the little things which I might have failed to divine that she needed. She accepted it, saying that the gift gave her the greatest pleasure.

A moment before we sat down at the table we saw the Hungarian Captain come in. Henriette ran and embraced him, calling him "Papa"; she begged him to come to dinner with us every day. The worthy man, seeing all the women at work, was delighted to find that he had placed his adventuress so well, and his joy knew no bounds when I embraced him and told him I owed him my happiness.

We dined most choicely. Andremont's cook was excellent. I discovered that Henriette was an epicure and the Hungarian a glutton; I was something of both. So, trying several of our host's wines, we ate a very enjoyable dinner. My young hired valet pleased me by serving his mother no less respectfully than he did the rest. Giannina, his sister, was sewing with the Frenchwoman. They had already dined.

At dessert I saw the proprietress of the linen shop arrive with two other women, one of whom, who was a milliner, spoke French. The other had samples for all kinds of dresses. I let Henriette choose whatever she wished in the way of caps, bonnets, and trimmings from the first; but I insisted on taking a hand in the choice of dresses, though adapting my taste to that of my beloved. I made her choose materials for four dresses, and it was I who was grateful for her willingness to accept them. The more I bound her heart to me, the more I felt that I was increasing my happiness. Thus we spent the first day, in which it was impossible to do more than we did. In the evening at supper, as she seemed to me not to be as gay as usual, I asked her why.

"My dear, you are spending a great deal of money for me, and if you are spending it to make me love you more, you are throwing it away, for I love you no more than I did day before yesterday. All that you do can please me only as I know more and more surely that you are worthy to be loved; but I have no need to be convinced of that."

"So I believe, dear Henriette; and I congratulate myself if you feel that your fondness cannot grow stronger; but know that I do as I do simply in order to love you the more; I want to see you shine in the finery of your sex, only regretting that I cannot make you shine still more. And if that pleases you, must it not delight me?"

"Certainly it pleases me; and in a way, since you have called me your wife, you are justified; but if you are not very rich you cannot but feel how I must reproach myself."

"Ah, dear Henriette! let me, I beg you, think that I am rich, and be sure that you cannot possibly be the cause of my ruin: you were born but to make me happy. Think only of never leaving me, and tell me if I may hope it."

"I wish it, my dearest; but who can be certain of the future? Are you free? Are you dependent?"

"I am free in the fullest sense of the word; and I am dependent on no one."

"I congratulate you and it rejoices my soul; no one can take you from me. But alas! you know that I cannot say as much. I am certain that I am being sought; and I know that if they catch up with me they can easily find means to gain possession of me. If they tear me from your arms I shall be wretched."

"And I will kill myself. You make me tremble. Have you reason to think this misfortune can befall you here?"

"I have reason to think it only if someone who knows me contrives to see me."

"Is it likely that the 'someone' is in Parma?"

"I think it scarcely possible."

"Then let us not frighten our love with fears, I beg you; and above all be gay, as you were at Cesena."

"Yet at Cesena I was unhappy, and I am happy now; but do not fear that you will find me gloomy, for gaiety is natural to me."

"I imagine that at Cesena you must have been constantly afraid that the French officer with whom you were living in Rome would catch up with you."

"Not in the least. He was my father-in-law, who, I am sure, did not make the slightest effort to find out where I had gone once he no longer saw me at the inn. He can only have felt very glad to be rid of me. What made me unhappy was being a burden to a man whom I did not love and with whom I could not converse. Add that I could not have the solace of thinking I was giving happiness to the man I was with, for I had only inspired a passing desire in him, which he had considered worth ten zecchini, and, when I had satisfied it, I could not but believe that I had become a burden to him, for it was obvious that he was not rich. I was unhappy for another and most painful reason. I thought it my duty to bestow caresses on him and since he had in all decency to return them, I was afraid that he was sacrificing his health to consideration: the idea distressed me, for, as we did not love each other, we were both doing violence to ourselves out of mere politeness. We lavished on courtesy what is due only to love. Another thought troubled me even more. I could not bear it that anyone should believe the good man was keeping me for his profit. That is why you cannot have been aware that you attracted me as soon as I saw you."

"What! Was it not rather because of your own self-respect?"

"No, truly; for you could have no opinion of me but the one I deserved. I made the misstep of which you know because my father-in-law was going to put me in a convent. But I beg you, do not be curious about my story."

"I will not press you, my angel. Let us love each other now, and let no fear of the future trouble our peace."

We went to bed in love, only to rise in the morning even more in love. I spent three months with her, always as much in love and constantly congratulating myself that I was so.

The next morning at nine o'clock I saw the language teacher. He was a respectable-looking man, well-mannered, modest, speaking little and well, guarded in his answers, and learned in an old-fashioned way. He began by setting me laughing when he said that the Copernican system[8] could be accepted by a Christian only as an ingenious hypothesis. I answered that it could not but be God's system since it was Nature's, and that Scripture was not the book from which Christians could learn physics. His laughter made me think him a Tartufe;[9] but if he could amuse Henriette and teach her Italian it was all I wanted. She told him at once that she would give him six lire every day, since she wanted a two-hour lesson. Six Parmesan lire are worth thirty French sous.[10] After her lesson she gave him two zecchini to buy her new novels which were already praised.

While she was taking her lesson I chatted with the dressmaker Caudagna to find out if we were relatives. I asked her what her husband's occupation was.

"My husband is major-domo to the Marchese Sissa."

"Is your father still living?"

"No, Signore. He is dead."

"What was his family name?"

"Scotti."

"And are your husband's father and mother alive?"

"His father is dead, and his mother is still living with Canon Casanova, his uncle."

That was all I needed to know. The woman was my first cousin once removed, and her children my third cousins. Since my cousin Giannina was not pretty I kept her mother chattering. I asked her if the Parmesans were pleased to have become the subjects of a Spaniard.

"Pleased? It has put us all in a perfect maze; everything is upside down, we don't know where we are. Happy days, when the house of Farnese[11] reigned, you are no more! Day before yesterday I went to the theater,[12] and Arlecchino[13] had everybody laughing fit to burst; but guess what—Don Filippo, who's our new Duke, tried so hard to keep from laughing that he made faces; and when he couldn't hold in any longer he put his hat in front of his face so no one could see him roaring. Somebody told me that laughing spoils the grave countenance of an Infante of Spain, and that if he let it be seen they'd write to his mother[14] in Madrid and she would think it dreadful and unworthy of a great prince. What do you think of that? Duke Antonio[15]—God rest his soul!—was a great prince too; but he laughed so heartily you could hear it in the street. We're brought to such confusion as nobody would believe. For the last three months there's not a soul in Parma who knows what time of day it is.[16]

"Since God made the world the sun has always set at half past twenty-three, and at twenty-four o'clock people have always said the Angelus; and all decent people knew that was the time to light their candles. The way things are now is unbelievable. The sun has gone mad—it sets every day at a different time. Our peasants no longer know at what hour to come to market. They call it a regulation—but do you know why? Because now everyone knows that dinner is at twelve o'clock. A fine regulation! In the days of the Farnese people ate when they were hungry, and that was much better."

Henriette had no watch; I went out to buy her one. I brought her gloves, a fan, earrings, and various knickknacks, all of which pleased her. Her teacher was still there; he praised her aptitude.

"I could," he said, "have taught Madame heraldry, geography, chronology, the sphere; but she knows all that. Madame received a superior education."

The man's name was Valentin de La Haye.[17] He told me that he was an engineer and a professor of mathematics. I shall have much to say of him in these memoirs, and my reader will learn his character better from his actions than from any portrait of him that I might draw.

We dined gaily with our Hungarian. I could not wait to see my dear Henriette in women's clothes. She was to be brought a simple dress the next day, and petticoats and a few chemises had already been made for her.

Henriette's intelligence was as sparkling as it was subtle. The milliner, who was from Lyons, enters our room the next morning saying:

"Madame et Monsieur, I am your servant."

"Why," Henriette asks her, "don't you say 'Monsieur et Madame'?"

"I have always," the woman answered, "seen the first honors paid to the ladies."

"But by whom do we hope such honors will be paid us?"

"By men."

"And don't you see that women become absurd if they do not pay men the same honors as men's politeness renders them?"

They who believe that a woman is incapable of making a man equally happy all the twenty-four hours of a day have never known an Henriette. The joy which flooded my soul was far greater when I conversed with her during the day than when I held her in my arms during the night. Having read a great deal and having natural taste, Henriette judged rightly of everything and, though not learned, she reasoned like a geometrician. Since she did not pretend to intellect, she never said anything important except with a laugh which, by giving it the color of frivolity, put it within the capacity of the entire company. In this way she bestowed intelligence on those who did not have it themselves, and who adored her for it. After all, a beautiful woman without a mind of her own leaves her lover with no resource after he has physically enjoyed her charms. An ugly woman of brilliant intelligence makes a man fall so much in love that she leaves him feeling no lack. So what must I have been with Henriette, who was beautiful, intelligent, and cultivated? It is impossible to conceive the extent of my happiness.

Ask a beautiful woman who is not very intelligent if she would give some small part of her beauty for a little more intelligence. If she is frank she will say that she is satisfied with what she has. Why is she satisfied? Because, having only a little, she can have no notion of the intelligence she lacks. Ask an ugly but intelligent woman if she would change places with the other. She will answer no. Why? Because, having a great deal of intelligence, she knows that it serves her for everything.

The intelligent woman who cannot make a lover happy is the bluestocking. In a woman learning is out of place; it compromises the essential qualities of her sex; then, too, it never goes beyond the limits of what is already known. No scientific discoveries have been made by women. To go *plus ultra* (''farther'') requires a vigor which the female sex cannot have. But in simple reasoning and in delicacy of feeling we must yield to women. Hurl a sophism at an intelligent woman: she cannot unravel it; but she is not the dupe of it; she tells you she is not taken in by it, and she rejects it. The man who finds it insoluble accepts it at face value, as does the bluestocking. What an intolerable burden for a man is a woman with the mind of Madame Dacier[18] for example! God preserve you from it, my dear reader!

When the seamstress arrived with the dress Henriette said that I must not be present at her metamorphosis. She told me to go out for a walk until I could come back to the house and find her no longer in disguise.

It is a great pleasure to do whatever the object of one's love commands. I went to the French bookseller's shop, where I found an intelligent hunchback. Nothing, by the way, is more uncommon than a stupid hunchback. Since all intelligent men are not hunchbacks, and all hunchbacks are intelligent, I long ago concluded that it is not intelligence which produces rickets but rickets which produces intelligence. The hunchback, with whom I at once struck up an acquaintance, was named Dubois-Chatellerault.[19] He was an engraver by profession, and director of the Duke-Infante's mint, for it was planned at the time to strike coins; but it was never done.

After spending an hour with this intelligent man, who showed me several of his engravings, I went back to my lodging, where I found the Hungarian Captain waiting for the door of Henriette's room to be opened. He did not know that she was to receive us undisguised. The door opened at last, and there she was. She receives us with perfect composure, dropping us a graceful curtsy in which there was no trace of either the overbearingness or the freedom of the soldier. It was we whom surprise and her new appearance had put out of countenance. She makes us sit down on either side of her; she looks at the Captain in a friendly way; her manner to me expresses tenderness and love, but with none of the show of familiarity which a young officer can make without dishonoring love but which is unsuitable in a well-bred woman. Her new bearing forces me to conform to it with complete good grace, for Henriette was not playing a part. She was actually the character she was representing.

In an ecstasy of admiration I take her hand to kiss it; but she draws it away, and offers me her lips, saying:

"Am I not the same?"

"No. And so little the same that I can no longer say *tu* to you. You are no longer the officer who answered Signora Querini that you played faro 'keeping the bank and the stakes are so small that it's not worth counting up.' "

"It is certain that, dressed as I am, I should not have dared say such a thing. But I am none the less Henriette, who has made three missteps in her life, the last of which, but for you, would have ruined me. Delightful misstep, the cause of my knowing you!"

These sentiments affected me so profoundly that I was on the point of throwing myself at her feet to ask her to forgive me if I had not shown her more respect, if I had taken it all too lightly, if I had conquered her too cavalierly.

Henriette, charming as ever, put an end to this too emotional scene by shaking the Captain, who seemed turned to stone. His obvious air of mortification arose from the shame he felt at having treated such a woman as an adventuress, for he could not believe that she was not what she appeared to be. He looked at her in amazement, he made her bow after bow; he seemed to be assuring her of his respect and his repentance; he was confounded. For her part, she seemed to be telling him, without a trace of reproach: "I am very glad that you know me now."

She began that same day to do the honors of the table like a woman who was accustomed to it. She treated the Captain as her friend and me as her favorite. At one moment she seemed my mistress, at another my wife.

The Captain asked me to tell her that if he had seen her disembark from the tartan dressed as she now was he would not have dared to send his guide to her.

"Oh, I am sure of that," she answered him; "but it is strange that a uniform is less worthy of respect than a simple dress."

I begged her not to think ill of her uniform, for I owed it my happiness.

"As I owe mine," she answered, "to the *sbirri* of Cesena."

It is a fact that I spent that whole day in Arcadian courtship; and that when we went to bed together it seemed as if it were for the first time.

CHAPTER IV

I take a box at the opera despite Henriette's reluctance. Monsieur Dubois comes to call, he dines with us; trick which my mistress plays on him. Henriette reasons on happiness. We call on Dubois; extraordinary talent which my wife displays there. Monsieur Dutillot. The court gives a magnificent entertainment in the palace gardens; our disastrous encounter there. I have an interview with Monsieur d'Antoine, the Infante's favorite.

MADAME DE FRANCE, the Infante's wife, having arrived, I told Henriette that I would engage a box for every day. She had said several times that her ruling passion was music. As she had never seen an Italian opera I was surprised to hear her answer me coldly:

"*You mean you want us to go to the opera every day?*"

"I even think we should get ourselves talked about if we did not go; but if you will not enjoy going, my dear, you know that you are under no obligation to put yourself out. I prefer our conversations in this room to all the music in the universe."

"I am mad about music, my dear; but I cannot help trembling at the very thought of going out."

"He is going to Padua," she says, "but everything is arranged for us to sup at his casino if we wish."

"Why not in Venice?"

"No, not in Venice, until he is back. He asked me not to. He has great judgment."

"Very well. When shall we sup at the casino?"

"Sunday, if you like."

"Let it be Sunday; I will go to the casino at dusk and will read while I wait for you. Did you tell your friend that you were not uncomfortable in my casino?"

"My dear, I told him everything; but one thing greatly troubles him. He wants me to beg you not to expose me to the danger of a big belly."

"May I die if it ever entered my mind. But don't you run the same risk with him?"

"Never."

"Then we must be very careful in future. I think, since there is no masking[1] during the nine days before Christmas, I shall have to go to your casino by water, for if I go by land I could easily be recognized as the same man who went to your church."

"That is very prudent. I can easily point out the quay to you. I think you can come during Lent too, when God wants us to mortify our senses. Isn't it odd that there is a time when God approves of our amusing ourselves and another when we can only please him by abstinence! What can an anniversary have in common with the divinity? I do not understand how the action of the creature can influence the creator, whom my reason can only conceive as independent. It seems to me that if God had created man with the power to offend him, man would be justified in doing everything he forbade him to do, if only to teach him how to create. Can one imagine God being sad during Lent?"

"My divine one, you reason perfectly; but may I ask you where you learned to reason, and how you managed to break away?"

the liberty of introducing him to his beautiful pupil, who then treated him to the polite remarks which it is customary to make to all new acquaintances. After thanking him for the *spartito* she asked him to procure several other arias for her. He said that he had taken the liberty to call on me to bring me the medallions in which I had shown an interest; and so saying he took from his portfolio the two which he had made. On one of them was the Infante with the Infanta, on the other the Infante. As everything about the medallions was beautiful, we praised them.

"The workmanship is priceless," said Henriette, "but the gold can be reimbursed."

He answered modestly that they weighed sixteen zecchini, and she paid him for them, thanking him and asking him to come some other day at suppertime. Coffee was brought.

As Henriette was about to put sugar into Dubois's cup, she asked him if he liked it very sweet.

"Madame, your taste is mine."

"Then you must know that I like it without sugar; and I am very glad that my taste is the same as yours."

So saying, she puts no sugar in his cup and after putting some in De La Haye's cup and in mine she puts none at all in hers. I wanted to burst out laughing, for the minx, who usually liked it very sweet, drank it bitter that day to punish Dubois for the insipid compliment he had paid her by saying that his taste was the same as hers. However, the clever hunchback would not retract. Drinking it with every appearance of pleasure, he maintained that it should always be drunk bitter.

After they left, and after laughing for a long time with Henriette over the trick she had played, I told her that she would be the victim of it, for in future she would always have to take her coffee bitter whenever Dubois was present. She said she would pretend that her doctor had ordered her to drink it sweet.

At the end of a month Henriette was speaking Italian. It was the result of practicing with Giannina, who served her as chambermaid, more than of the lessons she received from De La Haye. Lessons serve only to teach the rules of languages; to speak them, practice is necessary. We had been to the opera a score of times without making any acquaintances. We were happy in the fullest sense of the word. I never went out except with her in a carriage, and neither of us would receive callers. I knew no one, and no one knew me. After the Hungarian left, the only person who came to dine with us, when we invited him, was Dubois, for De La Haye dined with us every day.

Dubois was very curious about us; but he was intelligent enough to conceal it. One day he talked to us of how brilliant Don Filippo's court had become since Madame's arrival and of the great number of foreigners of both sexes who had attended it that day.

"Most of the foreign ladies we have seen there," he said, addressing Henriette, "are unknown."

"Perhaps if they were known they would not have put in an appearance."

"Perhaps; but I can assure you, Madame, that even if their attire or their beauty made them conspicuous, the wish of the Sovereign is entirely in favor of freedom. I still hope, Madame, to have the honor of seeing you there."

"It is very unlikely, for you cannot imagine what a ridiculous figure I think a woman cuts who goes to court without being presented, especially if she is of a station which gives her the right."

The hunchback was at a loss for an answer, and Henriette nonchalantly changed the subject. After he left she laughed with me over his thinking that he had concealed his curiosity. I told her that in all conscience she should forgive any man whose curiosity she aroused, whereupon she came to me all smiles and caressed me. Living together in this fashion, and tasting the delights of true happiness, we scoffed at the philosophy which denies that happiness can be perfect, because, it maintains, it is not enduring.

"What do they mean," Henriette said one day, "by that word 'enduring'? If they mean 'perpetual,' 'immortal,' they are right. But since man is not so, happiness cannot be so; apart from that, all happiness is enduring, for to be so it needs only to exist. But if by perfect happiness they mean a series of varied and uninterrupted pleasures, they are wrong too; for by putting between our pleasures the calm which must follow each of them after we enjoy it, we gain the time to recognize the reality of our happiness. Man can be happy only when he recognizes that he is so, and he can recognize what he is only in a state of calm. Hence, without periods of calm, he would never be happy. Hence pleasure, to be such, has to end. So what do they mean by the word 'enduring'? Every day we reach the point when, desiring sleep, we set it above all other pleasures; and sleep is the true image of death. We can only be grateful to it after it has left us.

"Those who say that no one can be happy all his life talk to no purpose too. Philosophy teaches the means to compound such happiness, if he who wishes to achieve it remains free from disease. Lifelong happiness could be compared to a bouquet composed of various flowers which would make a combination so beautiful and so harmonious that one would take it for a single flower. Is it impossible that we should spend all our lives here as we have spent a month, always in good health and lacking nothing? To crown our happiness we could, when we are very old, die together, and then our happiness would have been perfectly enduring. Death would not interrupt it but would only end it. We could be unhappy only if we assumed that we should continue to exist after our existence ended, which I think implies a contradiction. Do you agree with me?"

It was thus that my divine Henriette gave me lessons in philosophy, reasoning better than Cicero in his *Tusculans*;[4] but she admitted that such enduring happiness could be realized only in the case of two people who, living together, were in love with each other, healthy, intelligent, sufficiently wealthy, with no duties except to themselves, and having the same tastes, more or less the same character, and the same temperament. Happy the lovers whose minds can take the place of their senses when their senses need rest! Sweet sleep follows, not to end until it has restored all their faculties to equal vigor. On waking, the first to revive are the senses, eager to set the mind to work again. Man and the universe share the same condition. We could say that there is no difference between them, for if we discount the universe there is no more man, and if we discount man there is no more universe, for who could have an idea of it? Thus if we take away space we cannot imagine the existence of matter, nor, taking away the latter, can we imagine the former.

I was very happy with Henriette, and she was no less happy with me: never a moment of ill-humor, never a yawn, never did a folded rose petal come to trouble our content.

The day after the closing of the opera,[5] Dubois, after dining with us, told us that he was having the two leading singers, male and female, to dinner the next day, and that we had only to wish it and we could hear the finest pieces they had sung at the theater in the vaulted drawing room of his country house, where music lost nothing. Henriette, first thanking him heartily, answered that her health was so poor that she could make no engagements from one day to the next; and she at once turned the conversation to other subjects.

As soon as we were alone I asked her why she did not wish to allow herself the diversion of going to Dubois's house.

"I would go, my dear, and with great pleasure; but I am afraid that I may find someone at his dinner who would recognize me and so put an end to our happiness."

"If you have some new reason for being afraid, you are right; but if it is only a groundless fear, my angel, why do you take it upon yourself to give up a real pleasure? If you knew what joy I feel when I see you ravished and as if in ecstasy when you hear some beautiful piece of music!"

"Very well. I do not want you to think I have less courage than you. We will go to Dubois's directly after dinner. The singers will not sing before then. Besides, it is likely that, since he will not be counting on us, he will not have invited anyone who is curious to speak with me. We will go without telling him and without his expecting us. He said that he is at his country house, and Caudagna knows where it is."

In accordance with her reasoning, to which she had been inspired by prudence and love, which so seldom agree, the next day at four in the afternoon we went to his house. We were surprised to find him alone with a pretty girl, whom he introduced to us, saying that she was his niece, whom private reasons prevented him from letting everyone see.

Professing to be delighted to see us, he said that as he did not expect us he had changed his dinner to a small supper party, which he hoped we would honor him by attending, and that the *virtuosi*[6] would soon arrive. So it was that we were obliged to stay for supper. I ask him if he has invited many people, and he answers triumphantly that we shall be in company worthy of us, and that he only regretted that he had not invited any ladies. Henriette made him a little curtsy and smiled. I saw her looking carefree and content; but she was forcing herself. Her noble soul refused to show uneasiness; but in any case I did not believe she had any real cause for fear. I would have believed it if she had told me her whole story; and I would certainly have taken her to England, and she would have been very glad to go.

A quarter of an hour later the two singers arrived: they were Laschi[7] and La Baglioni,[8] who in those days was very pretty. Then all the people whom Dubois had invited arrived. They were all Spaniards or Frenchmen, and all at least middle-aged. There was no question of introductions, in which I admired the hunchback's tact; but since all the guests were seasoned courtiers, the breach of etiquette did not prevent them from paying Henriette all the honors of the gathering, which she received with an ease unknown anywhere but in France, and indeed only in the most exalted circles, except for certain provinces where haughtiness is too often displayed.

The concert began with a magnificent symphony;[9] then the singers performed a duet, then a pupil of Vandini's[10] played a concerto for violoncello, which was much applauded. But now for what caused me the greatest surprise. Henriette rises and, praising the young man who had played the *a solo,* she takes his violoncello from him, telling him modestly and calmly that she would do it even better justice. She sits down in his place, takes the instrument between her knees, and asks the orchestra to begin the concerto over again. Most profound silence descends on the company, and deathly fear on me; but—thank God!—no one was looking at me. For her part, she did not dare. If she had raised her beautiful eyes to mine she would have lost courage. But seeing her merely strike the pose of being ready to play, I thought it was only a joke which would end with this really charming tableau; but when I saw her make the first stroke of the bow, I thought the excessive palpitation of my heart would strike me dead. Knowing me well, Henriette had no resource but never to look at me.

But what was not my state when I heard her play the *a solo,* and when after the first movement the applause almost deafened the orchestra? The transition from fear to a satisfaction as excessive as it was unexpected produced such a paroxysm in me as the most violent fever could not do at its height. The applause had not the slightest effect on Henriette, at least visibly. Without raising her eyes from the notes, which she knew only from having followed the entire concerto while the professor was playing, she did not rise until after she had played alone six times. She did not thank the company for having applauded her; but turning to the professor she told him, with an air of gracious and noble courtesy, that she had never played a better instrument. After thus complimenting him, she smilingly told the audience that they must forgive the vanity which had induced her to increase the length of the concert by half an hour.

This compliment having put the finishing touch to my astonishment, I vanished to go and weep in the garden, where no one could see me. Who can this Henriette be? What is this treasure whose master I have become? I thought it impossible that I should be the fortunate mortal who possessed her.

Lost in these reflections, which increased the pleasure of my tears, I should have stayed there for a long time if Dubois himself had not come to look for me and had not found me despite the darkness of the night. He summoned me to supper. I relieved his anxiety by telling him that a momentary dizziness had obliged me to come out to cure it by taking the air.

On the way I had time to dry my tears, but not to restore their normal color to the whites of my eyes.

However, no one noticed me. Only Henriette, seeing me reappear, told me by a sweet smile that she knew what I had gone to do in the garden. At table my place was opposite her.

The hunchbacked Dubois-Chatellerault, director of the Infante's mint, had assembled the most agreeable noblemen of the court at his house, and the supper which he gave them, of few but well-chosen dishes, was exquisite. Henriette being the only woman present, it was natural that all attention should be paid to her; but even if there had been others she was such as to eclipse them all. If she had astonished the entire company by her beauty and talent, she conquered them completely by her wit at table. Monsieur Dubois never said a word; considering himself the author of the play, he was proud of it and thought it his part to remain modestly silent. Henriette had the tact to be equally gracious to everyone and the intelligence never to say anything witty without including me. On my side, it was in vain that I pretended submission and the most profound respect for the goddess; she wanted everyone to understand that I was her oracle. The company might well think that she was my wife; but none of them could be sure of it from the manner in which I behaved toward her. The conversation having turned to the merits of the Spanish and French nations, Dubois was stupid enough to ask her which she preferred. The question could not have been more tactless, for half of the guests were Spanish and the other half French; for all that, she talked so well that the Spaniards wished they were French and the Frenchmen wished they were Spanish. Dubois, unquelled, asked her what she thought of the Italians, and at that I felt alarmed. A Monsieur de La Combe,[11] who was at my right, shook his head in disapproval of the question; but Henriette did not let it go unanswered.

"Concerning the Italians," she said uncertainly, "I can say nothing, for I know only one Italian, and a single example is not enough to put one nation above all others.''

I should have been the stupidest of men if I had shown the least sign that I had heard Henriette's magnificent answer, and even more stupid if I had not at once dismissed the odious subject by asking Monsieur de La Combe some banal question about the wine with which our glasses were filled.

The talk turned to music. A Spaniard asked Henriette if, besides the violoncello, she played any other instrument, and she answered that it was the only one for which she had ever felt any inclination.

''I learned in the convent,'' she said, ''in the hope of pleasing my mother, who plays it quite well; however, without a downright order from my father, supported by the Bishop, the Mother Abbess would never have allowed me to study.''

''And what reasons could the Abbess allege for refusing?''

''Pious bride of Our Lord that she was, she insisted that I could not hold the instrument except by assuming an indecent posture.''

At this dictum of the Abbess I saw the Spaniards bite their lips, but the Frenchmen roared with laughter. After a silence of a few minutes, Henriette having made a gesture which seemed to ask permission to rise, everyone rose, and a quarter of an hour later we left. Dubois attended her to the step of our carriage, thanking her endlessly.

I could not wait to clasp the idol of my soul in my arms. I did not give her time to answer all the questions I asked her.

''You were right,'' I said, ''not to want to go, for you were certain to make me enemies. At this moment I must be mortally hated; but you are my universe. Cruel Henriette! You very nearly killed me with your violoncello! As I could not believe that you would have kept it a secret, I thought you had gone mad, and as soon as I heard you I had to go out to dry the tears which you forced from my heart. Tell me now, I beg you, what other accomplishments you have which you are hiding from me and in which you excel, so that when they are manifested to me for the first time they will not make me die of terror or surprise.''

''No, my dear love, I have no others, I have emptied my sack, and now you know your Henriette completely. If you had not told me a month ago that you had no liking for music, I would have told you that I can play the instrument. If I had told you so, you could have got me one, and I do not wish to amuse myself with something which may bore you.''

No later than the next day I went and found her a violoncello; and she was very far from boring me with it. It is impossible for a man who has no marked passion for music not to become a passionate devotee of it when the person who performs it to perfection is the object of his love. The human voice of the violoncello, which is superior to that of any other instrument, went to my heart when Henriette played it, and she was convinced of it. She offered me the pleasure every day, and I suggested to her that she should give concerts; but she was prudent enough never to consent. Despite that, the course of destiny was not to be halted. *Fata viam inveniunt* (''Fate will find the way'').[12]

The day after his charming supper the ill-omened Dubois came to thank us, and at the same time to receive the praises which we bestowed on his concert, his supper, and the persons he had invited.

''I foresee, Madame, the difficulty I shall have in resisting the importunity with which I shall be asked for introductions to you.''

''You will not find it very difficult, Monsieur, since your answer can be put in a very few words. You know that I receive no one.''

He no longer dared speak of introductions. About this time I received a letter from the younger Capitani in which he told me that, being in possession of St. Peter's knife in its sheath, he had gone to Francia's with two learned men who were certain that they could bring up the treasure and had been surprised to find that he would not receive him. He asked me to write to him, and to go there myself, if I wanted to have my share. I did not answer him. I rejoiced that the good peasant, mindful of my instructions, was safe from the fools and the impostors who would have ruined him.

After Dubois's supper we spent three or four weeks lost in happiness. In the sweet union of our hearts and our souls not one empty moment ever came to show us that dreary specimen of misery known as a yawn. Our only outside diversion was a drive out of the city when the weather was fine. As we never left the carriage and never went anywhere, no one, either of the court or the city, had been able to make our acquaintance, despite the general curiosity about us and the desires which Henriette had inspired in all the men who had been present at Dubois's supper. She had become more courageous, and I more confident, after we found that no one had recognized her either at the theater or at the supper. She had no fear of finding the person who could reveal her identity except among the nobility.

One day when we were driving outside the Porta di Colorno,[13] we met the Infante and the Duchess on their way back to Parma. Fifty paces farther on we met a carriage in which we saw a nobleman with Dubois. Just as we would have drawn beyond them one of our horses fell. The nobleman who was with Dubois cried "Stop!" to send help to our coachman, who might need assistance. With dignified politeness he at once addressed the appropriate compliment under the circumstances to Henriette, and Dubois did not lose a moment in saying to her, "Madame, this is Monsieur Dutillot."[14] The usual bow was her answer. The horse got up, and in a minute we were on our way again. This perfectly simple meeting should have had no consequences; but it had one.

The next morning Dubois came to breakfast with us. He began by saying at once that Monsieur Dutillot, delighted with the fortunate chance which had given him the pleasure of making our acquaintance, had commissioned him to ask our permission to call on us.

"On Madame, or on me?" I answered instantly.

"On both."

"Very well," I replied; "but one at a time; for Madame, as you see, has her room, as I have mine. So far as I am concerned, it will be I who will hasten to wait on His Excellency if he has any order to give me or anything to communicate to me, and I beg you to tell him so. As for Madame, there she is, speak with her. I am only, my dear Monsieur Dubois, her most humble servant."

Thereupon Henriette calmly and with the utmost politeness told Monsieur Dubois to thank Monsieur Dutillot and at the same time to ask him if he knew her.

"I am certain, Madame, that he does not know you."

"You see? He does not know me, and he wants to call on me. You must admit that if I received him I should stamp myself an adventuress. Tell him that though no one knows me, I am not an adventuress; and that hence I cannot have the pleasure of receiving him."

Dubois, realizing the mistake he had made, said nothing more; and during the following days we did not ask him how the Minister had received our answer.

Another three or four weeks later, the court being at Colorno, a magnificent entertainment[15] was given—I forget on what occasion—during which everyone was allowed to walk about the gardens, which were to be illuminated all night. Dubois having frequently spoken of the entertainment, which was public, we were tempted to go to it, and Dubois himself accompanied us in our carriage. We went there the day before and put up at the inn.

Toward evening we went to walk in the gardens, where, as it happened, the sovereigns were present with a considerable suite. According to French court custom, the Infanta curtsied first to Henriette as soon as she saw her, but without stopping. I then noticed that a Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis[16] who was beside Don Filippo looked at Henriette with great attention. Retracing our steps, we met the same Chevalier halfway down the walk, whereupon, after excusing himself by a bow to us, he asked Dubois to hear something he had to say to him. They talked together for a quarter of an hour, walking behind us. We were about to leave the gardens when the same Chevalier, hurrying to overtake us, after politely begging my pardon, asked Henriette if he had the honor to be known to her.

"Monsieur, I have not the honor of knowing you."

"Madame, I am D'Antoine."[17]

"I do not remember, Monsieur, that I have ever had the honor of seeing you."

"That is enough, Madame—I beg you to forgive me."

Dubois told us that the gentleman, who had no post at court, being only the Infante's intimate friend, had asked him to present him to Madame, believing that he knew her. He had replied that her name was D'Arci and that if he knew her he had no need of his intervention in order to pay her a visit. Monsieur d'Antoine had replied that since the name D'Arci was unknown to him he had hoped that he was not making a mistake but that, wishing to resolve his uncertainty, he had taken it upon himself to approach her without being presented.

"And so," said Dubois, "now that he knows that Madame is not acquainted with him, he must be convinced that he was mistaken."

After supper I thought Henriette seemed uneasy, and

I asked her if she had pretended not to know Monsieur d'Antoine.

"It was not a pretense. I know his name. It is a family well known in Provence; but I do not know him."

"Is it possible that he knows you?"

"He may possibly have seen me; but he has certainly never talked with me, for I should have recognized him."

"The meeting makes me uneasy, and it seems to me that you are not unconcerned over it. Let us leave Parma, if you will, and go to Genoa; and when my business is settled we will go to Venice."

"Yes, my dear, we shall be more at ease then. But I think we have no need to hurry."

The next day we saw the masquerades, and on the day after that we went back to Parma. Two or three days later my young valet Caudagna handed me a letter, saying that the messenger who had brought it was waiting outside for the answer.

"This letter," I say to Henriette, "makes me uneasy."

She takes it from me and, after reading it, hands it back, saying that she believes that Monsieur d'Antoine is a man of honor and that hence we have nothing to fear. Here is the letter:

"Either at your lodging, Monsieur, or at my house, or wherever you please, at whatever hour you appoint, I ask you to enable me to tell you something which should be of great interest to you. I have the honor to be your very humble and obedient etc. D'Antoine. To Monsieur de Farussi."

"I think," I said, "that I should hear what he has to say. But where?"

"Neither here nor at his house, but in the palace garden. Your answer should contain nothing but the hour at which you wish to meet him."

In accordance with her advice I wrote him that I would be in the first walk of the ducal garden at half seraglio. After imperiously putting my sultana in the state of nature and doing the same to myself, I laid her down and subjugated her in the classic manner, delighting in her swoons. A pillow which I had fitted under her buttocks and one of her knees bent away from the back of the sofa must have afforded a most voluptuous vision for our hidden friend. After the frolic, which lasted an hour, she took off the sheath and rejoiced to see my quintessence in it; but finding, even so, that she was wet with her own distillations, we agreed that a brief ablution would restore us *in statu quo*. After that we stood side by side in front of a large upright mirror, each putting one arm around the other's back. Admiring the beauty of our images and becoming eager to enjoy them, we engaged in every kind of combat, still standing. After the last bout she fell onto the Persian carpet which covered the floor. With her eyes closed, her head to one side, lying on her back, her arms and legs as if she had just been taken down from a St. Andrew's cross,[21] she would have looked like a corpse if the beating of her heart had not been visible. The last bout had exhausted her. I made her do the "straight tree,"[22] and in that position I lifted her up to devour her chamber of love, which I could not reach otherwise since I wanted to make it possible for her, in turn, to devour the weapon which wounded her to death without taking her life.

Reduced after this exploit to asking her to grant me a truce, I set her on her feet again; but a moment later she challenged me to give her her revenge. It was my turn to do the "straight tree" and hers to grasp me by the hips and lift me up. In this position, steadying herself on her two diverging pillars, she was horrified to see her breasts splattered with my soul distilled in drops of blood.

"What do I see?" she cried, letting me fall and herself falling with me. Just then the alarm chimed.

I called her back to life by making her laugh.

CHAPTER V

Henriètte receives Monsieur d'Antoine. I lose that charming woman, whom I accompany as far as Geneva. I cross the Saint Bernard Pass and return to Parma. Letter from Henriette. My despair. De La Haye pursues my acquaintance. Unpleasant adventure with an actress; its consequences. I become a bigot. Bavois. I hoax a bragging officer.

AFTER HAVING repeated to Henriette, word for word, what Monsieur d'Antoine had said to me, I handed her the letter, which filled four pages. After she had read it she said that the honor of two families did not permit her to let me read it, and that she was now obliged to receive Monsieur d'Antoine, who, as she had just learned, was related to her.

"So now," I said, "the last act begins. Miserable wretch that I am! What a final scene! Our happiness is coming to its end. Why did we have to stay so long in Parma? What blindness on my part! Under the present circumstances there was not a place in all Italy more to be feared than this, and I chose it above all the rest of the earth, for, except in France, I believe, no one would have been likely to recognize you anywhere. And I am all the more a wretch because it is entirely my fault!—for you had no other will than mine; and you never concealed your fears. Could I have made a more stupid mistake than to permit Dubois to visit us? I should have foreseen that the man would manage to satisfy his curiosity in the end, a curiosity which is too natural for me to blame him for it and which in any case would not have existed if I had not first aroused it and then increased it by letting him visit us freely. But what use is it to think of all this now that it is too late? I foresee the most painful outcome that I can imagine."

"Alas, my dear! I beg you to foresee nothing. Let us only prepare ourselves to be superior to whatever may happen. I will not answer this letter. It is you who must write him to come here tomorrow at three o'clock in his carriage and to send in his name. You shall be with me when I receive him; but a quarter of an hour later you shall retire to your room on some excuse. Monsieur d'Antoine knows my whole story and in what I have done wrong, but he knows, too, in what I have done right, which obliges him, as a man of honor, to protect me from any affront, and he will do nothing except with my consent, and if he sees fit to depart from the conditions I will lay down I will not go to France: we will go and spend the rest of our days together wherever you choose. Yes, my dear. But remember that inevitable circumstances may compel us to consider our separation our best course, and that then we must adopt that course in such a way that we may hope not to be unhappy. Trust in me. Be sure that I shall find a way to assure myself of all the happiness that can be supposed possible if I am reduced to accepting the idea of living without you. You must take the same precaution for your future, and I am sure you will succeed; but meanwhile let us banish sadness so far as we can. If we had left here three days ago we might have made a mistake, for Monsieur d'Antoine might have decided to give my family a proof of his zeal by making inquiries into my whereabouts which would have exposed me to violent proceedings which your love could not have tolerated; and then God knows what would have happened."

I did all that she asked; but from that moment our love began to grow sad, and sadness is a disease which in the end kills love. We often spent an hour looking at each other and not saying a word.

The next day when Monsieur d'Antoine arrived I followed her instructions to the letter. I spent six very boring hours alone, pretending that I was writing. Since my door was open the same mirror by means of which I saw them might also enable them to see me. They spent the six hours writing, often interrupting what one or the other of them was setting down by remarks which must have been crucial. I could foresee nothing but the saddest of outcomes.

After Monsieur d'Antoine left, Henriette came to my table, and she smiled when she saw that I was looking at her eyes, which were swollen.

"Tell me," she asked, "shall we go away tomorrow?"

"Yes indeed. Where shall we go?"

"Wherever you please; but we must be back here in two weeks."

"Here?"

"Alas, yes. I gave my word that I would be here when the answer comes to the letter I wrote. I can assure you that we need fear no violence. But, my dear, I can no longer bear this city."

"Alas, I loathe it! Shall we go to Milan?"

"Excellent! To Milan, then."

"And since we have to return here, Caudagna and his sister can come with us."

"Excellent."

"Leave it to me. They shall have a carriage to themselves, in which they will take your violoncello; but it seems to me you must let Monsieur d'Antoine know where you are going."

"On the contrary, it seems to me that I should tell him nothing about it. So much the worse for him if he can doubt that I will return. It is quite enough that I promised him I would be here."

The next morning I bought a trunk, into which she put whatever she thought she needed, and we set off, followed by our servants, after telling Andremont to lock up our apartment.

At Milan we spent two weeks, concerned with nothing but ourselves, never going out, and seen only by a tailor, who made me a coat, and a seamstress, who made her two winter dresses. I also gave her a lynx pelisse, of which she was very fond. An instance of Henriette's delicacy which greatly pleased me was that she never asked me the slightest question concerning the state of my purse. My own delicacy prompted me never to give her reason to believe that my purse was exhausted. When we returned to Parma I still had three or four hundred zecchini.

The day after our return Monsieur d'Antoine came to dine with us uninvited, and after coffee I retired as I had the first time. Their conference continued as long as the one in which Henriette had made her decision, and after the Chevalier's departure she came and told me that it was over, that her destiny decreed that we must part.

"When?" I asked her, clasping her in my arms and mingling my tears with hers.

"As soon as we reach Geneva, to which you will take me. You must set about tomorrow finding a respectable-looking woman with whom I will travel to France and the city to which I must go."

"Then we shall be together for a few days more? But I know no one except Dubois who can find you a woman of decent appearance, and I am troubled by the thought that the same woman may satisfy his curiosity concerning what you would not have him know."

"He will know nothing, for in France I will find another."

Dubois accepted the commission as a great honor, and three or four days later himself brought Henriette a middle-aged woman, passably well dressed, who considered herself fortunate to have found an opportunity to return to France. She was the widow of an officer who had recently died. Henriette told her to be in readiness to leave as soon as Monsieur Dubois sent her word. On the day before our departure Monsieur d'Antoine, after dining with us, gave Henriette a letter to read, addressed to Geneva, which he afterwards sealed and which she put in her pocket.

We set out from Parma at nightfall, and we stopped at Turin for only two hours to engage a manservant to wait on us as far as Geneva. The next day we ascended Mont Cenis[1] in sedan chairs, then descended to La Novalaise by sledge.[2] On the fifth day we reached Geneva and put up at the "Scales."[3] The next day Henriette gave me a letter addressed to the banker Tronchin,[4] who had no sooner read it than he told me he would come to the "Scales" in person to bring me a thousand louis.[5]

We were still at table when he appeared to discharge the obligation and at the same time to tell Henriette that he would give her two men for whom he would vouch. She told him that she would leave as soon as he should bring them to her and she should have the carriage she needed, as he must have learned from the letter I had delivered to him. After assuring her that she would have everything the next day, he left and we remained alone together, gloomy and pensive, as one is when the most profound sorrow weighs on the mind.

I broke the silence to say that the carriage which Tronchin would furnish her could not possibly be more comfortable than mine, and, that being so, she would be doing me a favor by keeping it for herself and letting me have the one the banker would give her; and she assented. At the same time she gave me five rolls of a hundred louis each, herself putting them in my pocket. A poor consolation for my heart, only too oppressed by so cruel a parting. During the last twenty-four hours the only eloquence we could muster was that which sighs, tears, and the tenderest embraces bestow on two happy lovers who have come to the end of their happiness and are forced by stern reason to accept the fact.

Henriette held out no illusory hopes to assuage my grief. She asked me not to make any inquiries about her and to pretend that I did not know her if, traveling in France, I should ever meet her anywhere. She gave me a letter to deliver to Monsieur d'Antoine in Parma, forgetting to ask me if I intended to return there; but I instantly resolved to do so. She asked me not to leave Geneva until after I had received a letter from her which she would write me from the first place at which she stopped to change horses. She left at daybreak, with her waiting-woman beside her and a footman on the coachman's seat and another ahead on horseback. I did not go back upstairs to our room until after I had followed the carriage with my eyes and long after I lost it from sight. After ordering the waiter not to enter my room until the horses with which Henriette was traveling should have returned, I went to bed, hoping that sleep would come to the aid of my grief-stricken soul, which my tears could not relieve.

The postilion returning from Châtillon[6] did not arrive until the following day. He gave me a letter from Henriette, in which I found only one word: "Farewell." He told me that no accident had befallen her and that she had continued her journey, taking the road to Lyons. Since I could not leave until the next morning, I spent one of the saddest days of my life alone in my room. On one of its two windows I saw written: "You will forget Henriette too." She had written the words with the point of a small diamond, set in a ring, which I had given her.

The prophecy was not of a nature to console me; but in how absolute a sense had she used the word "forget"? She could really mean no more than that the wound would heal, and since that was only natural she need not have gone to the trouble of making me a distressing prophecy. No. I have not forgotten her, and it is balm to my soul every time I remember her. When I consider that what makes me happy in my present old age is the presence of my memory, I conclude that my long life must have been more happy than unhappy, and after thanking God, cause of all causes and sovereign contriver—we know not how—of all combinations, I congratulate myself.

The next day I set out for Italy with a servant whom Monsieur Tronchin gave me. Despite the unfavorable season, I took the route through the Saint Bernard, which I crossed in three days on the seven mules required for ourselves, my trunk, and the carriage intended for my beloved. A man overwhelmed by a great sorrow has the advantage that nothing seems painful to him. It is a kind of despair which also has a certain sweetness. I felt neither hunger nor thirst nor the cold which froze all nature in that terrible part of the Alps. I reached Parma in reasonably good health, purposely going to lodge in a bad inn at the end of the bridge, where I was not at all pleased to find Monsieur de La Haye lodged in a small room next to the one which the innkeeper gave me. Surprised to see me there, he addressed me a long compliment intended to make me talk; but I answered only that I was tired and that we would see each other.

The next day I did not go out except to deliver Henriette's letter to Monsieur d'Antoine. Finding, when he unsealed it, that it contained a letter addressed to me, he gave it to me without reading it. But as it was not sealed he thought that Henriette must have intended that he should read it, and he asked me for permission to do so after I had read it to myself in a murmur. Handing it back to me, he said that he and all his credit were at my disposal on any occasion. Here is a copy of the letter Henriette wrote me:

"It is I, my only love, who had to forsake you. Do not add to your grief by thinking of mine. Let us imagine that we have had a pleasant dream, and let us not complain of our destiny, for never was an agreeable dream so long. Let us boast of having succeeded in being happy for three months on end; there are few mortals who can say as much. So let us never forget each other, and let us often recall our love to renew it in our souls, which, though parted, will enjoy it even more intensely. Do not inquire for me, and if chance brings you to know who I am, be as if you did not know it. Rest assured, my dear, that I have so ordered my affairs that for the rest of my life I shall be as happy as I can be without you. I do not know who you are; but I know that no one in the world knows you better than I do. I will have no more lovers in all my life to come; but I hope that you will not think of doing likewise. I wish you to love again, and even to find another Henriette. Farewell."

The reader will see where, and under what circumstances, I met Henriette again fifteen years later.[7]

As soon as I was alone in my room all I could do was go to bed after locking my door, without even bothering to order something to eat. Such is the effect of a great sorrow. It stupefies; it does not make its victim want to kill himself, for it stops thought; but it does not leave him the slightest ability to do anything toward living. I found myself in a like state six years later—but not on account of love—when I was put under the Leads,[8] and again twenty years later, in 1786 at Madrid, when I was imprisoned at Buen Retiro.[9]

At the end of twenty-four hours I found my state of inanition not unpleasant; even the thought that, by increasing, it might cost me my life did not strike me as consoling, but it did not frighten me. I was glad to see that no one came to my room to disturb me by asking if I did not want to eat something. I was glad that, immediately after I arrived, I had dismissed the servant who had attended me when I crossed the Alps. After twenty-four hours of fasting my prostration was marked.

In these straits it was De La Haye who came and knocked at my door. I would not have answered him had he not said as he knocked that someone had the most urgent reasons for talking with me. I get up and open my door for him, then go back to bed.

"A foreigner," he says, "who needs a carriage wishes to buy yours."

"I do not want to sell it."

"Then please excuse me; but you seem very ill."

"Yes; I need to be left in peace."

"From what illness are you suffering?"

He approaches, he has difficulty in finding my pulse, he is disturbed, he asks me what I had eaten the day before; and upon learning that nothing had entered my stomach for two days, he guesses the truth and becomes alarmed. He entreats me to take some broth, with such solicitude that he persuades me. Then, never mentioning Henriette, he preaches me a sermon on the life to come and on the vanity of this mortal life, though it is our duty to preserve it since we have not the right to deprive ourselves of it. I answer nothing; but determined not to leave me, he orders a light dinner three or four hours later and, when he saw me eat it, he was exultant and he entertained me all the rest of the day with the latest news.

The next day I asked him to keep me company at dinner; and considering that I owed him my life I gave him my friendship; but in a very short time my fondness for him became unbounded because of the event which I will now recount to my reader in detail.

Two or three days later Dubois, to whom De La Haye had told the whole story, came to see me, and I began going out. I went to the theater, where I made the acquaintance of some Corsican officers who had served in the Royal Italian Regiment in the service of France,[10] and of a young Sicilian named Paterno, who was the pattern of recklessness. Being in love with an actress who scorned him, the young man kept me entertained with his description of her adorable qualities and at the same time of her cruelty toward him, whom she received in her house but whom she repulsed whenever he tried to give her evidence of his love. She was ruining him by making him spend a great deal on dinners and suppers which were shared by her numerous family but for which she gave him no credit.

After attentively examining the woman on the stage and finding that she had some merit, I became curious about her, and Paterno was glad to take me to her house. Finding her decidedy approachable and knowing that she was poor, I had no doubt that I could obtain her favors at the cost of fifteen or twenty zecchini. I imparted my plan to Paterno, who laughed and said that she would no longer receive me if I dared make her such a proposal. He gave me the names of several officers whom she had declined to see again after they had made her proposals of the same sort; but he said he would be delighted if I made the attempt and afterwards would tell him frankly what had happened. I promised that I would tell him everything.

It was in her dressing room at the theater that, being alone with her and hearing her admire my watch, I offered it to her as the price of her favors. Handing it back to me, she replied in accordance with the catechism of her trade:

"A man of honor," she said, "can make such proposals only to whores."

I left her, saying that to whores I offered only a ducat.

When I told the story to Paterno I saw that he was triumphant; but his urgings were of no avail; I refused to attend any more of his suppers—utterly boring suppers at which, even as they were eating them, the actress's whole family laughed at the stupidity of the dupe who was paying for them.

A week or so later Paterno told me that the actress had related the incident to him exactly as I had reported it and had added that I no longer went to call on her for fear she would take me at my word if I made her the same proposal again. I asked the young scapegrace to tell her that I would call on her again, being certain not only that I would not make her the same proposal but also that I would not want her even if she were ready to give herself to me for nothing.

My young friend repeated my words so well that the actress, cut to the quick, charged him to tell me that she challenged me to visit her. Thoroughly determined to convince her that I despised her, I went to her dressing room again at the end of the second act of a play in which she had finished her role. After dismissing someone who was with her, she said she had something to say to me.

She locked her door; then, sitting on my knees, she asked me if it was true that I despised her so greatly. My answer was brief. I went to the point and, without a thought of bargaining, she surrendered at discretion. Yet duped, as I always am, by compassion, which is forever out of place when an intelligent man has to do with women of this sort, I gave her twenty zecchini, which she much preferred to my watch. Afterwards we laughed together at the stupidity of Paterno, who did not know how such challenges were bound to end.

I told him the next day that I had been bored and that I would not call on her again; and, as I was no longer curious about her, this was my intention; but the reason which compelled me to keep my promise to him was that three days later I found that the wretched woman had made me the same sort of present that I had been treated to by the prostitute at O'Neilan's. Far from feeling that I had cause to complain, I considered myself justly punished for having so basely abandoned myself after having belonged to an Henriette.

I thought it best to confide in Monsieur de La Haye, who dined with me every day, making no secret of his poverty. The worthy man, who deserved respect both for his age and his appearance, put me into the hands of a surgeon named Frémont,[11] who was also a dentist. Certain symptoms which he recognized decided him to put me through the great cure.[12] Because of the season the cure compelled me to spend six weeks in my room.

1749.[13]

But during those six weeks De La Haye's company infected me with a disease far worse than the pox,[14] and one to which I thought I was immune. De La Haye, who only left me for an hour in the morning to say his prayers in church, turned me into a bigot, and to such an extent that I agreed with him that I should consider myself fortunate to have caught a disease which had brought salvation to my soul. I sincerely thanked God for having made use of Mercury[15] to lead my mind, until then wrapped in darkness, to the light of truth. There is no doubt that this change in my method of reasoning proceeded from the mercury. That impure and always very dangerous metal so weakened my mind that I thought I had reasoned most erroneously until then. I came to the point of deciding to lead an entirely different life after I was cured. De La Haye often wept with me in his satisfaction at seeing me weep as a result of the genuine contrition which, with incredible skill, he had implanted in my poor, sick soul. He talked to me of Paradise and of the things of the next world as if he had been there in person, and I did not laugh at him. He had accustomed me to renounce my reason, where to renounce it one had to be a fool. No one knew, he said to me one day, whether God created the world at the spring or at the autumn equinox.

"Granted creation," I answered, despite the mercury, "the question becomes puerile, for the season cannot be determined except in relation to some part of the earth."

De La Haye persuaded me that I must stop reasoning in this fashion, and I surrendered. He had been a Jesuit; but not only would he not admit it, he would not allow the subject to be raised with him. Here is the discourse with which he one day put the finishing touch to his seduction of me:

"After being educated at school, cultivating the sciences and the arts with some success, and spending twenty years at the University of Paris, I served in the army in the corps of engineers, and I published books, though without putting my name to them, which are still used in every school for the instruction of youth. Not being rich, I undertook the education of several youths who now shine in the world even more by their conduct than by their abilities. My last pupil was the Marchese Botta.[16] Being now without employment, I live, as you see, trusting in God. Four years ago I met the Baron de Bavois,[17] a young Swiss, a native of Lausanne, son of the general of the same name, who had a regiment in the service of the Duke of Modena,[18] and who later had the misfortune to give occasion to too much talk.[19] The young Baron, a Calvinist like his father, having no liking for the idle life he could have led at home, asked me to teach him what I had taught the Marchese Botta so that he could pursue a military career. Delighted that I could foster his honorable predilection, I left every other occupation to devote myself to him. In the conversations I had with the young man I discovered that he knew that in the matter of religion he lived in error. He remained in it only because of the consideration which he owed his family. After wringing his secret from him I easily brought him to see that it was a matter of paramount concern, since his eternal salvation depended on it. Impressed by this truth, he abandoned himself to my affection. I took him to Rome and presented him to Benedict XIV, who, after his abjuration, procured him a post in the Duke of Modena's forces, in which he is now serving with the rank of lieutenant. But since my dear proselyte, who is now only twenty-five, receives only seven zecchini a month, he has not enough to live on. His change of religion results in his receiving nothing from his parents, who are horrified by his apostasy. He would have no choice but to go back to Lausanne if I did not assist him. But alas! being myself poor and without employment, I can only assist him by the pittance I obtain for him from the purses of the charitable souls whom I know. Having a grateful heart, my pupil would like to know his benefactors; but they do not wish to be known, and they are right, for charity ceases to be a meritorious action if he who distributes it cannot keep it free from all vanity. For my part—thank God!—I have no cause for vanity. I am only too happy to be able to serve as father to a young predestinate, and to have had a share, as a weak instrument, in the salvation of his soul. This good, handsome youth trusts only in me. He writes to me twice a week. Discretion forbids me to give you his letters to read, but you would weep if you read them. It was to him that I yesterday sent the three louis which I had from you."

At the end of this speech De La Haye rose and went to the window to blow his nose and hurriedly dry his tears. Feeling moved and admiring so much virtue in De La Haye and in his pupil the Baron, who, to save his soul, had reduced himself to living on charity, I wept too. In my budding piety I told the apostle that not only did I not want the Baron to know that it was I who was helping him but I did not even want to know how much I was giving him, and that I therefore begged him to take from my purse whatever he might need, without rendering any account to me. At that, De La Haye came to my bedside with open arms and said as he embraced me that by thus obeying the Gospels to the letter, I was following the one sure road to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The mind obeys the body. With my stomach empty, I became a fanatic; the mercury must have made a hollow in the region of my brain, in which enthusiasm had taken its seat. Unknown to De La Haye, I began writing Signor Bragadin[20] and my two other friends letters about the man and his pupil which communicated all my fanaticism to them. My reader knows that this disease of the mind is infectious. I urged it upon them that the greatest good of our little society depended upon our adding these two persons to it. "It is God's will," I said, "that you should employ all your resources to find some honorable employment in Venice for Monsieur de La Haye and in the army for young Bavois."

Signor Bragadin wrote me that De La Haye could stay with us in his palace, and that Bavois could write to his patron the Pope asking him to recommend him to the Venetian Ambassador,[21] a letter from whom to the Senate conveying the Holy Father's wish would, as things now stood, assure him of a post. The affair of the Patriarchate of Aquileia[22] was then being negotiated, and the Republic, which was in possession of it, as well as the House of Austria, which claimed the *jus eligendi*,[23] had appointed Benedict XIV to arbitrate it. It was clear that the Senate would accord the greatest attention to the wish of the Pontiff, who had not yet handed down his decision.

When I received this crucial answer I informed De La Haye of all that I had done in the matter; and I saw that he was astonished. He instantly grasped all the force and the truth of old Senator Bragadin's reasoning, and he sent his dear Bavois a magnificent letter in Latin to copy and send at once to His Holiness, in the certainty that he would be granted the favor he asked. After all, it was only a recommendation.

While this matter was being pursued and we were waiting for a letter from Venice which would tell us the effect of the Pontiff's recommendation, a comic adventure which befell me will perhaps be not unentertaining to my reader.

At the beginning of April, completely cured of the wounds of Venus and restored to my original vigor, going all day to churches and sermons with my converter, I also went with him to spend the evenings at a coffeehouse, where we found good company in the persons of several officers. The one who kept everyone amused by his boasting was a Provençal in uniform who narrated the military exploits which had distinguished him in the service of several powers and chiefly of Spain. To keep him talking, everyone pretended to believe him. Once as I was looking at him closely he asked me if I knew him.

"By Heaven," I said, "how could I fail to know you, since we were together at the Battle of Arbela?"[24]

Hearing this, the whole company burst out laughing; but the braggart said petulantly that there was nothing to laugh at, for he had been there and was beginning to think he recognized me. He then told me the name of the regiment in which we served, and after embracing we ended by mutual congratulations on the good fortune we had had to meet again in Parma. Having had my fun, I went back to my inn with De La Haye.

The next morning I was still at table with him in my room when I saw the braggart come in and address me without taking off his hat:

"Monsieur d'Arbela, I have something important to say to you, so hurry and let us go out together; and if you are afraid, bring anyone you please along with you—I am good for a dozen."

I quickly rise, and snatching up a pistol I tell him that no one has the right to come and disturb me in my room, so I order him to leave.

My man then draws his sword, daring me to murder him; but De La Haye, by stamping on the floor, brought up the innkeeper, who warned the officer that he would send for the guard if he did not leave. He left, saying that I had insulted him in public and that he would see to it that the satisfaction I owed him would be public. After he left, seeing that the joke could have tragic consequences, I discussed with De La Haye how best to set things right, but we did not need to talk long. A half hour later an officer of Don Filippo's came to order me to go at once to the main guardpost, where Signor Bartoloni,[25] the Town Major, had something to say to me. I asked De La Haye to come with me, as a witness both to what I had said in the coffeehouse and to the way the man had come to attack me in my own room.

I found the Town Major with four or five officers, among whom I saw the one in question. Signor Bartoloni, who was a wit, smiled slightly when he saw me, then with the utmost seriousness told me that since I had publicly made fun of the officer whom I saw present, he was justified in demanding public satisfaction, and that he, as Town Major, was in duty bound to oblige me to give it to him so that the whole affair would be amicably settled.

"There is no question of satisfaction, Major, since it is not true that I insulted him by ridiculing him. I told him that I thought I had seen him at the Battle of Arbela, and I no longer doubted it when he told me not only that he had been present at it but that he recognized me."

"Yes," said the officer, interrupting me, "but I heard Rodela,[26] not Arbela, and everyone knows I was there. But you said Arbela, and you can only have said it to ridicule me, for it is more than two thousand years since that battle was fought, whereas the Battle of Rodela, in Africa, is of our own time—I served in it under the Duke of Montemar."[27]

"If you tell me so, I believe you; and it is I who demand satisfaction from you if you dare to deny that I was at the Battle of Arbela. I was aide-de-camp to Parmenio,[28] and I was wounded at it. I cannot show you the scar for, as you can imagine, I had a different body. As I stand before you, I am only twenty-three years old."[29]

"All this strikes me as madness; but in any case I have witnesses that you ridiculed me, for you said that you saw me and, by God! you cannot have seen me because I was not there. I demand satisfaction."

"I also have witnesses that you told me you had seen me at Rodela, though I was not there either."

"I may have been mistaken."

"And so may I; hence we have no claims on each other."

The Major, who could no longer contain his laughter, seeing the serious air with which I had been trying to convince the officer that he was wrong, told him that he could not demand the least satisfaction, since I admitted that I might have been mistaken.

"But," he answered, "is it credible that he was at Arbela?"

"He leaves you at liberty to believe it or not to believe it, just as he is at liberty to say that he was present at it. Will you maintain against him, sword in hand, that he is lying?"

"God forbid! I prefer to consider the matter settled."

The Major thereupon invited us to embrace each other, which we did with the best of grace, and the next day the Rodomonte[30] came and asked me to dinner. Signor Bartoloni invited us to dinner too; but as I did not feel like laughing I declined.

CHAPTER VI

I receive good news from Venice, to which I return, taking De La Haye and Bavois with me. Excellent reception from my three friends, and their surprise at finding me a model of devotion. Bavois leads me back to my former life. De La Haye a true hypocrite. Adventure with the Marchetti girl. I win in the lottery. I meet Balletti again. De La Haye leaves the Palazzo Bragadin. I set off for Paris.

DURING THESE days I received word from Venice that the cases against me[1] had been forgotten, and at the same time a letter from Signor Bragadin in which he told me that the Savio di Settimana[2] had written the Ambassador that he could assure the Holy Father that when the Baron de Bavois presented himself steps would be taken to give him a post in the troops of the Republic, which would enable him to live honorably and to entertain the highest hopes from his own merit.

With this letter in my hand, I rejoiced the heart of De La Haye, who, seeing at the same time that since my difficulties had been resolved I would return to my native country, determined to go to Modena to have a talk with Bavois and decide on the new course of action which he should adopt in Venice in order to enter upon the road to fortune. He could have no doubt either of my sincerity or my friendship or my loyalty; he saw that

I had become a fanatic and he knew that it is usually an incurable disease when the causes which have produced it remain in operation, and, by himself coming to Venice, he hoped to keep them active. So he wrote to Bavois that he was coming to see him; and two days later he took leave of me, melting into tears, praising my soul and my virtues, calling me his son, and assuring me that he had not become attached to me until after he had seen the divine mark of predestination stamped on my physiognomy. Such was his language.

Two or three days later I went to Ferrara and from there to Venice by way of Rovigo, Padua, and Fusina,[3] where I left my carriage. After a year's absence my friends received me as if I were an angel come from Heaven to make them happy. They showed the greatest impatience to witness the arrival of the two sainted souls whom I had promised them in my letters. A lodging for De La Haye was already prepared, and two furnished rooms for Bavois had also been found in the neighborhood, for political considerations did not permit Signor Bragadin to give lodging in his palace to a foreigner[4] who was not yet admitted into the service of the Republic.

But their surprise was extreme when they could not but observe the wonderful change in the life I led. To mass every day, often to sermons, my assiduity in attending the "forty hours,"[5] no casinos, a coffeehouse where the company consisted only in men of known prudence, and continual study in my room when their duties kept them out of the house. My new behavior compared with my old habits made them adore Divine Providence and its incomprehensible ways. They blessed the crimes which had obliged me to spend a year far from my country. What further astonished them was that I began by paying all my debts, without asking a soldo from Signor Bragadin, who, not having sent me anything for a year, had taken care of all my money.

They were delighted to see that I had become averse to any kind of gaming.

At the beginning of May I received a letter from De La Haye in which he told me that he was about to embark with the dear son of his soul to put himself under the orders of the respectable persons to whom I had announced him.

Making sure of the hour at which the *barca corriere*[6] from Modena would arrive, we all went to meet him, except Signor Bragadin, who was at the Senate that day. He found all five of us at his palace and welcomed the two strangers as warmly as they could wish. De La Haye at once told me countless things; but I listened to him only with my ears, for Bavois engrossed my entire attention; I saw in him an entirely different person from the one I expected from the description of him which he had given me. I spent three days studying him before I could resolve upon a genuine attachment, for this is a portrait of the youth, who was twenty-five years of age:

Of middle height, handsome, very well built, blond, gay, always equable, speaking well and wittily, and expressing himself modestly and respectfully. His features were agreeable and regular, he had fine teeth, a good head of hair, elegantly curled and exhaling the scent of the excellent pomade with which he dressed it. This individual, who in neither substance nor form resembled the one De La Haye had portrayed for me, also surprised my friends. However, they were no less cordial to him on that account, nor did they form any judgment prejudicial to the good opinion they were bound to have of his morals.

As soon as I saw Monsieur de La Haye well settled in his room it fell to me to conduct the Baron de Bavois to his apartment, not very far from the Palazzo Bragadin, whither I had already had his few pieces of baggage carried. As soon as he found that he was excellently lodged in the house of a worthy citizen and his wife, who, having been well schooled beforehand, began by showing him a thousand attentions, he embraced me affectionately, assuring me of his entire friendship and of the profound gratitude he felt for all that I had done for him without knowing him and of which Monsieur de La Haye had informed him in full. I replied that I did not know to what he was referring; and I turned the conversation to the kind of life he wished to lead in Venice until the time when a post would give him an obligatory occupation. He answered that he hoped we would amuse ourselves very pleasantly, since he believed that his tastes were not different from mine. What I noticed at once was that he immediately attracted the hostess's two daughters, who were neither pretty nor ugly, but whom he at once flattered with an affability which could not but make them believe they had attracted him. I thought it common politeness. For the first day I only took him to the Piazza San Marco and to a coffeehouse until suppertime. It went without saying that he would dine and sup every day at Signor Bragadin's. At table he made an impression with apt remarks; and Signor Dandolo[7] appointed the hour on the following morning at which he would call for him to present him to the Savio for War.[8] After supper I took him to his lodging, where I left him in the hands of the two daughters of the household, who said they were delighted that the young Swiss nobleman whose arrival we had announced to them had no servant, as they had feared he might, for they undertook to convince him that he could do without.

The next morning I went to call for him with Signor Dandolo and Signor Barbaro, who were to introduce him to the Savio. We found the young Baron at his toilet under the delicate hands of the elder daughter of the house, who was dressing his hair and whose skill he praised. His room was fragrant with pomade and scented waters. My friends were in no way scandalized; but I observed their surprise, for they did not expect to see so great a show of worldliness in the convert. What almost made me burst out laughing was that, upon Signor Dandolo's remarking that if we did not hurry we should not have time to go to mass, the Baron asked him if it was a feast day. He answered that it was not, without adding any comment; but in the days that followed there was no longer any question of mass. I let them go, and we met again at dinner, where the talk was of the reception the Savio had given him; and in the afternoon my friends took him to visit their patrician relatives of the female sex, who were all pleased to see the charming young man. Thus in less than a week he had edged into society and was in no danger of being bored; but during the same week I became thoroughly acquainted with his character and his way of thinking. It would not have taken me so long if I had not entertained contrary preconceptions: Bavois loved women, gambling, and spending money, and, since he was poor, women were his chief resources. As for religion, he had none; and since he had the shining virtue of not being a hypocrite, he did not hide it from me.

"How," I asked him one day, "did you manage, being what you are, to deceive De La Haye?"

"Heaven preserve me from deceit! De La Haye knows the system I follow and my way of thinking, he knows me *funditus* ('thoroughly'). Pious as he is, he fell in love with my soul, and I let him. He has done me good; I am grateful to him, and I love him, and the more so because he never bores me by talking dogma and eternal salvation to me. It is all settled between us."

The amusing part of the business is that in the same week Bavois not only restored my mind to the state it was in when I parted from Henriette but made me blush to have been duped by De La Haye, who, though he played the role of thorough Christian to perfection, could nevertheless be nothing but a thorough hypocrite. Bavois opened my eyes, and I quickly resumed all my old ways. But let us return to De La Haye.

A man who at bottom cared for nothing but his own well-being, well on in years, and with no inclination for the sex, he was precisely the person to enchant my friends. Talking to them of nothing but God, angels, and eternal glory, always going to one church or another with them, they adored him, and they could not wait for the moment when he would reveal himself, for they imagined he was a Rosicrucian,[9] or at least the hermit of Carpegna[10] who, teaching me the cabala, had made me a present of the immortal Paralis.[11] They were distressed that, by the very words of the oracle, I had forbidden them ever to speak of my science in De La Haye's presence. This left me free to enjoy all the time I should have had to devote to their pious curiosity; and in any case I could not but fear De La Haye, for, such as I saw him to be, he would never have lent himself to my nonsense and he would probably even have tried to disabuse my friends in order to supplant me.

In the short space of three weeks I saw him obtain such an ascendancy over their minds that he was foolish enough to think not only that he had no further need of me to maintain his standing but that he had standing enough to knock me head over heels if he felt so inclined. I saw this from the different tone in which he talked to me and from the difference in his behavior. He began having private secrets with the three of them, and he had persuaded them to introduce him in houses which I did not frequent. He began giving himself airs, though always with a smile, and complaining, though in honeyed words, when I spent the night no one knew where. It began to annoy me that, when he preached me his gentle sermons at table in the presence of my friends and his proselyte, he appeared to regard me as one who was leading him astray. He did it as if in jest; but I was not taken in. I put an end to his game by going to call on him in his room and telling him frankly that, as a votary of the Gospels, I would now tell him in private what on another occasion I would say to him in public.

"What is it, my dear friend?"

"Take care in future not to treat me to any more of your jibes about the life I lead with Bavois, in the presence of my three friends. Privately, I will always listen to you gladly."

"You are wrong to take a certain jesting seriously."

"Why do you never aim at the Baron? Be prudent in future, or fear that, no less in jest, I may treat you to a reply which I spared you yesterday but which I will not spare you at the first opportunity."

During these same days I spent an hour with my three friends giving them instructions from the oracle never to do anything which Valentin (it was by his baptismal name that the oracle named him) might suggest to them without first consulting me. I had no doubt that they would obey the order. De La Haye, who did not fail to see a certain change, began to behave more sensibly. Bavois, whom I informed of my action, praised it. I was already thoroughly convinced that De La Haye had been of service to him only out of weakness—in other words, that he would have done nothing for him if he had not had a pretty face, though Bavois would never admit it. He did not have experience enough to admit it. The young man, seeing that giving him a post was constantly put off, entered the service of the French Ambassador;[12] which compelled him not only to cease visiting Signor Bragadin but also to stop seeing De La Haye because he was lodging in that nobleman's house. This is one of the most inviolable laws of the sovereign guardians of the Republic. Neither patricians nor their households may have the slightest connection with the households of foreign envoys.[13] But the step which Bavois took did not prevent my friends from soliciting a post for him; and they succeeded, as will be seen later in these memoirs.

Carlo,[14] the husband of Cristina, whom I never went to see, urged me to go to the casino to which his aunt went with his wife after her confinement. I found her charming and speaking Venetian like her husband. At the casino I met a chemist who made me wish to take a course in chemistry. Going to spend the evening at his house with him, I became curious about a girl who, living in a house next to his, came in to keep his old wife company. At the first hour of night[15] a servingwoman would come to fetch her and she would leave. I had spoken to her of the inclination she had inspired in me only once, and that in the presence of the chemist's old wife, when I was surprised to see no more of her and said so. She answered that apparently her cousin the Abate, with whom she lived, having learned that I visited her house, had become jealous and would no longer allow her to come.

"A cousin who is an abate, and jealous?"

"Why not? He lets her out only on feast days to go to the first mass at Santa Maria Mater Domini,[16] which is only twenty paces from his house. He let her come to my house because he knew that no one visited here; and apparently it was the servingwoman who told him she had seen you."

Jealous men being my abhorrence even as my own amorous vagaries are my delight, I write the girl that if she would leave her cousin for me I would set her up a house in which she would be mistress and in which, living with her as her lover, I would provide her with an enjoyable circle of acquaintances and see that she had all the pleasures which a girl like herself should enjoy in a city like Venice. In the same letter, which I gave her in the church to which she went to mass, I said that she would see me on the next feast day to give me an answer.

She answered that since the Abate was her tyrant, she would think herself happy if she could escape from his hands; but that she could not resolve to do so unless I was willing to marry her. She ended her letter by saying that if I had that honorable intention I had only to speak to Giovanna Marchetti, her mother, who lived at Lusia. This town is thirty miles from Venice.

Her letter annoyed me because I thought she had written it in concert with the Abate. Convinced that they meant to trap me, and in any case considering the proposal that I should marry her both absurd and impudent, I decided to avenge myself; but as I needed to know everything I went to Lusia to call on the widow Giovanna Marchetti, the girl's mother.

The woman was greatly flattered, after reading the letter her daughter had written me, to hear me say that I felt inclined to marry her, but that I could never bring myself to do so as long as she continued to live with the Abate.

"The Abate," she replied, "who is distantly related to me, owned and lived alone in the same house in Venice in which he is now living with my daughter. Two years ago he told me that he urgently needed a housekeeper and that he was inclined to take my daughter, who could easily find a good opportunity to marry, once she was in Venice. He offered me an engagement in writing in which he undertook to give her, when she married, his furniture, valued at a thousand ducati correnti,[18] and to make her his heir to an estate he owns here which brings him in a hundred ducati a year. As I thought the bargain a good one, and my daughter was satisfied with it, he gave me the stipulated deed in the presence of a notary; and my daughter went with him. I know that he keeps her like a slave; but it was her own wish. You can well imagine that all I want in the world is to see her married."

"Then come with me to Venice; remove her from the Abate's keeping, and, receiving her from you, I will marry her; never otherwise. If I received her from him, marrying her would dishonor me."

"Not at all, for he is her cousin, though in the fourth degree; what is more, he is a priest and says mass every day."

"You make me laugh. Take her back with you; otherwise you will never see her married."

"If I take her back he will never give her his furniture and he may sell his estate."

"Leave it to me. I will have her out of his custody and restored to your arms with all the furniture, and when she is my wife I will have her landed property. If you knew me you would have no doubt of it. Come to Venice, and I assure you that in four or five days you will be back here with her."

She read the letter her daughter had written me through again, she thought for a little, then said that she was a poor widow and had no money either for the journey to Venice or to stay there.

"At Venice you will have whatever you need; but in any case here are ten zecchini."

"Ten zecchini? I can come with my sister-in-law."

"Come with anyone you please. Let us go at once to spend the night at Chioggia, and we will dine tomorrow in Venice."

We slept in Chioggia, and the next day at seventeen o'clock[19] we reached Venice. I lodged the two women in Castello[20] in a house in which the second story was completely unfurnished. I left them there, taking the priest's deed with me, and after dining with my friends, to whom I explained that I had spent the night in Chioggia to settle an important matter, I called on the advocate Marco da Lezze,[21] who, after hearing the whole story, told me that if the mother would present a petition in person to the heads of the Council of Ten,[22] she would at once be given the authority and the necessary assistance to remove her daughter from the priest's custody together with all the furniture in his house, which she could have carried wherever she might please. I told him to draw up the petition, which I would come to fetch the following morning, accompanied by the mother, who would sign it.

So she came with me to the advocate's, and from there we went to the Bussola,[23] where she presented the petition to the heads of the Ten. A quarter of an hour later a *fante*[24] of the tribunal was ordered to accompany the woman to the priest's house and put her in possession of her daughter, who was to leave the house with all the furniture she wished to take.

The order was carried out to the letter. I was present with the mother in a gondola at the quay of the piazza near the house and with a large boat into which I saw the *sbirri* load all the furniture in the house, and finally I saw the girl get into the gondola, very much surprised to see me there. Her mother embraced her and told her that I was to become her husband the next day. She answered that she was sure of it and that she had left her tyrant only a bed and his clothes.

We reached Castello, where I had all her furniture unloaded and where I dined with the three women, persuading them to go and wait for me in Lusia, where they would see me again as soon as I had put my affairs in order. I spent the whole afternoon with my intended in most amusing talk. She told us that her cousin the Abate was dressing when the *fante* entered. He showed him the deed, and as soon as he had admitted it was his, he was ordered on pain of death to do nothing to oppose the girl's going or the removal of all the furniture. The Abate went off to say his mass, and everything was carried out to the letter. The same *fante* had told her that her mother was waiting for her in a gondola which was at the quay, in which she was very much surprised to see me because she could not believe that the thing was my doing. I told her that it was the first sample I was giving her of my affection.

I ordered a choice supper for four, with exquisite wines, and after spending two hours at table in joy and peace, I spent four more laughing with my intended.

The next morning after breakfast I sent for a peota,[25] into which I had all the furniture loaded to be transported to Lusia, and after giving the mother ten more zecchini I wished them a good journey. Victorious, proud, and triumphant, I went home.

The business had made such a stir that it could not remain unknown to my good friends, who when they saw me showed that they were saddened and surprised. Monsieur de La Haye embraced me with an air of the greatest grief; it was a role which he played to perfection. Only Signor Bragadin laughed heartily and told the three others that they did not understand it at all and that the whole thing had been done only to bring about a greater piece of work which was known only to the higher intelligences. For my part, not knowing through which of its particulars they believed they were acquainted with the whole story, which they could not really know, I laughed with Signor Bragadin, but said nothing. With nothing to fear, I resolved to amuse myself by listening to whatever was said. We sat down at table. Signor Barbaro was the first to say to me in a friendly tone that he had not expected to see me the day after my marriage.

"Are people saying that I am married?"

"Everyone says so, and everywhere. Even the heads of the Council of Ten believe it and have reason to believe it."

"They are all mistaken. I like to do good at the expense of my money, but not at the expense of my freedom. When you want to know my business it is from me that you should learn it. The public voice is fit only to amuse fools.''

''But,'' said Signor Dandolo, ''you spent the night with the girl who is said to be your wife.''

''No doubt, but I am not obliged to account to anyone for what I did last night. Do you not agree with me, Monsieur de La Haye?''

''I beg you not to ask my opinion, for I know nothing about it. However, I will say to you that you should not hold the public voice in so little esteem. The tender affection which I feel for you is the reason why what is being said pains me.''

''How is it that what is being said pains neither Signor Bragadin nor me?''

''I respect you, but I have learned at my own expense to fear slander. It is said that to obtain possession of a girl who was living with her uncle, a worthy priest, you paid a woman to say she was her mother and to go as such to demand the use of force from the heads of the Council of Ten to get her for you. The *fante* of the Council of Ten himself swears that you were in the gondola with the pretended mother when the girl got into it. It is said that the deed of gift by virtue of which you carried off the good priest's furniture is forged; and you are accused of having made the tribunal the instrument of these crimes. It is said, finally, that even if you have married the girl, which must be the case, the heads of the Ten will have much to say concerning the means you had the effrontery to employ to gain your end.''

I answered him coldly that *a wise man who has heard a story told in which there are criminal circumstances ceases to be wise if he repeats it to others, for if it is slanderous he thus becomes an accomplice of the slanderer.*

After this maxim, which made him blush and whose wisdom my friends admired, I asked him never to worry about me, to believe that I knew honor only to follow its commands, and to let people talk, just as I myself did when I heard evil tongues speaking evil of him.

The incident furnished the story which kept the city amused for five or six days; then it was forgotten.

Three months later, however, as I had never gone to Lusia and never answered the letters which the Signorina Marchetti wrote me or paid their bearers the money she demanded of me, she determined on a course which might have had consequences, but which had none.

Ignazio,[26] *fante* of the redoubtable tribunal of the State Inquisitors, appeared before me at a moment when I was still at table with Signor Bragadin, my two other friends, De La Haye, and two strangers. He told me politely that the Cavaliere Contarini dal Zoffo[27] wished to speak to me and that he would be at his house in Santa Maria dell'Orto[28] the next day at such-and-such an hour. I answered, rising, that I would not fail to obey His Excellency's[29] order. He left at once; I could not imagine what such a great personage could want of my small person. However, the message could not but put us all in a kind of consternation, for the man who was summoning me was a State Inquisitor. Signor Bragadin, who had been one himself in the days when he was a Councilor,[30] and knew their procedures, told me calmly that I had nothing to fear.

"Ignazio," he said, "being dressed in country clothes, did not come as a messenger of the tribunal, and Signor Contarini himself wishes to speak to you only as a private citizen, since he sends you word to wait on him at his palace and not in the sanctuary.[31] He is a severe old man, but just, and one to whom you must speak clearly and above all admit the truth if, by denying it, you run the risk of making matters worse."

His advice pleased me, and I needed it. I presented myself in the nobleman's antechamber at the appointed hour.

I am announced and am not kept waiting. I enter, and His Excellency, who was seated, spends a minute looking me up and down without saying a word. He rings and tells the footman who enters to show in the two persons who were in the next room. I was not at all surprised to see the Marchetti woman and her daughter come in. The nobleman asks me if I know them.

"I cannot but know them, Monsignore, since the Signorina is to be my wife as soon as she has proved to me by her conduct that she is worthy to be."

"Her conduct is good; she lives with her mother at Lusia; you have deceived her; why do you put off marrying her; why do you not go to see her; you do not answer her letters, and you leave her in want."

"I cannot marry her without having something to live on, and that will come three or four years hence from a post which I shall obtain through the patronage of Signor Bragadin, my only support. In the meanwhile she will live in God's grace. I will not marry her until I am convinced of it and, above all, that she does not see the Abate her cousin in the fourth degree. I do not go to see her because my confessor and my conscience forbid me to."

"She wishes you to make her a formal promise of marriage and to give her enough to live on."

"Nothing obliges me to make her such a promise, and as I have nothing to live on myself it is impossible for me to give her anything. In her mother's house she cannot die of starvation."

"When she was with my cousin," her mother interrupted, "she lacked nothing. She shall go back there."

"If she goes back there," I said, "I will not again take the trouble to deliver her; and then His Excellency will see that I am right in putting off marrying her until I am sure that her behavior has become what it should be."

His Excellency told me that I might leave, and it was all over. I heard nothing more of the matter, and my account of the dialogue amused Signor Bragadin's dinner table.

1750.

At the beginning of the Carnival I won a *terno*[32] which brought me three thousand ducati correnti. Fortune made me the present at a moment when I did not need it. I had spent the autumn at cards every day, but making the bank. It was at a small casino for members, to which no Venetian nobleman dared to come because one of the members was an officer of the Duke of Montealegre, the Spanish Ambassador.[33] The presence of noblemen is embarrassing to private citizens in an aristocratic government, where equality exists only among members of the government. I put a thousand zecchini in Signor Bragadin's hands, intending to make a journey to France after the Ascension Day fair. With this idea in mind I had the firmness to spend the Carnival without ever risking my money punting. A very obliging patrician had accorded me a quarter share in his bank, and on the first day of Lent we found ourselves the winners by a sufficient sum.

In the middle of the Carnival my friend Balletti, who had produced the ballets at Mantua for the second time, came to Venice under contract to produce them at the Teatro San Moisè[34] during the fair. I was delighted to see him with Marina, who, however, did not lodge with him. She immediately found an English Jew named Mendex,[35] who spent a great deal of money on her. This Jew, with whom she invited me to dine, gave me news of my dear Teresa-Bellino, telling me that he had been in love with her and had left her pleasant recollections. The news pleased me. I congratulated myself that Henriette had prevented me from going to see her when I had intended to, for I could easily have fallen in love with her again, and God knows what would have happened.

At this same time the Baron de Bavois was appointed a captain in the service of the Republic; he had a most successful career, as I will narrate in its proper place.

De La Haye undertook the education of a young man named Felice Calvi and a year later took him to Poland with him. I will narrate in its proper place how I met him in Vienna three years later.

At the same time that I was arranging to go to the fair at Reggio,[36] then to Turin, where, on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of Savoy[37] to an Infanta of Spain, daughter of Philip V, all Italy was present, then to Paris, where, Madame la Dauphine[38] being pregnant, magnificent festivals were in preparation in the expectation of a prince, Balletti was also arranging to make the same journey. His father and his mother, who was the famous actress Silvia,[39] were summoning him back to the bosom of his family. He was to dance at the Théâtre Italien[40] and to play the first lover's roles there. I could not choose company more agreeable and more apt to procure me countless advantages in Paris and a quantity of brilliant acquaintances.

So I took leave of Signor Bragadin and my two other friends, promising them that I would return at the end of two years. I left my brother Francesco studying under the battle painter Simonetti,[41] known as Il Parmigiano, promising him that I would think of him when I was in Paris, where in those days genius was certain to make its way to fortune. The reader will see how I kept my word to him.

I also left in Venice my brother Giovanni, who had returned there with Guarienti[42] after making the tour of Italy. He was about to leave for Rome, where he remained for fourteen years studying under the Cavaliere

Mengs.[43] He returned to Dresden in 1764 and died there in 1795.

So I set out from Venice after Balletti, who had gone on to wait for me in Reggio. It was the first day of June in the year 1750. I set out well equipped, with plenty of money, and certain not to be in want of it if I behaved properly.

A four-oared peota put me ashore at Pontelagoscuro[44] twenty-four hours after I embarked. It was noon. I immediately took a calèche to convey me to Ferrara for dinner.

CHAPTER VII[1]

My stay in Ferrara and comic adventure which befalls me there. My arrival in Paris, 1750.

I DISEMBARK from a peota at noon at Pontelagoscuro; I take a chaise to hurry on to Ferrara for dinner. I put up at the Albergo San Marco,[2] and I go upstairs, preceded by a valet to show me to my room. A sound of merriment coming from an open room prompts me to see what it might be. I see ten or twelve people at table; it is nothing unusual; and I was going on, but I am halted by a "There he is!" spoken by a pretty woman, who rises and runs to me with open arms, embraces me, and says:

"Set a place for my dear cousin at once, and have his trunk put in the room next to this one."

A young man comes toward me, and she says to him:

"Didn't I tell you he would arrive today or tomorrow?"

She makes me sit down beside her, and the entire company, who had risen in my honor, return to their places.

"You are sure to be hungry," she says to me, treading on my foot; "there is my fiancé, whom I introduce to you, and there are my father-in-law and my mother-in-law. These ladies and gentlemen are friends of the family. How is it that my mother did not arrive with you?"

The moment had come when I must speak.

"Your mother, my dear cousin, will be here in three or four days."

I look at the minx closely, and I recognize her as Cattinella,[3] a very well-known dancer, to whom I had never spoken in my life. I see that she is making me play a false role for the sake of a play of her own composition, and one which she needed to bring on its dénouement. Curious to know if I really had the talent with which she credited me, I gladly fall in with her scheme, certain that she will reward me at least with her favors in secret. What was required of me was the skill to play my role well yet not to compromise myself. In the meanwhile, on the pretext that I wanted to eat, I gave her all the time we needed to fill me in. She gave me a good example of her quick wit by explaining the whole working of the plot to me through remarks which she made, while I was eating, now to one member of the company, now to another. I gathered that her marriage could not take place until the arrival of her mother, who was to bring her her clothes and her diamonds, and that I was the *maestro* who was going to Turin to compose the music of the opera for the marriage of the Duke of Savoy. Certain that she could not prevent me from leaving the next day, I saw that I risked nothing by playing the role. Except for the nocturnal reward which I promised myself, I would have told the company that she was mad. Cattinella might be thirty years of age, she was extremely pretty, and famous for her intrigues.

The supposed mother-in-law, who was seated across from me, filled a glass for me and, as I had to reach out my arm to take it, she noticed my hand, which I held as if it were sprained.

"What's that?" she asked.

"A little sprain which will soon be cured."

Cattinella burst out laughing and said that she was very sorry, for now they could not hear me at the harpsichord.

"I am surprised that you laugh at it."

"I laugh because I remember a sprain I pretended I had suffered two years ago to avoid dancing."

After coffee the mother-in-law said that Signorina Cattinella must have family matters to discuss with me and that we should be left to our own devices; so at last I found myself alone with the schemer in the room next to hers, which she had arranged that I should have.

She sank onto a sofa to succumb to laughter which she could not contain. She said that she felt sure of me, though she knew me only by sight and by name, and she ended by saying that I would do very well to leave the next day.

"I have been here," she said, "for two months without a soldo; I have nothing but some dresses and linen, which I should have had to sell to live on if I had not managed to inspire a passion in the innkeeper's son, whom I flattered into believing that I would become his wife and bring him a dowry of twenty thousand scudi in diamonds, which I am supposed to have in Venice and which my mother is supposed to be bringing me. My mother has nothing, knows nothing about the plot, and will not stir from Venice."

"Pray tell me what end this farce will have: I foresee that it will be tragic."

"You are wrong. Very comic. I am waiting here for a lover, who is Count Ostein,[4] brother to the Elector of Mainz. He wrote to me from Frankfurt, he has left there, and he must now be in Venice. He will come for me to take me to the fair at Reggio. If my supposed fiancé decides to make difficulties, he will certainly give him a beating, at the same time paying him my bill; but I want him neither to beat him nor pay him. As I leave, I will whisper to him that I will come back, and all will go smoothly, for I will assure him that I will marry him on my return."

"It is perfect; you are as clever as an angel; but I will not wait until your return to marry you, that must be done at once."

"What madness! At least wait until tonight."

"Not a bit of it, for I seem to hear your Count's horses already. If he doesn't arrive we'll be none the worse off for tonight."

"So you love me?"

"Madly; but what of it? Your play deserves my adoring you and making you sure of it. Let us be quick."

"Wait. Lock the door. You are right. It is an episode, but a very pretty one."

Toward nightfall they all joined us upstairs, and there was talk of going to take the air. We were just about to do so, when a carriage drawn by six post horses was heard to arrive. Cattinella looks out of the window and tells everyone to leave, since it was a prince coming for her, she was sure of it. Everyone left, and she pushes me into my room and locks me in. Sure enough, I see the berlin[5] stop in front of the inn, I see a nobleman four times my size emerge from it supported by two servants. He comes upstairs, he enters the bride's room, and I had nothing left to entertain me except my ability to hear everything they said and to see through a crack everything that Cattinella did with his enormous bulk. But the entertainment finally bored me, for it went on for five hours. They were devoted to packing all Cattinella's belongings, loading them on the berlin, supping, and emptying several bottles of Rhine wine. At midnight Count Ostein left as he had arrived, taking the bride away from the bridegroom. No one ever came to my room during all this time, and I avoided summoning anyone. I was afraid I should be discovered and I did not know how the German prince might take it if he knew that he had a hidden witness to his demonstrations of love, which did no honor to either of the persons who were concerned in them. I made sundry reflections on the miserable estate of the human race.

After the heroine's departure I saw the innkeeper's son through the crack; I knocked to get him to open the door for me, and he told me in a plaintive voice that the lock would have to be broken since the Signorina had carried off the key. I asked him to do it at once since I was hungry; and it was done. He kept me company at table. He told me that the Signorina had found a moment to assure him that she would return in six weeks; he told me that she had wept as she gave him the assurance and that she had embraced him.

"Did the Prince pay her bill?"

"No indeed. We would not have accepted it if he had offered to. My intended would have taken offense, for you cannot imagine how nobly she thinks."

"What does your father say about her going?"

"My father always thinks the worst; he says that she will not come back, and my mother is more of his opinion than of mine. But you, Signor Maestro, what do you think?"

"That if she told you so, she will undoubtedly return."

"If she had not intended to come back, she would not have assured me of it."

"Exactly. Your reasoning is faultless."

My supper was the remains of what the Count's cook had prepared, and I drank a bottle of Rhenish which Cattinella had filched as a present for him.[6] After supper I took the post, and I left after assuring him that I would persuade my cousin to return as soon as she could. I wanted to pay; but he would take nothing. I reached

Bologna a quarter of an hour after Cattinella and lodged at the same inn. I found an opportunity to tell her of the conversation I had had with her stupid lover.

I reached Reggio before her, but I was never able to speak to her, for she never left her Count. I spent the whole fair there without anything happening to me which is worth recording. I left Reggio with Balletti, and reached Turin, which I was eager to see. When I had been there with Henriette I had stopped only long enough to change horses.

At Turin I found everything equally fine—the city, the court, the theater, and the women, who were all beautiful beginning with the Duchesses of Savoy.[7] I laughed when I was told that the city was well policed and saw the streets full of beggars. Yet the efficiency of the police was the principal concern of the King[8] himself, who was highly intelligent, as everyone knows from history. But I was silly enough to be astonished by the monarch's appearance. Never having seen a king in my life, a spurious idea made me believe that a king should have something rarely beautiful or majestic in his physiognomy, not shared by the rest of mankind. As a young, thinking republican, my idea was not entirely stupid; but I soon got rid of it when I saw the King of Sardinia ugly, hunchbacked, morose, and common even in his manners. I heard La Astrua[9] and Gafarello[10] sing, and I saw La Geoffroi[11] dance, whom a very gentlemanly dancer named Bodin married at about this time. No amorous inclination disturbed the peace of my soul in Turin, except for the daughter of a washerwoman, with whom there befell me an accident which I record only because it taught me a lesson in physiology.

After doing everything I could to obtain an interview with the girl in my lodging or in hers or anywhere at all and not succeeding, I resolved to have her by using a little violence at the foot of the concealed staircase down which she usually went when she left my lodging. I hid at the foot of it, and when I saw that she was within reach I sprang on her and, partly by persuasion, partly by swift action, I subjugated her on the last steps; but at the first thrust of our union a most extraordinary sound, proceeding from the place next to the one I was occupying, stayed my fury for a moment, and the more so because I saw the victim put her hand over her face to hide the shame she felt at her indiscretion.

I reassure her by a kiss and make to continue, but lo! a second sound, louder than the first; I proceed, and now comes the third, then the fourth, and so regularly that it was like the bass of an orchestra giving the time for a piece of music. This aural phenomenon, together with the embarrassment and confusion which I saw in my victim, suddenly took possession of my soul; all together they presented so comical an idea to my mind that, laughter having overpowered all my faculties, I had to let go. She seized the moment to run away. From that day on she did not dare to enter my sight. I remained there sitting on the stairs for more than a quarter of an hour before I could shake off the comedy of the thing, which makes me laugh every time I think of it. I reflected afterward that the girl perhaps owed her virtuous behavior to her infirmity. It might also be due to a certain configuration of the organ, and in that case she ought to thank eternal Providence for a gift which an ungrateful feeling perhaps prompted her to consider a defect. I believe that three out of four loose women would cease to be so if they were subject to this phenomenon, unless they were sure that their lovers were subject to it too, for then the strange symphony might become one more charm of a happy union. It might even be easy to hit on a device which could be applied to the sluice gate and which would make the explosions odoriferous, for one sense should not suffer when another sense is enjoying; and the sense of smell plays no small part in the pleasures of Venus.

Gambling at Turin avenged me for the wrong it had done me at Reggio, and I was easily persuaded by my friend Balletti to go with him to Paris, where magnificent festivals were being prepared in expectation of the birth of a Duke of Burgundy.[12] Everyone knew that Madame la Dauphine was near the end of her pregnancy. So we set out from Turin, and on the fifth day we arrived in Lyons. We spent a week there.

Lyons is a very fine city, in which not even three or four noble houses are open to foreigners; but to make up for it there are a hundred belonging to businessmen, merchants, manufacturers, and commission agents far richer than manufacturers, in which there is excellent society. The tone is considerably below that of Paris, but one gets used to it, and one enjoys life more methodically. What makes Lyons rich is taste and low prices. The divinity to which the city owes its prosperity is fashion. It changes every year, and a stuff for which thirty is paid because of its new pattern fetches only twenty the next year and is sent to foreign countries, where the buyers sell it as something brand-new. Lyons pays high fees to designers who have taste; that is the secret. Low prices come from competition, whose soul is freedom. Hence a government which wishes to see the state prospering by commerce has but to leave commerce completely free, only being watchful to prevent frauds which private interest may invent to the detriment of the general interest. The sovereign should hold the scales, and allow his subjects to load them as they please.

At Lyons I found the most celebrated of all Venetian courtesans. Her name was Ancilla.[13] Her beauty was astonishing. Everyone said that her equal had never been seen. Those who saw her could not help wanting to enjoy her, and she could refuse no one, for if all men loved her individually, she loved the male sex in general. Those who had not the small amount of money which the law demanded that they give her to obtain her favors obtained them for nothing as soon as they could acquaint her with their desires.

Venice always had courtesans more famous for their beauty than for their intelligence; the chief of these among my contemporaries were this same Ancilla and another named Spina;[14] both daughters of gondoliers; both dead at an early age after deciding to enter a profession which they thought would raise their standing. Ancilla at the age of twenty-two became a dancer; and Spina tried to become a singer. The man who made Ancilla a dancer was a dancer named Campioni,[15] a Venetian who, dancing serious roles, taught her all the graces of which her beautiful form was capable, and married her. Spina learned music from a castrato who called himself Beppino della Mammana,[16] who could not marry her; but she was always less than mediocre and continued to live on what she earned by her charms. Ancilla danced in Venice until two years before her death, of which I will speak at the proper time.

I found her at Lyons with her husband. They had just come from London, where they had been applauded at the Haymarket Theater.[17] She had stopped at Lyons with her husband purely for her own pleasure, and she had at her feet all the fashionable and rich young men of the city, who went to call on her every evening and did whatever she wanted to please her: outings by day, great suppers, and faro all night. The banker was a certain Don Giuseppe Marcati,[18] the same man whose acquaintance I had made in the Spanish army eight years earlier, where he was called Don Bepe il cadetto, and who some years later made known his real name of Afflisio and who came to such a bad end. His bank won three hundred thousand francs in a few days. In a country with a court such a sum would not have been talked about, but in a city of merchants it alarmed all the heads of families, and the Italian contingent thought of leaving.

A respectable personage whom I met at the house of Monsieur de Rochebaron[19] procured me the privilege of being admitted[20] into the company of those who see the light. I became an apprentice *Freemason.* Two months later at Paris I received the second degree,[21] and some months later the third, which is the mastership. It is the highest. All the other titles which were conferred on me in the course of time are pleasing fictions which, though symbolic, add nothing to the dignity of Master.

There is not a man on earth who succeeds in knowing everything; but every man should aspire to know everything. Every young man who travels, who wishes to know society, who does not wish to be inferior to another and excluded from the company of his equals in the age in which we live, should be initiated into what is called Freemasonry, if only to acquire a superficial knowledge of what it is. However, he must be careful to make the right choice of the lodge of which he wishes to become a member, for though evil company cannot act in the lodge, it may be present in it, and the candidate must beware of dangerous connections. Those who decide to become Masons only to learn the secret may well be deceiving themselves, for a man can be a Master Mason for fifty years and never learn the secret of the brotherhood.

The secret of Masonry is inviolable by its own nature, since the Mason who knows it, knows it only because he has divined it. He has learned it from no one. He has discovered it by virtue of going to the lodge, observing, reasoning, and deducing. When he has arrived at it, he takes great care not to share his discovery with anyone, were it his best friend and a Mason, because if he has not had the ability to find it out, he will by the same token not have the ability to profit by it if he learns it by word of mouth. The secret, then, will always be a secret.

Whatever one does in lodge must be kept secret; but those who, in their dishonest indiscretion, have not scrupled to reveal what is done there have not revealed the heart of the matter. How could they reveal it if they did not know it? If they had known it they would not have revealed the ceremonies.

The same impression which the Brotherhood of Masons produces today on many who have not been initiated into it was produced in ancient times by the great mysteries which were celebrated at Eleusis[22] in honor of Ceres. They aroused the interest of all Greece, and the greatest men in the world aspired to be initiated into them. That initiation was of far greater significance than initiation into modern Freemasonry, among whose members some are rascals and the dregs of human society. Impenetrable silence was long preserved concerning everything that took place in the Eleusinian mysteries, because of the veneration which they inspired. Someone dared, for example, to reveal the three words which the hierophant[23] addressed to the initiates when he dismissed them at the conclusion of the mysteries; but what did that accomplish? Only to dishonor him who had revealed them, for the three words were in a barbarian language unknown to the profane. I have somewhere read that the three words meant: "Watch, and do no evil." The initiation lasted for nine days, the ceremonies were most imposing, the company was of the worthiest. We read in Plutarch[24] that Alcibiades was sentenced to death and that all his property was confiscated because he had dared to ridicule the great mysteries in the privacy of his house with Polytion and Theodoros, contrary to the laws of the Eumolpides.[25] In consequence of his sacrilege he was sentenced to be cursed by the priests and priestesses, but the curse was not pronounced; a priestess[26] opposed it, giving as her reason that she was a priestess "to bless, not to curse," a most noble lesson which our Most Holy Father the Pope scorns. Nothing is important today.

Botarelli[27] publishes all the practices of the Freemasons in a pamphlet, and no one says anything except that he is a scoundrel. It was already common knowledge. At Naples a Prince and Monsieur Hamilton[28] perform the miracle of San Gennaro[29] at home. The King shuts his eyes and does not remember that he wears on his royal breast an order on which, around the effigy of San Gennaro, are the three words: *In sanguine foedus* ("In the blood of the covenant").[30] Everything nowadays is inconsequential and there is nothing which has any significance. The present trend will be defended and pursued; but everything will go from bad to worse if it stops halfway.

We engaged two places in the diligence which would take us to Paris in five days; Balletti informed his family of the time of his departure, so they knew the hour at which we should arrive.

We were eight in the conveyance, which is called a "diligence";[31] we were all seated, but all uncomfortably, for it was oval; no one had a corner seat since it had no corners. I thought this poorly considered; but I said nothing, for as an Italian it was my part to consider everything in France admirable. An oval coach: I bowed to the fashion, and I cursed it, for the strange movement of the vehicle made me want to vomit. It was too well sprung. I should have found a jolting less trying. The very force of its speed over the fine road made it rock; hence it was called a "gondola"; but the true Venetian gondola propelled by two oarsmen goes smoothly and does not cause a nausea which turns one inside out. My head was spinning. The swift motion, which at least did not jolt me in the slightest, affected my intestinal vapors and made me throw up everything I had in my stomach. My fellow passengers thought me bad company, but none of them said so. All that anyone said was that I had eaten too much supper, and a Parisian Abbé spoke up in my defense, saying that I had a weak stomach, and there was an argument. Out of patience, I put a stop to it by saying:

"You are both wrong, for I have an excellent stomach and I did not eat supper."

An elderly man who had a boy of twelve or thirteen years with him said to me in honeyed tones that I should not tell the gentlemen that they were "wrong," but that I could have told them that they were "not right," thus imitating Cicero, who did not tell the Romans that Catiline[32] and the other conspirators were dead but that they "had lived."

"Is it not the same thing?"

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur, the one is impolite and the other is polite."

He then delivered a magnificent dissertation on politeness, which he concluded by saying to me, with a smile:

"I wager that Monsieur is Italian."

"Yes, but may I make bold to ask you from what you guessed it?"

"Oh, from the attention with which you honored my lengthy prattle."

The whole company then burst out laughing, and I began making up to the eccentric, who was tutor to the youth beside him. I made use of him through all those five days to give me lessons in French politeness, and when we had to part he called me aside and said that he wished to make me a small present.

"What is it?"

"You must forget and renounce the particle *non* which you use without mercy in season and out of season. *Non* is not a French word. Say *pardon,* it comes to the same thing and does not offend. *Non* is a contradiction. Give it up, Monsieur, or be prepared to draw your sword in Paris every moment."

"I thank you, Monsieur, and I promise never to say *non* again as long as I live."

At the beginning of my stay in Paris it seemed to me that I had become the guiltiest of men, for I did nothing but beg pardon. One day I even thought that I had brought a quarrel on myself by begging it out of season. It was at the theater that a young dandy trod on my foot by mistake.

"Pardon me, Monsieur," I said quickly.

"It is for you to pardon."

"For you."

"For you."

"Alas, Monsieur, let us pardon each other and embrace."

So ended our quarrel.

One day when I was sleeping quite soundly sitting up in the gondola-diligence, which was making great speed, my neighbor suddenly shakes me to wake me up.

"What is it?"

"Ah, Monsieur, look at that château, I beg you."

"I see it. It is not much. What do you consider remarkable about it?"

"Nothing—if we were not forty leagues from Paris. Will my gawking fellow citizens believe me when I tell them I have seen such a fine château forty leagues from the capital? How ignorant one is when one has not traveled a little!"

"You are quite right."

The man was a Parisian himself, an inveterate gawker, like a Gaul in the days of Caesar.

But if the Parisians go gawking about from morning to night, being amused by everything and admiring everything, a foreigner like myself should be even more of a curiosity-seeker. The difference between them and myself was that, being accustomed to seeing things as they are, I was surprised to see them under a mask which changed their nature, whereas the Parisians' surprise is due to their often being led to suspect what is under the mask.

What greatly pleased me was the beauty of the highroad, the immortal work of Louis XV, the cleanliness of the inns, the fare which they supplied, the promptness with which we were served, the excellence of the beds, the modest manner of the person who served us at table, who was usually the most accomplished daughter of the house and whose bearing, cleanliness, and manners were enough to check any licentiousness. Who among us in Italy takes pleasure in seeing the waiters in our inns with their effrontery and their insolence? In those days in France overcharging was unknown; France was the home of foreigners. Is it now the home of the French? There was the disadvantage of often seeing an odious despotism consisting in *lettres de cachet*.[33] It was the despotism of kings. We shall see what is the despotism of a raging, ferocious, uncontrollable people who flock together, hang, cut off heads, and murder those who, not being of the people, dare to speak their minds.[34]

We slept at Fontainebleau, and an hour before reaching Paris we saw a berlin coming from it.

"That is my mother," said Balletti, "stop, stop!"

We got out; and after the usual ecstasies between mother and son he introduces me, and his mother, who was the celebrated actress Silvia, greets me only with:

"I hope, Monsieur, that my son's friend will be so good as to sup with us tonight."

So saying she gets into her carriage with her son and her daughter, who was nine years old. I return to the gondola.

On arriving in Paris I find one of Silvia's servants waiting with a hackney coach; he attended to everything and conducted me to a lodging[35] which I found very clean. After leaving my trunk and all my possessions there he took me to his mistress's house, which was fifty paces away. Balletti introduced me to his father, who was named Mario,[36] and who was convalescing. Mario and Silvia were the names they bore in the comedies which they improvised. The French never called the Italian actors any other names in society than those by which they were known on the stage. "Bonjour, Monsieur Arlequin; bonjour, Monsieur Pantalon"—so the actors who played those parts were addressed at the Palais-Royal.[37]

CHAPTER VIII

My apprenticeship in Paris. Portraits. Oddities. Things many and various.

SILVIA CELEBRATED her son's arrival by inviting her relatives to supper at her house. I was delighted to have reached Paris in time to make their acquaintance. Mario, Balletti's father, did not come to the table because he was recovering from an illness, but I met his elder sister, who was called by her stage name of Flaminia.[1] She was known in the Republic of Letters[2] for some translations; but what made me want to know her well was the story, which was current all over Italy, of the sojourn[3] which three famous men had made in Paris. The three men were the Marchese Maffei,[4] the Abate Conti,[5] and Pier Giacomo Martelli.[6] They became enemies, the story went, because of the preference to which each of them aspired in the actress's good graces, and as men of learning they fought with their pens. Martelli wrote a satire on Maffei, in which he gave him the anagrammatic name of "Femia."

As I was presented to Flaminia as a candidate in the Republic of Letters, she saw fit to honor me with her conversation. I found her repulsive in her face, her tone, her style, and even her voice; she did not quite say it, but she gave me to understand that, famous herself in the Republic of Letters, she was talking to an insect; she acted as if she were laying down the law and she considered that, at the age of seventy, she had every right to do so toward a youth of twenty-five who had added nothing to any library. To flatter her, I talked of the Abate Conti, and in a certain connection I cited two lines by that profound writer. She corrected me affably enough on the word *scevra,* which means separated, which I pronounced with the consonantal *u*, which is *v*.[7] She said that it should be pronounced as a vowel, and that I should not take it amiss to have learned the fact in Paris on my first day there.

"I am certainly eager to learn, Madame, but not to unlearn. It should be pronounced *scevra,* and not *sceura,* because it is a contraction of *scévera.*"

"It remains to be seen which of us is wrong."

"You are, Madame, according to Ariosto, who rhymes *scevra* with *persevra.*"

She was going on when her husband, who was eighty years old,[8] told her that she was mistaken. She said no more, and from that time on she told everyone that I was an impostor. Her husband was Lodovico Riccoboni, known as Lelio, the same man who had brought the Italian troupe to Paris in the year sixteen in the service of the Duke-Regent.[9] I was aware of his merit. He had been very handsome, and he rightly enjoyed the esteem of the public both for his talent and for his morals. During supper my principal concern was to study Silvia, who was praised to the skies. I found her above everything that was said of her. Her age was fifty, her figure elegant, her bearing distinguished, as were her manners; she was easy, affable, pleasant, well-spoken, obliging to everyone, full of wit yet completely unpretentious. Her face was an enigma, it was interesting and it pleased everyone, yet on examination it could not be considered beautiful; but by the same token no one had ever dared to pronounce it ugly. She could not be said to be neither beautiful nor ugly, for the fascination of her character made an instantaneous impression. So what was she? Beautiful—but in accordance with laws and proportions unknown to all except those who, feeling an occult power drawing them to love her, had the courage to study her and the capacity to discover them.

This actress was the idol of all France, and her talent was the mainstay of all the comedies which the greatest authors wrote for her, and especially Marivaux.[10] But for her, their comedies would never have come down to posterity. An actress capable of replacing her has never been found, and never will be found, for she would have to combine in herself all the aptitudes which Silvia possessed in the too difficult art of the theater—action, voice, countenance, intelligence, bearing, and knowledge of the human heart. Everything in her was nature; the art which accompanied and had perfected it all was not allowed to appear.

To be unique in every respect, she added to those which I have just mentioned a quality even without which she would have risen to the pinnacle of fame as an actress. Her life was pure. She was ready to make friends of men, but never lovers—scorning a privilege which she could have enjoyed but which would have made her base in her own estimation. For this reason she gained a reputation for respectability at an age when it would have seemed absurd and almost insulting to all women of her profession. For this reason several ladies of the highest rank honored her with their friendship even more than with their patronage. For this reason the capricious Parisian groundlings never dared to hiss her in a role which they did not like. By general and unanimous consent, Silvia was a woman above her profession.

Since she did not consider that her good conduct could be placed to her credit, for she knew that she practiced it only for the sake of her self-esteem, no pride, no show of superiority was ever seen in the relations she was obliged to have with her fellow actresses, who, content to shine by their talents, were not concerned to make themselves conspicuous by their virtue. Silvia loved them all, and she was loved by them, she did them justice publicly, and she praised them. But she was right: she had nothing to fear, none of them could cast the slightest shadow on her.

Nature cheated this unique woman out of ten years of her life. She became consumptive at the age of sixty, ten years after I met her. The climate of Paris plays these tricks on Italian women. Two years before her death I saw her play the role of Marianne in Marivaux's comedy,[11] in which she seemed to be only Marianne's age. She died in my presence, holding her daughter in her arms and giving her her last advice five minutes before she expired. She was honorably buried at Saint-Sauveur[12] without the slightest opposition from the parish priest, who said that her profession[13] of actress had never prevented her from being a Christian.

Excuse me, reader, if I have delivered Silvia's funeral oration ten years before reaching her death. When I come to that, I will spare you another.

Her only daughter, the principal object of her affection, was seated beside her at this same supper. She was only nine years old. Entirely taken up by the mother's excellences, I did not pause to make any observations on the daughter. That was to come only later. Well satisfied with my first evening, I returned to my lodgings in the house of Madame Quinson. Such was the name of my hostess.

When I woke, Mademoiselle Quinson came to tell me that there was a manservant outside, who had come to offer me his services. I see a very short man; this I find distasteful, and I tell him so.

"My shortness, Prince, will assure you that I will not wear your clothes to go gadding in."

"Your name?"

"Whatever name you please."

"What? I am asking you what your name is."

"I have none. Each master whom I serve gives me one, and in the course of my life I have had more than fifty. I will take the name you give me."

"Come now, you must have a name of your own, your family name."

"Family? I never had a family. I had a name in my youth, but in the twenty years that I have been a servant, always changing masters, I have forgotten it."

"I will call you L'Esprit."

"You do me great honor."

"Go get me change for this louis."

"Here it is."

"I see you are rich."

"Entirely at your service, Monsieur."

"Who will give me information about you?"

"The agency for servants, and Madame Quinson as well. Everyone in Paris knows me."

"That will do. I will give you thirty sous a day. I do not provide your clothing, you will sleep at home, and you will be at my orders every morning at seven o'clock."

Balletti came to see me and asked me to come to dinner and supper every day. I had L'Esprit show me the way to the Palais-Royal[14] and left him at the gate. Eager to satisfy my curiosity concerning a promenade which was so highly praised, I began by observing everything. I saw a rather fine garden, walks bordered by big trees, fountains, the whole surrounded by *high houses,* many men and women strolling, benches here and there, from which *new pamphlets,* scented waters, toothpicks, and trinkets were sold; I saw cane chairs which were rented for a sou, newspaper readers sitting in the shade, light women and men breakfasting alone and in company; coffeehouse waiters hurrying up and down a small concealed staircase behind beds of shrubbery. I sit down at a small empty table, a waiter asks me what I will have, I ask for chocolate without milk, and he brings me some which is horrible in a silver cup. I let it stand and tell the waiter to bring me coffee if it is good.

"Excellent, I made it yesterday myself."

"Yesterday? I don't want it."

"The milk in it is excellent."

"Milk? I never drink it. Make me a cup of coffee made with water, at once."

"With water? We make that only after dinner. Would you like a bavaroise?[15] Would you like a decanter of orgeat?"[16]

"Yes, orgeat."

I find it an excellent beverage, and I decide to make it my regular breakfast. I ask the waiter if there is anything new, and he answers that the Dauphine has given birth to a prince; an abbé tells him he is mad: it is a princess she has borne. A third man comes forward and says:

"I have just come from Versailles, and the Dauphine has borne neither a prince nor a princess."

He tells me that he gathers I am a foreigner, and I answer that I am an Italian, arrived in Paris the day before. He then talks to me of the court, of society, of the theater; he offers to introduce me everywhere, I thank him, I leave, and the Abbé accompanies me and tells me the names of all the light women who are strolling about. A gentleman of the robe[17] meets him, he embraces him, and the Abbé introduces him to me as learned in Italian literature; I address him in Italian, he answers wittily, and I laugh at his style and tell him the reason: he spoke exactly in the style of Boccaccio. My remark pleases him, I persuade him that it is not the way to speak, though that ancient writer's language is perfect. In less than a quarter of an hour we become fast friends, finding that we have the same inclinations. He a poet, I a poet, he interested in Italian literature, I in French, we give each other our addresses and promise to exchange visits.

I see many men and women crowded together in one corner of the garden, looking up. I asked my new friend what was remarkable there. He said that they were watching the meridian line, each with his timepiece in his hand, waiting for the moment when the shadow of the style would show exactly noon, when they would set their timepieces.

"But aren't there meridians everywhere?"

"Yes, but the most celebrated is the one in the Palais-Royal."

At that I could not help laughing.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Because it is impossible that all meridians are not the same; so this is the height of gawking."

He thought a little and then laughed too; and he gave me the courage to criticize the good Parisians. We leave the Palais-Royal by the main gate, and I see to my right a crowd in front of a shop whose sign was a civet cat.[18]

"What's this?"

"Now you will really laugh. All these people are waiting to buy snuff."

"Is it sold only in this shop?"

"It is sold everywhere; but for the last three weeks no one will have any snuff in his snuffbox except what comes from the Civet Cat."

"Is it better than others?"

"Not at all; it may even be worse; but since the Duchess of Chartres[19] made it fashionable no one will have anything else."

"What did she do to make it fashionable?"

"She stopped her carriage two or three times outside the shop, buying only enough to fill her snuffbox and openly telling the young woman who sells it that it was the best snuff in Paris; the gawkers who crowded around her told others, and everyone in Paris knew that if one wanted good snuff one had to buy it at the Civet Cat. The woman will make her fortune, for she sells over a hundred crowns' worth of it a day."

"The Duchess of Chartres probably does not know she has made the woman's fortune."

"On the contrary, the Duchess, who is very intelligent, contrived the whole thing herself; being fond of the woman, who was recently married, and considering what she could do to help her, she decided that the thing to do was just what she has done. You cannot imagine what good souls the Parisians are. You are in the only country in the world in which intelligence can make its way to fortune either if it displays itself in genuine contributions, in which case it is welcomed by intelligence, or if it imposes what is specious, in which case it is rewarded by stupidity; stupidity is characteristic of the nation, and what is astonishing is that it is the daughter of intelligence, so that it is no paradox to say that the French nation would be wiser if it were less intelligent.

"The gods who are worshiped here, though no altars are raised to them, are novelty and fashion. A man has but to run, and all those who see him run after him. They would not stop until he was found to be mad; but to find that out is to count the sands: we have madmen here who have been mad from birth and they are still accepted as wise. The snuff from the Civet Cat is a very small example of what a flock of sheep our citizens are. Our King, out hunting, came to the Pont de Neuilly[20] and wanted a drink of ratafia.[21] He stopped at the tavern there; he asked for it, and by some strange chance the poor tavernkeeper had a flagon of it, and the King, after drinking a glass, saw fit to say to those around him that it was an excellent drink and asked for another.

That was all it took to make the tavernkeeper's fortune. In less than twenty-four hours the whole court and the whole city knew that the ratafia at Neuilly was the best drink in Europe, for the King had said so. The most fashionable people flocked to Neuilly at midnight to drink ratafia, and in less than three years the tavernkeeper was a rich man and had a house built on the same spot, on which you will see the inscription *Ex liquidis solidum* ('From liquids, a solid'), which is quite amusing and which was given him by one of our Academicians. What saint must the fellow thank for his swift rise to a brilliant fortune? Stupidity, flightiness, love of a joke."

"It seems to me," I said, "that this approbation of the views of the King and the princes of the blood comes from an unconquerable affection in the nation, which adores them; it is so great that they believe them to be infallible."

"True. Everything that happens in France makes foreigners believe that the nation adores its King; but those among us who think see that this love of the nation for the monarch is only tinsel. How can one base anything on a love which has no basis? The court does not rely on it. The King comes to Paris, and everyone cries: 'Long live the King' because some idler has begun shouting it. It is a cry which comes from high spirits, or perhaps from fear, and which the King himself, believe me, does not take seriously. He cannot wait to get back to Versailles, where there are twenty-five thousand men to protect him from the fury of the same populace which, grown wise, might take it into their heads to cry: 'Death to the King.' Louis XIV knew them. And his knowledge cost several councilors of the Great Chamber[22] their lives when they ventured to talk of assembling the States-General[23] when the country was threatened with calamity. France has never loved her Kings, except St. Louis[24] for his piety, Louis XII,[25] and Henri IV[26] after his death. The King who now reigns said with perfect sincerity during his convalescence: *'I am amazed at these great rejoicings because I have recovered my health, for I cannot see any reason why I should be so much loved.'* This remark of our monarch's has been praised to the skies. He was actually using his reason. A philosophical courtier should have told him that he was so much loved because his surname was 'the Well Beloved.' "

"Are there any philosophers among the courtiers?"

"No—for as a courtier, a man cannot be a philosopher; but there are intelligent men who, in deference to their own interests, only champ the bit. Not long ago the King, in conversation with a courtier whom I will not name, extolled the pleasures he enjoyed when he spent the night with Madame la M.,[27] and said that he did not believe there was another woman on earth who could furnish their equal. The courtier answered that His Majesty was of that opinion because His Majesty had never been to a bordello.[28] The courtier was banished to his estate."

"The Kings of France are right, I believe, to shun summoning the States-General, for then they are in the same situation as a Pope who summons a Council."

"Not quite, but very nearly. The States-General would be dangerous if the people, who are the third estate, could counterbalance the votes of the nobility and the clergy; but that is not the case,[29] and it never will be, for it is not to be believed that policy will put the sword in the hands of madmen. The people would be glad to acquire the same influence, but there will never be either a King or a minister who will grant it to them. Such a minister would be a fool or a traitor."

The young man who, so discoursing, at once gave me a just idea of the nation, of the Parisian populace, of the court, and of the monarch, was named Patu.[30] I shall have occasion to speak of him. Still talking in the same vein, he took me to Silvia's door and congratulated me on my having the entrée to such a house.

I found the amiable actress in brilliant company. She introduced me to all her guests, telling me who each of them was as she introduced me. The name which struck me was Crébillon.[31]

"What, Monsieur!" I said to him. "Am I so quickly fortunate? For eight years you have charmed me. Listen, I beg you."

Thereupon I recite him the finest scene in his *Zénobie et Rhadamiste,*[32] in my blank verse translation. Silvia was delighted to see the pleasure which Crébillon, at the age of eighty, took in hearing himself rendered into a language which he loved more than his own. He recited the same scene in French, and he politely pointed out the places in which he said I had improved it. I thanked him, but was not taken in by his compliment. We sat down at table and, asked what I had seen of interest in Paris, I told them everything I had seen and heard, except Patu's discourse. After I had talked for at least two hours Crébillon, who had seen more clearly than any of the others the course I was taking to learn both the good and the bad of his nation, addressed me as follows:

"For a first day, Monsieur, I think you promise very well. You will make rapid progress. You tell your story excellently. You speak French in a way which is perfectly comprehensible; but all that you said, you put in Italian constructions. You make people listen to you, you arouse interest, and the novelty of your language renders your listeners doubly attentive; I will even say that your idiom is just the thing to gain their approval, for it is odd and new, and you are in the country where everything odd and new is sought after; nevertheless, you must begin tomorrow, and no later, to make every effort to learn to speak our language well, for in two or three months the same people who now applaud you will begin laughing at you."

"I believe it, and I fear it; so my principal purpose in coming here was to apply myself entirely to the French language and French literature; but how, Monsieur, am I to go about finding a teacher? I am an intolerable pupil, always questioning, curious, demanding, insatiable. I am not rich enough to pay such a teacher, even supposing that I find him."

"For fifty years now, Monsieur, I have been looking for a pupil such as you describe yourself to be, and it is I who will pay you if you will come to me for lessons. I live in the Marais,[33] in the Rue des Douze Portes, I have the best Italian poets, whom I will make you translate into French, and I will never find you insatiable."

I accepted, at a loss to express all my gratitude. Crébillon was six feet tall, overtopping me by three inches; he ate well, told stories amusingly but without laughing himself, and he was famous for his witticisms. He spent his life at home, going out very seldom, and seeing almost no one because he always had a pipe in his mouth and was surrounded by eighteen or twenty cats with which he played for the greater part of the day. He had an old housekeeper, a cook, and a valet. His housekeeper saw to everything, handled his money, and, since she never let him want for anything, he never asked her to render an account. It is a remarkable fact that Crébillon's face resembled a lion's, or a cat's, which is the same thing. He was a royal censor,[34] and he told me it entertained him. His housekeeper read him the works which were brought to him, and paused in her reading when she thought something called for his criticism; and I often laughed over his quarrels with the woman when he was of a different opinion. One day I heard her turn away someone who had come to receive his corrected manuscript:

"Come next week," she said, "for we haven't had time to look over your work yet."

I visited Crébillon three times a week for a year, and I learned from him all the French I know, but I have never been able to rid myself of Italianisms; I recognize them when I find them in others; but when they come from my pen I do not recognize them, and I am sure I shall never learn to recognize them, just as I have never known what fault in Latinity Livy[35] is taxed with.

I composed an octet in irregular measure on a certain subject and took it to Crébillon for him to correct. After reading my eight lines attentively he addressed me as follows:

"Your thought is fine and very poetic; your language is flawless; your verses are good and exactly measured; nevertheless your octet is bad."

"How can that be?"

"I have no idea. What is lacking is the 'certain something.'[36] Imagine that you see a man and find him handsome, well built, pleasing, witty, and in short perfect in your most severe judgment. A woman comes up, she looks at him, and after considering him thoroughly she leaves, telling you that he does not please her. 'But, Madame, tell me what fault you find in him.' 'I don't know.' You go back to the man, you consider him more carefully, and you find that he is a castrato. 'Ah!' you say, 'now I see the reason why the woman did not find him to her taste.'"

It was by this comparison that Crébillon made me realize why my octet could not please.

At table we talked a great deal about Louis XIV,[37] to whom Crébillon had paid court for fifteen years, and he told us some very curious anecdotes which no one knew. He assured us that the Siamese Ambassadors[38] were rogues in the pay of Madame de Maintenon. He said that he had never finished his tragedy entitled *Cromwell*[39] because the King himself had one day told him not to waste his pen portraying a scoundrel.

He talked to us of his *Catilina*,[40] and said that he considered it the weakest of all his plays, but that he would not have wanted it to be good if, to make it so, he had had to bring Caesar on the stage, for Caesar as a young man would arouse laughter, as Medea[41] would do if she were brought on the stage before she knew Jason. He praised Voltaire's talent highly, at the same time accusing him of theft, for he had stolen the Senate scene[42] from him. He said that, to do him justice, he was born with every talent for writing history but that he falsified it and filled it with fairy tales to make it interesting. According to Crébillon the Man in the Iron Mask [43] was a fairy tale, and he said that he had been assured of it by Louis XIV himself.

The play being given at the Theâtre Italien that day was *Cénie,*[44] by Madame de Graffigny.[45] I went early to get a good place in the amphitheater.[46] The ladies covered with diamonds who were entering the first-tier boxes interested me, and I observed them attentively. I had a fine coat, but since the sleeves of it were open and it had buttons all the way down everyone who saw me recognized me as a foreigner; the fashion no longer existed in Paris. While my attention was thus occupied a richly dressed man three times my size approaches me and politely asks if I am a foreigner. I say that I am, and he immediately asks me if I like Paris. I reply by praising it; and at the same moment I see entering the box at my left a woman covered with jewels but immensely stout.

"Who on earth," I ask my fat neighbor, "is that fat sow?"

"She is the wife of this fat pig."

"Ah, Monsieur, I ask a million pardons."

But the man was in no state for me to beg his pardon for, far from being angry, he was choking with laughter. I was in despair. After having a good laugh, he rises, leaves the balcony, and a moment later I see him in the box speaking to his wife. I see them both laugh, and I was on the verge of leaving when I hear him calling me:

"Monsieur, Monsieur."

I cannot refuse without being impolite, and I approach the box. Now perfectly serious, he begs my pardon with the greatest dignity for having laughed so much and most graciously invites me to come to supper at his house that evening. I thank him and tell him that I already have an engagement. But he insists and his wife joins in, and to convince them that it is not a pretext I tell them that I am invited to Silvia's.

"I am certain," he says, "that I can obtain your release, if you have no objection; I will go to her myself."

I yield, he goes; he comes back later with Balletti, who gives me a message from his mother that she is delighted to have me make such excellent acquaintances and that she expects me for dinner the next day. Balletti tells me privately that it is Monsieur de Beauchamp,[47] Receiver-General of Finances.

After the play I gave my hand to Madame and got into her carriage. In their house I found the lavishness which was the rule among all people of their sort in Paris: a great crowd of guests, a great many parties at cards, and great gaiety at table. We rose from supper an hour after midnight, and I was driven home. The house was open to me during all the time I stayed in Paris, and it was very useful to me. Those who say that all foreigners who go to Paris are bored for at least the first two weeks are right, for it takes time to make one's way in. For my part, I know that in twenty-four hours I was already kept occupied and was sure that I would enjoy myself there.

The next morning Patu appeared at my lodging and presented me with the prose eulogy he had composed on the Maréchal de Saxe.[48] We set out together and went to breakfast at the Tuileries, where he introduced me to Madame du Boccage.[49] Speaking of the Maréchal de Saxe, the lady made a witty remark.

"It is strange," she said, "that we cannot say a *De profundis* for the man who has made us sing so many *Te Deums.*" [50]

Afterward he took me to call on a famous actress of the Opéra whose name was Le Fel,[51] a favorite of all Paris and a member of the Royal Academy of Music.[52] She had three small and charming children, who fluttered about the house.

"I adore them," she said.

"The beauty of their faces," I said, "is of a different sort in each of the three."

"And well it may be. The eldest is the son of the Duke of Aneci,[53] that one is by Count Egmont,[54] and the youngest is the son of Maisonrouge,[55] who has just married La Romainville."

"Oh, oh. Excuse me, I beg you. I thought you were the mother of all three of them."

"And so I am."

So saying she looks at Patu, and she and he together burst out laughing, which makes me blush to the ears. I was a novice. I was not used to hearing a woman usurp the rights of men in this way. Mademoiselle Le Fel was not shameless, she was frank, and superior to all prejudices. The noblemen to whom these little bastards belonged left them in their mother's care and paid her a pension for bringing them up, and the mother lived in luxury. My inexperience of Parisian customs led me into many such awkward blunders. Mademoiselle Le Fel would have laughed at anyone who told her that I had wit after the interrogation through which I had put her.

Another day, calling on Lany,[56] the ballet master at the Opéra, I saw four or five girls, each accompanied by her mother, to whom he was giving dancing lessons. They were all between thirteen and fourteen years old, and had the modest manner which comes from being well brought up. I said flattering things to them, and they replied by lowering their eyes. One of them had a headache, and I made her smell Eau des Carmes;[57] her little friend asks her if she had slept well.

"It is not that," the child answers; "I think I am pregnant."

At this unexpected reply I say, like a fool:

"I should never have thought that Madame was married."

She looks at me, then turns to her friend, and they both fall to laughing with all their hearts. I went away covered with shame and determined that in future I would never impute virtue to young women of the theater. They pride themselves on not having it, and they laugh at the stupidity of those who impute it to them.

Patu introduced me to all the women of pleasure who enjoyed some reputation in Paris; he loved the fair sex as much as I did, but unfortunately for him he did not have as strong a constitution as mine and he paid for it with his life. If he had lived he would have taken Voltaire's place. He died at the age of thirty, at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne,[58] on his way back from Rome to France. It was from him that I learned a secret which a number of young French writers use to make sure that their prose is perfect when they have to write something which demands the most beautiful prose possible, for example eulogies, funeral orations, letters of dedication. I got the secret out of Patu himself, by surprise.

One morning at his house I saw on his table loose sheets filled with unrhymed alexandrines;[59] I read a dozen verses and told him that, though they were well turned, they gave me more vexation than pleasure, and I added that what I had read in the verses had pleased me much more in the prose eulogy he had composed on the Maréchal de Saxe.

"My prose would not have pleased you if I had not first written everything I say in it in unrhymed alexandrines."

"That is going to a great deal of trouble for nothing."

"No trouble, since unrhymed verses require no effort. One writes them as if one were writing prose."

"Then you believe that your prose becomes more beautiful when you copy it from your own verses?"

"I believe it because there is no doubt of it; it becomes more beautiful, and in addition I make sure that my prose has not the fault of being full of hemistichs, which come from a writer's pen without his being aware of it."

"Is it a fault?"

"A great one, and unforgivable. Prose interlarded with chance verses is worse than prosaic poetry."

"It is true that involuntary verses which occur in an oration must make a bad impression and indeed be bad."

"Certainly. Take the example of Tacitus, whose history begins with *Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere* ('In the beginning the city of Rome was ruled by kings').[60] It is a very bad hexameter,[61] which he certainly did not write intentionally and which he did not notice afterward, for he would have constructed his sentence differently. Is not your Italian prose in which involuntary verses occur faulty?"

"Very faulty. But I will tell you that several writers of little genius put verses into their prose intentionally, to make it more sonorous; it is tinsel, but they flatter themselves that it will pass for gold and that their readers will not notice the difference. But I think you are the only writer who is willing to go to so much trouble."

"The only one? You are mistaken. All those to whom verses come without effort, as is the case with me, do it when the thing they are writing is to be copied by themselves. Ask Crébillon, the Abbé de Voisenon,[62] La Harpe,[63] anyone you please, and they will tell you what I am telling you. Voltaire was the first to make use of the art in the little pieces in which his prose is enchanting. His epistle to Madame du Châtelet[64] is one of them; it is superb; read it, and if you find a single hemistich, say that I am wrong."

I asked Crébillon, and he told me the same thing; but he assured me that he had never done it himself.

Patu could not wait to take me to the Opéra to see the impression which the spectacle would make on me, for an Italian cannot but find it extraordinary. The opera being given was entitled *Les Fêtes vénitiennes.*[65] An interesting title. We take places in the parterre, paying forty sous; one stands[66] there, and one finds good company. The spectacle is the delight of the nation. *Solus Gallus cantat* ("Only the cock [or: the Gaul] sings").[67]

After an overture which was very beautiful in its kind, performed by an excellent orchestra, the curtain goes up and I see a set representing the Piazzetta seen from the little island of San Giorgio Maggiore; but I am surprised to see the Doge's Palace on my left and the Procuratie and the great campanile on my right. This too ridiculous mistake—a disgrace to my century—begins by making me laugh, and Patu, whom I enlighten, has to laugh too. The music, though beautiful in the old style, entertains me for a time because of its newness, then bores me, and the recitative distresses me because of its monotony and its senseless shrieks. The French claim that this recitative of theirs replaces both the melopoeia of the Greeks and our *recitativo,* which they detest and which they would not detest if they understood our language.

As for the error in the stage setting, I attribute it to the crass ignorance of the painter, who had made a botch of copying a print. If he had found men wearing swords at their right sides he would not have understood that if he sees them on the right they should be on the left.

The action took place on a day during the Carnival, when the Venetians walk about masked in the great Piazza San Marco, and the scene represented gallants, procuresses, and women entering into and carrying on intrigues; everything in the way of costumes was false but amusing. But what really made me laugh was seeing the Doge and twelve Councilors come out of the wings in bizarre robes and fall to dancing a passacaglia.[68] Suddenly I hear the parterre clapping at the appearance of a tall, well-built masked dancer in a black wig with long curls which reached halfway to his waist and wearing a robe which was open in front and came down to his heels. Patu told me in devout and earnest tones that I was seeing the great Dupré.[69] I had heard him talked of, and I am all attention. I see the fine figure advance with rhythmical steps and, reaching the edge of the orchestra pit, slowly raise its arms in a circle, move them gracefully, extend them to the full, draw them in again, move its feet, take small steps, execute some mid-leg *battements,* then a pirouette, and disappear, backwards, into the wings. This whole dance of Dupré's lasted only thirty seconds. The clapping from the parterre and the boxes was universal; I ask Patu what it means, and he answers seriously that the applause was for Dupré's grace and the divine harmony of his movements. He was, he said, sixty years of age, and he was the same as he had been forty years earlier.

"What! He never danced differently?"

"He cannot have danced better; for the performance you saw is perfect. Is there anything above perfection? He always does the same thing, and we always find it new; such is the power of the beautiful, the good, the true, it speaks to the soul. This is true dancing; it is a song; you have no notion of it in Italy."

At the end of the second act out comes Dupré again with his face, needless to say, covered by a mask, and dances to a different air but, so far as I could see, the same thing. He advances toward the orchestra pit, halts for a moment, striking—I admit—a very fine pose; and suddenly I hear a hundred voices in the parterre whispering:

"Oh my God, my God! he is stretching, he is stretching."

And to tell the truth he appeared to be an elastic body which, by stretching, became larger. I granted Patu that there was grace in it all, and I saw that he was pleased. Immediately after Dupré I see a female dancer who rushes all over the stage like a madwoman, making *entrechats* to right and left in rapid succession, but scarcely rising, and violently applauded.

"She is the famous Camargo,[70] my friend, whom you have come to Paris in time to see. She is sixty years old too. She is the first woman dancer who dared to leap, before her they did not, and the wonderful thing is that she does not wear drawers."

"I beg your pardon, I saw."

"What did you see? It was only her skin, which, to tell the truth, is not white."

"La Camargo," I answered penitently, "does not please me; I prefer Dupré."

An admirer, a very old man, who was on my left, said that when she was young she did the *saut de basque* and even the *gargouillade*[71] and that he had never seen her thighs even though she danced without drawers.

"But if you never saw her thighs how can you swear that she did not have on drawers?"

"Oh, that sort of thing is easy to find out. I see that Monsieur is a foreigner."

"You are right about that."

A thing which pleased me at the French opera was the scene changes at the command of the whistle. Likewise the orchestra attacking at the stroke of the bow; but the originator of the music with scepter in hand indulging in violent movements to right and left, as if he had to make all the instruments work by strings, offended me.

What pleased me too was the silence of all the spectators. In Italy one is rightly scandalized by the insolent noise made during the singing, and one cannot but laugh afterward when one observes that silence is maintained during the performance of the ballet. There is not a place on earth where the observer does not note aberrations if he is a foreigner, for if he is a native of the country he cannot discern them.

I was delighted at the Comédie Française.[72] My great pleasure was to go there on the days when something old was being given and there were not two hundred spectators. I saw *Le Misanthrope, L'Avare, Le Joueur, Le Glorieux,*[73] and I pretended that I was seeing their first performances. I arrived in time to see Sarrazin, his wife Grandval, La Dangeville, La Dumesnil, La Gaussin, La Clairon, Préville,[74] as well as several actresses who had retired from the stage and were living on their pensions, among them La Levasseur.[75] I talked with them with pleasure, for they told me the most savory anecdotes. In addition they were very helpful. A tragedy was being performed in which a pretty actress played the mute role of a priestess.

"How pretty she is!" I said to one of these matrons.

"Yes, delicious. She's the daughter of the actor who played the confidant. She is very agreeable in company and shows a great deal of promise."

"I should very much like to make her acquaintance."

"Lord! that's not difficult. Her father and mother are civility itself, and I am sure they will be delighted if you ask them to invite you to supper, and they will not be in your way; they will go off to bed and leave you at table with the girl for as long as you please. You are in France, Monsieur, where people know what life is worth and try to make the most of it. We love pleasures and count ourselves happy if we can be the cause of them."

"Your way of thinking is divine, Madame; but how could I have the effrontery to ask an invitation to supper of respectable people who do not know me?"

"Lord, what are you saying? We know everyone. You see how I treat you. Would anyone think I did not know you? After the play I will introduce you."

"I will ask you, Madame, to do me the honor some other day."

"Whenever you please, Monsieur."

CHAPTER IX

My blunders in French, my successes, my numerous acquaintances. Louis XV. My brother comes to Paris.

ALL THE Italian actors in Paris wanted to show me how lavishly they lived. They invited me to meals, they entertained me. Carlino Bertinazzi,[1] who played Arlecchino, and whom everyone in Paris adored, reminded me that he had seen me at Padua thirteen years earlier, when he had come from Petersburg with my mother. He gave me a fine dinner in the house of Madame de La Caillerie,[2] where he was lodging. The lady was in love with him. She had four children, who fluttered about the house; I complimented her husband on their childish charm, and her husband replied that they were Carlino's.

"That may be so, but in the meanwhile it is you who take care of them, and it is you whom they should recognize as their father, whose name they will bear."

"Yes, that would be so in law; but Carlino is too decent a man not to look after them when I take it into my head to get rid of them. He knows very well that they are his, and my wife would be the first to complain if he did not admit it."

Thus did this honest man think, and thus did he express himself with the utmost calm. He loved Carlino as much as his wife loved him, with only the difference that the consequences of his fondness were not those which result in children being born. Affairs of this kind are not uncommon in Paris among people of a certain sort. Two of the greatest noblemen of France changed wives quite calmly and had children who bore the names not of their real fathers but of their mothers' husbands; this happened not a century ago (Boufflers and Luxembourg),[3] and the descendants of their children go under the same names today. Those who know about the matter laugh, and they are right. The privilege of laughing and being right is one which belongs only to those who know how a matter stands.

The richest of the Italian actors was Pantalone,[4] he was the father of Corallina and Camilla; in addition he knew and practiced the art of lending against pledges. He invited me to dinner with his family. The two sisters enchanted me. Corallina was being kept by the Prince of Monaco,[5] son of the Duke of Valentinois,[6] who was still alive, and Camilla was in love with the Count of Melfort,[7] the favorite of the Duchess of Chartres, who had recently become the Duchess of Orléans by the death of her father-in-law.

Corallina was less animated than Camilla, but she was prettier; I began paying my court to her at odd hours, as a person of no importance; but odd hours, too, belong to the proprietor; so I would sometimes be there at the time the Prince came to see her. On the first few of these occasions I bowed and left, but later I was asked to stay, for princes alone with their mistresses usually do not know what to do. The three of us would sup together, and their part would be to look at me, listen to me, and laugh; while mine was to eat and talk.

I thought it my duty to pay my respects to the Prince at the Hôtel de Matignon in the Rue de Varenne.

"I am very glad," he said to me one morning, "that you have come, for I promised the Duchess of Ruffec[8] that I would bring you to call on her, and we will go at once."

Another Duchess! I asked nothing better. We get into a *diable*,[9] a carriage then fashionable, and by eleven o'clock in the morning we are being received by the Duchess. I see a woman of sixty with a face covered with rouge, a blotchy complexion, thin, ugly, and faded, sitting immodestly on a sofa, who as soon as I appear cries:

"*Oh, what a handsome young man!* Prince, you are charming. Come and sit here, young man."

I obey, thoroughly astonished, and am immediately repelled by an unbearable stench of musk. I see a hideous bosom, which the virago displayed in its entirety, and pimples, not visible because they were covered with patches, but palpable. Where am I? The Prince leaves, saying that he will send his *diable* back for me in half an hour and will wait for me at Corallina's.

Scarcely is the Prince gone before the harpy surprises we with two drooling lips which offer me a kiss I should perhaps have put up with, but at the same time she extends a gaunt arm to the place to which her hellish fury bound her ugly soul saying:

"*Let's see if you have a fine . . .*"

"Oh, my God! Madame la Duchesse!"

"You draw back? You are acting like a child."

"Yes, Madame. Because . . ."

"What?"

"I have . . . I can't . . . I don't dare . . ."

"What's the matter with you?"

"I have the clap."[10]

"Filthy creature!"

She rises in anger, and so do I, and I make for the door and leave the house, very much afraid that the porter will stop me. I take a hackney coach, and I go and tell the infamous adventure in so many words to Corallina, who laughed heartily but at the same time agreed that the Prince had played me a foul trick. She praised the presence of mind with which I had escaped from the nasty situation; but she did not give me the opportunity to convince her that I had deceived the Duchess. Nevertheless I did not despair. I knew that she did not consider me enough in love.

At supper three or four days later I talked to her so eloquently and demanded my dismissal in such clear terms that she promised me the reward of my love on the following day.

"The Prince of Monaco," she said, "will not return from Versailles until day after tomorrow. Tomorrow we will go to the warren,[11] we will dine together in private, have a hunt with a ferret, and come back to Paris satisfied."

"Very good."

The next morning at ten o'clock we get into a cabriolet and are soon at the Vaugirard barrier.[12] Just as we are going through, along comes a *vis-à-vis*[13] with a foreign livery: "Stop, stop!"

It was the Chevalier de Württemberg, who, not condescending to give me even a look, begins flattering Corallina, then, thrusting out his whole head, whispers to her; she answers in the same manner, he speaks to her again, she thinks for a moment, then, taking my hand and with her face all smiles, says:

"I have important business with the Prince; go to the warren, my dear friend, dine there, hunt, and come to see me tomorrow."

So saying, she steps out, gets into the *vis-à-vis,* and abandons me.

Any of my readers who has found himself in a situation like mine has no need for me to explain the kind of anger with which I was fired at that outrageous moment. I am powerless to explain it to those who have not been so situated. I could not bear to remain in the accursed cabriolet a single instant; I told the driver to go to the devil, I took the first hackney coach I found, and went to see Patu, to whom I told the story in a fury. Patu found my adventure comical, not new, and quite within the rules.

"Within the rules?"

"Within the rules, for there is not a fancy man to whom something of the sort is not bound to happen, and who, if he is intelligent, is not willing to put up with it. For my part, I envy such a hitch; I would sign a note to have one like it tomorrow. I congratulate you. You are certain to have Corallina tomorrow."

"I don't want her any more."

"That's another matter. Shall we go dine at the Hôtel du Roule?[14]

"Yes indeed. It's an excellent idea. Let us go."

The Hôtel du Roule was celebrated in Paris. In the two months that I had spent there I had not yet seen it and I was most curious to do so. The capable woman who had rented it had furnished it very well and had twelve or fourteen choice girls there. She had a good cook, good wines, excellent beds, and she welcomed all who came to visit her. She was known as Madame Paris, she was protected by the police;[15] she was at some distance from Paris, hence she was certain that those who came to her establishment were people of means, for it was too far to go on foot. Her business was excellently organized; pleasures were charged for at a set price, which was not high. One paid six francs to breakfast with a girl, twelve francs to dine there, and a louis to sup and spend the night. It was an orderly house, and people spoke of it with admiration. I could not wait to be there, and I decided that it was better than the warren.

We get into a hackney coach. Patu says to the driver:

"To the Porte Chaillot."[16]

"I understand, Your Honor."

He is there in half an hour. He stops at a portecochère, on which I read "Hôtel du Roule." The door was closed. A mustachioed servant, emerging from a door at the rear, comes and looks at us. Satisfied with our appearance, he opens. We dismiss our coach, we enter; and he shuts the door. A well-dressed, polite woman, with one eye missing, who seemed to be about fifty, asks us if we have come to dine there and to see the young ladies of her household. We answer yes, and she conducts us to a drawing room where we see fourteen girls wearing identical dresses of white muslin, with their sewing in their hands, sitting in a semicircle; when we appear they all rise and simultaneously make us a deep curtsy. They all had their hair nicely dressed, were all about the same age, and all pretty—some tall, others of middle height, others short, some were brunettes, some blondes, some auburn-haired. We pass them all in review, saying a few words to each, and just as Patu was choosing his I take hold of mine. Our two choices cry out joyously, throw themselves on our necks, hurry us out of the room to show us the garden while we wait to be called for dinner. Madame Paris leaves us, saying:

"Take a stroll in my garden, gentlemen, enjoy the good air and the peace and silence which reign in my house, and I answer to you for the good health of the girls you have chosen."

After a short stroll each of us takes his partner to a room on the ground floor. The girl I had chosen looked rather like Corallina, so I immediately paid her my respects. We were summoned to table, where we dined moderately well, but we had scarcely finished our coffee when the one-eyed dame appeared, watch in hand, to tell us that our turn was over, but that by paying another six francs we could amuse ourselves until evening. Patu says that he agrees but wants to choose another partner, and I am of the same mind.

"It is for you to say, gentlemen."

So we go back to the seraglio, we choose again, and go out for a stroll. As might be expected, this second combat made us find the time too short. We were informed that it was up at an unpleasant moment, but we had to yield and obey the regulations. I took Patu aside, and after our philosophical considerations we concluded that these pleasures measured out by the hour fell short of perfection.

"Let us go back to the seraglio," I said, "and choose a third partner and assure ourselves that she will be in our power until tomorrow."

Patu liked my plan, and we went and imparted it to the abbess, who confessed that we thereby proved ourselves men of discernment. But when we entered the room to make a third choice, and the girls we had already had found that they were rejected, all the others laughed at them, and they avenged themselves by booing at us and saying that we were awkward.

But I was astonished when I saw my third, who was a beauty. I thanked Heaven that she had escaped me, for I was now sure that I would have her for fourteen hours. Her name was Saint-Hilaire;[17] she was the girl who, under the same name, became notorious a year later with an English nobleman who took her to England. She looked at me with an air of pride and scorn. It took me more than an hour's walk with her to calm her. She considered me unworthy to sleep with her because I had presumed not to take her either the first or the second time. But when I showed her that my inadvertence would now make us both the gainers, she began to laugh and she became charming to me. The girl had intelligence, culture, and everything necessary to make her fortune in the profession she had entered. While we were supping Patu said to me in Italian that I had forestalled him only by a moment, but he insisted on having her five or six days later. He assured me in the morning that he had spent the whole night sleeping; but I did not imitate him. La Saint-Hilaire was very well satisfied with me, and boasted of it to her companions. I returned to Madame Paris's more than ten times before I left for Fontainebleau, and I did not have the heart to take another girl. Saint-Hilaire was proud of having been able to hold me.

The Hôtel du Roule was the reason why I cooled off in my pursuit of Corallina. A Venetian musician named Guadagni,[18] handsome, well versed in his art, and a man of quick intelligence, succeeded in ingratiating himself with Corallina two or three weeks after I fell out with her. The handsome young fellow, who had only the appearance of virility, aroused Corallina's curiosity, and he was the cause of her breaking with the Prince of Monaco, who caught her in the act. But Corallina managed to patch it up with the Prince a month later, and to such effect that nine months later she gave him a child. It was a girl, whom she named Adélaïde[19] and whom the Prince dowered. Then the Prince left her after the death of the Duke of Valentinois to marry Signorina Brignole,[20] of Genoa, and Corallina became the mistress of Count de La Marche, who is now Prince of Conti.[21] Corallina is no longer living, nor is a son whom the Prince had by her and to whom he gave the title of Count of Montréal.[22] But to return to myself.

At this time Madame la Dauphine gave birth to a princess,[23] who at once received the title of Madame de France. In August I saw at the Louvre the new paintings which the members of the Royal Academy of Painting[24] were exhibiting to the public, and seeing no battle pieces I formed the plan of bringing my brother Francesco to Paris; he was in Venice and was talented in the genre. Parosselli,[25] the only French battle painter, being dead, I thought that my brother could make his fortune; I wrote to Signor Grimani and to my brother himself, and I persuaded them, but he did not reach Paris until the beginning of the next year.

King Louis XV, who was passionately fond of hunting, was in the habit of spending six weeks of the autumn of every year at Fontainebleau.[26] He was always back at Versailles by the middle of November. The journey cost him five millions; he took with him everything that could contribute to the enjoyment of all the foreign envoys and his whole court. The French and Italian comedians and his actors and actresses of the Opéra were commanded to follow him. During these six weeks Fontainebleau was far more brilliant than Versailles. Even so, the great city of Paris was not left without spectacles. Opera and the French and Italian players continued nevertheless, for there were so many actors that substitutes could be found for those who were absent.

Mario, Balletti's father, who had completely recovered his health, was to go there[27] with his wife Silvia and his whole family; he invited me to go with them, offering me a lodging in a house which he had rented, and I accepted. I could not have enjoyed a better opportunity to become acquainted with all the court of Louis XV and all the foreign envoys. So I at once waited on Signor Morosini,[28] now Procurator of San Marco, then Ambassador of the Republic to the King of France. The first day on which opera was given he permitted me to escort him; it was a piece by Lully.[29] I was seated in the parquet, exactly under the box occupied by Madame de Pompadour,[30] whom I did not know. In the very first scene the famous Lemaure[31] comes out of the wings and at her second line gives a shriek so loud and so unexpected that I thought she had gone mad; I give a little laugh, in all innocence, never imagining that anyone would think it out of place. A Blue Ribbon,[32] who was in attendance on the Marquise, asks me curtly from what country I come, and I answer curtly that I am from Venice.

"When I was in Venice I often laughed at the recitative in your operas too."

"I believe you, Monsieur, and I am equally certain that no one there ever thought of preventing you from laughing."

My rather sharp answer brought a laugh from Madame de Pompadour, who asked me if I really came from "down there."

"From where?"

"From Venice."

"Venice, Madame, is not down; it is up."

This answer of mine was thought even odder than my first, and the whole box falls to deciding whether Venice was down or up. Apparently it was concluded that I was right, and I was not attacked again. I listened to the opera without laughing, and since I had a cold I blew my nose too often. The same Blue Ribbon, whom I did not know, and who was the Maréchal de Richelieu,[33] remarked to me that apparently the windows of my room were not tightly closed.

"Beg pardon, Monsieur; they are even *calfoutrées.*"

There was general laughter, and I was mortified because I realized that I had mispronounced the word *calfeutrées.*[34] I looked thoroughly humiliated. A half hour later Monsieur de Richelieu asks me which of the two actresses pleased me better in the way of beauty.

"That one."

"She has ugly legs."

"One does not see them, Monsieur, and in any case in assessing the beauty of a woman the first thing I put apart[35] is her legs."

This witticism, which I had uttered by chance and of whose implication I was unaware, gave me standing and made the company in the box curious about me. The Maréchal learned who I was from Signor Morosini himself, who told me that he[36] would be pleased to have me wait on him. My witticism became celebrated, and the Maréchal de Richelieu received me graciously. The foreign envoy on whom I waited most assiduously was Lord

Keith,[37] Marshal of Scotland, who was Ambassador from the King of Prussia. I shall have occasion to speak of him.

It was on the day after I arrived in Fontainebleau that I went to court alone. I saw the handsome King on his way to mass, the whole royal family, and all the court ladies, who surprised me by their ugliness as those at the court of Turin had surprised me by their beauty. But seeing a surprising beauty among so much ugliness, I asked someone what the lady's name was.

"She is Madame de Brionne,[38] Monsieur, who is even more virtuous than beautiful, for not only is there not a single story about her but she has never given the slightest occasion for slander to invent one."

"Perhaps nothing became known."

"Oh, Monsieur, at court everything becomes known."

I went on alone, prowling everywhere, even into the royal apartments, when I saw ten or twelve ugly ladies who looked as if they were running rather than walking and so awkwardly that they seemed about to fall flat on their faces. I asked where they were coming from and why they were walking so awkwardly.

"They are coming from the apartment of the Queen, who is about to dine, and they walk so awkwardly because their slippers have heels half a foot high, which makes them walk with their knees bent."

"Why do they not wear lower heels?"

"Because they think these make them look taller."

I enter a gallery and I see the King pass supporting himself with one arm around Monsieur d'Argenson's[39] shoulders. Louis XV's head was ravishingly beautiful and set on his neck to perfection. Not even a most skillful painter could draw the attitude the monarch gave it when he turned to look at someone. One felt instantly forced to love him. I thought that I saw the majesty for which I had looked in vain in the face of the King of Sardinia. I felt certain that Madame de Pompadour had already fallen in love with that countenance when she contrived to make his acquaintance. Perhaps it was not true, but the face of Louis XV[40] compelled the observer to think so.

I enter a room in which I see ten or twelve courtiers walking up and down, and a table prepared for dinner, big enough for twelve, but set only for one.

"For whom is that table?"

"For the Queen, who is about to dine. There she is."

I see the Queen of France,[41] without rouge, wearing a large bonnet, looking old and pious, thanking two nuns who set on the table a plate containing fresh butter. She sits down; the ten or twelve courtiers who were walking about station themselves before the table in a semicircle ten paces away, and I join them in the deepest silence.

The Queen begins to eat, looking at no one and keeping her eyes fixed on her plate. She had eaten some of a dish and, finding it to her taste, she returned to it, but as she returned to it she cast her eyes over the company, apparently to see if she saw anyone to whom she should justify her epicureanism. She found him and she addressed him, saying:

"Monsieur de Lowendal."[42]

At the name I see a handsome man two inches taller than myself, who, bowing and taking three steps toward the table, answers:

"Madame."

"I believe that the best ragout of all is a fricassee of chicken."

"I am of that opinion, Madame."

After this answer, which was delivered in the most serious tone, the Queen eats and the Maréchal de Lowendal falls back three steps and resumes his previous station. The Queen said no more, finished dining, and returned to her apartments.

Curious as I was to make the acquaintance of the celebrated soldier who had taken Bergen-op-Zoom,[43] I am enchanted to have done so on this occasion. Consulted by the Queen of France on the excellence of a fricassee, and giving his opinion in the same tone in which a death sentence is pronounced at a court-martial. Enriched by the anecdote, I go to regale Silvia's table with it at an elegant dinner at which I found the choicest of agreeable company.

A week or ten days later I am in the gallery at ten o'clock, forming a line with everyone else to have the ever fresh pleasure of seeing the King go by on his way to mass and the singular pleasure of seeing the nipples of Mesdames de France[44] his daughters, who were so dressed that they displayed them to everyone, together with their completely bare shoulders, when I am surprised to see La Cavamacchie, Giulietta,[45] whom I had left in Cesena under the name of Signora Querini. If I was surprised to see her, she was no less so to see me in such a place. Giving her his arm was the Marquis de Saint-Simon,[46] first gentleman of the bedchamber to Prince de Conti.[47]

"Signora Querini at Fontainebleau?"

"You here? I remember Queen Elizabeth,[48] who said: *Pauper ubique jacet*" ("The poor man makes his bed everywhere").[49]

"The comparison is excellent, Madame."

"I am joking, my friend; I have come here to see the King, who does not know me, but the Ambassador will present me tomorrow."

She takes her place in the line five or six paces above me in the direction from which the King was to come. The King enters, with Monsieur de Richelieu by his side, and I see him immediately look at the supposed Madame Querini, and as he walks along I hear him address *his friend* exactly in these words:

"We have prettier women here."

After dinner I go to the Venetian Ambassador's, and I find him at dessert with a large company, seated beside Signora Querini, who, on seeing me, says the most gracious things possible, which was extraordinary in such a nitwit who had no reason either past or present to like me, for she was aware that I knew her through and through and had been able to make her do as I wished. But I understand the reason for it all, and I make up my mind to do everything to please her and even to serve her as a false witness if that should be what she needed.

She comes round to speaking of Signor Querini, and the Ambassador congratulates her on his having rendered justice to her merit by marrying her.

"Strangely enough," said the Ambassador, "I did not know of it."

"Yet it happened more than two years ago," said Giulietta.

"It is a fact," I said to him, "for it was two years ago that General Spada introduced the Signora by the name of Querini to all the nobility in Cesena, where I had the honor to be."

"I do not doubt it," said the Ambassador, looking at me, "since Querini himself writes me of it."

When I made to leave, the Ambassador took me into another room on the pretext of showing me a letter. He asked me what was said in Venice on the subject of the marriage, and I answered that no one knew of it and that, in fact, people were saying that the heir of the house of Querini was to marry a Grimani.[50]

"I will write the news to Venice day after tomorrow."

"What news?"

"That Giulietta is really Querini, since Your Excellency will present her as such to Louis XV."

"Who told you that I shall present her?"

"She herself."

"She may have changed her mind by now."

I thereupon repeated to him the exact words I had heard from the King's lips, which showed him the reason why Giulietta no longer wished to be presented. Monsieur de Saint-Quentin,[51] the minister who secretly carried out the monarch's private commands, had gone in person after mass to tell the beautiful Venetian that the King of France had poor taste, since he had not thought her more beautiful than several other ladies at his court. Giulietta left Fontainebleau early the next morning. I discussed Giulietta's beauty at the beginning of these memoirs;[52] her countenance had extraordinary charms, but they had lost their power by the time I saw her at Fontainebleau; then, too, she painted her face white, an artifice which the French cannot forgive; and they are right, for white paint conceals nature. Yet women, whose business is to please, will continue to use it, for they always hope to find a man who is taken in by it.

After my journey to Fontainebleau I saw Giulietta again at the Venetian Ambassador's; she laughed and told me that she had been joking when she called herself Madame Querini and that in future she would be obliged to me if I would call her by her real name of Countess Preati;[53] she told me to come and see her at the Hôtel du Luxembourg, where she was staying. I went there very often to amuse myself by observing her intrigues, but I never entered into them. During the four months which she spent in Paris she drove Signor Zanchi out of his mind. He was secretary of the Venetian Embassy, an amiable, upright, and well-read man. She made him fall in love with her, he said he was ready to marry her, she flattered him, and then she treated him so badly and made him so jealous that the poor wretch lost his reason and died soon afterward. Count Kaunitz,[54] Ambassador of the Empress-Queen, was attracted by her, and so was Count Zinzendorf.[55] The intermediary in these brief affairs was an Abbé Guasco,[56] who, not being rich and being extremely ugly, could aspire to her favors only by becoming her confidant. But the man on whom she set her heart was the Marquis de Saint-Simon. She wanted to become his wife, and he would have married her if she had not given him false addresses for him to obtain information about her birth. The Preati family, of Verona, which she had appropriated, disowned her, and Monsieur de Saint-Simon, who despite his love had managed to keep his common sense, had the strength of mind to leave her. She did not come off well in Paris, and she left her diamonds in pawn there. Back in Venice, she managed to marry the son of the same Signor Uccelli[57] who sixteen years earlier had taken her out of poverty and put her on the stage. She died ten years ago.

In Paris I still went to take lessons from the elder Crébillon; nevertheless my speech, which was full of Italianisms, often made me say in company what I did not mean to say, and my remarks almost always produced very odd jokes which were repeated afterward; but my gibberish did not prevent people from forming a favorable opinion of my wit; on the contrary, it gained me some choice acquaintances. Several women who mattered asked me to come and teach them Italian, adding that it would give them the pleasure of correcting my French, and in the exchange I gained more than they did.

Madame Préaudeau,[58] who was one of my pupils, received me one morning still in bed and saying that she did not feel like taking a lesson because she had taken medicine the night before. I asked her if during the night she had *déchargé*[59] well.

"What a question! What curiosity! You are intolerable."

"Lord, Madame, why does one take a medicine if it is not to *décharger*?"

"A medicine purges, Monsieur, and does not make one *décharger*, and let this be the last time in your life that you use the word."

"I know very well, now that I think of it, that I can be misinterpreted; but say what you will, it is the right word."

"Would you like some breakfast?"

"No, Madame, I've had it. I drank a *café* with two Savoyards[60] in it."

"Good God! I am lost. What a madman's breakfast! Explain yourself."

"I drank a *café,* as I drink one every morning."

"But that is nonsense, my friend; a *café* is the shop in which it is sold, and what one drinks is a cup of it."

"Do you drink the cup? In Italy we say *un caffè,* and we have brains enough to understand that we didn't drink the shop."

"He refuses to be wrong. And the two Savoyards—how did you swallow them?"

"Dipped in the coffee. They were no bigger than those you have there on your night table."

"You call those Savoyards? Say *biscuits.*"

"We call them Savoyards in Italy, Madame, for the fashion for them came from Savoy, and it is not my fault if you thought I ate two of those porters who stand at street corners to serve the public and whom you call Savoyards,[61] while they may be from some other country. In future I will say that I have eaten *biscuits,* to conform to your usage; but permit me to tell you that the term *Savoyards* fits them better."

In comes her husband; she tells him of our disagreements; he laughs and says that I am right. Her niece enters. She was a girl of fourteen, well behaved, intelligent, and extremely modest; I had given her five or six lessons, and since she liked the language and applied herself earnestly she was beginning to speak. Here is the fatal compliment which she addressed to me:

"*Signore, sono incantata di vi vedere in buona salute*" ("Sir, I am delighted to see you in good health").

"I thank you, Mademoiselle, but to translate 'I am delighted' you must say *ho piacere.* And again, to translate 'to see you,' you must say *di vidervi,* not *di vi vedere.*"

"I thought, Monsieur, that the *vi* should be put in front."

"No, Mademoiselle, we put it *derrière*" ("behind").[62]

Monsieur and Madame are dying with laughter, the young lady smiling, and I speechless and in despair at having made so gross a blunder; but it was done. I take up a book, sulking and wishing in vain that their laughter would end; but it lasted more than a week. My shameless *double-entendre* spread all over Paris and made me furious; but I at last learned the power of words and for the time being my credit diminished. Crébillon, after laughing heartily, told me that I should have said *après* instead of *derrière*. But if the French laughed over the mistakes I made in speaking their language, I took my revenge by pointing out some absurd usages of theirs.

"Monsieur," I ask, "how is Madame your wife?"

"You do her great honor."

"Her honor has nothing to do with it; I am asking after her health."

A young man in the Bois de Boulogne falls from his horse; I run to pick him up, but he is on his feet and full of life.

"Have you come to any harm?"

"On the contrary, Monsieur."

"Then I take it the fall did you good."

I am calling on Madame la Présidente Charon[63] for the first time; her nephew makes a brilliant entrance; she presents me and tells him my name and country.

"What! You are an Italian, Monsieur? On my word, you make such a good appearance that I would have wagered you were French."

"Monsieur, when I saw you I very nearly fell into the same error—I would have wagered that you were Italian."

"I did not know that I looked Italian."

I was at table at Lady Lambert's,[64] someone remarked on a cornelian I had on my finger on which the head of Louis XV was engraved to perfection. My ring makes the round of the table, everyone finds the likeness striking; a young Marquise hands me back the ring, saying:

"Is it really an antique?"

"You mean the stone? Yes, Madame, it is."

Everyone laughs, and the Marquise, who had the reputation of being intelligent, does not see fit to ask why people are laughing. After dinner the conversation turns to the rhinoceros which was being shown at the fair at Saint-Germain[65] for twenty-four sous a head. "Let us go see it, let us go see it!" We get into a carriage, stop at the fair, and take several turns through the walks, looking for the one in which the rhinoceros was. I was the only man, I had a lady on either arm, the intelligent Marquise was preceding us. At the end of the walk where we had been told the animal was, its master was sitting at the gate to take their money from people who wished to go in. It is true that he was dressed in African costume, enormously fat, and looked like a monster; but the Marquise ought at least to have recognized that he was a man. Not a bit of it.

"Are you the rhinoceros, Monsieur?"

"Step in, Madame, step in."

She sees us choking with laughter, and, seeing the real rhinoceros, she feels obliged to apologize to the African, assuring him that she had never in her life seen a rhinoceros and so he must not be offended if she had made a mistake.

In the greenroom of the Comédie Italienne, where during the intermissions the greatest noblemen are to be found, for they go there to get warm in winter and at all seasons to amuse themselves by talking with the actresses who sit there waiting for their turns in the parts they are playing, I was sitting beside Camilla, Corallina's sister, keeping her laughing by flirting with her. A young councilor, who did not like my monopolizing her attention, attacked me in a conceited tone on an account I had given of an Italian play and showed his ill-humor only too clearly by unjustly criticizing my country. I answered him in a way which he did not expect, keeping my eyes on Camilla, who laughed; and everyone present was intent on the encounter, which, as it was only a duel of wits, had nothing so far to make it disagreeable. But it seemed to become serious when the fop, changing the subject to the police of the city, said that for some time it had been dangerous to walk at night in Paris.

"In the last month," he said, "Paris has seen seven hanged men in the Place de Grève[66] and five of them were Italians. It is astonishing."

"Not at all astonishing," I replied, "for right-thinking people go and get themselves hanged outside their own countries—in proof of which sixty Frenchmen were hanged last year between Naples, Rome, and Venice. Five times twelve makes sixty, and you see that it is only a fair exchange."

The laughter was all on my side, and the young councilor left. An agreeable nobleman who thought I had answered well came up to Camilla and asked her in a whisper who I was, and the acquaintance was made. He was Monsieur de Marigny,[67] brother of Madame la Marquise, whom I was delighted to know so that I could present my brother to him, for I was expecting him from day to day. He was overseer of the royal buildings, and the whole Academy of Painting was under his jurisdiction. I mentioned my brother to him at once, and he promised me that he would be his patron. Another young nobleman struck up a conversation with me, asked me to come to see him, and told me that he was the Duke of Maddaloni.[68] I told him that I had seen him when he was still a child, eight years earlier in Naples, and that Don Lelio Caraffa, his uncle, had been my benefactor. The young Duke was delighted, and, he having repeatedly insisted that I come to see him, we became good friends.

My brother arrived in Paris in the spring of 1751, lodged with me at Madame Quinson's, and began working successfully for private individuals; but since his main idea was to paint a picture for the Academy to judge, I presented him to Monsieur de Marigny, who received him graciously and encouraged him by promising him his protection. So he set to work making sketches, in order not to fail in his purpose.

Signor Morosini, having completed his embassy, had gone back to Venice, and Signor Mocenigo[69] had come in his place. I had been recommended to him by Signor Bragadin and he opened his house to me, as he did to my brother, whom he was concerned to patronize as a Venetian and as a young man who was seeking to make his fortune in France by his talent.

Signor Mocenigo was completely unassuming; he loved gambling, and he always lost; he loved women, and he was unsuccessful because he did not know how to go about it. Two years after he came to Paris he fell in love with Madame de Colande;[70] she would have none of him, and the Venetian Ambassador killed himself.

Madame la Dauphine gave birth to a Duke of Burgundy,[71] and the rejoicings which I witnessed become incredible today when we see what the very same nation is doing against its King.[72] The nation wants to free itself; its ambition is noble and reasonable, and it will bring its enterprise to fulfillment under this same monarch, who, by a strange and unique coincidence, has a soul without ambition, the successor to sixty-five kings, all of them more or less ambitious and jealous of their authority. But is it likely that his soul will pass into the body of his successor?

France has seen her throne occupied by several other monarchs who were indolent, who hated work, avoided difficulties, and were concerned only with their own peace of mind. Secluded at the center of their palace, abandoning despotism to their deputies, who acted in their names, they always remained kings and true monarchs; but the world has never seen a king like this one, who has in good faith put himself at the head of the nation which has assembled to dethrone him. He seems delighted that he has at last reached the point of not having to think of anything except obeying. Hence he was not born to reign, and it seems certain that he regards as his personal enemies all those who, animated by a genuine regard for his interests, do not subscribe to the decrees of the Assembly, all of which are calculated to degrade the King's majesty.

A nation which revolts to cast off the yoke of despotism, which it calls and will always call "tyranny," is not unusual, for it is natural; the proof is that the monarch always expects it and is careful not to drop the reins, for he is certain that the nation will not fail to take the bit in its teeth. What is unusual, unique, and unexampled is a monarch who puts himself at the head of twenty-three millions of his subjects and asks nothing of them except that they leave him the empty name of king and leader, not that he may command them but to execute their orders. "Be legislators," he says to them, "and I will see that all your laws are carried out, provided that you will give me armed assistance against the unruly who will not obey; moreover you will be free to pursue them tooth and claw and tear them to pieces without any sort of legal proceedings; for who could oppose your will? You will actually occupy my place. Those who will object to this will be the nobles and the priests, but they are only one against twenty-five. It is for you to clip their physical and moral wings so that they will have no power to set bounds to your authority or to harm you. To achieve this you will break the pride of the priests by giving ecclesiastical dignities to your equals and by giving them only such stipends as are necessary to support them. As for the nobility, you do not need to impoverish it; you will have done enough if you cease to respect it for its empty titles of birth; there will be no more nobles; follow the example of the wise Turkish regulations;[73] when these gentlemen find that they are no longer dukes or marquises they will moderate their ambition, and the only pleasure which will remain to them will be to spend their money on ostentation, and so much the better for the nation, for their expenditures will pour their money into it, and it will make their money circulate and increase by commerce. As for my ministers, they will be discreet in the future, for they will depend upon you and it will not be for me to judge of their capability; I will choose them myself for form's sake; but I will dismiss as many of them as you please. I shall thus at last see an end to the tyranny under which they oppressed me, by making me do whatever they wished, by very frequently compromising me, and by always burdening the State with debt in my name. I said nothing, but I could bear it no longer. Now at last I am delivered. My wife, and in time my children, my brothers, my cousins who call themselves princes of the blood, will condemn me, I know, but only in their hearts, for they will not dare to speak out to me. I shall instill more fear in them now under your high protection than I did when my only defense was my household, the uselessness of which I have myself helped you demonstrate to the public.

"Those who are discontented and have gone to live outside of the kingdom will return to it one day or another if they feel so inclined, and if not, they must be left to do as they please; they say that they are my true friends, and they make me laugh, for I cannot have any true friends except those who are willing to think as I do. The only important thing in the world, according to them, is the ancient rights of our house to royalty and its concomitant despotism; the only important thing in the world, according to me, is first my peace, second the extirpation of the tyranny which my ministers exercised over me, and third that you should be content. I could also tell you, if I were a charlatan, that what concerns me is the wealth of the kingdom, but I am indifferent to it; it is for you to think of it, it concerns only you, since the kingdom is no longer mine; I am no longer, thanks be to God, King of France; but I am, as you very well put it, King of the French. All that I ask of you is that you make haste, and let me go hunting at last, for I am tired of being bored.''

This historic and completely authentic harangue proves, I believe, that the counterrevolution cannot take place. But it also proves that it will take place when the King changes his way of thinking; and there is no likelihood of that, as there is no likelihood that he can have a successor who will resemble him.

The National Assembly will do whatever it pleases, despite the nobility and the clergy, because it has at its service the unbridled people, the blind executor of its orders. At the present moment the French nation can be regarded as like gunpowder, or like chocolate; both are composed of three ingredients; their goodness could not, and cannot, depend upon anything but the proportions. Time will show us which ingredients were in excess before the Revolution, or which ingredients are in excess now. All I know is that the stench of sulphur is deadly and that vanilla is a poison.

As for the people, the people is the same everywhere: give a thief six francs to shout ''Long live the King,'' he will do you the favor, and for three livres[74] he will shout ''Death to the King'' a minute later. Put a rabble-rouser at its head and in one day it will destroy a citadel of marble. It has neither laws, nor system, nor religion; its gods are bread, wine, and idleness, it believes that liberty means impunity, that aristocrat means tiger, that demagogue means loving shepherd of his flock. The people, in short, is only an enormous animal which does not reason. The prisons of Paris are overflowing with prisoners who were all members of the people in revolt. Let anyone go and say to them, "I will open the doors of your prison if you will promise to blow up the hall in which the Assembly sits," they will agree and go at once. Every people is a union of executioners. The French clergy knows this; hence the clergy counts on nothing but the people if it can succeed in inspiring them with religious zeal, which is perhaps even stronger than zeal for liberty, which is known only by a process of abstraction of which material minds are incapable.

It is possible, moreover, not to believe that there is a single member of the National Assembly who is solely animated by his country's good. The soul of each of them is his own self-interest; and there is not one among them who, if he were king, would have imitated Louis XVI.

The Duke of Maddaloni introduced me to the Roman Princes Don Marcantonio and Don Giovanni Battista Borghese[75] who were amusing themselves in Paris and living without ostentation. I observed that when these Roman princes are presented at the French court they are received only under the title of Marquis. For the same reason the Russian princes who were presented were not accorded the title of Prince; they were called *Knez*.[76] It made no difference to them, for the word means "Prince." The French court was always scrupulously particular in the matter of titles. Simply reading the gazette is enough to show it. The title "Monsieur"—which is commonly given everywhere—is used very sparingly; "Sieur" is the form of address to the untitled. I noticed that the King called none of his bishops "Bishop," he called them "Abbé." He also affected not to know any nobleman of his kingdom whose name he did not find inscribed among those who were in his service. Yet the haughtiness of Louis XV had only been inculcated into him by his upbringing, it was not natural to him. When an ambassador presented someone to him, the person so presented went home certain that the King of France had seen him, but that was all. He was the most polite of Frenchmen, especially toward ladies and toward his mistresses in public; he dismissed from his favor anyone who dared to fail in respect to them, even in the slightest; and no one more than he possessed the royal virtue of dissimulation, faithfully keeping a secret and delighted when he was sure that he knew something of which everyone else had no inkling. Monsieur d'Éon's being a woman[77] is a small example. The King alone knew, and had always known, that he was a woman, and the whole altercation between the false Chevalier and the Foreign Office was a comedy which the King allowed to play itself out simply because it amused him.

Louis XV was great in everything, and he would not have had a failing if flattery had not forced failings upon him. How could he know that he was at fault when he was always being told that he was the best of kings? About this time the Princess of Ardore gave birth to a son.[78] Her husband, who was the Neapolitan Ambassador, wanted Louis XV to stand godfather to it, and the King consented. The present he gave his godson was a regiment. The new mother would have none of it, because she did not like soldiers. The Maréchal de Richelieu told me that he had never seen the King laugh so much as when he was informed of her refusal.

At the Duchess of Fulvy's[79] I made the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Gaussin,[80] known as Lolotte, who was the mistress of Lord Albemarle,[81] the English Ambassador, a man of brilliant and most noble parts and very generous, who, one night when he was out walking with Lolotte, chided her for praising the beauty of the stars she saw in the sky, since he could not give them to her. If His Lordship had been the English envoy in France at the time of the break between his nation and the French he would have patched things up, and the unhappy war which caused France to lose the whole of Canada[82] would not have occurred. There is no doubt that the harmony between two nations most often depends upon the respective envoys whom they have at the courts which are on the verge or in danger of falling out.

As for his mistress, all who knew her had the same opinion of her. She had all the qualities to deserve to become his wife, and the greatest houses in France did not consider that she needed the title of Lady Albemarle in order to be admitted into their society, and no woman was offended to find her seated at her side because it was common knowledge that she had no title except that of His Lordship's mistress. She passed from her mother's arms into His Lordship's at the age of thirteen, and her conduct was always irreproachable; she had children, whom His Lordship recognized, and she died Countess of Érouville. I will speak of her in due course.

At this same time I met at the house of the Venetian Ambassador Signor Mocenigo a Venetian lady,[83] the widow of the English baronet Wynne, who had just come from London with her children. She had gone there to make sure of her dowry and the estate of her late husband, which could not pass to her children unless they declared that they were of the Anglican religion. She had accomplished this, and she was returning to Venice satisfied with her journey. She had with her her eldest daughter,[84] who was only twelve years old but whose character was already delineated to perfection in her beautiful face. She now lives in Venice, the widow of the late Count Rosenberg, who died in Venice as Ambassador from the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa; she shines in her native country by her discreet behavior, her wit, and her social virtues, which are of the highest. Everyone says of her that her only failing is not being rich. It is true, but no one can complain of it; she feels how great a failing it is only when it prevents her from being generous.

At this time I had some little difficulties with the French guardians of the law.

CHAPTER X

I run foul of the law in Paris. Mademoiselle Vesian.

THE YOUNGEST daughter of my landlady Madame Quinson often came to my room unsummoned, and having perceived that she loved me I should have thought it strange in me if I had taken it into my head to be cold to her—the more so as she was not without qualities, she had a pretty voice, she read all the new publications, and rattled away about everything with a vivacity which was charming. Her age was an ambrosial fifteen or sixteen.

For the first four or five months there was nothing between us but childish trifling; but happening one night to come in very late I found her asleep on my bed. Curious to see if she would wake, I undressed by myself, I got in, and the rest goes without saying. At daybreak she went downstairs and got into her own bed. Her name was Mimi. Two or three hours later chance would have it that a milliner came with a young girl to see if I would offer them a breakfast. The girl was pretty, but having worked too hard with Mimi I told them to go away after spending an hour chatting with them. As they were leaving my room, in comes Madame Quinson with Mimi to make my bed. I sit down to write, and I hear her say:

"Oh, the sluts!"

"To whom do you refer, Madame?"

"The riddle is easily answered; these sheets are ruined."

"I am sorry; excuse me; say nothing and change them."

"Say nothing? Just let the hussies come back!"

She goes downstairs for fresh sheets, Mimi remains, I reproach her for her imprudence, she laughs and says that Heaven has protected the innocence of our doings. From that day on Mimi stood on no ceremony; she came to sleep with me when she felt the need, and I, no less unceremoniously, sent her away when I did not want her, and our little household was as harmonious as possible. Four months after our union Mimi told me she was pregnant; I answered that I did not know anything to do about it.

"Something must be thought of."

"Then think."

"What am I to think of? What will happen, will happen. As for me, I will not give it another thought."

By the fifth or sixth month Mimi's belly leaves her mother in no doubt of the state of things; she takes her by the hair, beats her, forces her to admit it, insists on knowing who is responsible for her girth; and Mimi tells her—and perhaps truthfully—that it is I.

Madame Quinson comes upstairs and enters my room raging. She flings herself into an armchair, recovers her breath, relieves her anger by insulting me, and ends by saying that I must prepare to marry her daughter. At this ultimatum I understand what is afoot, and I reply that I am married in Italy.

"Then why did you go and give my daughter a baby?"

"I assure you I had no such intention, and besides, who told you that it is I?"

"She did, Monsieur, she is certain of it."

"I congratulate her; for my part, I am ready to swear that I am not certain of it."

"Then what?"

"Then nothing. If she is pregnant, she will bear a child."

She goes downstairs threatening me, and from my window I see her get into a hackney coach. The next day I am summoned before the district commissary;[1] I go, and find Madame Quinson in battle array. After asking my name, how long I had been in Paris, and various other things, and writing down all my answers, the commissary asks me if I admit having done the wrong of which I was accused to the daughter of the lady there present.

"Be good enough, Monsieur le Commissaire, to write down my answer word for word."

"Very well."

"I have done no wrong to Mimi, daughter of Madame Quinson here present, and I refer you to Mimi herself, who has always shown me the same friendship that I have shown her."

"She says that you made her pregnant."

"It is possible, but it is not certain."

"She says it is certain, since she has seen no man but you."

"If that is true, she is unfortunate, for a man cannot trust anyone in such a matter except his wife."

"What did you give her to seduce her?"

"Nothing, for it was she who seduced me, and we were of one mind in an instant."

"Was she a virgin?"

"I was not concerned about that either before or afterward; so I have no idea."

"Her mother demands reparation from you, and the law is against you."

"I have no reparation to make to her, and as for the law, I will gladly submit to it when I have seen it and am convinced that I have broken it."

"You have already admitted that. Do you maintain that a man who gets a decent girl with child in a house of which he is an inmate does not transgress the laws of society?"

"I agree, if the mother is deceived; but when she sends her daughter to my own room, must I not suppose that she is prepared to suffer all the consequences of the frequentation without complaining?"

"She sent her to you only to serve you."

"And she served me, even as I served her in the needs of human nature; and if she sends her to me this evening I may do the same, if Mimi is willing, but nothing by force, or outside of my room, for which I have always punctually paid the rent."

"You can say what you please, but you will pay the fine."

"I will pay nothing, for there cannot be a fine to pay when no violation of law has occurred, and if I am found guilty I will appeal to the last jurisdiction and until equity does me justice, for I know that such as I am I shall never have the ill grace to refuse my caresses to a girl who attracts me and who comes to my own room to submit to them, especially when I am certain that she has come with her mother's consent."

Such, or very nearly such, was my interrogation, which I read and signed and which the commissary transmitted to the Lieutenant-General of Police,[2] who summoned me to a hearing and who, after examining the mother and daughter, acquitted me and sentenced the imprudent mother to pay the costs. Nevertheless I yielded to Mimi's tears and defrayed her mother for her lying-in. She gave birth to a boy, whom I allowed to go to the Hôtel-Dieu[3] for the benefit of the nation. After all this Mimi ran away from her mother's house to appear on the stage of the comic opera[4] at the Saint-Laurent fair[5] under Monnet.[6] As she was not known she had no trouble finding a lover who thought her a virgin. I was delighted when I saw her on the stage at the fair. I thought her very pretty.

"I did not know," I said to her, "that you were a musician."

"Like all the rest of us here. The girls at the Paris Opéra don't know a note either; but they sing just the same. All one needs is a good voice."

I asked Mimi to have Patu to supper and he thought her charming. But later she got into trouble. She fell in love with a violinist named Bérard[7] who ran through everything she had, and she disappeared.

The Italian players were then allowed to give parodies of operas and tragedies on their stage, and I made the acquaintance of the famous Chantilly[8] who had been the mistress of the Maréchal de Saxe,[9] and who was known as Favart because the poet Favart[10] had married her. She sang the part of Tonton in the parody of Monsieur de Fontenelle's[11] *Thétis et Pélée,*[12] to tremendous applause. Her charms and her talent won the heart of a man of the greatest merit, whom all France knew by his works. He was the Abbé de Voisenon,[13] with whom I became as intimately acquainted as I had been with Crébillon. All the plays which are generally supposed to be by Madame Favart and which bear her name are by the celebrated Abbé, who was elected to the Academy[14] after my departure. I made his acquaintance, I cultivated it, and he honored me with his friendship. It was from me that he conceived the idea of writing oratorios in verse, which were sung for the first time at the Concert Spirituel[15] at the Tuileries during the few days of the year when religion commands that the theaters be closed. The Abbé, secretly the author of several comedies, was a man whose health was as precarious as his person was small; he was all sparkle and grace, famous for his witticisms, which were cutting and which nevertheless offended no one. He could not have enemies, for his criticism only grazed the skin and did not sting.

"The King was yawning," he told me one day when he had just come back from Versailles, "because he has to go to the Parlement tomorrow to hold a bed of justice."[16]

"Why is it called a 'bed of justice'?"

"I don't know. Perhaps because justice sleeps in it."

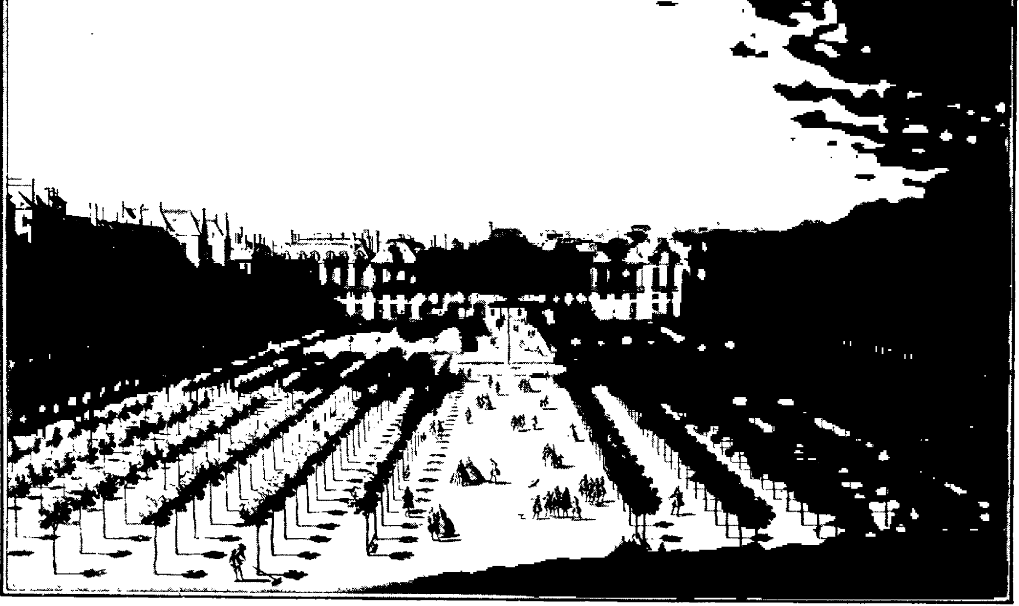
I found the image of the Abbé at Prague in the person of Count Franz Hartig,[17] now Minister Plenipotentiary of the Emperor at the electoral court of Saxony. It was the Abbé who introduced me to Monsieur de Fontenelle, who was then ninety-three years of age and who was not only a wit but also a profound natural scientist, famous too for his epigrams, of which a collection could be made. He could not pay a compliment without enlivening it with wit. I told him that I had come from Italy *expressly* to visit him. He answered, pouncing upon the meaning of the word "express":

"Confess that you have kept me waiting a long time."

A courteous and at the same time a critical answer, for it shows the mendaciousness of my compliment. He presented me with his works.[18] He asked me if I liked French theatrical performances, and I answered that I had seen *Thétis et Pélée* at the Opéra; it was by him, but when I praised it to him he said it was a *tête pelée*.[19]

"Friday at the Théâtre Français,"[20] I said, "I saw *Athalie*."[21]

"It is Racine's masterpiece, Monsieur, and Voltaire was wrong when he accused me of criticizing him by attributing to me an epigram of which no one has ever discovered the author and the last two lines of which are very bad:



Garden of the Palais-Royal, Paris

Pour avoir fait pis qu'Esther[22]
Comment diable as-tu pu faire?"

("How the devil did you manage to compose something worse than *Esther?*")[23]

I was told that Monsieur de Fontenelle had been the lover of Madame de Tencin[24] and that Monsieur d'Alembert[25] had been the fruit of their intimacy. Le Rond was the name of his foster father. I met D'Alembert at Madame de Graffigny's.[26] That great philosopher had in the highest degree the talent of never seeming learned when he was in an agreeable company of people who were not scientists. He also had the art of imparting intelligence to those who argued with him.

The second time I returned to Paris, on my flight from the Leads,[27] I looked forward to seeing Fontenelle again, and he died two weeks after I arrived, at the beginning of the year 1757.

The third time[28] I returned to Paris, intending to stay there until my death, I counted on the friendship of Monsieur d'Alembert, and he died just two weeks after the day I arrived, toward the end of the year 1783. I shall not see Paris again, nor France; I am too much afraid of the executions of an unbridled people.

Count Loss,[29] Ambassador of the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony[30] in Paris, ordered me in this year 1751 to translate into Italian a French opera which would allow for great transformation scenes and for great ballets connected with the subject of the opera, and I chose *Zoroastre*[31] by Monsieur de Cahusac. I had to fit the Italian words to the French music of the choruses. The music remains beautiful, but the Italian poetry did not come off well. Nevertheless I received from the generous monarch a handsome gold snuffbox, and greatly pleased my mother.[32]

At this same time Mademoiselle Vesian[33] came to Paris with her brother, in the first flush of her youth, well born, well brought up, very pretty, completely unspoiled, and as charming as possible. Her father, who had served in the army in France, had died in Parma, his native country; left an orphan, and having nothing to live on, his daughter followed the advice someone gave her to sell everything and make her way as best she could to Versailles with her brother to move the Minister of War[34] to pity and obtain something. Leaving the diligence, she told a coachman to take her to a furnished room near the Théâtre Italien, and the coachman took her to the Hôtel de Bourgogne[35] in the Rue Mauconseil, where I was lodging.

I was told the next morning that the room on the rear of my floor was occupied by two young Italians, a brother and sister who had just arrived, both very handsome but having with them only what could be contained in a small traveling bag. Italians, just arrived, good-looking, poor, and my neighbors were five reasons for my going in person to see what it was all about. I knock, I knock again, and a youth in his shirt comes and opens the door, begging my pardon for being in his shirt.

"It is I who must ask your pardon. I come as an Italian and your neighbor to offer you my services."

I see a mattress on the floor, on which, as the brother of the pair, the youth had slept, and I see a bed hidden by curtains in which I suppose the sister must be, and I say to her without seeing her that if I had thought she would still be in bed at nine o'clock in the morning I would not have made bold to knock at her door. She answers, without appearing, that she had slept longer than usual because she had gone to bed exhausted by the journey and that she would get up if I would be so kind as to give her time.

"I will go to my room, Mademoiselle, and you will be so good as to have me called as soon as you consider yourself fit to be seen. I am your neighbor."

A quarter of an hour later, instead of sending for me she arrives herself and making me a pretty curtsy says that she has come to return my visit and that her brother will come as soon as he is ready. I thank her, I ask her to be seated, I at once inform her candidly of the interest she inspires in me, she is delighted, and she does not wait for many questions to tell me the whole short and simple story which I have just described; she ends it by saying that she must try that day to find a cheaper lodging, for she has only six francs left and nothing to sell. She had to pay a month in advance for the room she was occupying. I ask her if she has any letters of recommendation, and she draws from her pocket a parcel of papers in which I soon see seven or eight testimonials to her father's services, baptismal certificates for him, herself, and her brother, death certificates, testimonials to good conduct and poverty, and passports. That is all.

"I will wait, with my brother," she says, "on the Minister of War, and I hope that he will take pity on us."

"You know no one?"

"No one. You are the first person in France to whom I have told my story."

"We are fellow countrymen. You are commended to me by your situation and your face, and I will be your adviser, if you are willing. Give me your papers and let me make inquiries. Tell no one that you are in want, do not leave this house, and here are two louis which I lend you."

She accepts them, overcome with gratitude.

Mademoiselle Vesian was a brunette sixteen years of age with every attraction, though not a perfect beauty. Speaking French well, she told me her pitiful situation without groveling and without the timidity which seems to come from fear that the listener is disposed to take advantage of the distress which is being confided to him.

She seemed neither humiliated nor bold; she was not without hope, and she did not boast of her courage; with a noble bearing, and with no sign that she was trying to make a parade of virtue, she yet had something which discouraged the libertine; and the proof is that though her eyes, her fine figure, her white, fresh complexion, her dishabille all tempted me, from the very first moment she summoned up my better feelings and not only did I make no attempt on her but I promised myself that I would not be the first to set her on the wrong road. I put off until another time a speech by which I should learn her attitude in that respect and which would perhaps make me adopt a different course of conduct; but on this first occasion I told her only that she had come to a city in which her destiny was bound to declare itself and in which all the qualities she possessed, and which appeared to be gifts of nature to help her make her fortune, might be the causes of her irreparable ruin.

"You have," I said, "come to a city in which rich men scorn all light women except those who have sacrificed their virtue to them. If you have virtue and are resolved to keep it, prepare to suffer poverty, and if you feel that you have a mind above prejudice and ready to consent to anything to secure you a comfortable position, at least try not to let yourself be deceived. Put no trust in the gilded words which a man full of ardor will address to you to obtain your favors; believe him when deeds will have preceded words, for after enjoyment the fire goes out, and you will find that you are betrayed. Beware, too, of assuming disinterested feelings in those whom you see overwhelmed by your charms: they will give you false coin in abundance to persuade you to give them good. Do not be compliant. For my part, I am sure that I will do you no harm, and I hope I shall do you good; and to reassure you, I will treat you like my sister, for I am still too young to treat you as a father:

I would not be talking to you in this way if I did not find you charming."

Her brother then entered, and I saw a handsome youth of eighteen years, very well built, but entirely lacking in style, speaking very little, and with a countenance that promised nothing. We breakfasted, and when I tried to learn from him what course he wished to take, he answered that he was ready to do anything to earn an honest living.

"Have you any particular talent?"

"I write fairly well."

"That is something. If you go out, beware of everyone; you must not go to a coffeehouse, and you must speak to no one in the street. Eat in your room with your sister, and arrange at once to have a small room for yourself on the fourth floor. Write something in French today to give to me tomorrow morning, and hope. As for you, Mademoiselle, here are books, choose among them. I have your papers, I shall have something to tell you tomorrow, for I come home very late."

She chose some books and took her leave in the most well-bred manner, after saying that she had complete confidence in me.

Very much inclined to be of use to the girl, I talked of her situation wherever I went all that day, and everywhere I heard both men and women say that if she was pretty some good fortune could not fail to befall her, and that in the meanwhile she should take what steps she could; as for the brother, I was told that if he could write a place would be found for him in some office. I considered finding a woman of station in a position to recommend her to Monsieur d'Argenson and to introduce her to him. It was the best course; I felt that I could support her meanwhile, and I asked Silvia to mention the matter to Madame de Monconseil,[36] who had great influence with the Minister of War. She promised me she would do so, and she asked to see the young lady first.

I got home at eleven o'clock, and seeing a light in Mademoiselle Vesian's room I knocked and she opened the door, saying that she had not gone to bed in the hope of seeing me. I told her all that I had done for her, and I found her ready for anything and overwhelmed with gratitude. She talked of her situation with an air of noble indifference which was maintained only to restrain tears which she would not allow to flow; but I saw her eyes, which the gathering tears made brighter, the sight wrung a sigh from me, and I felt ashamed. Our talk continued for two hours. In the course of the conversation I managed decorously to bring it out that she had never loved and so was worthy of a lover who would recompense her properly if she sacrificed her virtue to him. It was absurd to suppose that the recompense should be marriage; the girl had never taken the false step, but she did not play the prude by telling me that she would not have taken it for all the money in the world; her one hope was that she would not give herself inconsiderately or for very little.

I sighed as I heard her speaking so sensibly and with a sincerity beyond her years, and I burned. I remembered poor Lucia at Pasiano, my remorse, and the wrong I had done in acting toward her as I had acted, and I saw myself now sitting beside a lamb who was bound to be the prey of some hungry wolf and who had not been brought up to end so and whose education had given her sentiments which deserved to be fostered by virtue and honor. I sighed because I was in a position neither to provide her with a competence by taking her illegitimately, nor to be her safeguard. I even saw that by becoming her protector[37] I should have done her more harm than good and that instead of helping her to a respectable competence I should perhaps have contributed to her ruin. There she was, sitting beside me;

and there was I, talking sentiment to her and never love, kissing her hand too often and even her arm, and never proceeding to a decision or a beginning which would too quickly have reached its end and which would then have obliged me to keep her; after that, there would be no good for which she could hope or any way for me to get rid of her. I have loved women even to madness, but I have always preferred my freedom to them. When I have been in danger of sacrificing it, only chance has saved me.

It was three hours after midnight when I took leave of Mademoiselle Vesian, who, since she could not suppose that my restraint was the result of my virtue, must have attributed it either to shame or to impotence or to some secret malady; but not to a lack of inclination, for my amorous fire had sufficiently shown itself in my eyes and in the absurd avidity with which I kissed her hands and her arms. Such was I forced to be with that charming girl, only to repent of it afterward. As I wished her a happy slumber, I said that we would dine together the next day.

We dined in high spirits, and her brother went for a walk after dinner. The windows of my room, from which we saw the whole of the Rue Française, also permitted us to see all the carriages which were arriving at the entrance to the Théâtre Italien, where there was a great crowd that day. I ask my fellow countrywoman if she would be pleased to let me take her to the play; she begs me to do so; I find her a place in the amphitheater and I leave her there, saying that we would meet again at the house at eleven o'clock. I did not want to stay with her, in order to avoid all the questions I should be asked, for the more simply she was dressed the more interest she aroused.

After supping at Silvia's I go home, and at the door I see a most elegant carriage; I am told that it belongs to a young nobleman who had supped with Mademoiselle

Vesian and who was still there. So she was launched. What do I care? I go to bed.

I get up the next morning, I see a hackney coach stop at the door, a young man in morning dress gets out, comes upstairs, and I hear him enter my neighbor's room. It is nothing to me. I dress to leave, and in comes Vesian to tell me that he is not going to his sister's room because the same nobleman who had taken them to supper was with her.

"That is to be expected."

"He is rich, and extremely well-mannered. He wants to take us to Versailles himself, and to get me a position at once."

"Who is he?"

"I have no idea."

I put her papers in an envelope, which I seal, and give it to him to deliver to his sister, and I go out. I come back at three o'clock, and the hostess hands me a note which the young lady, who had gone, had told her to give me. I go to my room, I open the note, and I find two louis and these words: "I return the money you lent me, and I thank you. The Count of Narbonne[38] is concerned for me and certainly wishes only to help me, as he does my brother, and I will write you everything from the house in which he wishes me to live and where he will see that I want for nothing; but I have the highest regard for your friendship and I beg you to continue it toward me. My brother remains in the small room on the fourth floor, and my room is mine for the whole month, for I have paid for everything."

Her leaving her brother tells the story. She moved very fast. I decide to have nothing more to do with it, and I repent of having left her untouched for the young Count, who will make God knows what of her. I dress to go to the Français and to find out what I could about Narbonne, for, though I was angry, I felt some interest in learning the whole story. At the Comédie Française the first comer tells me that Narbonne is the son of a rich father on whom he is dependent, that he is riddled with debt, and that he frequents all the light women in Paris.

I went to two or three theaters every day, more to see Narbonne, whom I was curious to know, than for the sake of La Vesian, whom I thought I despised, and a week having gone by without my having managed to learn anything or even to see the young nobleman, I was beginning to forget the incident when Vesian came to my room at eight in the morning to tell me that his sister was in hers and that she wished to speak with me. I go without losing a moment, and I find her very sad and with her eyes swollen. She told her brother to go out for a walk, and she spoke to me as follows:

"Monsieur de Narbonne, whom I believed to be upright because I needed him to be so, sat down beside me where you left me, told me that my face interested him, and asked who I was. I told him all that I told you. You promised me that you would think about my situation; but Narbonne said there was no need to think and that he would see to everything immediately. I believed him; I was his dupe; he deceived me; he is a scoundrel."

As she could no longer hold back her tears I went to the window to give her time to shed them unobserved, and a few minutes later I returned to her side.

"Tell me everything, my dear Vesian, and unburden yourself freely. Do not think that you are guilty toward me, for when all is said and done I am the cause of your misfortune. You would not feel the grief which is rending your soul if I had not been so thoughtless as to take you to the theater."

"Alas, Monsieur, do not say that; am I to hold it against you that you believed me virtuous? To be brief: He promised to do everything for me on condition that I give him a proof of the confidence which he deserved that I should place in him; the proof was that I should go to lodge with a woman of station in a small house which he rented, and above all without my brother, for spite could think him my lover. Alas for me! Could I go there without asking your advice? He told me—and he lied to me—that the respectable woman to whose house he was taking me would herself escort me to Versailles, where he would arrange for my brother to be, so that we could be presented to the Minister together. After supper he left, saying that he would come for me the next morning in a hackney coach, and he gave me two louis and a gold watch, which I thought I could accept without putting myself under any obligation to a rich nobleman who said that he wished to do me good without any other design.

"When we reached his small house he introduced me to a woman whose appearance did not seem to me respectable, and he kept me there all this week, coming, going, leaving, returning, but never reaching a decision; when at last today, at seven o'clock in the morning, the woman told me that for family reasons the Count had been obliged to go to the country and that there was a hackney coach at the door to take me to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, from which he had brought me and where he would come to see me on his return. She told me, pretending regret, that I must leave the gold watch he had given me with her, for she had to return it to the watchmaker, whom the Count had forgotten to pay for it. I handed it to her instantly, answering not a word; I wrapped what I had brought with me in a kerchief, and returned here half an hour ago."

A minute later I asked her if she hoped to see him again on his return from the country.

"See him again! Speak to him again! Not I!"

I quickly went back to the window to give her tears scope again, for she was choking. Never did an unhappy girl in a lamentable situation so touch me. Pity took the place of the love she had inspired in me a week earlier, and though she did not accuse me of it I recognized that I was the chief cause of her misfortune; hence I felt obliged to show her the same friendship. Narbonne's infamous proceedings so disgusted me that if I had known where to find him alone there is no doubt that, without saying anything to La Vesian, I would have gone and attacked him.

I took care not to ask her for the detailed story of the week she had spent in the small house. It was a story which I knew by heart without needing to reduce her to humiliation by indirectly forcing her to tell it to me. In the return of the watch I saw the infamy, the low deceit, the miserliness, the shame of the base Narbonne. She left me at the window for more than a quarter of an hour; I returned to her when she called me, and I found her less sad. In great sorrow the relief of tears is an infallible remedy. She begged me to have the heart of a father toward her, assuring me that she would not again be unworthy of it, and to tell her what she should do.

"As things now stand," I said, "you must not only forget Narbonne's crime, you must also forget the error you made in enabling him to commit it. What is done is done, my dear Vesian; you must love yourself again and recover the expression which lightened your beautiful face a week ago. Honesty, frankness, good faith were visible in it then, and the noble self-assurance which arouses sympathy in those who appreciate its charms. All this must appear in your face again, for only this commands the interest of decent people, and you need their interest now more than ever. As for me, my friendship can do little, but I promise you the full extent of it when I tell you that you have a claim upon it which you did not have a week ago. I promise you that I will never leave you until you are certain of a secure future. At this moment I do not know what more to say; but be sure that I will take thought for you."

"Ah, my dear friend, if you promise me that, I ask no more. Alas, there is no one who takes thought for me!"

The reflection affected her so much that I saw her chin tremble and the onslaught of anxiety which made her faint away. I took care of her without summoning anyone, until I saw her restored and calm. I told her true or improvised stories about the snares set by those whose only occupation in Paris was to deceive girls; I told her amusing stories to cheer her, and I ended by saying that she ought to thank Heaven for what had happened to her with Narbonne, for she needed the misfortune to teach her once and for all to be more circumspect in future.

Throughout this conversation, by which I instilled true balm into her soul, I had no difficulty in abstaining from taking her hand and showing her signs of love, for to tell the truth the only feeling which animated me was pity. It was with genuine pleasure that, at the end of two hours, I saw her convinced and with courage enough to bear her misfortune like a heroine. She suddenly rises; she looks at me with an expression between confidence and doubt, and she asks me if I have any pressing business to attend to that day; I answer no.

"Then," she says, "take me somewhere outside of Paris, where breathing the country air will give me back the appearance which you consider I must have in order to enlist the interest of those who see me. If I can manage to sleep peacefully this coming night, I feel that I can be happy again."

"I thank you for your confidence in me; I will dress, and we will go somewhere; in the meanwhile your brother will come back."

"What does my brother have to do with it?"

"Remember, my dear friend, that you must make Narbonne ashamed and miserable all his life by your conduct. Consider that if he ever learns that on the very day on which he sent you away you went to the country alone with me, he will exult and say that he treated you as you deserved. But accompanied by your brother, and going with me your fellow countryman, you will give malice no ground and slander no occasion."

The docile child blushes and agrees to wait for her brother; he came back a quarter of an hour later, and I at once sent for a hackney coach. Just as we were getting into it Balletti turns up to call on me. After introducing him to the young lady I invite him to join the party; he accepts, and we go to Le Gros Caillou[39] to eat eel stew, boiled beef, an omelet, and boned and broiled pigeons; the gaiety which I managed to inspire in the young lady made up for the rather helter-skelter dinner.

After dinner Vesian went for a walk by himself, and his sister remained alone with us. I saw with pleasure that Balletti thought her agreeable, and without consulting her I determine to persuade my friend to teach her to dance. I inform him of her situation, of her reason for leaving Italy, the slight hope she had of obtaining a pension at court, and of her need for some employment suitable to her sex and by which she could live decently. Balletti reflects and says that he is ready to do anything, and after carefully considering the young lady's figure and frame of mind, he assures her that he will find a way to induce Lany[40] to take her for the ballets at the Opéra.

"Then," said I, "you must begin giving her lessons tomorrow. Mademoiselle is staying in the room next to mine."

The extemporized plan thus quickly decided upon, La Vesian burst out laughing at the idea of becoming a dancer, a thing which had never entered her head.

"But can one learn to dance so quickly? I can only dance the minuet, and I have a good ear for quadrilles; but I don't know a single step."

"The ballet girls at the Opéra," Balletti answers, "know no more than you do."

"And how much shall I ask from Monsieur Lany, for I do not think I can expect much?"

"Nothing. For ballet girls are not paid at the Opéra."

"Then what will I live on?"

"Don't worry about that. Such as you are, you will immediately find ten rich noblemen who will offer you their homage. Your part will be to choose wisely. We shall see you covered with diamonds."

"Now I understand. One of them will take me and keep me as his mistress."

"Exactly. It's much better than a pension of four hundred francs, which you will perhaps only obtain after a great deal of effort."

In her astonishment she looked at me to find out if all this was serious; and Balletti having gone off, I assured her that it was the best course she could take unless she preferred the dreary position of chambermaid to some great lady whom we might find for her. She answered that she would not be a chambermaid to the Queen herself.

"And a ballet girl at the Opéra?"

"Better that."

"You are laughing?"

"It's enough to make anyone die laughing. Mistress of a great nobleman, who will cover me with diamonds! I will choose the oldest."

"Right you are, my dear friend; but take care you do not cuckold him."

"I promise you I will be true to him. He will find a post for my brother."

"Of course."

"But until I get into the Opéra and my old lover appears, who will give me enough to live on?"

"I, Balletti, and all my friends—and all of us for no other reward than to see your beautiful face, to be sure that you are behaving as you should, and that we are contributing to your happiness. Are you convinced?"

"Completely convinced; I will do nothing but what you tell me to do. Only be always my friend."

We returned to Paris at nightfall. I left La Vesian at the Hôtel de Bourgogne and went off to sup with my friend, who at table made his mother promise to speak to Lany. Silvia said it was better than begging a wretched pension from the War Ministry. The talk then turned to a plan which was being considered by the management of the Opéra and which consisted in putting up for sale all the appointments for ballet girls and chorus girls; the intention, in fact, was to set a high price on them, for the more expensive they were the more the girls who bought them would be esteemed. This project, which was part of the general dissoluteness of the times, nevertheless had an appearance of wisdom. It would in a way have ennobled a breed of women who continue to be contemptible.

In those days at the Opéra I noticed a number of girls, both dancers and singers, who were ugly and untalented, yet all of whom were living comfortably; for it is inevitable that a girl who is there must, by her position, renounce what the lower classes call "virtue," for if one of them tried to live virtuously she would die of starvation. But if a new girl is clever enough to remain virtuous for a month her fortune is made, for then the noblemen who try to conquer such an exemplary virtue are among the most eminent. A great nobleman is delighted if the audience names him when the girl appears. He even forgives her some infidelities provided she does not throw away what he gives her and that she does not cuckold him too brazenly; the nobleman who keeps her seldom objects to her fancy man, and in any case he never goes to sup with his mistress without letting her know in advance. What chiefly makes French noblemen eager to have a girl at the Opéra to their credit is the fact that all the girls there belong to the King as members of his Royal Academy of Music.

I came home at eleven o'clock, and seeing Vesian's door ajar I went in. She was in bed.

"I'll get up, for I want to talk with you."

"Stay in bed, and you can talk with me just as well. I find you more beautiful."

"Then I am glad."

"What do you want to say to me?"

"Nothing—just to talk about the profession I am entering. I am about to practice virtue in order to find a man who loves it only to destroy it."

"That is it exactly; and believe me, everything in this life is much the same. We refer everything to ourselves, and each of us is a tyrant. That is why the best of mortals is he who is tolerant. I am happy to see you becoming a philosopher."

"How does one do that?"

"By thinking."

"How long?"

"All one's life."

"Then it's never over?"

"Never; but one learns what one can and gains all the share of happiness of which one is capable."

"And this happiness—in what effect is it felt?"

"It is felt in all the pleasures which the philosopher can procure for himself, and when he considers that he has procured them by his own efforts and by overriding all prejudices."

"What is pleasure, and what is prejudice?"

"Pleasure is immediate sensual enjoyment; it is a complete satisfaction which we grant to our senses in all that they desire; and when, exhausted or wearied, our senses want rest, whether to catch breath or to revive, pleasure becomes imagination; imagination takes pleasure in reflecting on the happiness which its tranquillity procures it. The philosopher is he who refuses no pleasure which does not produce greater pains and who knows how to create pleasures.''

''And you say this depends on overriding prejudices. What is prejudice, and how can we override it and where can we find the strength to do so?''

''There is no greater question in moral philosophy, my dear friend, than the one which you ask me; hence it is a study which lasts all our lifetime. But I will tell you briefly that prejudice means every so-called duty for which we find no reason in nature.''

''Then the principal occupation of the philosopher must be to study nature?''

''It is the only thing he must do. The wisest man is he who is least mistaken.''

''Who, according to you, is the philosopher who has been least often mistaken?''

''Socrates.''

''But he was sometimes mistaken.''

''Yes, in metaphysics.''

''Oh, that's no matter. I think he could get on without that.''

''You are wrong; for ethics itself is the metaphysics of natural science, since everything is nature. For which reason I allow you to call any man a fool who comes and tells you that he has made a new discovery in metaphysics. But now I must be becoming obscure to you. Think, be guided by maxims which follow from sound reasoning, always have your happiness in view, you will be happy.''

''I like the lesson you have given me much better than the dancing lesson Balletti is to give me tomorrow, for I foresee that I will be bored, and I am not bored in your company now."

"What tells you that you are not bored?"

"The desire I feel that you should not leave me."

"May I perish, my dear Vesian, if a philosopher ever defined boredom better than you have done. What a pleasure! How is it that I want to prove it to you by kissing you?"

"It is because our souls cannot be happy except when they are in harmony with our senses."

"What do I hear, divine Vesian? Your mind is giving birth."

"It is you, my divine friend, who are the midwife, and I am grateful to you for it, and so much so that I feel the same desire that you do."

"Then let us satisfy our desire, my dear, and embrace each other without restraint."

In such considerations we spent the whole night, and what assured us at dawn that our joy had been perfect was that it never occurred to us that the door of the room was open—proof that we never thought we had any reason to go and shut it.

Balletti gave her a few lessons, she was accepted at the Opéra, and she appeared there only two or three months, always governing herself by the precepts which I had inculcated in her and which her intelligence made her realize were golden. She refused all who came to conquer her, because they all in some way resembled Narbonne. The one she chose was a nobleman different from all the rest because he did for her what none of them would ever have done. He made her give up the stage at once. He took a small box for her, which she occupied every day there was a performance at the Opéra and in which she received her patron and all his friends. He was the Count de Tressan, if I am not mistaken, or de Trean,[41] for the name wavers in my memory. She remained with him until his death, always happy and making him happy. She still lives in Paris, dependent upon no one, for her lover settled an income on her. No one talks of her now, for in Paris a woman of fifty-six is as if she no longer existed. After she left the Hôtel de Bourgogne I did not speak to her again; when I saw her covered with diamonds, our souls greeted each other. Her brother was given a post, but the only profession he practiced was being married to La Piccinelli,[42] who may be dead by now.

CHAPTER XI

The beautiful O-Morphi. Imposture by a painter. I practice cabalism for the Duchess of Chartres. I leave Paris. My stay in Dresden and my departure from there.

AT THE Saint-Laurent fair my friend Patu took a notion to sup with a Flemish actress named Morphy[1] and invited me to join him; I accepted. La Morphy did not tempt me; but that did not matter—a friend's pleasure is motive enough. So he offered her two louis, which were at once accepted, and after the opera we went to the beauty's house in the Rue des Deux Portes Saint-Sauveur. After supper Patu wanted to sleep with her, and I asked for a couch for myself in some corner of the house. La Morphy's younger sister, a pretty, ragged, dirty little creature, said she would give me her bed but wanted a half écu;[2] I promised it to her. She takes me to a closet in which I see only a mattress on three or four boards.

"Do you call that a bed?"

"It's my bed."

"I don't want it, and you shan't have the half écu."

"Were you going to undress for bed?"

"Of course."

"What an idea! We haven't any bedclothes."

"Then you sleep with your clothes on?"

"Certainly not."

"Very well, go to bed yourself and you shall have the half écu. I want to see you."

"All right, but you mustn't do anything to me."

"Not a thing."

She undresses, lies down, and covers herself with an old curtain. She was thirteen years old. I look at the girl; I send every prejudice packing; I see her neither slovenly nor in rags, I find her a perfect beauty. I make to examine her completely, she refuses, she laughs, she resists; but a whole écu makes her as mild as a lamb, and since her only fault is being dirty I wash her all over with my own hands; my reader knows that admiration is inseparable from another kind of appreciation, and I find the little Morphy willing to let me do whatever I please, except what I did not want to do. She warns me that she will not permit that—for that, according to her elder sister, was worth twenty-five louis.[3] I tell her we will haggle about it some other time; and thereupon she gives me every indication of her future consent by consenting most freely to everything I could want.

The little Helen[4] whom I had enjoyed, though leaving her a virgin, gave her sister the six francs and told her what she hoped from me. She calls me aside before I leave and says that, since she needs money, she will come down a little. I answer that I will return and talk to her the next day. I wanted Patu to see the girl as I had seen her, to make him admit that it was impossible to see a more consummate beauty. Helen, white as a lily, had everything that nature and the art of the painter could combine in the way of perfect beauty. In addition she had a beauty of countenance which instilled the most delicious peace into the soul which beheld her. She was blonde. I went there that evening, and not having reached a suitable price, I gave her twelve francs in exchange for her sister's lending her her bed, and I finally came to an agreement to keep giving her twelve francs each time until I decided to pay the six hundred. The rate of interest was usurious, but La Morphy was a Greek[5] by nature, and she had no scruples in the matter. It is certain that I would never have brought myself to pay the twenty-five louis, for I should have thought that I was the loser by it. The elder Morphy thought me the greatest of dupes, since in two months I had spent three hundred francs for nothing. She attributed it to my stinginess. Stinginess indeed! I paid six louis to have her painted naked by a German painter,[6] who produced a living likeness. She was lying on her stomach, resting her arms and her bosom on a pillow and holding her head as if she were lying on her back. The skillful artist had drawn her legs and thighs in such a way that the eye could not wish to see more. I had him write under it *O-Morphi.*[7] The word is not Homeric, but it is Greek none the less. It means "beautiful."

But what are not the secret paths of all-powerful destiny! My friend Patu wanted a copy of the portrait. Can one refuse such a thing to a friend? The same painter made it, went to Versailles, and showed it, with several other portraits, to Monsieur de Saint-Quentin,[8] who showed them to the King, who became curious to know if the portrait of the "Greek Girl" was a true likeness. If it was, the monarch claimed the right to sentence the original to quench the fire which it had kindled in his heart.

Monsieur de Saint-Quentin asked the painter if he could bring the original of the "Greek Girl" to Versailles, and he answered that he thought it perfectly possible. He called on me to tell me of the proposal, and I thought it excellent. La Morphy jumped for joy when I told her that she was to go to court with her sister under conduct of the painter and there submit to the decrees of Providence. So one fine morning she cleaned up her little sister, dressed her decently, and went to Versailles with the painter, who told her to stroll in the park until he came back.

He came back with the Groom of the Bedchamber, who told him to go to the inn and wait for the two sisters, whom he took to a garden house and shut them in. I learned the next morning from La Morphy herself that a half hour later the King came, alone, asked her if she was Greek, drew the portrait from his pocket, looked carefully at her younger sister, and said:

"I have never seen a better likeness."

He sat down, took her on his knees, caressed her here and there, and, after his royal hand had assured him that she was a virgin, gave her a kiss. O-Morphi looked at him and laughed.

"What are you laughing at?"

"Because you are as like a six-franc piece[9] as two peas."

At this ingenuousness the monarch burst out laughing and asked her if she would like to stay at Versailles; she answered that he must arrange it with her sister, and her sister told the King that nothing could make her happier. The King then left, locking them in. A quarter of an hour later Saint-Quentin came and let them out, put the younger sister in an apartment on the ground floor in the custody of a woman, and went off with the elder sister to find the German, to whom he gave fifty louis for the portrait, but nothing to La Morphy. He only took her address, assuring her that she would hear from him. She received a thousand louis, which she showed me the next day. The honest German gave me twenty-five louis for my portrait and made me another, copying it from the one Patu had. He offered to paint for me, gratis, all the pretty girls whose portraits I might wish to have. What gave me the most pleasure was seeing the joy of the worthy Flemish girl, who, gazing at five hundred double louis,[10] thought she was rich, and who considered me the first cause of her good fortune.

"I didn't expect so much, for it's true that Helen is pretty but I didn't believe what she told me about you. Is it possible, my dear friend, that you left her a virgin? Tell me the truth."

"If she was, I can assure you that she did not cease to be by my doing."

"She certainly was, for you're the only one I gave her to. What a man of honor! She was destined for the King. Who would have thought it? God disposes. I admire your virtue. Come here and let me kiss you."

O-Morphi (for so the King always called her) pleased him even more by an ingenuousness of which the monarch had no notion than by her beauty, though it was as perfect as possible. He put her in an apartment in the Parc aux Cerfs,[11] where His Majesty kept nothing short of a seraglio and which no one was allowed to enter except ladies presented at court. At the end of a year[12] the girl bore a son, who became no one knows what, for Louis XV would never hear anything about his bastards as long as Queen Marie was alive.

O-Morphi fell into disgrace after three years. The King gave her four hundred thousand francs, which she brought as a dowry to a staff officer[13] in Brittany. I saw a son from this marriage at Fontainebleau in the year 1783. He was twenty-five years of age, and he did not know the story of his mother, whose living image he was. I asked him to give her my compliments and wrote my name on his tablets.[14]

The cause of the beauty's disgrace was the malice of Madame de Valentinois,[15] sister-in-law of the Prince of Monaco. During a visit to the Parc aux Cerfs, that lady, who is well known in Paris, told O-Morphi to make the King laugh by asking him how he treated his old wife.[16] O-Morphi, who was too simple-minded, asked the King the impertinent and insulting question, which so astonished the monarch that, rising and looking daggers at her,

"You miserable wretch," he said, "who got you to ask me that question?"

O-Morphi tremblingly told him the truth; the King turned his back on her and never saw her again. The Countess of Valentinois was not seen at court again until two years later. Louis XV, who knew that he failed his wife as a husband, wanted at least to make it up to her as King. Woe to anyone who dared fail in respect to her!

Despite all the wit of the French, Paris is and will always be the city in which impostors will succeed. When an imposture is discovered everyone shrugs and laughs, and the impostor laughs even more, for he has already become rich, *recto stat fabula talo* ("the play is a hit").[17] This characteristic which makes the nation fall into a trap so easily comes from the supreme influence which fashion exercises over it. The imposture is new; so it becomes fashionable. It is enough if the thing has the power to surprise by being out of the ordinary, and everyone welcomes it for everyone fears he will look foolish if he says "It is impossible." In France alone is it true that only natural philosophers know that between the possibility and the act there is infinity, whereas in Italy the meaning of the axiom is firmly fixed in everyone's mind. A painter had a great success for a time by announcing that he could paint a person's portrait without seeing him; all that he asked was full information from the person who ordered the portrait; he had to describe the countenance to him so precisely that the painter could not possibly go wrong. The result was that the portrait was even more to the informant's credit than to the painter's; it also followed that the informant had to say that the portrait was a perfect likeness, for if he said anything else the painter alleged the most legitimate excuse: he said that if the portrait was not a good likeness the fault lay with the person who had not been able to describe the subject's countenance to him. I was surprised at Silvia's when someone retailed this piece of news, but—be it noted—without ridiculing it or casting doubt on the skill of the painter, who, so he had heard, had already painted over a hundred portraits, all excellent likenesses. Everyone said it was brilliant. I alone, choking with laughter, said it was an imposture. The man who had told the story took offense and offered to wager me a hundred louis; but I laughed again, because it was a question on which one could not wager without running the risk of being duped.

"But the portraits are likenesses."

"I do not believe it; and if they are likenesses there is trickery."

Only Silvia, who was of my opinion, accepts his proposal to go and dine at the painter's with him and myself. We go, and we see a quantity of portraits, all said to be likenesses; but since we did not know the originals it meant nothing.

"Could you paint my daughter's portrait for me, Monsieur," Silvia asked him, "without seeing her?"

"Yes, Madame, if you are sure you can describe her countenance to me."

We exchanged a look, and that was the end of it. Politeness forbade us to say more. The painter, whose name was Sanson,[18] gave us a good dinner, and his niece, who was intelligent, pleased me extremely. As I was in a good humor I held her attention by making her laugh a great deal. The painter told us that his favorite meal was supper and that he would be honored if we would often give him the pleasure of our company at it. He showed us more than fifty letters from Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyons, Rouen, Marseilles, the writers of which ordered portraits from him, giving him descriptions of the faces they wanted him to paint; I read three or four of them with the greatest pleasure. He was paid in advance.

Two or three days later at the fair I saw his pretty niece, who reproached me for not coming to supper at her uncle's. The niece was very attractive and, flattered by her reproach, I went there the next day, and in a week or so the business became serious. I fell in love with her, and the niece, who was intelligent and was not in love, granted me nothing. Nevertheless I hoped, and I saw that I was snared.

I was drinking coffee alone in my room and thinking of her when I am visited by a young man whom I cannot place. He tells me he has had the honor to sup with me at the house of the painter Sanson.

"Ah yes, excuse me, Monsieur, I did not place you."

"That is only natural; at table you had eyes for no one but Mademoiselle Sanson."

"That may well be, for you must admit she is charming."

"It is not hard for me to admit it since, unfortunately, I know it only too well."

"Then you are in love with her."

"Alas, yes."

"Then win her love."

"That is what I have been trying to do for a year, and I was beginning to hope when you appeared and reduced me to despair."

"Who, Monsieur, I?"

"Yes, you."

"I am very sorry; but at the same time I fail to see what I can do about it."

"Yet it would not be very difficult, and if you will permit me I will myself suggest what you could do to oblige me."

"Please tell me."

"You could never set foot in her house again."

"I agree that it is the only thing I could do if I wanted very much to oblige you; but do you think that, if I did it, she would love you?"

"Oh, that is up to me. Meanwhile, do not go there again, and I will see to the rest."

"I admit that I may do you this extraordinary favor, but permit me to say that I think it strange you should have counted on it."

"Yes, Monsieur, after giving it much thought I saw that you were a man of great intelligence. I therefore made bold to conclude that you would be able to put yourself completely in my place, that you would consider the matter rationally, and that you would not wish to fight to the death with me for a young lady whom you, I imagine, do not wish to marry, whereas in my love my only object is that bond."

"And if I, too, were thinking of asking for her hand?"

"Then we should both deserve to be pitied, and I more than you, for as long as I am alive Mademoiselle Sanson will never be the wife of another."

This well-built young man, pale, serious, cold as ice, and in love, standing there in my own room deliberately saying such things to me with amazing calm, gave me occasion to think. I walked up and down for a good quarter of an hour to weigh the two courses of action dispassionately and see which of them would prove me the more courageous and the more worthy of my own esteem. I saw that the one which would best prove me the more courageous was the one which would prove to my rival that I was wiser than he.

"What will you think of me, Monsieur," I asked him firmly, "if I never set foot in Mademoiselle Sanson's house again?"

"That you pity an unhappy wretch who will always be ready to shed all his blood to show you his gratitude."

"Who are you?"

"I am Garnier,[19] only son of Garnier the wine merchant in the Rue de Seine."

"Very well, Monsieur Garnier, I will cease to visit Mademoiselle Sanson. Be my friend."

"Until death. Good-by, Monsieur."

A moment after he was gone, in comes Patu, to whom I tell the story and who declares me a hero; he embraces me, he thinks, and he says that he would have done the same in my place, but not in Garnier's place.

The Count of Melfort, then Colonel of the Orléans regiment, asked me through Camilla, sister of Corallina (the latter I no longer saw), to answer two questions by means of my cabala. I make up two answers which are very obscure but full of meanings, I seal them and give them to Camilla, who the next day asks me to go with her to a place which she will not name. She takes me to the Palais-Royal and we go up a narrow staircase to the apartment of the Duchess of Chartres,[20] who comes in a quarter of an hour later, showers the little beauty with caresses, and thanks her for having brought me to her. After a short preamble, all dignity and graciousness but without ceremony, she begins telling me all the difficulties she had found in the two answers I had given and which she had in her hand. After showing some surprise that the questions had been Her Highness's, I tell her that I know how to operate the cabala but that I am no good at interpreting it, so she must go to the trouble of asking further questions likely to produce clearer answers. So she writes down everything she could not understand and everything she wanted to know; I tell her that she must separate the questions, since one could not ask the oracle two things; she tells me to prepare the questions myself; I answer that she must write the whole with her own hand and imagine that she is interrogating an intelligence which knew all her secrets. She writes down everything she wanted to know in seven or eight questions; she reads them over to herself, and says with great dignity that she wishes to be sure that no one except myself will ever see what she has just written. I promise it on my word of honor; I read, and I see not only that she was right but that by putting them in my pocket to return them to her the next day with the answers I was in danger of compromising myself.

"I need only three hours, Madame, to do all this, and I want Your Highness to feel no anxiety. If Your Highness has anything to do, Your Highness can go and leave me here, provided that no one interrupts me. When I have finished I will seal everything; I need only know to whom I am to deliver the packet."

"To me, or to Madame de Polignac,[21] if you know her."

"Yes, Madame, I know her."

With her own hands the Duchess gave me a tinderbox so that I could light a small candle when I needed to seal, and she left and Camilla with her. I remained there, locked in; and three hours later, just as I was finishing, Madame de Polignac entered and I handed her the package and left.

The Duchess of Chartres, daughter of the Prince of Conti, was twenty-six years of age. She had in abundance the kind of intelligence which makes every woman who possesses it adorable, she was extremely animated, without prejudices, gay, witty in conversation, loving pleasure and preferring it to the hope of a long life. "Short and sweet" was an expression which was forever on her lips. In addition she was kind, generous, patient, tolerant, and constant in all her affections. With all that, she was very pretty. She carried herself awkwardly, and she laughed at the dancing teacher Marcel when he tried to correct her. She danced with her head bent forward and her toes turned in; even so, she was charming. A prime defect, which troubled her greatly and marred her beauty, was pimples, which were believed to be due to her liver but which in fact came from an impurity of the blood which finally caused her death and against which she struggled to her last breath.

The questions she put to my oracle were directed to matters which concerned her heart, and among other things she wanted to know a remedy to rid her beautiful skin of the small pimples which distressed everyone who saw her. My oracles were obscure concerning everything whose particulars I did not know; but they were not obscure concerning her malady, and it was this which made my oracle precious and necessary to her.

The next day after dinner Camilla, as I expected, wrote me a letter in which she asked me to drop everything and be at the Palais-Royal at five o'clock, in the room to which she had taken me. I went, and an old valet, who was waiting for me, set off at once and five minutes later I saw the charming Princess.

After complimenting me briefly but most graciously, she took all my answers from her pocket and asked me if I was busy; I assured her that my only business was to serve her.

''Good! I will not go out either and we will work.''

She thereupon showed me all the new questions she had already prepared on all sorts of subjects and especially concerning the remedy to make her pimples disappear. What had given her confidence in my oracle was something it had told her which no one could know. I guessed, and my guess was right; if I had not, it would have made no difference. I had had the same malady, and I was physician enough to know that a forced cure of a cutaneous disease by local remedies could kill the Princess. I had already answered that she could not be cured of the marks of the malady on her face in less than a week, and that it would take at least a year of dieting to cure it radically, but that in a week she would appear to be cured. We now spent three hours finding out all that she must do. Fascinated by what my oracle knew, she submitted to everything, and a week later all her pimples disappeared. I purged her every day, I prescribed what she should eat, I forbade her any pomades, advising her instead only to wash before going to bed and in the morning with plantain water.[22] My modest oracle told the Princess to use the same wash wherever she wanted to produce the same result, and enchanted with the Intelligence's discretion, the Princess obeyed.

I purposely went to the Opéra on the day when the Princess appeared there with her complexion completely clear. After the performance she walked in the great promenade of her Palais-Royal, followed by all the principal ladies, and flattered by everyone; she saw me and honored me with a smile. I felt I was the happiest of men. Camilla, Monsieur de Melfort, and Madame de Polignac alone knew that I had the honor to be the Princess's oracle. But the day after she went to the Opéra, small pimples returned to mar her face, and I was summoned to appear at the Palais-Royal in the morning. The old valet, who did not recognize me, showed me into a delightful little room next to another in which there was a bathtub, and the Duchess came in looking rather sad, for she had pimples on her chin and her forehead. She was holding a question for the oracle, and since it was short I amused myself by making her obtain the answer herself, which surprised her when, translating the numbers into letters, she found that the angel reproached her with having broken the prescribed diet. She could not deny it. She had eaten ham and had drunk liqueurs. Just then one of her chambermaids came in and whispered something to her. She told her to wait outside for a moment.

"You will not take it amiss, Monsieur," she said, "to see someone here who is a friend of yours and discreet."

So saying, she puts all the papers which have nothing to do with her malady in her pocket and she calls. In comes a person whom I really took to be a stable boy. It was Monsieur de Melfort.

"Look," she said, "Monsieur Casanova has taught me to operate the cabala," and she showed him the answer she had obtained. The Count did not believe it.

"Then," she said to me, "we must convince him. What do you want me to ask?"

"Whatever Your Highness pleases."

She thinks, she takes an ivory box from her pocket, and she writes: *"Tell me why this pomade no longer produces any effect on me."*

She constructs the pyramid, the columns, and the keys as I had already taught her to do, and when she is ready to obtain the answer I show her how to make various additions and subtractions which appear to arise from the numbers but which are really arbitrary, then I tell her to translate the numbers into letters and I go out, alleging some necessity. I come back when I think the translation has been completed, and I see the Duchess beside herself with astonishment.

"Ah, Monsieur, what an answer!"

"It may be wrong; but that can happen."

"Not at all; it is divine. Here it is: *'It has no effect except on the skin of a woman who has not had children.'* "

"I see nothing astonishing in the answer."

"Because you do not know that the pomade is the one prescribed for me by the Abbé de Brosses,[23] which cured me five years and ten months ago before I gave birth to the Duke of Montpensier.[24] I would give everything I possess in the world to learn to operate this cabala myself."

"What!" said the Count. "It is the same pomade the history of which I know?"

"The very same."

"It is astonishing."

"I should like to ask another question about a woman whom I do not wish to name."

"Just say 'the woman I have in mind.'"

She then asks what the woman's malady is, and I make her obtain the answer that she wants to deceive her husband. At that the Duchess cried out in amazement.

It was very late, and I left with Monsieur de Melfort, who had first spoken privately to Her Highness. He told me that what the cabala had answered about the pomade was astonishing; and here is the story.

"The Duchess," he said, "pretty as you see her, had her face so full of pimples that the Duke, in disgust, could not bring himself to sleep with her, hence she would never have borne a child. The Abbé de Brosses cured her with this pomade, and in all her beauty she went to the Comédie Française in the Queen's box. As chance would have it, the Duke of Chartres goes to the theater, not knowing that his wife was there, and takes a place in the King's box. He sees his wife in the opposite box, he thinks her pretty, he asks who she is, he is told that she is his wife, he does not believe it; he leaves his box, goes to see her, compliments her on her beauty, then goes back to his box. At half past eleven we were all at the Duchess's apartment; she was playing cards. Suddenly—and contrary to all precedent—a page informs the Duchess that the Duke her husband is entering her apartment, she rises to receive him, and the Duke tells her that he had thought her so beautiful at the theater that, on fire with love, he has come to ask her to allow him to get her with child. Hearing this, we all left immediately; it was in the summer of the year '46, and in the spring of '47 she gave birth to the Duke of Montpensier, who is five years old and in good health. But after her lying-in the pimples came back and the pomade had no more effect."

After relating this anecdote the Count took from his pocket an oval tortoise-shell box with a very good likeness of the Duchess and gave it to me as a present from her, saying that if I wanted to have it set in gold she sent me the gold as well, and he handed me a roll of a hundred louis. I accepted it, begging him to express all my gratitude to the Princess; but I did not have the portrait set in gold, for I was greatly in need of money at the time. When the Duchess summoned me to the Palais-Royal after that there was no further question of curing her pimples, for she would never follow a diet; instead she made me spend five hours or six hours now in one corner now in another, leaving me, coming back again, having dinner or supper served to me by the old valet, who never spoke a word to me. The cabalas concerned only private matters of her own or of other people in whom she was interested, and she hit upon truths which I did not know I knew. She wanted me to teach her to operate the cabala, but she never pressed me to do it; she only had Monsieur de Melfort tell me that she would obtain me a post which would give me an income of twenty-five thousand livres if I would teach her the calculations. Alas, it was impossible. I was madly in love with her, but I never let her see the least sign of my passion. I thought such a conquest beyond me. I feared I should be humiliated by too scornful a refusal, and perhaps I was a fool. All I know is that I have always regretted that I did not speak out. It is true that I enjoyed several privileges which she might not have allowed me to enjoy if she had known that I loved her. I was afraid that I should lose them if I declared myself. One day she wanted the oracle to tell her if it was possible to cure a cancer which Madame La Pouplinière[25] had on one breast. I took it into my head to answer that the lady did not have a cancer and was in excellent health.

"What!" she said, "everyone in Paris believes it, and she consults every doctor; nevertheless, I believe the cabala."

She sees Monsieur de Richelieu at court and she tells him she is sure that Madame La Pouplinière is shamming; the Marshal, who was in on the secret, told the Duchess she was wrong, and she offered to wager him a hundred thousand francs; when she told me this, I trembled.

"Did he accept your wager?"

"No. He seemed amazed, and you know that he ought to know."

Three or four days later she told me that Monsieur de Richelieu had admitted to her that the cancer was a ruse to excite pity in her husband, to whom she wanted to return, but that the Marshal had told her he would pay a thousand louis to find out how she had discovered it.

"If you want to earn them," she said, "I will tell him everything."

"No, no, Madame—I implore you."

I feared a snare. I knew the Marshal's character; and the story of the hole[26] in the fireplace wall by which that illustrious nobleman entered the lady's house was known all over Paris. Monsieur de La Pouplinière had himself made the thing common knowledge by refusing to see his wife, to whom he gave twelve thousand francs a year. The Duchess had composed some very pretty verses on the affair; but no one outside of her own circle had seen them except the King, who was very fond of her despite the fact that she occasionally treated him to cutting witticisms. One day she asked him if it was true that the King of Prussia was coming to Paris; and the King having replied that there was no truth in it, she retorted that she was sorry because she was dying to see a king.

My brother, who had already painted several pictures in Paris, decided to present one of them to Monsieur de Marigny. So one fine morning we went together to call on the nobleman, who lived in the Louvre,[27] where artists went to pay court to him. We were in the large room next to his apartment, and having been the first to arrive were waiting for him to come out. The picture was hanging there. It was a battle piece in the style of Bourguignon.[28]

In comes a man dressed in black, sees the picture, stops in front of it for a moment, and says, addressing no one:

"It is bad."

A moment later two more men come in, look at the picture, laugh, and say:

"It is by some student."

I glanced at my brother, who was sitting beside me, sweating profusely. In less than a quarter of an hour the hall is full of people, and the badness of the picture was the butt of all those who stood around it snickering and criticizing. My poor brother was almost expiring and kept thanking God that no one knew him.

As his state of mind provoked me to laughter, I got up and went into the next room. I told my brother, who followed me, that Monsieur de Marigny would come out presently and, by declaring his picture beautiful, would avenge him on all these people; but with great good sense he did not agree with me. We go downstairs as fast as possible, and get into our hackney coach, ordering our servant to go and fetch the picture. And so we went home, and my brother slashed his picture a good twenty times with his sword and instantly resolved to settle his affairs, leave Paris, and go elsewhere to study and master the art to which he had devoted himself. We decided to go to Dresden.

Two or three days before the end of my pleasant stay in the enchanting city of Paris, I dined alone at the Tuileries in the house of the Swiss at the Porte des Feuillants,[29] whose name was Condé. After dinner his wife, who was rather pretty, handed me a bill in which I found that everything was charged double; I tried to get it reduced, but she would not take off even a liard.[30] So I paid, and as the bill was receipted at the bottom by the words "femme Condé," I took the pen and added to the "Condé" a "Labre."[31] After which I left and walked toward the swing bridge.[32] When I had stopped thinking about the Swiss's wife who had overcharged me, I see a short man with his hat over one ear, an enormous bouquet in his buttonhole, and wearing a sword of which the hilt guard tierced two inches, who comes up to me with an insolent look and tells me in so many words that he has a mind to cut my throat.

"By jumping, since you are only a dwarf compared with me, who will cut off your ears."

"Hell and damnation, Monsieur!"

"That is enough from you. You have only to follow me."

I stride toward the Étoile,[33] where, seeing no one, I ask the insolent fellow what he wants with me and what reason he has to attack me.

"I am the Chevalier de Talvis.[34] You have insulted a respectable woman who is under my protection. Unsheathe."

So saying, he draws his sword. I instantly draw mine and, not waiting for him to guard his body, I wound him in the chest. He jumps back and says that I have wounded him treacherously.

"You lie; admit it, or I will cut your throat."

"You will do no such thing, for I am wounded; but I demand my revenge, and our meeting will be judged."

I left him there; but my thrust was legitimate, for he had his sword out before I did. If he did not guard his body, it was his own fault.

In the middle of August I set out with my brother from Paris, where I had stayed for two years and where I enjoyed all the pleasures of life without any drawbacks, except perhaps that I was often short of money. By way of Metz and Frankfurt we reached Dresden at the end of the month, and we saw our mother, who greeted us most affectionately in her delight at seeing the first two fruits of her marriage, whom she could not hope to see again. My brother devoted himself entirely to studying his art by copying the excellent battle pictures by the most famous painters in the celebrated gallery.[35] He spent four years there until he considered that he was ready to go back to Paris and face criticism. I will relate in due course how we returned there nearly at the same time; but before then my reader will see how I was treated by an alternately benignant and hostile Fortune.

The life I led at Dresden until the end of the Carnival in the following year, 1753, offers nothing out of the ordinary. The only thing I accomplished was to favor the actors with a tragicomedy in which I had two characters playing the role of Harlequin. My play was a parody of Racine's *Frères ennemis*.[36] The King laughed heartily at the comic incongruities with which my comedy was filled, and at the beginning of the Carnival I received a handsome present from the monarch, whose prodigality was seconded by a minister[37] whose equal in liberality Europe has nowhere seen. I said good-by to my mother, my brother, and my sister, who had married Peter August, the court harpsichordist, who died two years ago leaving his wife with a decent competence and his family happy.

I spent the first three months of my stay in Dresden making the acquaintance of all its mercenary beauties. I found them superior to those of Italy and France in physical endowments, but very inferior in grace, in wit, and in the art of pleasing, which chiefly consists in appearing to be in love with the man who has found them attractive and pays them. In consequence they have the reputation of being cold. What stopped me in this ruthless pursuit was a malady with which I was infected by a Hungarian girl in La Creps's[38] bevy. It was the seventh infection, and I got rid of it, as always, by dieting for six weeks. I have never done anything in my life except try to make myself ill when I had my health and try to make myself well when I had lost it. I have been equally and thoroughly successful in both, and today in that particular I enjoy perfect health, which I wish I could ruin again; but age prevents me. The malady which we call the "French disease" does not shorten life when one knows how to cure it; it merely leaves scars; but we are easily consoled for that when we consider that we gained them with pleasure, even as soldiers take pleasure in seeing the scars of their wounds, the proofs of their virtue and the wellsprings of their fame.

King Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, was fond of his Prime Minister Count Brühl because he spent proportionately more than his master and because he never let him think that anything was impossible. The King was an inveterate enemy of economy, laughing at those who robbed him and spending lavishly merely to find occasions for laughing. Not having wit enough to laugh at the political blunders of his fellow monarchs and the absurdities of people in general, he had in his service four buffoons, known in German as "fools,"[39] whose function was to rouse laughter by outright scurrility, low jests, and impertinence. These gentlemen often obtained considerable favors from their master for those whose interests they undertook to advance. Hence they were often honored and cultivated by decent people who needed their patronage. Where is the man whom necessity does not drive to baseness? Agamemnon in Homer tells Menelaus that necessity commands them to be base.

Both the common voice and history are wrong today when they say that Count Brühl was the cause of what was then called the "ruin of Saxony."[40] The man was no more than his master's faithful minister; and all his children, who inherited nothing of all the wealth he was supposed to have accumulated, sufficiently justify their father's memory.

In short, I saw at Dresden the most brilliant court in Europe, and the arts which flourished at it. I saw no amorous intriguing, for King Augustus was not inclined that way, nor is gallantry in the nature of the Saxons unless their sovereign sets them the example.

On arriving in Prague, where I did not intend to stay, I only sent over a letter from Amorevoli[41] to Locatelli,[42] the manager of the opera, and went to see La Morelli.[43] She was an old acquaintance, who took the place of everything else for me during the three days I spent in that vast city. But just as I was about to leave, I ran into my old friend Fabris[44] in the street; he was now a colonel and he insisted on my going to dine with him. I embrace him and explain to him that I must leave.

"You shall leave this evening with a friend of mine and overtake the diligence."

I did as he wished, and I was delighted. He was longing for war, which came two years later,[45] and he won great glory in it.

As for Locatelli, he was an original character and well worth knowing. He ate every day at a table laid for thirty; the guests were his actors and actresses, his dancers and danseuses, and his friends. He presided himself over the excellent fare which he served, for good eating was his passion. I shall have occasion to speak of him when I come to my journey to Petersburg, where I saw him again and where he died not long ago at the age of ninety.[46]

CHAPTER XII

My stay in Vienna. Joseph II. My departure for Venice.

SO HERE I am, in the capital of Austria for the first time, at the flourishing age of twenty-eight. I had a few possessions, but scarcely any money; so I had to go slowly until the return of a letter of exchange which I at once drew on Signor Bragadin. The only other letter I had was one from the poet Migliavacca,[1] of Dresden, introducing me to the celebrated Abate Metastasio,[2] whose acquaintance I was most eager to make. I presented it to him on the next day but one, and in an hour's conversation I found him even more learned than his works proclaim him to be and with a modesty which at first I could not believe was natural; but I very quickly perceived that it was real when it vanished as soon as he recited something of his own and himself pointed out its beauties. I talked to him of his teacher Gravina,[3] and he recited five or six stanzas which he had composed on his death and which were not printed, and I saw him shed tears, touched by the sweetness of his own poetry. After reciting them to me, he added these words:

"Ditemi il vero: si può dir meglio?" ("Tell me the truth: is it possible to write better?")

I answered that only he had the right to believe it impossible. I asked him if his beautiful lines cost him much effort, and he at once showed me four or five pages filled with erasures due to his trying to bring fourteen lines to perfection. He assured me that he had never been able to compose more lines than that in a day. He then substantiated a truth which I already knew, namely, that the lines which cost a poet the most labor are those which uninitiated readers think cost him none. I asked him which of his operas he liked the best, and he said it was his *Attilio Regolo,*[4] and he added:

"Ma questo non vuol già dire che sia il migliore." ("But that does not necessarily mean it is the best.")

I told him that all his works had been translated into French prose[5] at Paris, and that the publisher had gone bankrupt because it was impossible to read them, and that this showed the power of his beautiful poetry. He answered that some other fool had gone bankrupt in the previous century by translating Ariosto[6] into French prose, and he laughed heartily at those who maintained, and who maintain, that a work in prose has the right to be called a poem. On the subject of his ariettas, he said that he had never written one of them without setting it to music himself, but that he usually did not show his music to anyone; and he laughed heartily at the French for believing that it is possible to fit words to a tune composed beforehand. He made a very philosophical comparison:

"It is," he said, "as if you said to a sculptor: 'Here is a piece of marble, make me a Venus which will show her expression before you have carved her features.' "

At the Imperial Library[7] I found, to my great surprise, Monsieur de La Haye with two Poles and a young Venetian[8] whom his father had entrusted to him for a good education. I embraced him several times. I thought he was in Poland. He told me that he was in Vienna on business and that he would go back to Venice in the summer. We called on each other, and as soon as I told him I had no money he lent me fifty zecchini, for which I was grateful to him. The news he told me which gave me decided pleasure was that of his friend the Baron de Bavois, who was already a lieutenant-colonel in the Venetian service. He had had the good fortune to be chosen as adjutant-general by Signor Morosini, whom the Republic had appointed border commissioner[9] on his return from his embassy in France. I was delighted at the good fortune of those who could not but recognize me as first cause of it. I learned beyond doubt in Vienna that De La Haye had been a Jesuit; but no one was allowed to speak to him on the subject.

Not knowing where to go and wanting amusement, I went to the rehearsal at the opera,[10] which was to open after Easter, and I found Bodin, the premier danseur, who had married La Geoffroi. I had seen them both at Turin. I also found Campioni, the husband of the beautiful Ancilla, who told me that he had divorced her because she dishonored him. Campioni was a great dancer and a great gambler. I lodged with him.

Everything in Vienna was splendid, there was much money and much luxury; but there was great hardship for those who were votaries of Venus. Rascals turned spies, who were known as "Commissaries for Chastity,"[11] pitilessly persecuted all pretty girls; the Empress, who had all the virtues, had not the virtue of tolerance in the matter of illegitimate love between a man and a woman. That great and very religious sovereign hated mortal sin in general, and wishing to deserve well of God by extirpating it, she rightly thought that it must be persecuted in detail. So, taking into her royal hands the register of what are called mortal sins, she found that they numbered seven, and she thought she could hedge about six of them, but she considered lechery unforgivable, and it was against lechery that her zeal mustered all its forces and let loose.

"It is possible," she said, "not to recognize pride, for dignity bears its standard. Avarice is horrible, but one may be mistaken about it, for it may look like economy to him who loves money. As for anger, it is a disease which is murderous when the fit is on, but murderers are punished with death. Gluttony may be only love of choice food, which is considered a virtue in good society, and it is connected with appetite. So much the worse for those who die of indigestion! Envy is never admitted, and sloth is punished by boredom. But lust is what I cannot pardon. My subjects shall be free to find any woman beautiful in whom they see beauty, and women may do whatever they wish to the end of appearing so; let men and women desire one another as much as they please, I cannot prevent it; but I will never tolerate the base act which satisfies that desire and which is nevertheless inseparable from human nature and the cause of the reproduction of the species. Let people marry if they wish to have that pleasure, and let all those perish who wish to procure it for money, and let there be exile in Temesvar[12] for all the miserable women who live on what they suppose they can earn by their charms. I know that Rome is indulgent in the matter, to prevent, so they say, sodomy and incest and adultery; but my climate is different; my Germans don't have the devil in their bodies like the Italians, who have not, as we have here, the resource of the bottle; in addition, a watch will be kept for licentiousness of any consequence, and when I learn that a wife is unfaithful to her husband I will have her locked up too, despite the claim that her husband is her only master. This cannot be admitted in my dominions, for husbands here are too indolent. Fanatical husbands who claim that I dishonor them by punishing their wives may protest as much as they please. Are they not already dishonored?"

"But, Madame, dishonor can be only in the thing being known, and besides, you may be mistaken."

"Be still!"

From this ferocious principle, the product of the only fault which the great Maria Theresa had *sub specie recti* ("under the appearance of rectitude"),[13] arose all the injustices and all the violences committed by the murderous "Commissaries for Chastity." At every hour of the day any girl who was walking alone in the streets of Vienna, even to earn an honest living, was seized and haled off to prison. But how could it be known that these girls were going to some man's house for solace or were looking for some man to solace them? A spy followed them at a distance; the police had five hundred of them in their pay, and they were not in uniform. When the girl entered a house the spy who had seen her, having no way of knowing to what floor she had gone, waited downstairs for her and took her in charge to find out on whom she had called and what she had done there, and at the least obscurity in her answers, the villain haled her off to prison, beginning by taking whatever money or jewels she had, of which nothing more was ever heard. During a disturbance in the street at Leopoldstadt a girl who was running away, and whom I did not know, slipped a gold watch into my hands, foreseeing that it would become the booty of those who were going to take her to the Stockhaus.[14] A month later I returned it to her, after hearing her story and by what sacrifices she had delivered herself from her torments. In short, all girls who walked in the streets of Vienna were reduced to carrying rosaries. Then they could not be arrested out of hand, for they said they were going to church, and Maria Theresa would have had the Commissary hanged. Vienna was so encumbered with these blackguards that a man who needed to make water could hardly find a place where no one would see him. I was greatly surprised one day when I was interrupted by a fellow in a round wig who threatened to have me arrested if I did not go and finish somewhere else.

"Why, if you please?"

"Because to your left there is a woman at a window who can see you."

I look and, sure enough, I see in a fourth-story window the face of a woman who, if she had had a spyglass, could have seen whether I was a Jew or a Christian. I obeyed, laughing at the incident, which I related to all and sundry; but no one thought it unusual.

I went to the "Sign of the Crawfish"[15] to dine with Campioni at the common table and I was surprised to see Bepe il cadetto, whom I had met at the time of my arrest by the Spanish army and had seen again at Venice and later at Lyons under the name of Don Giuseppe Marcati. Campioni, who had been his partner in Lyons, embraced him, spoke to him privately, and told me before we sat down at table that the gentleman had resumed his real name, which was Count Afflisio. He said that after dinner they would make a bank at faro, in which I would have a small share, and so I must refrain from playing. I agreed. The bank was made, Afflisio won, Captain Beccaria[16] threw the cards in his face; but Afflisio prudently disregarded it. Afflisio, Campioni, and I went to a coffeehouse with an engaging officer, who looked at me and smiled but not in such a way as to offend against good manners.

"I am smiling because you do not remember me."

"No, Monsieur, but it seems to me . . ."

"Nine years ago at Prince Lobkowitz's order I conducted you to the gate in Rimini."

"You are Baron Weiss."[17]

"The same."

He offered me his friendship and promised to procure me all the pleasures in his power in Vienna. And that very evening he introduced me to a countess, at whose house I met the Abate Testagrossa,[18] whom everyone called Grossatesta, who was Ambassador from the Duke of Modena and well liked at court because he negotiated the marriage between the Archduke and the Princess Beatrice d'Este.[19] Among the guests I met a Count Roggendorf [20] and a Count Sarotin,[21] and several Fräuleins,[22] together with a baroness who had gone the pace but who was still attractive. Supper was served and I was made a baron; it was in vain that I said I had no title; I was told that in such a company I had to be something and I could not be less than a baron and I must agree to be one if I wanted to be received anywhere in Vienna. I gave in. The Baroness nonchalantly made me understand that I was to her taste and that she would be glad to receive my attentions; I paid her a visit the next day: she told me to come in the evening if I liked cards, and I met several players. It was there that I met Tramontini,[23] whose wife I already knew as Signora Tesi.[24] There I also met three or four Fräuleins who, quite unawed by the Commissaries for Chastity, were devoted to love and so kindly disposed that they had no fear of sullying their nobility by accepting money. After discovering the privileges enjoyed by these young ladies, I saw that the Commissaries were a hindrance only to people who did not frequent good houses.

The Baroness told me that I might introduce my friends to her if I had any, and after consulting Campioni, I brought Afflisio, Baron Weiss, and even Campioni, who, being a dancer, did not need a title. Afflisio played, held the bank, won, and Tramontini introduced him to his wife, who introduced him to her Prince Sachsen-Hildburghausen.[25] It was there that Afflisio began the triumphant career which ended so badly for him twenty-five years later. Tramontini, having become his partner in the great gambling sessions which he induced him to organize, easily got his wife to persuade the Prince to have him made a captain in the service of Their Imperial and Royal Austrian Majesties. It did not take long, for three weeks later I myself saw him in uniform. He was already in possession of a hundred thousand florins when I left Vienna, the Empress loved play, and the Emperor too, but not as a punter. He had someone hold a bank for him. He was a good prince, magnificent yet economical; I saw him in his role of Imperial Majesty and was surprised to find that he was dressed in the Spanish fashion.[26] I thought I was seeing Charles V, who established this etiquette, which still existed despite the fact that after him no Emperor was Spanish and Franz I had no connection with that nation. I saw the same thing, but with better reason, in Warsaw at the time of the coronation of Stanislas August Poniatowski,[27] who also indulged the whim of wearing Spanish dress. The costume brought tears to the eyes of the old courtiers, but they had to swallow the pill, for under the Russian despotism they were left with no power but the power to think.

The Emperor Franz I was handsome, and I should have known that his physiognomy promised good fortune even if I had not seen him a monarch. He treated his wife with the utmost consideration, he did not prevent her from being prodigal, for it was only Kremnitz ducats[28] which she staked at cards or gave away in pensions, and he let her put the State in debt because he had the skill to become its creditor himself. He favored commerce because he put into his coffers a good share of the profits which it produced. He was also given to gallantry, and the Empress, who always addressed him as "Master," pretended not to notice. Perhaps she did not want it known that her charms did not suffice her husband's nature, and the more so since everyone admired the beauty of her numerous family. I saw all her Archduchesses[29] and thought them all beautiful except the eldest; among the males I studied only her eldest son,[30] whose physiognomy I found unpromising, despite the contrary opinion of the Abate Grossatesta, who also prided himself on being a physiognomist.

"What do you see in it?"

"I see conceit and suicide."

I guessed rightly, for Joseph II killed himself; and despite the fact that he did not intend it, he killed himself none the less. His conceit was the reason for his not being aware of it. What he professed to know, and did not know, made what he did know useless, and the acuity he tried to have spoiled what acuity he had. He loved to talk to anyone who, dazzled by his reasoning, did not know how to answer him, and those whose sound arguments invalidated his own he called "pedants." He told me in Laxenburg[31] seven years ago, talking of a man who had spent a fortune to buy a patent of nobility, that he despised anyone who bought one. I replied that it would be better to despise the person who sold it. He turned his back on me and from then on did not consider me worthy to hear his voice. His passion was to see people laugh, at least in their sleeves, when he told some story, for he told them well and embroidered on the circumstances amusingly; and he considered those who did not laugh at his jokes lacking in intelligence. They were precisely the people who understood them best. He preferred the arguments of Brambilla,[32] who encouraged him to kill himself, to those of the doctors whose advice to him was *Principiis obsta* ("Resist from the beginning").[33] As for the art of ruling, he did not know it, for he had no knowledge of the human heart, he could neither dissimulate nor keep a secret; he showed the pleasure he took in punishing, and he had not learned to control his countenance. He so far neglected this art that when he saw someone he did not know he made a grimace which rendered him very ugly, when he could have used an eyeglass instead, for the grimace seemed to say, "Who can that creature be?"

He succumbed to a malady which was most cruel in that it left him his reason until the end and because, before killing him, it showed him that his death was inescapable. He must have known the unhappiness of repenting of everything he had done and the other unhappiness of being unable to undo what he had done, partly because it was impossible and partly because he would have thought it dishonorable, for his sense of his high birth must always have remained in his soul even when it was languishing. He had the greatest esteem for his brother,[34] who reigns in his stead today, yet he had not the strength of mind to follow the important advice which he more than once gave him. With great magnanimity he gave a large reward to the intelligent physician[35] who had pronounced his death sentence, but with no less pusillanimity he had some months earlier rewarded the physicians and the charlatan who had made him believe he was cured. He also had the unhappiness of knowing that he would not be regretted; it is a most grievous thought. Another misfortune he had was not to die before the Archduchess his niece.[36] If those who were about him had really loved him, they would have spared him the dreadful news, for he was already dying and there was no need to fear that he would so far recover as to punish discretion as indiscretion; but they were afraid that his successor would not be generous to the worthy lady, who at once obtained a hundred thousand florins. Leopold would have defrauded no one.

Delighted by my stay in Vienna and by the pleasures I procured with the beautiful Fräuleins whom I had met at the Baroness's, I was thinking of leaving, when Monsieur Weiss, encountering me at the wedding festivities for Count Durazzo,[37] invited me to a picnic at Schönbrunn. We went, and I did not stint myself in anything;

but I returned to Vienna with such a case of indigestion that within twenty-four hours I was at the brink of the grave.

I used what dregs of intelligence I had left to save my life. At my bedside were Campioni, in whose house I was lodging, Monsieur Roggendorf, and Sarotin. The latter, who had become my staunch friend, had come with a physician, though I had explained that I did not want one. The physician, considering himself at liberty to employ the despotism of his art, had sent for a surgeon, and I was about to be bled, without my consent and against my will. Half dead, I do not know what inspiration made me open my eyes, whereupon I saw the man with his lancet about to pierce my vein. ''No, no,'' I said, and feebly drew back my arm; but according to the doctor, the butcher was going to restore me to life despite myself, and I see my arm grasped. I quickly laid hold of one of the two pistols which I had on my night table, and I fired it at the man who had sworn to obey the doctor. The ball uncurled a lock of his hair, and that was quite enough to send away the surgeon, the physician, and everyone who was with me. Only the chambermaid did not abandon me and gave me water to drink whenever I asked for it, and in four days I was in perfect health. The whole of Vienna heard the story, and the Abate Grossatesta assured me that if I had killed him nothing would have happened to me, for the two noblemen who were present had been witnesses that I was about to be bled by force. In addition everyone told me that all the physicians in Vienna said that if I had been bled I would be dead. However, it is true that I had to beware of falling ill, for no physician would have dared to visit me again. This incident made a stir. I went to the opera, and many people wanted to make my acquaintance; I was admired as a man who had defended himself against Death by firing a pistol at him. A miniature painter named Marolles,[38] a friend of mine, who had died because he had been bled for indigestion, had impressed it on me that to recover from the indisposition one need only drink water and be patient. One is in a state of distress which one cannot define. One does not want to vomit, for vomiting does not cure. I shall never forget a jest from the lips of a man who never made one; it was Monsieur de Maisonrouge, who was being brought home dying of indigestion. A jam of carts forces his coachman to stop opposite the Quinze-Vingts.[39] A beggar comes up to his carriage and asks him for a sou for charity, saying that he is dying of hunger. Maisonrouge opens his eyes, looks at him, and says:

"You're a very lucky fellow."

At this same period I made the acquaintance of a Milanese dancer who, besides being pretty, had a taste for literature. Her receptions were frequented by people of distinction. There I met a Count Christoph Erdödy,[40] pleasant, rich, and generous, and a sparkling Prince Kinsky[41] who had all the graces of a Harlequin. The girl, who is still alive, I believe, inspired me with love, but in vain, for she had fallen in love with a dancer named Angiolini,[42] who had just arrived from Florence. I paid my court to her, but she would have none of me. A girl of the theater who is in love with some man is invincible unless one can conquer her by force of money. I was not rich. Nevertheless I did not despair and I continued to go there; my company entertained her because she showed me the letters she wrote and I pointed out their beauties; at the same time, sitting beside her, I enjoyed the beauty of her eyes. She showed me letters from her brother, who was a Jesuit and a preacher. She had been painted in miniature, and the portrait was a speaking likeness; on the eve of my departure, furious because I had not been able to obtain anything from the beauty, I resolved to steal her portrait, a poor compensation for one so unlucky as not to have obtained the original. So on the day I bade her good-by I took it without her noticing it, and put it in my pocket. The next day I left for Pressburg, to which Baron Weiss had invited me for an outing with two Fräuleins.

We got out of our carriage at an inn, and the first person I see is the Chevalier de Talvis, the very man who had obliged me to give him a little wound with my sword at the Étoile on the day I had written "Labré" after "Condé" on the receipt from the wife of the Swiss at the Tuileries. He no sooner sees me than he comes up and says I owe him a revenge. I reply that I never leave one company for another and that we shall meet again.

"That is enough," he answered. "Will you do me the honor of introducing me to these ladies?"

"With pleasure, but not in the street."

We go upstairs, he follows us, and it occurs to me that the man, who was certainly no coward, might amuse us, and I introduce him. He had been lodging at the same inn for two days, and he was dressed in mourning[43] and wearing a shirt with frayed cuffs. He asks us if we are going to the Prince-Bishop's[44] ball, of which we had heard nothing, and Weiss answers that we are.

"One can go to it," he says, "without being presented, and that is why I expect to go, for I have no acquaintances here."

A moment later he leaves, the innkeeper comes to take our orders, he tells us about the ball, the Fräuleins want to go to it; after eating something, we go, we see a great many people, and, being known to no one, we walk about freely.

We enter a room in which we see a large table surrounded by members of the nobility punting at faro; the dealer was the Prince and we thought the sovereigns[45] and ducats in the bank amounted to thirteen or fourteen thousand florins. The Chevalier de Talvis was standing between two ladies, to whom he was saying pretty things, while Monsignore was shuffling. He offers the pack to be cut, and takes it into his head to look at the Frenchman and tell him to stake on a card too.

"With pleasure, Monsignore—banco on this card."

"Banco," said the Bishop loftily, wanting to show that he was not afraid, whereupon the card appears at his left and the Chevalier indifferently gathers up all the money. The astonished Bishop says to the Gascon:

"If your card had lost, Monsieur, how would you have paid me?"

"Monsignore, that is not your business."

"Monsieur, you have more luck than sense."

Talvis left with his money in his pocket.

This astonishing incident gave rise to all sorts of talk, but everyone ended by saying that the foreigner must be either mad or desperate and that the Bishop was a fool.

A half hour later we return to the inn, we ask what has become of the winner, and are told that he has gone to bed. I tell Weiss that we ought to turn the incident to advantage by borrowing a small sum. We enter his room very early, I congratulate him and ask him to be so good as to lend me a hundred ducats.

"Most gladly."

"I will return them to you in Vienna. Shall I write you a receipt?"

"No, no."

He counts out a hundred Kremnitz ducats, and a quarter of an hour later leaves for Vienna by post. His entire luggage was a traveling bag, an overcoat, and a pair of boots. I faithfully divided the hundred ducats between the four of us, and we went back to Vienna the next day. We found that the story was on the lips of all our acquaintances, but no one knew either that we had received a hundred ducats or that the winner was the Chevalier de Talvis; furthermore until that moment not a soul in Vienna had been able to guess who the man was.

No one at the French Embassy[46] had any idea. I never learned if anything was heard of him again. I left by the diligence and on the fourth day reached Trieste, whence I at once took ship for Venice. I arrived there two days before Ascension Day in the year 1753.

CHAPTER XIII

I return the portrait I had carried off from Vienna. I go to Padua; incident during my return; its consequences. I meet Teresa Imer again. My acquaintance with Signorina C. C.

DELIGHTED THAT I was back in my native country, which the greatest of prejudices endears to all men, become the superior of several of my equals in respect to experience and to knowledge of the laws of honor and good manners, I could not wait to resume my old courses, but more systematically and with more reserve. In the room where I slept and wrote I saw with pleasure my papers shrouded in dust, certain proof that no one had entered it for the past three years.

The next day but one after my arrival, just as I was going out to accompany the *Bucentaur*,[1] in which the Doge, according to custom, was going to marry the Adriatic, a gondolier brought me a note. I open it, and I find that Signor Giovanni Grimani[2] asks me to come to his house to receive a letter which he was instructed to deliver to me in person. This nobleman, aged twenty-three, a rich patrician, had no right to summon me, but he counted on my good manners. I went at once. After congratulating me on my safe return, he hands me a small unsealed letter which he had received the previous day. I find this in it:

"After you left I looked everywhere in vain for my portrait in miniature. I am sure that it is in your possession, because, since I do not receive thieves, everything in my house is safe. You will deliver it to the person from whom you receive this letter.—Fogliazzi."

Very glad that I have the portrait in my pocket, I instantly hand it to the nobleman, who is all amiability. I see on his countenance an expression of surprise and satisfaction. He had had good reason to think that his task would be difficult.

"It is apparently love which induced you to commit this theft," he said; "but I congratulate you on its not being very strong. I deduce this from the promptness with which you return the jewel."

"I would not so easily return it to anyone else."

"In that case I beg you to count on my friendship in future."

"It is worth far more than the portrait, and than the original. Dare I hope that Your Excellency will send her my answer?"

"Of course. Here is paper. You need not seal it."

Here are the few lines I wrote: *"The pleasure which Casanova feels in ridding himself of this portrait is far greater than that which he enjoyed when an unworthy caprice prompted him to the folly of putting it in his pocket."*

On the next day, bad weather having caused the postponement of the miraculous wedding until Sunday, I accompanied Signor Bragadin to Padua, to the quiet of which he was retiring during the days which the festivities in Venice made distasteful to him. A truly amiable old man leaves boisterous pleasures to the young. On Saturday, after dining with him, I kissed his hand and took a *barella*[3] for Venice. If I had left Padua ten seconds earlier or later, everything that has happened to me in my life would be different; my destiny, if it is true that destiny is dependent upon coincidence, would have been changed. The reader shall judge.

Having, then, left Padua at this fateful moment, two hours later at Oriago[4] I meet a cabriolet, drawn by two post horses at full trot, in which there is a pretty woman on the right of a man in the German uniform. Eight or ten paces from me the cabriolet overturns in the direction of the river, the woman falls across the officer and is in obvious danger of falling into the Brenta.[5] I jump out of my small carriage without shouting ''halt,'' and I stop the lady, quickly pulling down her skirts, which had exposed all her secret wonders to my eyes. Her companion comes running at the same moment, and she stands there in complete confusion and certainly less put out by her fall than by the indiscretion of her skirts, despite the beauty of all that they had displayed. In the course of her thanks, which continued for all the time that her postilion and mine took to right the carriage, she several times called me her ''angel.'' After the two postilions had quarreled, each blaming the other as usual, the lady set off for Padua and I continued my journey. I had scarcely reached Venice before I masked and went to the opera.

The next morning I masked early to follow the *Bucentaur,* which, as the day was fair, was to go to the Lido without fail. This function, which is not only unusual but unique, depends upon the courage of the Admiral of the Arsenal,[6] since he must answer for the weather remaining fair on peril of his head. The least contrary wind could capsize the vessel and drown the Doge with the whole Serenissima Signoria, the Ambassadors, and the Nuncio of the Pope, founder and guarantor of the efficacy of this strange sacramental ceremony, which the Venetians rightly revere to the point of superstition. The crowning misfortune of such a tragic accident would be that it would set all Europe laughing and saying that the Doge of Venice had finally gone to consummate the marriage.

I was drinking coffee unmasked under the Procuratie[7] in the Piazza San Marco when a beautiful female masker who was passing by gave me a playful blow on the shoulder with her fan. Not knowing the masker, I pay no attention. After drinking my coffee I put on my mask and make my way to the Riva del Sepolcro, where Signor Bragadin's gondola was waiting for me. Near the Ponte della Paglia[8] I see the same masker who had struck me with her fan staring at the picture of a caged monster[9] which was shown to anyone curious enough to give ten soldi to go in. I approached the masked lady and ask her what right she had had to strike me.

"To punish you for not recognizing me after you saved my life yesterday beside the Brenta."

I compliment her, I ask her if she intends to follow the *Bucentaur,* and she answers that she would go if she had a perfectly safe gondola; I offer her mine, which is of the largest; she consults with the officer whom, though he is masked, I recognize by his uniform, and she accepts. We go aboard, I urge them to unmask, and they answer that they have reasons not to reveal themselves. I then ask them to tell me if they were connected with some ambassador, in which case I must ask them to get out, and they answer that they are Venetians. Since the gondoliers wore the livery of a patrician, I should have been in trouble with the State Inquisitors. We followed the *Bucentaur.* As I am sitting on the bench beside the lady, I take a few liberties under cover of her cloak; but she discourages me by changing her position. After the ceremony we return to Venice, we disembark at the Colonne,[10] and the officer says that they would be happy if I would dine with them at the "Wild Man,"[11] I accept. I had become greatly interested in the woman, who was pretty and of whom I had seen something more than her face. The officer left me alone with her, going on ahead to order dinner for three.

I at once told her that I loved her, that I had a box at the opera, that I offered it to her, and that I would attend her throughout the fair if she would assure me that I would not be wasting my time.

"So if you intend," I said, "to be cruel to me, be so good as to tell me so frankly."

"Be so good as to tell me with whom you think you are."

"With a woman who is completely charming, be she a princess or a woman of the lowest condition. You will show me some signs of kindness today, or after dinner I will take a respectful leave of you."

"You will do as you please; but I hope that after dinner you will speak differently, for the tone you are taking is one to make you hated. It seems to me that such a matter can hardly be discussed until after people know each other. Do you not agree?"

"Yes—but I am afraid of being deceived."

"Poor man! And for that reason you want to begin where people end."

"I ask only a payment on account today; after that you will find me undemanding, obedient, and discreet."

"I think you are very amusing; I advise you to calm yourself."

We found the officer at the door of the "Wild Man" and went upstairs. When she unmasked I thought her even prettier than the day before. I still had to find out, for the sake of form and etiquette, whether the officer was her husband, her lover, her relative, or her procurer. Inured as I was to adventures, I wanted to know on what kind of adventure I had embarked.

We eat, we converse, and both she and he behave in such a way that I believe I must proceed cautiously. It was to him that I saw I should offer my box, and it was accepted; but since I did not have one I left them, on some pretext, to go and buy one, and I took it for the *opera buffa*[12] which was being given at the San Moisè and in which Laschi[13] and Pertici[14] were appearing with great success. After the opera I invited them to supper at an inn; then I took them to their lodging in my gondola, in which, under cover of the darkness, the beauty granted me all the favors which propriety permits a woman to grant when there is a third person to be considered. When we parted the officer said that I would hear from him the next day.

"Where and how?"

"I will see to it."

The next morning I was told that an officer had come to call. It was he. After thanking him for honoring me with a visit, I ask him to tell me his name and rank, congratulating myself on having made his acquaintance. He answers me as follows, speaking very fluently but not looking at me:

"My name is P. C.[15] My father is very well off and in excellent standing at the Exchange; but we do not get on well with each other. My house is on the Fondamenta di San Marco;[16] and the lady whom you have seen, whose maiden name was O.,[17] is the wife of the broker C. Her sister[18] is married to the patrician P. M. Signora C. is at odds with her husband over me, as I am at odds with my father over her. I wear this uniform by virtue of a captain's commission in the Austrian service; but I have never served. I am in charge of supplying the Venetian State with beef cattle,[19] importing them from Styria and Hungary. When the accounts are made up, this enterprise assures me of a clear ten thousand florins a year; but an unexpected slump, which I shall remedy, a fraudulent bankruptcy, and unusual expenditures now place me in financial difficulties. It is four years since, having heard of you, I wished to make your acquaintance; and you see that Heaven itself decreed that I should make it day before yesterday. I do not hesitate to ask you for a necessary favor which will unite us in the closest friendship. Become my backer *without risking anything yourself*. Honor these three bills of exchange, and do not fear that you will have to redeem them when they fall due, for I will give you these other three, which will be paid to you before the due date of yours. In addition, I will mortgage my cattle shipments to you for the whole of the present year, so that, if I should fail you, you could sequestrate all my cattle at Trieste, for they can only come to Venice from there."

Astonished by such a speech and such a proposition, which seemed to me chimerical and the source of countless difficulties which I loathed, and by the man's extraordinary notion that I would be taken in by it which had made him choose me in preference to a hundred other men he must know, I do not hesitate to reply that I will never honor the three bills of exchange. At that, his eloquence redoubled to convince me; but his ardor diminished when I told him that I was surprised he should have chosen me in preference to many others. He replied that, knowing that I was highly intelligent, he had felt certain that I would have no objection to raise.

"Then you know better by now," I said. "Indeed I am such a fool that I shall never get it through my head how, if I do it, I shall not risk being gulled by it."

He left, excusing himself and saying that he hoped to see me toward evening on the Liston[20] at the Piazza San Marco, where he and Signora C. would be. He left me his address, saying that, without his father's knowledge, he was still occupying his rooms. It was as much as to tell me that I must return his visit. If I had been wise, I would have dispensed with fulfilling this supposed obligation.

Disgusted with the man's designs on me, I was also disgusted with mine on Signora C. I thought I saw a plot; I thought I saw that I was being taken for an easy mark and, determined not to be one, I did not go to the Liston;

but the next morning I went to his house. I thought that a polite call could have no consequences.

A servant having conducted me to his room, he embraced me and reproached me in a friendly way for having made them wait for me in vain on the Liston. Immediately bringing up his business again, he showed me a mass of papers which bored me. If I would honor the three bills of exchange, he said that he would make me his partner in the provisioning enterprise. By this mark of extraordinary friendship he was enriching me by five thousand florins a year. My only answer was to ask him not to mention the matter to me again. I was about to leave, when he said he wished to introduce his mother and his sister to me.

He goes out and a moment later returns with them. I see a woman who looks both ingenuous and respectable, and a very young girl who strikes me as a prodigy. A quarter of an hour later the mother all too trustfully asks me to excuse her, and the girl remains. It took her no more than half an hour to enchant me by her bearing, her face, and by all that I saw was budding in her. What chiefly struck me was a lively and perfectly unspoiled nature brimming over with candor and ingenuousness, a gay and innocent vivacity, simple and noble feelings—in short, a combination of qualities which showed my soul the venerable portrait of virtue, which always had the greatest power to make me the slave of the object in which I believed I saw it.

Signorina C. C.[21] never went out except with her mother, who was pious and indulgent. She had read only the books in the library of her father, a serious man who possessed no novels; she was longing to know Venice; no one visited the house; she had never been told that she was a miracle of nature. The short time I remained there, while her brother wrote, I spent entirely in answering questions which she asked me, and to which I could not fully reply except by adding to her primitive stock of ideas others which she had not known she could entertain; her soul was still in chaos. I told her neither that she was beautiful nor that she interested me in the highest degree, because it was only too true and having lied on the subject to so many other women, I feared she would distrust me.

I left the house sad and pensive, only too impressed by the rare qualities I had discovered in the girl. I promised myself that I would not see her again. I regretted that I was not the man to ask her father for her hand in marriage. I thought her uniquely endowed to make me happy.

Having not yet seen Signora Manzoni,[22] I called on her, and I found her the same as she had always been toward me. The news she told me was that Teresa Imer, the same Teresa on whose account old Senator Malipiero had given me a caning thirteen years earlier, had just arrived from Bayreuth, where the Margrave[23] had made her fortune. As she was staying in the house across the way, Signora Manzoni, wishing to enjoy her surprise, sent a message to ask her to come to call. She appeared a quarter of an hour later with a boy eight years of age and as handsome as could be. It was her only son,[24] whom she had had by the dancer Pompeati,[25] who had married her; he had remained in Bayreuth.

Our surprise at seeing each other again was equaled by the pleasure we took in recollecting what had happened to us when we were leaving childhood. So all that we could remember was childish trifling. I offered her my congratulations on her good fortune, and, judging by appearances, she thought she must congratulate me on mine; but hers would have been more durable than mine if she had behaved herself later. She indulged her impulses far more than I did, and my reader will hear something of it five years hence. She had become a great musician; but her good fortune had not depended entirely on her talent; her charms had contributed to it more than anything else. She narrated her adventures to me at length, of course passing over those which her self-esteem did not allow her to tell me. The interview ended two hours later, after she had invited me to breakfast with her the next morning. The Margrave, she said, was having her watched; but as I was an old acquaintance I could not be suspect. This is the aphorism of all light women. She told me to go that evening to her box at the opera, where Signor Papafava[26] would be glad to see me. I went. He was her godfather. Very early the next morning I went to breakfast with her.

I found her in bed with her son, the principles of whose education taught him to get up as soon as he saw me sitting at his mother's feet. I spent three hours with her, of which the last was the one which counted. My reader will see its consequences five years hence. During the two weeks she spent in Venice I was with her one more time, and on her departure I promised to visit her at Bayreuth, but I did not keep my promise.

During these first days of my return to my native country I had to attend to the affairs of my posthumous brother, who having, or so he said, a divine vocation to become a priest, could not do so because he had no patrimony.[27] Ignorant and completely uneducated, with nothing in his favor but a handsome face, he thought that he could succeed only in the priesthood, counting chiefly on preaching, for which the women he knew told me he had a marked talent. I made all the applications he asked me to, and I succeeded in forcing the Abate Grimani to furnish him with a patrimony. He could not avoid it, since he was in debt to us for all the furniture in our house and had never accounted to us for it. He gave him a life interest in a house he owned, and two years later my brother took holy orders by title of patrimony. But the patrimony was fictitious, for the house was already mortgaged; the transaction was a stellionate. I shall speak of my unfortunate brother's conduct when it becomes connected with my own vicissitudes.

Two days after my visit to P. C. I met him in the street. He told me that his sister did nothing but talk of me, that she had remembered many of the things I had said to her, and that his mother was delighted that she had made my acquaintance. He said that she would be a good match for me, since she would bring me a dowry of ten thousand ducati correnti.[28] He asked me to come and drink coffee with her and her mother the next day, and I went despite the fact that I had promised myself I would not go there again. *It is always easy to break one's word to oneself.*

On this second visit three hours of nothing but conversation, which passed very quickly, sent me away so much in love that I realized I was incurable. Saying to her, as I left, that I envied the lot of the man whom Heaven had destined for her, I saw a flame from her very soul spread over her face. No one had ever said as much to her before.

On my way home I examined the nature of my budding passion, and I found it cruel. I could proceed with C. C. neither as an honorable man nor as a libertine. I could not delude myself into believing that I could obtain her hand, and I thought that I would kill anyone who dared to suggest that I seduce her. To turn my thoughts elsewhere I went to a gambling casino. Gambling is often a great palliative for a man in love.

Leaving the gambling den the winner by some hundred zecchini, I was suddenly approached in a solitary street by a man bent under the weight of years, whom I at once recognized as Count Bonafede.[29] After a short preamble he said that he was in dire want and reduced to despair by his obligation to support his numerous family.

"I do not blush," he said, "to ask you for a zecchino, which will keep me alive for five or six days."

I quickly gave him ten, preventing him from groveling to me to show his gratitude, but I could not prevent him from shedding tears. He told me as he left that his crowning misfortune was the state of his elder daughter, who, having become a beauty, would rather die than sacrifice her virtue to necessity.

"I can," he said with a sigh, "neither support her in her feelings nor reward them."

Understanding what he wanted, I took his address and promised to call on him. I was curious to see what the ten years since I had lost sight of it might have done to a virtue of which I had no high opinion. I went the next day. He lived in the Biria.[30] The almost bare house in which I found the daughter, for the father was not at home, did not surprise me. The young Countess, having seen my arrival from a window, came to the stairs to meet me. She was quite well dressed. I found her beautiful and lively, as I had known her at the fortress of Sant'Andrea. Her father had told her that I would come. Transported with joy, she embraced me; she could not have welcomed an adored lover more fondly. She showed me to her room, where, after telling me that her mother was ill in bed and unable to receive a visitor, she surrendered to fresh transports caused, she said, by her pleasure at seeing me again. The storm of kisses, which were given and received under the merest guise of friendship, so affected our senses that the thing which propriety defers to the end of a visit happened in the first quarter of an hour. After that our role, whether genuine or assumed, was to show our surprise. In all decency I could not but assure the poor Countess that what I had done was only the forerunner of a constant attachment; she believed it, as I believed it myself at the moment. In the calm which followed she told me of her family's poverty, of her brothers roaming the streets of Venice in rags, of her father who literally had nothing to feed them.

"Then you have not a lover?"

"A lover! What man would have the courage to be a lover in a house like this? As for profiting by my person, do you think me a woman to give myself for thirty soldi? There is no one in Venice who would set a higher price on me, seeing me in this wretched house. Besides, I do not feel that I was born to be a prostitute."

She now began to shed tears—which brought me to a standstill, mind, body, and soul. *The sad spectacle of misery revolts and frightens love.* She would not let me go until I had promised I would come to see her often. I gave her twelve zecchini, and the amount astonished her; she had never had so much money.

The day after this encounter P. C. called on me early to tell me in most cordial tones that his mother had given his sister permission to go to the opera with him, that she was delighted because she had never seen a theater, and that if I wished I could meet them somewhere.

"Does your sister know that you are so kind as to include me in the party?"

"She knows it, and she is delighted."

"And does your mother know it?"

"No; but when she hears of it she will not take it amiss, for she thinks highly of you."

"In that case I will try to get a box."

"Then kindly meet us at twenty-one o'clock[31] in the Campo dei Santi Apostoli."[32]

The scoundrel said no more about his bills of exchange. Seeing that I was not interested in his mistress, and aware that his sister had attracted me, he conceived the pretty plan of selling her to me. I felt sorry for the mother, who entrusted her daughter to him, and for the girl, who thus put herself in the hands of such a brother; but I was not virtuous enough to refuse the invitation. On the contrary, I thought that, since I loved her, I should be present to guard her against other snares. If I had refused he would have found some other man; and the idea was poison to my soul. I thought that with me she ran no risk.

I took a box for the *opera seria*[33] which was being given at San Samuele,[34] and, not bothering to eat dinner, waited for them at the time and place agreed upon. I saw C. C., ravishingly beautiful and elegantly masked. I made them get into my gondola, for P. C. in his uniform might be recognized and someone might have guessed that the pretty masker was his sister. He asked to be let out at his mistress's house, saying that she was ill, and promised to join us in our box, the number of which I told him. What surprised me was that C. C. seemed neither afraid nor reluctant to be left alone with me in the gondola. As for her brother's abandoning her to me, it did not surprise me. It was obvious that he hoped to profit by it. I told C. C. that until the hour for the Liston we would have the gondoliers row us about, and that since the day was very hot she could unmask. She did so instantly. As I was bound to respect her by the strict principle of conduct I had adopted, and seeing a noble assurance in her countenance and pure confidence and joy of soul shining in her eyes, my love became immense.

Not knowing what to say to her, for I naturally could not talk to her of anything but love and the subject was dangerous, I only kept my eyes on her face, not daring to let them stray to her young bosom for fear I should frighten her modesty. Cut too low in front, her bodice let me see the buds of her breasts through the lace of her *bautta*.[35] I had seen them only for an instant, and, terrified, I did not dare look at them again.

"Do speak to me," she said; "you only look at me and say nothing. You have sacrificed yourself today, for I am sure that my brother would have taken you to call on his lady, who, he says, is as beautiful and intelligent as an angel."

"I know your brother's lady. I have never gone to her house, and I shall never go there; I am sacrificing nothing for you, and if I do not talk to you it is because my happiness and your beautiful confidence in me have me in ecstasies."

"I am delighted; but how could I fail to have confidence in you? I feel freer and safer than if I were with my brother. My mother herself says there is no mistaking it and that you are certainly one of the most honorable young men in Venice. Besides, you are not married. It's the first thing I asked my brother. Do you remember telling me that you envied the lot of the man who would marry me? At the very same moment I was saying to myself that the girl who gets you will be the happiest girl in Venice."

Hearing these words uttered with angelic sincerity, and not daring to print a kiss on the beautiful lips from which they had come, I pity the reader who does not know what sort of torment I endured at the same time that I felt the sweetest joy from knowing that I was loved by this angel incarnate.

"Our sentiments being the same," I said, "ought we not to be happy, my charming C., if we could be united forever? But I could be your father."

"You my father! What nonsense! Do you know that I am fourteen?"

"And I am twenty-eight."

"So there you are! What man of your age has a daughter like me? I laugh when I think that if my father were like you he would certainly never frighten me and I would hide nothing from him."

At the hour for the Liston we disembarked at the Piazzetta and the spectacle, which was new to her, occupied all her attention. Toward nightfall we ate ices, then went to the opera, where her brother joined us during the third act. I took them to supper at an inn,[36] where the pleasure of seeing the young lady in high spirits and eating with the greatest appetite made me forget that I had not dined. I scarcely spoke: I was sick with love and in a state of excitement which could not continue. When I said that I had a toothache they condoled with me and let me remain silent.

After supper P. told his sister that I was in love with her and that I would feel better if she would let me kiss her. Her only answer was to turn a smiling mouth to me. It would have been churlishness in me not to do my duty, but it was only a polite salute, a kiss on the cheek, and even a very cold one. *What prevented me from kissing her otherwise was crime not daring to sully innocence.*

"What a kiss!" said the scoundrel. "Come, give her a lover's kiss."

I did not stir, and the fellow's provocations annoyed me. Then his sister, turning her beautiful head away,

"Do not urge him," she said, "for I do not please him."

This conclusion startled me, pierced my soul, and determined me to act.

"What!" I said. "You do not attribute my reserve to my feeling for you? You think you do not please me? You are mistaken, heavenly C., and if a kiss is needed to tell you that I love you, this is how I must print it on your beautiful, smiling mouth."

With which, clasping her fondly to my bosom, I gave her the kiss which she deserved and which I was dying to give her. But the nature of my kiss showed the dove that she was in the talons of the hawk. She left my arms blushing crimson and as if stunned to have discovered my love in such a fashion. Her brother congratulated me, while she busied herself putting on her mask. I asked her whether she now doubted if she pleased me. She answered that I had convinced her, but that I need not have hurt her to undeceive her. This answer, which was dictated by the purity of her feeling, seemed nonsense to her wretched brother. After taking them home I went home myself, content, yet very sad.

CHAPTER XIV

Progress of my love affair with the beautiful C. C.

ON THE next day but one P. C. came to call and told ne triumphantly that his sister had told her mother that we loved each other and that, if she must marry, she could not be happy with anyone but me.

"I adore her," I answered; "but will your father give her to me?"

"I do not think so; but he is old. In the meanwhile, ove. My mother is willing that she should go to the *opera buffa* with you today."

"Then we will go, my friend."

"I am obliged to ask you to do me a small favor."

"Command me."

"At the moment there is some excellent Cyprus wine for sale cheap. I can have a cask of it against a note payable in six months. I am sure I can resell it at once, nd make a profit; but the merchant requires a guarantee, nd is willing to accept yours. Will you sign my note?"

"With pleasure."

"Here it is."

I signed without hesitation. Who is the man in love who at that moment could have refused such a favor to one who, to revenge himself, could have made him miserable? After arranging to meet him at the same place at twenty o'clock,[1] I went to the Piazza San Marco to engage a box.[2] A quarter of an hour later I see P. C. masked and in a brand-new suit of clothes. I tell him he has done well to give up wearing his uniform and I show him the number of my box. We part. I go to the fair, I buy a dozen pairs of white gloves, a dozen pairs of silk stockings, and embroidered garters with gold clasps, which I at once put at the top of my own stockings. I am delighted to be giving this first present to my angel. After that, the hour being at hand, I hurry to the Campo dei Santi Apostoli, and I see them standing still and looking about for me; P. C. says that he has business which obliges him to leave us and that since he already knows the number of my box he will join us at the opera. I thereupon tell his sister that there is nothing for us to do but row about in a gondola until time for the Liston. She answers that she would like to go for a walk in a garden on La Giudecca,[3] I second her idea. Not having dined, as I found she had not, I tell her that we can get something to eat in the garden, and we go there in a ferry-gondola.

We go to a garden I know in San Biagio,[4] where a zecchino makes me lord and master of the place for the whole day. No one else was permitted to enter. We order what we want to eat, we go upstairs to the apartment, leave our disguises there, and go down to the garden for a walk. C. C. had on only a short taffeta bodice and a skirt of the same material; it was her entire costume. My amorous soul saw her naked, I sighed, I cursed duty and all feelings contrary to the nature which triumphed in the Golden Age.

As soon as we reached the long walk, C. C., like a young greyhound released from days of tedious confinement in its master's room and given the freedom of the fields at last—joyously obeying its instincts, it runs at top speed left and right, back and forth, returning every moment to its master's feet as if to thank him for allowing it to play so wildly—even so did C. C., who had never been granted the untrammeled freedom she was enjoying that day; she ran and ran until she was out of breath, and then laughed at the astonishment which kept me motionless and staring at her. After catching her breath and wiping her forehead she takes it into her head to challenge me to a race. The notion pleases me, I accept; but I insist on a wager.

"The loser," I say, "must do whatever the winner pleases."

"Agreed."

We set the goal of the race at the gate which gives on the Lagoon. The first to touch it will be the winner. I was certain to win; but I meant to lose to see what she would order me to do. We start. She uses all her strength, but I spare mine so that she touches the gate five or six paces ahead of me. She catches her breath, thinking up some pretty penalty to inflict on me, then she goes behind the trees and a minute later comes and says that she sentences me to find her ring, which she had hidden somewhere on her person, that I am free to look for it, and that she will think very little of me if I do not find it.

It was charming: there was mischief in it, but she was enchanting; and I must not take advantage of her, for her ingenuous confidence was something to be encouraged. We sit down on the grass. I search her pockets, the folds of her short bodice and her skirt, then her shoes, and I turn up her skirt, slowly and circumspectly, as high as her garters, which she was wearing above the knee; I unfasten them and I find nothing. I fasten them again, I draw down her skirt, and, since I am free to do anything, grope under her armpits. The tickling makes her laugh; but I feel the ring, and if she wants me to get it she has to let me unlace her bodice and touch the pretty breast over which my hand must pass to reach it; but just in time the ring drops lower, so that I had to take it from the waist of her skirt, thereby blessing both my hungry eyes and my hand, which she was surprised to see shaking.

"Why are you shaking?"

"With pleasure at finding the ring; but you owe me a revenge. You shall not beat me this time."

"We'll see."

At the beginning of the race the charming runner did not make much speed, and I was in no hurry to get ahead of her. I felt certain that I could gain the lead toward the finish and touch the gate before her. I could not suppose that she was up to the same trick; but she was. When she was thirty paces from the goal, she ran her best, and, realizing that I must lose, I fell back on an unfailing ruse. I let myself fall, crying:

"Oh, my God!"

She turns, she thinks I have hurt myself, and she comes to me. With her help I get up, groaning, and pretending that I could not stand on one foot, and she is perturbed. But as soon as I see that I am one step ahead of her, I look at her, I laugh, I run to the gate, I touch it, and I cry victory.

The charming girl was too amazed to understand what had happened.

"Then you didn't hurt yourself?"

"No—I fell on purpose."

"On purpose to fool me, counting on the kindness of my heart. I would not have believed you capable of it. It's against the rules to win by a trick, and you have not won."

"I won, because I got to the gate ahead of you, and, trick for trick, you must admit that you tried to trick me when you began running your best."

"But that's fair. Your trick, my dear friend, was outrageous."

"But it got me the victory.

> "'*Vincasi per fortuna o per inganno*
> *Il vincer sempre fu laudabil cosa.*'"[5]
>
> ("Whether victory be gained by luck or by ruse, winning has always been praiseworthy.")

"That's a maxim I have more than once heard from my brother but never from my father. But to cut it short, I admit that I lost. Pronounce my sentence, I will obey you."

"Wait. Let us sit down. I must think about it.

"I sentence you," I said thoughtfully, "to change garters with me."

"Garters? You saw mine. They're old and ugly, they're worth nothing."

"Never mind. I shall think of the object of my love twice a day, at the moment when it is always in the mind of a devoted lover."

"It is a pretty idea and it flatters me. I forgive you now for having tricked me. Here are my ugly garters."

"And here are mine."

"Oh, my dear deceiver, how beautiful they are! What a pretty present! How my dear mother will like them! They must be a present you have just received, for they are brand-new."

"No. They're not a present. I bought them for you, and I have racked my brains to find a way of persuading you to accept them. Love suggested making them serve as the forfeit for our race. Imagine my disappointment when I saw you on the verge of winning. It was love itself which suggested a trick based on what does you honor, for admit that if you had not come running to me at once it would have shown you were hardhearted."

"And I'm sure you wouldn't have played such a trick on me if you could have guessed how much it made me suffer."

"Then you feel a deep interest in me?"

"I would do anything on earth to convince you of it. As for these garters, I assure you I'll never wear any others and my brother shall never steal them from me."

"Is he capable of it?"

"Perfectly so, if this is gold."

"It is gold; but you shall tell him it is gilded copper."

"But you must show me how to fasten these pretty clasps, because my legs are thin there."

"Let us go and eat our omelette."

We needed the light repast. She became gayer, and I more in love and hence more to be pitied because of the restraint I had laid on myself. Impatient to put on her garters, she asked me to help her in perfect good faith, with no thought of evil and not a grain of coquetry. An innocent girl who, though she is fourteen years old, has never loved and never mingled with other girls knows neither the violence of desire nor exactly what excites it nor the dangers of being alone with a lover. When instinct makes her fall in love with a man she believes him worthy of all her trust, and she thinks she can only make him love her by showing him that she trusts him with no reservations. C. C. pulled her skirt up to her thighs and finding that her stockings were too short for her to put the garters on above the knee, she said that she would put them on with longer stockings; but I at once gave her the dozen pairs of pearl-gray stockings I had bought. In an ecstasy of gratitude, she sat on my lap, giving me the same sort of kisses she would have given her father when he made her such a present. I returned them, quelling the violence of my desires with a strength more than human. However, I told her that a single one of her kisses was worth more than a kingdom. C. C. took off her shoes and put on a pair of my stockings, which reached halfway up her thigh; and, supposing that I was in love with her, she thought not only that the sight would please me but that, since it was of no consequence, I would think her a fool if she attached any importance to it. The more innocent I found her to be, the less I could make up my mind to possess her.

We went downstairs again, and after strolling until nightfall we went to the opera wearing our masks, for, the theater being small, we might have been recognized. C. C. was certain that she would no longer be allowed to go out if her father discovered that she was given the privilege.

We were surprised not to see P. C. At our left was the Marchese di Montealegre,[6] the Spanish Ambassador, with his mistress Signorina Bola, and at our right a masked man and woman who, like ourselves, had never taken off their masks. They watched us constantly, but C. C., whose back was toward them, could not be aware of it. During the ballet she put the libretto of the opera on the ledge of the box, and I saw the masked man reach out and take it. Judging from this that it could only be a person whom one of us knew, I mentioned it to C. C., who at once recognized her brother. The lady could be none other than his C. Knowing the number of my box, he had taken the one beside it, and I foresaw that he intended to have his sister to supper with the woman. I did not like it; but I could not avoid it except by a direct challenge; and I was in love.

After the second ballet he came to our box with his lady, and after the usual compliments the introduction was made; and we had to go to supper at his casino. After taking off their disguises the ladies embraced, and C. fulsomely praised the beauties of my angel. At table she affected to shower her with attentions, and she, having no knowledge of the world, treated her with the utmost respect. Yet I saw that C., despite all her art, was very jealous of the budding charms which I had preferred to hers. P. C., boisterously gay, minced no words in his stupid jokes, at which only his lady laughed; my annoyance made me serious, and C. C., who understood nothing of the situation, remained silent. Our supper party was as depressing as possible.

At dessert, by which time he was drunk, he embraced his lady, challenging me to do as much to mine; I answered calmly that since I loved the Signorina I would not go so far until I had won rights over her heart. C. C. thanked me, her brother said that he did not believe us, and his lady told him to be still. At that I took from my pocket the gloves I had bought and gave her six pairs of them, presenting the other six to C. C. As I put them on for her, I kissed her beautiful arm again and again as if it were the first favor I had secured. Her brother laughed derisively and got up from the table.

He threw himself on a sofa, bringing C., who had also drunk too much, down with him and exposing her bosom to our view, while she only pretended to resist; but when he saw that his sister had turned her back on him and gone to a mirror and that his lewd behavior disgusted me, he pulled up her skirts to display for my admiration what I had already seen when she fell beside the Brenta and had handled since. For her part she slapped him in pretended punishment, but she was laughing. She wanted me to believe that her laughter deprived her of the power to defend herself; but her efforts had the contrary effect of revealing her completely. An accursed hypocrisy forced me to praise the shameless creature's charms.

But now the libertine, apparently calmed, asks her to forgive him, rearranges her dress, and changes her position; then, without changing his, he displays his bestial condition and adjusts the lady to himself, holding her astride him while she, still pretending that she was powerless in his hands, lets him perform, and performs. At that I go and talk to C. C., standing between her and them to hide the horror which she must already have seen in the mirror. Red as fire, she spoke to me of her beautiful gloves, which she folded on the mantelpiece.

After his brutal performance the scoundrel came and embraced me, and the lady embraced his sister, saying she was sure she had seen nothing. C. C. modestly answered that she did not know what there had been for her to see. But I saw that her beautiful soul was in the greatest perturbation. As for my own state, I leave it to the reader who knows the human heart to divine it. How could I bear this scene in the presence of an innocent girl whom I adored; and at the very moment when my soul was struggling between crime and virtue to defend her from myself? What torture! Anger and indignation set me trembling from head to foot. The infamous scoundrel believed that he had given me a great proof of his friendship. Reckoning as nothing the fact that he was dishonoring his lady and debauching and prostituting his sister, he was so blinded and infatuated that he did not understand that what he had done must have aggravated me to the point of very nearly drenching the scene in blood. I do not know how I restrained myself from cutting his throat. The only reasonable excuse he offered me two days later was that he could not imagine that when I had been alone with his sister I had not treated her just as he had treated C. After taking them home, I went to bed, hoping that sleep would calm my anger.

Upon awaking and finding that I was only indignant, my love became unconquerable. I thought C. C. was to be pitied only because I could not myself make her happy, for I was determined to do anything necessary to prevent the scoundrel from profiting in any way by her charms if I were forced to give her up. I felt I must lose no time. How horrible! What an unparalleled sort of seduction! What a strange way of winning my friendship! I seemed to be under the dire necessity of pretending to accept as tokens of friendship what could spring only from the baseness of an unbridled libertinism ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of its own continuance. I had been told that he was deeply in debt, that he had gone bankrupt in Vienna, where he had a wife and children, and he had done the same in Venice, compromising his father, who had turned him out of the house and who pretended not to know that he was still living there. He had seduced C., whom her husband refused to see, and after running through what money she had, he wanted to keep her as his mistress despite the fact that he did not know where to turn for a single zecchino. His mother, who adored him, had given him everything she possessed, even to her clothes. I expected to see him come to ask me for money again or to stand surety for him; but I was resolved to refuse him. I could not bear either the thought that C. C. was to become the cause of my ruin or the thought that she must serve as her brother's tool in supporting his debauchery.

Guided by love, I called on him the next day and after telling him that I adored his sister with the purest intentions, I made him realize what pain he had made me feel during that infamous supper. I told him that I had resolved to associate with him no longer, even if I had to renounce the pleasure of seeing his sister; but that I would find means to keep her from going out with him if he flattered himself that he could sell her to someone else.

He answered only that I must forgive him because he had been drunk and that he did not believe I loved his sister with a love which excluded possessing her. He embraced me with tears in his eyes, and just then his mother came in with her daughter to thank me for the pretty presents I had given her. I told her that I loved her only in the hope that she would grant me her hand and that to that end I would send someone to speak with her husband after I had secured a sufficient income to make her happy. So saying, I kissed her hand, unable to hold back my tears, which set hers flowing. After thanking me for the sentiments I had expressed to her, she withdrew, leaving me with her daughter and her son, who seemed turned to stone.

The world is full of mothers of this stamp, every one of them honest and endowed with all the virtues, the first of which being good faith they are nearly always the victims of the trust they repose in those whom they take to be people of probity.

My speech to the Signora astonished her daughter. But she was even more astonished when I repeated to her what I had said to her brother. After reflecting for a very short time, she told him that with any other man but myself she would have been ruined, and that she would not have forgiven him if she had been in the place of the lady he had dishonored even if she had been his wife.

P. C. wept. But the scoundrel could command his tears. The day being Whitsunday and the theaters not open, he asked me to meet him on the next day at the usual place, where he would bring his sister to me. He added, addressing us both, that since honor and love obliged him not to leave Signora C. alone, he would leave us in perfect freedom.

"I will give you my key," he said to me, "and you shall bring my sister back here after you have supped wherever you please."

He left us after giving me the key, which I had not strength of mind to refuse, and I left a moment later, telling C. C. that we would talk the next day in the garden on La Giudecca. She said that what her brother had now done was the most honorable decision he could take.

It was fulfilled the next morning; he left her with me and, burning with love, I foresaw what must happen. After engaging a box we went to our garden, where, it being Whitmonday, we found many people; but as the casino was unoccupied we asked nothing more.

We go upstairs and, certain that we should not dare take a walk, since ten or twelve parties were sitting at a number of tables in the garden, we decide to sup in the casino, not caring to go to the opera until the second ballet. So we ordered supper for later. We had seven hours before us; she said she was sure we would not be bored and, having taken off her disguise, she threw herself in my arms, saying that I had finally won her heart and soul during that terrible supper where I had been so considerate toward her. What we said was always accompanied by kisses, with which we deluged each other's faces. *But love kisses the face only to thank it for the desires it inspires; and since its desires have a different goal, love becomes irritated if that is not attained.*

"Did you see," she asked, "what my brother did to his lady when she got astride him as one rides a horse? I hurried to the mirror; but I could well imagine what was happening."

"Were you afraid I would do the same to you?"

"No, I assure you. How could I have feared such a thing, knowing how much you love me? You would have humiliated me so greatly that I could no longer have loved you. We will keep ourselves until we are married. Shall we not? You cannot imagine the joy of my soul when you spoke out to my mother. We will love each other forever. But, while I think of it, please explain the two verses on my garters."

"Are there two verses on them? I didn't know it."

"Please read them. They are in French."

As she was sitting on my lap, she unfastens one garter while I take off the other. Here are the two verses, which I ought to have read before I gave her the garters:

En voyant tous les jours le bijou de ma belle
Vous lui direz qu'amour veut qu'il lui soit fidèle.

("You who see my beauty's jewel every day, tell it that Love bids it be true.")

The verses which, though naughty, I thought were perfect, both funny and witty, made me burst out laughing and then laugh even more when I had to explain them word by word to satisfy her. Since they depended on two ideas both of which were new to her, she needed a commentary which set us both on fire. The first thing I had to tell her was that the "jewel" stood for her little such-and-such, of which I could only obtain possession by marrying her, and the second was that her garters would have the privilege of seeing it constantly if they had eyes. Blushing furiously, C. C. embraced me with all her heart and said that her jewel did not need any such flattering advice from her garters, since it knew very well that it was only for her husband.

"I am only sorry," she said after thinking a moment, "that I shall not dare show anyone my garters now. Tell me what you are thinking."

"I am thinking that those lucky garters have a privilege which I may never enjoy. Why am I not where they are! I may die of the desire I feel, and I shall die unhappy."

"No, my dear. I am in the same state as you, for you must have jewels to interest me, too, and I am sure I shall live. Besides, we can hasten our marriage. For my part, I am ready to pledge you my faith tomorrow if you wish. We are free, and my father will be obliged to consent."

"Your reasoning is sound, for his honor would demand that of him; yet I wish first to show him my respect by making an application for your hand, and our household will soon be set up. It will be a matter of a week or ten days."

"So soon? You'll see that he will say I am too young."

"And perhaps he will be right."

"No; for I am young, but not too young. I am certain, my dear, that I could be your wife."

I was burning; I could no longer resist the compelling force of nature.

"My dear one," I said, holding her clasped in my arms, "are you sure that I love you? Do you think I could fail you? Are you certain you will never repent of marrying me?"

"I am more than certain of it, dear heart; I shall never believe you capable of making me unhappy."

"Then let us marry now before God, in his presence; we cannot have a truer and more worthy witness than our Creator, who knows our consciences and the purity of our intentions. We have no need of documents. Let us pledge our faith to each other; let us unite our destinies here and now and be happy. We will have a church ceremony when we can do everything publicly."

"So be it, my dear. I promise God and you that from this moment until my death I will be your faithful wife, and that I will say the same to my father, to the priest who will bless us in church, and to the whole world."

"I make you, my dear, the same vow, and I assure you that we are truly married and belong to each other. Now come to my arms. We will complete our marriage in bed."

"Now? Is it possible that I am so near to my happiness?"

Thereupon I went out and told the hostess not to bring us supper until we called and to leave us undisturbed, for we wanted to sleep until nightfall. C. C. had thrown herself on the bed with all her clothes on; but I laughed and told her that Love and Hymen went naked.

"Naked? And you too?"

"Of course. Leave it to me."

In less than a minute I had her before my avid and covetous eyes with no veil to hide the least of her charms from me. In an ecstasy of admiration which put me beside myself I devoured all that I saw with fiery kisses, hurrying from one spot to another and unable to stop anywhere, possessed as I was by the desire to be everywhere, regretting that my mouth must move less swiftly than my eyes.

"Your beauty," I said, "is divine; it will not let me believe at this moment that I am mortal."

C. C., white as alabaster, had black hair, and her puberty was apparent only in the down which, divided into little curls, formed a transparent fringe above the little entrance to the temple of love. Tall and slender, she was ashamed to let me see her hips, which the junction of her thighs set off to perfection and whose proportions she thought faulty, whereas if they had been less full and less prominent they would have been less beautiful. Her belly scarcely showed its contours, and her breasts left nothing for either my eyes or my hands to desire. Her large black eyes, under brows not given to anger,[7] bore witness to the joy of her soul in its delight at seeing the effect of her wonderful beauty in my admiration. Her rosy cheeks, which contrasted with her whiteness, showed only two small dimples except when a sweet smile added a fraction of an inch to the length of her coral lips, which at the same time showed teeth whose whiteness surpassed that of her bosom only because it was brightened by the sheen of their enamel.

Beside myself, I began to fear either that my happiness was not real or that it could not be made perfect by an even greater enjoyment. But at that most serious moment mischievous Love gave me occasion to laugh.

"Can it be the law," said C. C., "that the husband must not undress?"

"No, my angel. And even if such a barbarous law existed I would not submit to it."

Never have I undressed more quickly. Then it was her turn blindly to obey the promptings of instinct. She did not interrupt her transports and her ardors except to ask me if it was really true that I belonged to her. She said that the statue of Beauty her father possessed proved that the first sculptor had been a man, for a woman would have made it of the opposite sex from hers.

"Great power of love!" she cried. "I feel no shame. Would I have believed it ten days ago? Please don't tickle me there, it's too sensitive."

"Dear heart, I am going to hurt you more than that."

"I am sure of it; but let nothing stop you. What a difference between you and my pillow."

"Your pillow? Are you joking? Tell me what you mean."

"It's just silliness. These last four or five nights I couldn't get to sleep unless I held a big pillow in my arms and kissed it over and over and imagined it was you. I only touched myself there, dear, just for a moment at the end and very lightly. Then a pleasure for which there are no words left me motionless and as if dead; I fell asleep and when I woke eight or nine hours later I laughed to find the big pillow in my arms."

C. C. became my wife like a heroine, as every girl in love must do, for pleasure and the assuagement of desire make even pain delicious. I spent two whole hours without ever separating from her. Her continual swoons made me immortal. Nightfall bade me resolve to suspend our pleasures. We dressed and I called for lights and supper.

What a delicious repast, even though there was not much of it! We ate gazing at each other, and we did not speak because we did not know what more to say. We found our supreme happiness in the thought that it was we who had created it and that we would renew it whenever we wished.

The hostess came up to see if we wanted anything else, and she asked us if we were going to the opera and if it was true that it was such a fine spectacle.

"Have you never gone?" C. C. asked her.

"Never—it's too expensive for people like us. My daughter is so curious about it that she would give—God forgive me!—her maidenhead to go just once."

C. C. burst out laughing and replied that she would be paying too dearly to satisfy her curiosity, and just as I was thinking of offering the woman the box I had taken she said to me that we could make the girl happy by giving her our key. I give it to her, swearing that I had had the same idea.

"Here," she said to the hostess, "is the key to a box at San Moisè, which cost two zecchini. Go to the opera at once with your daughter, and tell her to keep her maidenhead for something better."

"And here are two more zecchini," I added, "to do as you please with."

Amazed at such a liberal present, the good woman ran to take it to her daughter, while we congratulated ourselves on having made it necessary for us to go back to bed. The hostess comes back upstairs with her daughter, a beautiful and quite savory blonde, who insists on kissing the hands of her benefactors.

"She will be off at once," said her mother, "with her lover, who is downstairs, but I won't let her go alone because he's a strapping fellow. I shall go with them."

I told her to keep the gondola in which they came back, and we would take it to return to Venice.

"Really? You mean to stay here until four o'clock?" [8]

"Yes, for we were married this morning."

"This morning? God bless you!"

She goes to the bed and, seeing signs worthy of veneration, she embraces my charming initiate, congratulating her on her virtue; but what amused us extremely was a sermon the woman preached to her daughter while she pointed out what, according to her, did immortal honor to C. C. and what Hymen very seldom saw on his altar. The daughter replied, casting down her blue eyes, that she was certain the same thing would happen when she was married.

"I'm sure of it too, because I never let you out of my sight. Take the basin and get some water and bring it here, for the bride must need it."

She brought up water, then they left, and the comical scene diverted my angel exceedingly. After refreshing ourselves all over, we locked ourselves in and went back to bed, where four hours passed very quickly. The last combat would have gone on longer if my wife, already grown curious, had not taken it into her head to put herself in my place and me in hers. When she thus displayed herself before my soul in a state of obsession which pronounced her ravaged by Venus, the supreme degree of pleasure seized on my senses. Left as if dead, we fell asleep; but a moment later the hostess knocked to say that the gondola was at our service. I hurried to open the door, eager to laugh at what she would have to tell us about the opera; but she left it to her daughter while she went to make us coffee. The blonde helped C. C. to dress, occasionally giving me glances which showed me beyond doubt that her mother was greatly mistaken if she thought her inexperienced.

Nothing was more telltale than my angel's eyes, which had such dark circles that they looked as if they had been bruised. The poor child had sustained a combat which had literally left her another person. After drinking some very hot coffee we told the hostess that we wanted a choice dinner for the following day. By the light of early dawn we disembarked at the Campo di Santa Sofia[9] to evade the curiosity of the gondoliers. We parted content, happy, and certain that we were well and duly married. I went to bed resolved that, by an infallible oracle, I would compel Signor Bragadin to obtain the girl's hand for me. I slept until noon; I ate dinner in bed, and I spent the rest of the day gambling and losing.

CHAPTER XV

Continuation of my love affair with C. C. Signor Bragadin asks for the young lady's hand for me. Her father refuses and puts her in a convent. De La Haye. I lose at cards. Association with Croce, which replenishes my purse. Various incidents.

THE NEXT day I saw P. C. in my room in high spirits and taking an entirely new tone with me. He told me in so many words that he was sure I had slept with his sister and that he was delighted.

"She refuses to admit it," he said, "but that makes no difference. I will bring her to you today."

"You will be doing me a kindness, for I love her, and I shall arrange to have her father asked for her hand for me in such a way that he will not refuse."

"I should like nothing better, but I doubt it. Meanwhile, I am under the necessity of asking you to do me another favor. In exchange for a note payable in six months, I can have a ring worth two hundred zecchini which I am sure I can sell today for the same price; but unless you will stand surety, the merchant, who knows you, will not let me have it. Will you do me this favor? I know that you lost three hundred zecchini yesterday; I offer you a hundred, which you will repay me when the note falls due."

How could I refuse the wretch what he asked of me? I answered that I was ready; but that he was wrong in thus abusing the affection which bound me to his sister. We went to the merchant who had the ring and we completed the transaction. The man, whom I did not know, thought he was paying me a great compliment when he said that he was ready to give P. C. everything he had on my surety. Such was the fashion in which the scoundrel went about Venice looking for the one man in a hundred ill advised enough to grant me credit against all reason, for I had nothing. And so C. C., who should have brought me nothing but happiness, became the cause of my ruin.

C. C.'s father having gone to Treviso on business, her brother brought her to me at noon. To convince me that he was honest he gave me back the note for the Cyprus wine for which I had stood surety, insisting at the same time that when next we met he would give me the hundred zecchini he had promised me.

On La Giudecca, where I at once had the garden closed, we dined in a grape arbor. I thought C. C. had become more beautiful. Friendship had been added to love, so that our perfect contentment shone in our faces. The hostess, who had found me generous, gave me game and sturgeon. The blonde waited on us at table and came to wait on us in our room when she learned that we were going to bed. After helping my wife undress she offered to take off my shoes; but I waved her away, pretending not to see her bosom, which on the excuse of the hot weather she displayed too lavishly. But could I have eyes for anyone else when I was with C. C.?

She at once asked me what was the meaning of the hundred zecchini her brother was to bring me, and I told her the whole story. She said that in future I must absolutely refuse him my signature, for, since the wretch was sunk in debt, he would involve me in his ruin, which was inevitable.

On this second occasion we found our amorous pleasures more substantial; we thought we relished them with more delicacy, we discussed them. She begged me to do everything possible to make her pregnant, for in case her father obstinately refused to let her marry so young he would change his mind when he saw her with a big belly. I had to give her a lecture on the rudiments to make her understand that her becoming a mother depended upon us only in part, but that it was likely it would happen on one occasion or another, especially when we reached the sweet ecstasy at the same time.

So, both applying ourselves sedulously and single-mindedly after two attempts which she said went very well, we spent four good hours sleeping. I called; candles were brought, and after drinking coffee we resumed our amorous labors in order to arrive together at that life-engendering death which was to ensure our happiness. But dawn having come to warn us that we must go back to Venice, we dressed in haste and left.

We did the same on Friday, but I think I should spare the reader the details of our communion, which, though always new to those who are in love, often does not seem so to those who hear it recounted. We arranged to go to the garden for the last time on Monday, the last day for masks. Death alone could prevent me from going, for it might be the last day of our amorous enjoyments.

So, having seen P. C. on Monday morning, when he confirmed the appointment for the same hour at the same place, I did not fail to be there. The first hour passes quickly, despite the impatience of him who waits; but after the first another passed, then a third, a fourth, and a fifth, and the couple for whom I was waiting did not appear. I could imagine only the most terrible disasters. But if C. C. had been unable to leave, her brother should have come to tell me so; but it was possible that some insurmountable obstacle had prevented him from going to fetch his sister. I could not go to their house for fear of missing them on the way.

It was finally on the stroke of the Angelus that I saw C. C. coming toward me, masked, but alone.

"I was sure," she said, "that you were here, and I let my mother say what she would. Here I am. You must be dying of hunger. My brother has not shown his face all day. Let us go to our garden quickly. I need to eat, and to have love console me for all that I have suffered today."

As she had told me everything I did not need to ask her any questions. We went to our garden, despite a very violent storm which, our gondola having only one oar, terrified me. C. C., who was unaware of the danger, frisked about, and the movement she imparted to the gondola put the gondolier in danger of falling into the water, which would have meant our death. I told her to keep quiet, though I did not tell her the danger we were in for fear of frightening her. It was the gondolier who shouted that if we did not sit still we were lost. We arrived at last, and the gondolier smiled when I paid him four times the fare.

We spent six hours there in a state of happiness which the reader can imagine. Sleep was not of our company. The only thought which clouded our joy was that, the season of masks[1] being over, we did not see how we could continue our amorous meetings. I promised that I would call on her brother on Wednesday morning, when she would join us as usual.

After taking leave of the kind hostess of the garden, who could not hope to see us again, we went to Venice and, after leaving C. C. at her door, I went home. The news with which I was greeted when I woke at noon was the return of De La Haye with his pupil Calvi. He was a very handsome boy, as I think I have said, but I laughed heartily at table when, encouraging him to speak, I found him a young De La Haye in miniature even to his gestures. He walked, he laughed, he looked about like him, he spoke De La Haye's French, which was correct but harsh. I thought this was going much too far. I considered it my duty to tell his tutor publicly that he must certainly rid his pupil of his affectations, for his aping him would expose him to bitter raillery. Baron Bavois came in, and after spending an hour with the boy he thought as I did. The promising boy died two or three years later. Two or three months after Calvi's death De La Haye, whose passion was forming pupils, became tutor to a young Cavaliere Morosini,[2] the nephew of the Morosini who had set Baron Bavois on the road to fortune and who was then Border Commissioner for the Republic to settle its boundary with the House of Austria, whose commissioner was Count Cristiani.[3]

In love as I was, I could no longer put off taking the step on which, as I thought, my happiness depended. After the company left I asked Signor Bragadin and his two faithful friends to grant me a hearing for two hours in our withdrawing room, where we were inaccessible. It was there that, making no exordium but *ex abrupto,* I told them that I was in love with C. C. and determined to elope with her if they could not induce her father to grant me her hand.

"It will be necessary," I said to Signor Bragadin, "to provide me with an income on which I can live and to guarantee the ten thousand ducats which the girl will bring me as her dowry."

Their answer was that if Paralis would give them all the necessary instructions they would obey. I asked nothing better. I thereupon spent two hours constructing all the pyramids they wished, and the upshot was that the intermediary who was to ask her father for the girl would be Signor Bragadin in person, because it was he who would have to guarantee the dowry by all his present and future possessions. As C. C.'s father was then in the country I told them that I would inform all three of them when he returned, since the three of them must be together when he was asked for her hand.

Well satisfied with what I had done in the matter, I called the next morning on P. C. An old woman told me that he was not at home but that the Signora would come to me at once. I see her a moment later with her daughter, both looking sad. C. C. tells me that her brother is in prison for debt and that it would be difficult to get him out since the amounts he owed were too great. Her mother weeps as she says she is in despair because she cannot support him in prison and shows me the letter he had written in which he asked her to give an enclosed letter to his sister. I ask her if I may read the letter he had written her, she hands it to me, and I find that he begs her to recommend him to me. I say, handing it back to her, that she can only write him that I can do nothing for him and at the same time I ask the mother to accept twenty zecchini, with which she could help him, sending him one or two at a time. She took them only at her daughter's urging.

After this mournful scene I tell them what I have done toward obtaining C. C. as my wife. The Signora said that my measures did them much honor and were well planned; but she added that I must not hope for anything, since her husband would not give her in marriage until she was eighteen, and then only to a merchant. He was to arrive that day. As I was going, C. C. slipped a note into my hand. She wrote me that, since I had the key to the small door, I could safely come to her at midnight, sure that I would find her in her brother's room. My joy was complete, for, despite their doubts, I hoped for everything. I go home and inform Signor Bragadin that Signor Ch.,[4] C. C.'s father, is expected at any moment. He writes the note in my presence. He asked him to appoint an hour at which he could come to discuss an important matter with him. I told him to wait until the next day to send it.

Having gone to C. C.'s house at midnight, I found her waiting for me with open arms in her brother's room. After she had assured me that I had nothing to fear, that her father had returned in perfect health, and that everyone was asleep, we gave ourselves up to love; but she trembled when I told her that her father would receive the fatal note the next day. She told me what she feared, and her reasoning was sound.

"My father," she said, "who now thinks of me only as a child, will look at me with new eyes and, once he begins examining my conduct, God knows what he will do. We are even happier now than we were when we were going to La Giudecca, for we can spend every night here together; but what will my father do when he finds out that I have a lover?"

"What can he do? If he refuses me I will carry you off, and the Patriarch[5] cannot refuse us the nuptial benediction. We shall belong to each other for the rest of our lives."

"It is all that I ask, and I am ready for anything; but I know my father and I am afraid."

Two hours later I left her, promising that I would return the next night. Signor Bragadin sent his note to her father about noon. He replied that he would himself go to his palace the following day to receive his orders. About midnight I told all this to my dear C. C., who said that her father was most curious to know what Signor Bragadin, to whom he had never spoken, could want with him. Uncertainty, fear, and delusive hope made the pleasures of love much less keen during these last two hours we spent together. I was certain that when Signor Ch. returned home after hearing Signor Bragadin's proposal he would have a long talk with his daughter, and, since she must expect it, I saw that she was terrified; the pity she aroused in me pierced my heart, I could think of no advice to give her, for I could not know how her father would take the matter; she must hide from him whatever circumstances might be injurious to her virtue, at the same time she must in general tell him the truth and show herself more than ready to obey his will. In the course of these reflections I repented that I had taken the great step, precisely because its consequences would be too decisive. I could not wait to escape from the cruel uncertainty which weighed on my soul, and I was surprised to see C. C. less anxious than I was. I felt certain that I would see her the next night. The contrary seemed to me impossible.

The next day after dinner Signor Ch. called on Signor Bragadin, and I did not show myself. He left after spending two hours with him and his two friends, and I learned at once that he had said what his wife had already told me, but with an addition which was most painful for me. He said that he would send his daughter to a convent for the four years which must pass before she married. He had ended by saying that if, at the expiration of that time, I had a well-established position, he might grant me her hand. I found his answer devastating, and in the despair with which it filled my soul I was not surprised at midnight to find the small door of C. C.'s house locked from inside. I went home neither dead nor alive. I spent twenty-four hours in the cruel indecision of one who must adopt a course and does not know what course to adopt. I thought that carrying her off would now be difficult, even as, with P. C. in prison, it would be difficult to correspond with my wife, for I considered her such by a far stronger bond than one we might have contracted before the Church and a notary.

It was about noon on the next day but one that I resolved to visit Signora C., ringing at the main door of the house. A maid came down and told me that the Signora had gone to the country and it was not known when she would return. At that moment I almost gave up hope. All ways of obtaining any information were closed to me. I tried to appear indifferent when I was with my three friends; but I was the most unhappy of men. Hoping to hear something, I was reduced to visiting P. C. in prison.

Surprised to see me, he expresses the greatest gratitude. He explains the state of his debts, he tells me any number of lies, which I pretend to believe; he assures me that he will be out of prison in ten or twelve days, and he asks me to forgive him for not having given me the hundred zecchini he had promised me; but he assures me that when the time comes he will honor the note for two hundred for which I had stood surety. After letting him talk I coldly ask him for news of the family. He knows nothing, and believes there is nothing new; he says that it will be my own fault if I do not call on his mother occasionally, where I will see his sister. I promised to go, and after giving him two zecchini I left.

I racked my brains for a way to find out what C. C.'s situation was. I imagined that she was unhappy, and aware that I was the cause of it I was in despair, I loathed myself. Soon I could neither eat nor sleep.

Two days after Signor Ch.'s refusal, Signor Bragadin and his two friends went to Padua for a month on the occasion of the Fair of St. Anthony. The state of my soul and my uncertain situation did not allow me to go with them. I was left alone in the palace; but I went there only to sleep. I spent the whole day at cards, I lost constantly, I had sold or pawned everything I owned, and I owed money everywhere; I could hope for help only from my faithful friends, who were in Padua, and shame kept me from writing to them.

In this situation, which was enough to bring thoughts of suicide (it was June 13th,[6] St. Anthony's Day), while I was shaving my valet announces a woman. She enters with a basket and a letter. She asks me if I am the person whose name I saw written in the address. I see the imprint of a seal which I had given to C. C. I thought I should drop dead. To calm myself, I told the woman to wait, thinking that I would finish shaving, but my hand was shaking. I put down the razor, turn my back on the woman, unseal the letter, and read the following:

"Before writing you at length, I must be sure of this woman. I am boarding in this convent, and very well treated; and I am in perfect health, despite the anxiety of my mind. The Mother Superior has orders not to let me see anyone and not to allow me to correspond with anyone; but I am already sure that I can write to you despite her prohibition. I do not doubt your constancy, my dear husband, and I am sure that you do not doubt and will never doubt mine or my readiness to do whatever you command me to do; for I am yours. Answer only a few words, until we are sure of the messenger. Murano, June 12th."

All the letters I quote are faithful translations of the originals, which I have always kept.

In less than three weeks the girl had become an expert in moral science; but her teacher must have been love, which alone performs miracles. The moment during which a man returns from death to life can only be a moment of crisis; so I needed to sit down and spend four or five minutes returning to myself.

I asked the woman if she could read.

"Oh, Signore, if I couldn't read I'd be in a bad way. There are seven of us appointed to serve the blessed nuns of XXX [7] in Murano. Each of us takes her turn coming to Venice on her day of the week; my day is Wednesday. So a week from today I can come back and bring you the answer to the letter which, if you wish, you can write now. You can see that, since our principal errands are the letters we're given to carry, we shouldn't be wanted unless we could read the addresses on those we're entrusted with. The nuns want to be sure—and they're right—that we won't give Peter a letter they write to Paul. They are always afraid we'll make that very blunder. So you'll see me a week from today at the same hour, but give orders that you're to be waked if you're asleep, for our time is measured out *like gold.* Above all, when you deal with me you need fear no indiscretion. If I didn't know how to hold my tongue, I'd lose my employment, and what would I do then, being a widow with a son eight years old and three pretty daughters, the eldest sixteen and the youngest thirteen? You're welcome to come and see them if you come to Murano. I live on the ground floor ten paces from the bridge nearest the church, on the garden side in the alley, and the door has four steps outside and I'm always home or at the convent gate or in the visiting room or running errands, of which there are plenty. The Signorina, whose name I don't know, for she's only been with us for a week and who—God keep her in health!—is really a perfect beauty, gave me this letter, but so cleverly! . . . Oh, she must be a sly one, for three nuns who were there certainly never noticed it. She gave it to me with this note for me, which I leave you too. She tells me to be discreet. The poor child! I beg you to write her that she can be sure of it and don't be afraid to vouch for me, but not for the others, though I believe they're all honest women, for God preserve me from thinking ill of anyone; but, you see, they're all ignorant, and they certainly chatter away at least to their confessors. As for me—thank God!—I know I need account to him only for my sins, and carrying a letter from a Christian woman to a Christian man isn't one; and besides, my confessor is an old monk who—God forgive me!—I think must be deaf, because he never answers me at all; but if he's deaf, that's his business, not mine."

So it was that the woman, whom I had not intended to question, kindly saved me the trouble by telling me everything I could wish to know, simply to persuade me to use no one but herself in the intrigue. It would appear that her very chatter, which sticks in the mind, contains a sublime eloquence which persuades and instills perfect confidence.

I at once answered my dear captive, intending to write only a few lines as she told me to do; but I did not have time enough to write her a short letter; it filled four pages and it perhaps said less than she had said to me in one. I told her that her letter had saved my life, since I knew neither where she was nor if she was alive or dead. I asked her if I could hope, if not to speak with her, at least to see her. I told her that I had given the bearer a zecchino, that she must have found one herself under the seal of my letter, and that I would send her as much money as she wished if she thought it might be necessary or useful to her. I begged her not to fail to write to me every Wednesday and never to fear that she was writing at too great length, telling me not only every detail of the life she was being forced to lead but also all her ideas on the subject of breaking all the chains and destroying all the obstacles which could stand in the way of our reunion, for I belonged to her just as she told me that she belonged to me. I impressed it upon her that she must use all her ingenuity to make herself loved not only by all the nuns but also by her fellow boarders, yet without confiding anything to them or showing any resentment at having been put where she was. After praising her ingenuity in finding a way to write to me despite the Mother Superior's prohibition, I impressed it upon her that she must take the greatest care never to be caught writing to me, for then her room and her chest of drawers and even her pockets would be searched and any papers she had would be confiscated. On this account I asked her to burn all my letters. I told her to apply all the powers of her mind to the consideration that she was obliged to go to confession frequently; being certain that she would well understand what I was trying to say to her. I ended by imploring her to tell me all her sufferings, assuring her that her sorrows were of even greater concern to me than her joys.

After sealing my letter in such a fashion that the zecchino under the wax would be neither seen nor felt, I gave another to the woman, assuring her that I would reward her in the same way each time she brought me a letter from the same young lady. She wept with gratitude. She said that, since she was free to come and go there, she would give my letter to the Signorina at a time when she found her alone. Here is the note which my dear C. C. had given the woman when she entrusted the letter to her:

"It is God, my good woman, who prompts me to rely on you rather than on any of the others. Take this letter to its address and, if the person is not in Venice, bring it back to me. You must deliver it into his own hands. I am sure that you will at once be given the answer, which you will deliver to me only when you are sure that no one sees you."

Love becomes imprudent only when it is impatient to enjoy; but when it is a matter of procuring the return of a happiness to which a baleful combination of circumstances has raised impediments, love sees and foresees all that the most subtle perspicacity can discover. My wife's letter filled my soul with joy, and in an instant I had passed from one extreme to the other. I felt certain that I could carry her off even if the walls of her convent were guarded with artillery. My first thought was to find some way of quickly passing the week at the end of which I was to receive her second letter. Only gambling could distract me, and everyone was in Padua. I quickly order my valet to pack my trunk and take it to the *burchiello*[8] which was about to leave, and I instantly set off for Padua, from where, at full gallop, in less than three hours I am at the door of the Palazzo Bragadin,[9] where I see its master going in to eat dinner. He embraced me and, seeing me covered with sweat, said with a laugh that he was sure I was in no hurry. I answered that I was dying of hunger.

I brought joy to the company and it increased when I told them that I would spend six days with them. After dinner I saw Signor Dandolo shut himself up in his room with De La Haye. They spent two whole hours there. Signor Dandolo came to my bedside to tell me that I had arrived just in time to consult my oracle about an important matter which concerned him, and he gave me his question. He asked if he would do well to accept the proposal which De La Haye had just made to him. I produce the answer that he should reject it. Signor Dandolo is surprised and returns with another question. He asks what reasons he shall give him for his refusal. I suggest that he answer that he had thought he should ask my advice and, finding me opposed to the plan, wished to hear no more of it. Pleased that he could put all the odium of his refusal upon me, Signor Dandolo left. I did not know what it was all about, but I did not care to know. My satisfaction consisted in the fact that Signor Dandolo's curt refusal should teach De La Haye that he must not try to make my friends do anything except through me.

I quickly masked and went to the opera. I sat down at a faro bank, I played, and I lost all my money. Fortune showed me that she was not always on love's side. After this ill-considered performance I went to bury my sorrow in sleep.

On waking in the morning I see De La Haye, all smiles. After professing the most exaggerated regard for me, he asks me why I had dissuaded Signor Dandolo from accepting the proposal he had made to him.

"What proposal?"

"You know."

"I know nothing about it."

"He told me himself that you advised him against it."

"Very well, I advised him against it; but I did not dissuade him, for if he had been persuaded he would have had no need to ask my advice."

"As you please. May I ask your reasons?"

"First tell me what the proposal is."

"Did he not tell you himself?"

"Possibly. But if you want me to tell you my reasons I must hear the whole thing from you, for he spoke to me under my promise of secrecy. You would do the same in my place. I have always heard you say that in matters of secrecy one must always be on guard against being taken unawares."

"I am incapable of taking a friend unawares; but in general your maxim is sound. I like circumspection. Here is the story. You know that Signora Tiepolo[10] has been left a widow and that Signor Dandolo continues to court her assiduously after having courted her for ten whole years during the lifetime of her husband. The lady, who is still young, beautiful, and fresh, who has very good sense and is sweetness itself, wishes to become his wife. She chose me to confide in, and, seeing nothing that is not praiseworthy in the union, either temporally or spiritually, for you know that we are all human, I was much pleased to take the matter in hand. I even thought I saw that Signor Dandolo was inclined toward it when he said he would give me his answer today. I will tell you sincerely that I was not surprised that he should ask your advice, for it is the part of a sensible man to ask the advice of a prudent friend before he resolves upon an important and decisive step; but I was greatly astonished that such a marriage did not have your approval. Forgive me if, to improve my mind, I ask you to tell me the reasons which make your opinion so different from mine."

Delighted to have discovered everything and to have arrived in time to prevent my friend, who was goodness itself, from contracting a ridiculous marriage, I answered De La Haye that I loved Signor Dandolo and that, knowing his constitution, I was certain that marriage with a woman like Signora Tiepolo would shorten his life.

"That being so," I said, "you must admit that, as a true friend, I was bound to advise him against it. Do you remember telling me that you had never married for the same reason? Do you remember talking to me at great length in Parma in defense of bachelors? Consider too, if you please, that every man is something of an egoist, and that I am entitled to be one when I think that if Signor Dandolo should take a wife his wife's credit with him must have some weight and that whatever influence she gained over him would be at the expense of mine. So you see it would be going against nature if I should advise him to take a step which he could take only to my disadvantage. If you can show me that my arguments are beside the point or are sophistries, speak, and I will yield and make my recantation to Signor Dandolo. Signora Tiepolo will become his wife upon our return to Venice; but I warn you that I will not yield unless I am thoroughly convinced."

"I do not believe I have the power to convince you. I will write to Signora Tiepolo that it is to you that she must apply."

"Do not write that, for she will think you are making a fool of her. Do you think she is stupid enough to expect that I would consent? She knows that I do not like her."

"How can she know that you do not like her?"

"From seeing that I would never let Signor Dandolo take me to call on her. In short, as long as I live with my three friends they shall never have any wife but me. As for you, marry if you please, and I will raise no objection; but if you want us to remain friends give up your scheme of seducing them away from me."

"You are caustic this morning."

"I lost all my money last night."

"Then I chose a bad time. Good-by."

From that day De La Haye became my secret enemy; and he played no small part in my being imprisoned under the Leads two years later, not by calumniating me, for he was incapable of that, but by pious discourses to pious people. If my reader is fond of bigots, I advise him not to read these memoirs. There was no more talk of the marriage after we returned to Venice. Signor Dandolo continued to pay his court to the widow every day, and I made my oracle forbid me ever to set foot in her house.

Don Antonio Croce,[11] a young Milanese whose acquaintance I had made in Reggio, a great gambler and an old hand at rectifying bad luck, came to call on me just as De La Haye was leaving. He said that, having seen me lose my money, he had come to offer me a way of recouping if I would go halves with him in a faro bank which he would open in his house and at which the punters would be seven or eight rich foreigners, all of whom were paying court to his wife.

"You shall put three hundred zecchini in my bank," he said, "and you shall be my croupier. I have three hundred myself; but it is not enough, for the punters play high. Come to dinner at my house today and you shall meet them all. We can play tomorrow, because it being Friday there is no opera. Be sure that we shall win very large sums, for a Swede named Gillenspetz[12] can lose twenty thousand zecchini all by himself."

Certain that the celebrated swindler did not have designs on me and sure that he knew the secret of winning, I found that I was not conscientious enough to deny him my assistance as his partner and to refuse a half share in his winnings.

CHAPTER XVI

I come into money again. My adventure at Dolo. Analysis of a long letter from my mistress. P. C. plays me a scurvy trick in Vicenza. My tragicomic scene at the inn.

THE DIFFICULTY was to find the money; but in the meanwhile I wanted to make the acquaintance of the gulls and of the idol to whom they did homage. So we went to the Prato della Valle[1] where we found Signora Croce at the coffeehouse, surrounded by foreigners. She was pretty. A secretary to Count Rosenberg,[2] the Imperial Ambassador, who was with her, was the reason why no Venetian nobleman dared to appear in her train. The ones who interested me were the Swede Gillenspetz, a man from Hamburg, an English Jew named Mendex,[3] whom I have already mentioned, and three or four others whom Croce called to my attention. We went to dine and afterwards everyone asked him to make a bank; but he excused himself, which surprised me, for the three hundred zecchini he said he had should have been enough for the skillful player he was; but he cleared my doubt when, taking me to a private room, he showed me fifty fine doblones de a ocho,[4] which amounted to exactly five hundred zecchini. On my promise that I would secure the same amount, he invited them all to supper the next day. Our agreement was that we would divide the winnings before we parted, and that he would let no one play on his word.

It was to Signor Bragadin that I turned to procure the amount, for his money box was always empty. He found a Jewish usurer who, against a note which my benefactor signed, gave me a thousand Venetian ducati[5] at five percent per month, payable at the end of a month and with the interest deducted in advance. It was the amount I needed. I went to supper, he dealt until dawn, and our shares were eight hundred zecchini each. On Saturday Gillenspetz alone lost two thousand zecchini and the Jew Mendex a thousand. On Sunday we did not play and on Monday the bank won four thousand. On Tuesday he had the company to dinner, because I had told him I must go to Venice. He made a bank after dinner, and here is what happened at the end of the afternoon.

An adjutant of the Podestà[6] entered and told him that he had orders from His Excellency to speak to him in private. They went out together and two minutes later my associate came back looking rather embarrassed and told the company that he had just received an order forbidding him to deal in his house. His lady said she felt ill and withdrew, and all the players filed out. After taking half of the money on the table, I left too. He said we would meet again in Venice,[7] for he had been ordered to leave within twenty-four hours. I expected as much, for the young man was too well known, but also for the still stronger reason that the authorities wanted people to lose their money at the gaming room in the theater, where most of the bankers were Venetian noblemen.[8]

I set off at full gallop at nightfall in very bad weather; but nothing could have held me back. I was to receive C. C.'s letter early the next morning.

Six miles from Padua my horse fell on its side, so that I was caught with my left leg under its belly. As my boots were soft, I feared that I had broken it. The postilion, who was riding ahead of me, comes running up, pulls me out, and I am delighted that I have suffered no injury; but my horse was lamed. I make use of my privilege and mount the postilion's horse, but the insolent fellow takes it by the bit and will not let me go. I prove to him that he is in the wrong; but it makes no difference; he holds me back, giving me a quantity of spurious arguments, and I have no time to lose. I fire my pistol at him point-blank, at which he makes off and I pursue my journey. At Dolo[9] I go into the stable and myself saddle a horse which the postilion, to whom I immediately gave a scudo, tells me is excellent. No one is surprised that my postilion has remained behind. It was an hour after midnight, a storm had damaged the road, and, the night being very dark, when I reached Fusina I saw the first light of dawn.

I was told that there would be another storm, but I made light of it, a four-oared boat dared the elements, and I reached home safe and sound, though roughly handled by the rain and the wind. A quarter of an hour later the woman from Murano brought me a letter from C. C., saying that she would come back in two hours for my answer.

The letter was a journal seven pages long, a translation of which would bore my reader; but here is the gist of it. Her father, returned home after talking with Signor Bragadin, had summoned her to his room with her mother and had gently asked her where she had made my acquaintance. She answered that she had talked with me five or six times in her brother's room, where I had asked her if she would consent to become my wife, to which she had replied that she was governed by her father and mother. He had then told her that she was too young to think of marrying and that in any case I had as yet no established position. After that he had gone to the room in which his son was living and had himself bolted the small door opening onto the alley and the door which gave access to his mother's room, ordering him to have me told that she had gone to the country if I came to call on her.

Two days later he told her at the bedside of her mother, who was ill, that her aunt would take her to a convent where she would remain as a boarder until she should receive a husband from the hands of her father and mother. She had answered that, being perfectly obedient to his will, she was very glad to go. He had then promised to visit her there and that when her mother was well she would go too. A quarter of an hour after this conversation she got into a gondola with her aunt, who was her father's sister and who took her to the convent in which she now was. Her bed and all her clothes had been brought the same day, and she was well pleased with her room and with the nun to whom the Abbess had entrusted her and under whose supervision she was. It was this nun who had told her that she was forbidden to receive visits and letters and to write letters, under pain of excommunication. However, the same nun had given her books and everything she needed to copy out the passages she liked; it was at night that she abused this favor by writing to me, having no fear of an excommunication which she considered unreasonable. She said that she thought the woman who carried her letters was discreet and trustworthy, and that she would remain so since, being poor, four zecchini a month would make her rich. She thanked me for the zecchino I had sent her, saying that she would let me know when she needed another from me. She told me, in a very amusing style, that the most beautiful nun in the convent loved her to distraction, that she gave her French lessons twice a day, and had forbidden her to make the acquaintance of her fellow boarders. The nun was only twenty-two years old and, as she was rich and generous, all the other nuns treated her with deference. She said that when they were alone she gave her kisses of which I could rightly be jealous if she were of a different sex. As for my plan of eloping with her, she said she did not think it would be difficult to execute it, but that it would be wiser to wait until she could tell me all about the convent building. She urged me to be true to her, saying that constancy depended upon fidelity; and she ended her letter by asking me for my portrait in a ring, but with a secret device so that no one could see it. She said that I could easily send it to her by her mother, who was well again and went alone every day to the first mass at the church of the P. S.[10] She assured me that her mother would be delighted if I would go there and speak with her. She hoped, she said, that in five or six months she would be in a condition which would scandalize and dishonor the convent if she remained there.

I answered at once, not finishing my letter until I saw the woman. Her name was Laura. After giving her her zecchino I entrusted her with a package in which were fine paper, sealing wax, and a tinderbox. She left, assuring me that my cousin was growing more beautiful every day. C. C. had told her that I was her cousin, and Laura pretended to believe it. Not knowing what to do in Venice, and my honor demanding that I go to Parma, my hurried departure from which might have given rise to such unfavorable conjectures as Croce's had done, I drank a bouillon and set off, going myself to the Roman post for a *bollettone*.[11] It was easy to foresee that my pistol shot near Fiesso[12] and the lamed horse could have put the post masters in a bad humor to the point of refusing me horses; but they had to obey when they saw what is called a *bollettone* in Italy. As for the pistol shot, I had no fear because I knew I had missed the insolent fellow on purpose. But even if I had killed him nothing would have happened to me.

At Fusina I took a two-wheeled *barella,* being extremely tired and even in no condition to ride a horse. I reach Dolo, I am recognized at once, and I am refused horses. The post master comes out and threatens to have me arrested if I do not pay for the horse I had killed. I answer that if the horse is dead I will account for it to the post master in Padua, and I hand him my *bollettone* to read. He says that since I had nearly killed my postilion none of his will serve me. I say that in that case he shall serve me himself. He laughs in my face and goes off. I then go to a notary with two witnesses, I draw up a complaint, and I threaten him with a fine of ten zecchini an hour if he persists in refusing me horses.

At that he sends out a postilion with two rampaging horses; I clearly see that the plan is to have me upset, perhaps into the river. I coldly tell the postilion that the instant he overturns me I will blow out his brains. He goes back with the horses and tells the post master that he will not serve me. Just then a courier arrives at full gallop from Padua and orders six horses for a berlin and two saddle horses. I thereupon tell the post master that he shall give no one horses before me and that if an attempt should be made to use force blood will be shed, and so saying I show him my pistols. He curses and goes off; everyone around me says he is in the wrong.

Five or six minutes later who should appear but Croce in a fine six-horse berlin with his wife, a chambermaid, and footmen in his livery! He had on an imposing uniform. He gets out, we embrace, and I pull a long face and tell him that he will not leave before I do; I explain the reason, and he says I am right. He raises a row, everybody trembles, the post master had taken to his heels, his wife comes down and orders that I be served. Croce says that I am doing well to show myself in Padua, for people were saying that I too had left it by order. He tells me that Signor Gondoin,[13] a colonel in the service of the Duke of Modena, who also made a bank in his house, had likewise been compelled to leave. I promised that I would go to see him in Venice the following week. This man, who had come into my life as if he had dropped from the sky, had won ten thousand zecchini in four sessions, of which I received four thousand nine hundred. I paid all my debts and redeemed all the possessions I had pawned; but what is more, he filled my purse.

On arriving in Padua I found all my friends greatly alarmed except Signor Bragadin, to whose custody I had entrusted my money box the day before. They believed a rumor which was going the rounds that the Podestà had also sent me an order to leave. As I was a Venetian, such an order could not be sent me. Instead of going to bed I dressed in my best to go to the opera unmasked. I told them that I must go to give the lie to everything that evil tongues had been saying about me.

"I am delighted," said De La Haye, "if everything that is being said is false, but you have only yourself to blame. Your hurried departure did you this injustice. People want to know the reason for everything, and when they do not know it they invent one. However, it is certain that you tried to kill the postilion; give thanks to God that you missed him."

"Another slander. Do you think that a pistol fired point-blank can miss?"

"But the horse is dead, and you must pay for it."

"I will not pay for it, for the postilion was ahead of me. Do you know the rules of the post? Besides, I was in a hurry. I had promised a lady to breakfast with her that morning."

He seemed annoyed when, after this dialogue, I returned to him all the money he had lent me in Vienna. A man can reason well only when he has money, unless a tumultuous passion makes him lose patience. Signor Bragadin said that I would do well to go to the opera unmasked.

On my appearance in the parterre I saw that everyone was astonished, and whoever spoke to me congratulated me, whether sincerely or not. After the first ballet I went to the gaming room and in three or four deals I won five hundred zecchini. Dying with sleep and hunger, I went home to boast of my victories. My dear Bavois borrowed fifty zecchini from me, which he never returned; but it is true that I never asked him for them.

Still thinking of C. C., I spent the whole next day having my portrait painted in miniature by a skillful Piedmontese who had come to the fair and who later made a great deal of money in Venice; he also painted me a St. Catherine[14] of the same size. A Venetian who was an excellent jeweler made the ring for me surpassingly well. The figure one saw was the saint. An almost invisible blue dot on the white enamel which surrounded her was to be pushed with the point of a pin. The saint sprang up and my portrait appeared, a very good likeness. He delivered it to me four days later, as he had promised.

On Friday, just as we were getting up from table, a letter was brought for me. I was surprised to see that it was P. C. asking me to come to him at once at the "Star" (this was the posthouse inn). He said that he had news to tell me which would interest me greatly. I thought it was something which concerned his sister and I went at once.

I found him, as I expected, with his mistress C. After congratulating him on being out of prison, I asked him what the interesting news was. He said he was certain that his sister was being boarded in a convent and assured me that he would be able to tell me the name of the convent as soon as he returned to Venice. I answered that he would be doing me a favor. But the news was only a means to get me to come and talk with him. The reason for his zeal was something else. He told me exultantly that he had sold a three-year lease on his right to supply cattle for fifteen thousand florins, and that the contracting party with whom he had made the transaction had got him out of prison by standing surety for him and had advanced him six thousand florins in the form of four bills of exchange. He at once showed them to me, all four of them honored by a name which I did not know but of whose excellent reputation he assured me.

"I want to buy," he went on, "six thousand florins' worth of silks from the manufactories in Vicenza, paying the makers by these notes, which are to my order and which I will make over to theirs. I am certain to sell the silks and make a profit of ten percent. Come with us, and I will give you silks to the value of two hundred zecchini; and thus you will be covered for the two hundred zecchini you guaranteed for me on the ring. It will take us only twenty-four hours to finish the whole business."

I should not have gone; but my wish to have the value of my guarantee in my hands overcame my judgment. I consented. "If I do not go," I said to myself, "he will sell the goods at once at a loss of twenty-five percent, and my money will be gone." So I promised to leave with them early the next day. He showed me letters of recommendation to the leading houses in Vicenza. An avariciousness which was not in my character made me fall into the trap.

So very early the next morning I am at the "Star." Four horses are harnessed. The innkeeper comes upstairs with the account and P. C. asks me to pay it; I see a bill for five zecchini, four of which had been paid out by the innkeeper, for the Signore owed them to the *vetturino* he had engaged at Fusina. I paid, with a little laugh. The scoundrel had left Venice without a soldo. We got into the carriage, we reach Vicenza in three hours and put up at the "Sign of the Hat."[15] He orders a choice dinner, then leaves me with his lady while he goes to talk with the cloth manufacturers.

Signora C. begins by treating me to reproaches which I disdain. She says that it is eighteen years since she began to love me, that we were both nine years old when we saw each other for the first time in Padua. She brings it back to me. She was the daughter of the Abate Grimani's antiquarian friend who had put me to board with the Slavonian woman. Her story makes me smile, for I recollect that her mother was fond of me.[16]

But in come some shopboys, already bringing lengths of goods. Signora C. is delighted. In less than two hours the room is full of silks. P. C. arrives with two manufacturers whom he has invited to dinner. C. flirts with them, we dine, there is a great plenty of fine wines. After dinner more goods are brought; P. C. lists them, with their prices; but he wants still more. He is promised that he shall have more the next day, though it is a Sunday.

Toward nightfall several Counts arrive; for in Vicenza all noblemen are Counts.[17] P. C. had left his letters of introduction at their houses. There were a Count Velo, a Count Sesso, and a very pleasant Count Trento; they invite us to the casino which the nobility frequented. C. is admired there. After spending two hours at the casino, P. C. invites them to sup with us. Gaiety and profusion. I was bored to death; I said nothing; no one spoke to me. I go to bed in a room on the third floor, leaving them at the table. In the morning I come down for breakfast, and until noon I see so many lengths of goods that there must be enough. P. C. tells me that the whole transaction will be completed during the course of the next day and that we are invited to a ball at which all the nobility will be present. The manufacturers with whom he had been dealing all came to dinner with us. The same profusion.

At the ball that evening I really lost my patience. Everyone talked with C. and with P. C., who said nothing worth hearing, and when I said anything no one listened. I take a lady out to dance a minuet, she dances it, but looking this way and that. A quadrille is made up, and I find I am left out and that the same lady who refused me is dancing with another man. If I had been in good spirits I would not have put up with it; but I preferred to return to the inn at once and go to bed, at a loss to understand what reason the nobility of Vicenza could have to treat me in such a fashion. Perhaps I was neglected because I was not named in the letters which P. C. had presented; but the rules of politeness could not be unknown to them. I possess my soul in patience. We were to leave the next day.

The next day the tired couple slept until noon. After dinner P. C. went out to pay for the goods he had chosen. We were to leave the next day, Tuesday, early in the morning. The Counts, whom C. had enchanted, came to supper. I left them still at table, impatient for the next day to come, for I must be in Venice early on Wednesday.

In the morning the inn boy comes up and tells me that breakfast is ready in the room downstairs; I delay a little. He comes up again and tells me that my wife asks me to hurry. At the word "wife" my hand strikes the poor innocent's face while my feet kicking his belly show him to the stairs, which he descends headlong at the risk of breaking his neck.

I go down furious, I enter the room in which I am awaited, and I ask P. C. who is the blackguard who has announced me at the inn as the Signora's husband; and just as he is answering that he knows nothing about it, in comes the innkeeper with a knife in his hand and asks me why I had kicked his nephew downstairs. I ask him, pistol in hand, who had told him that I was the woman's husband. He replies that it was Captain P. C. himself who had registered the party. I thereupon seize the Captain by his coat collar, I push him against the wall, and it is the innkeeper who, dropping the knife, prevents me from breaking his head open with the butt of my pistol. The Signora, as always, appeared to be in a faint. The scoundrel did nothing but shout, *"It is not true, it is not true."* The innkeeper goes downstairs and quickly comes back with the register, and, with a murderous look, holds it under the villain's eyes, defying him to repeat that it was not he who had dictated: *"P. C., Captain in the Imperial Army, with Signor and Signora Casanova."* He answers that he had misunderstood him, at which the innkeeper hits him in the face with the book. When I see the coward swallow this insult without remembering that he had a sword and was wearing a uniform, I left the room and, going upstairs, told the innkeeper's nephew to order me a *barella* and two horses for Padua at once. Frothing with rage, I put my possessions in a traveling bag, realizing too late the unpardonable error a decent man commits when he associates with scoundrels. But in comes Signora C.

"Leave this room, for I am furious, and I should not respect your sex."

She drops into an armchair and, bursting into tears, says that she is innocent; she swears that when the shameless knave dictated the registration she was not present. The innkeeper's wife comes in and tells me the same. At that my anger begins to evaporate in words; and from my window I see the *barella* I had ordered standing ready at the door. I send for the innkeeper, to pay him whatever my share may be. He replies that, since I had ordered nothing, I owed him nothing. At this juncture in comes Count Velo.

"I wager, Signor Conte, that you thought this woman is my wife."

"The whole town knows it."

"Hell and damnation! I am astonished that you should have thought so when you know that I lodge alone in this room and when you saw me retire last night leaving her with you all."

"There are accommodating husbands."

"I am not one of them, and you are no judge of men of honor. Let us go outside and I will prove it to you."

The Count quickly made for the stairs and left the inn. C. was choking, and I felt no pity for her. But then it occurs to me that if I leave without paying anything people would laugh at the scene I had made and say I had had a share in the swindle. I order the innkeeper to bring me the bill, as I insisted on paying half of it. He goes for it at once, whereupon I am treated to a fresh surprise. Signora C., falling to her knees and weeping, says that if I abandon her she is lost, for she has neither money nor anything to pawn.

"What! Have you not four thousand scudi worth of goods?"

"They have all been taken away. Did you not know it? The bills of exchange which you saw and which we thought were as good as ready money only made the gentlemen laugh; they took back all the lengths of goods we had chosen. Is it possible?"

"The scoundrel foresaw everything, and that is why he got me to come here. But I am ashamed to complain. I did a stupid thing, and I must pay the penalty."

The bill which the innkeeper brought me came to forty zecchini, an enormous amount for three days; but the money he had paid out was included. I instantly realized that my honor demanded that I pay the whole of it, and I fulfilled the obligation on the spot, taking a receipt signed by two witnesses. I gave the innkeeper's nephew two zecchini to forgive me for having mistreated him, and I refused two to C., who sent the innkeeper's wife to ask me for them.

So ended this ugly affair, which taught me a lesson, but one which I should not have needed. Two or three weeks later I learned that Count Trento had packed off the two wretches, with whom I refused to have any further dealings. A month later P. C. was back in prison, the man who had stood surety for him having gone bankrupt. He had the effrontery to send me a long letter asking me to come to see him; but I did not even answer it. I did the same to Signora C., who was reduced to poverty.

I stopped in Padua only to get my ring and to dine with Signor Bragadin, who returned to Venice a few days afterward.

C. C.'s letter, which Laura brought me punctually the next morning, told me nothing new. In my answer I gave her a detailed account of the trick her brother had played on me, and I told her to expect her ring, explaining its secret to her.

So, following the instructions she had given me, at dawn one morning I stationed myself at a place from which I saw her mother enter the church. Kneeling down beside her I said I must speak with her, and she came to the cloister. After trying to console her and assuring her that I would remain constant in my love for her daughter until the day of my death, I asked her if she went to visit her. She answered that she expected to go on Sunday and that she was sorry she could not tell me in what convent she was. I said there was no use in my knowing and that I only begged her to tell her that my heart was hers alone and to give her the ring, which I showed her.

"It is the likeness," I said, "of her patron saint, without whose protection she will never become my wife."

She was to keep it on her finger day and night, and say a Paternoster and an Ave Maria to it every day. I said that I did the same with my patron San Giacomo, reciting a Credo to him every day.

Delighted that she could teach her daughter this new devotion, she took the ring and promised to deliver it to her. I left her, giving her two zecchini which her daughter might be glad to have to satisfy her small needs. She accepted them, at the same time assuring me that she did not lack anything she needed.

In the letter she wrote me the following Wednesday I found the quintessence of true love. She said that as soon as she was alone nothing was quicker than the point of the pin with which she made St. Catherine spring up. She then kissed my portrait a hundred times and did not leave off if someone came in, for she instantly made the cover drop over it. The nuns were all edified by her confidence in the protection of her blessed patron, whose features by some chance, all the convent said, resembled hers. She said that for that reason the nun who taught her French had offered her fifty zecchini for her ring—not for love of the saint, at whom she had laughed when she read her life, but because she looked like her. The two zecchini I had sent her were very precious to her for, since her mother had given them to her publicly, she could use them as she pleased without arousing idle speculation in those who, seeing her spending money, might wonder from where she could have received it. She liked to make "little presents" to her fellow boarders. She said that her mother had praised my Christian piety, and she ended her very long letter by asking me not to tell her any more news of her brother.

For three or four weeks her letters were about nothing but her St. Catherine, which made her shake with fear when it was in the hands of some nun who, being shortsighted, rubbed the enamel. "Where would I be," she wrote me, "if at such a moment the spring worked and the nun suddenly saw a face which certainly does not look like a saint's? Tell me what I should do."

A month after P. C. was put in prison the merchant who had sold him the ring for two hundred zecchini gave me the note, reconciling himself to losing twenty. I sent it to the wretch in his prison, who kept writing me asking for money.

Croce was the talk of Venice. He kept a fine house; he dealt at faro and cleaned out the punters. Foreseeing what would happen sooner or later, I never set foot there; but his wife having given birth to a boy[18] and asking me to stand godfather to him, I went there and stayed for supper. From then on I never set foot in his house again.

Volume Four

CHAPTER I

Croce expelled from Venice. Sgombro. His disgrace and death. Misfortune which befalls my dear C. C. I receive an anonymous letter from a nun and I answer it. Love intrigue.

WHAT BROUGHT my dear partner the order to leave the States of the Republic was not gaming, for the State Inquisitors would have had too much to do if they had tried to purge the State of swindling gamesters. The cause of his exile was something very different and very extraordinary.

A Venetian nobleman of the Gritti[1] family, surnamed Sgombro,[2] fell in love with the man, contrary to nature, and he, either for the fun of it or because it was his taste, did not reject his advances. The great trouble was that they did not conceal their monstrous love. The scandal reached such a point that the wise government was forced to order the young man to live elsewhere.

But soon afterward what happened to Sgombro had even more serious consequences. Having fallen in love with his two sons,[3] he reduced the handsomer of them to needing the services of a surgeon. The poor boy confessed that he had not had the courage to disobey the author of his existence. This submission to paternal affection rightly seemed of a sort which Nature must abhor. The State Inquisitors sent the tyrannical father to the citadel of Cattaro,[4] where he died at the end of the year,[5] poisoned by breathing the air of the place. The deadly effect of its air is so well known to the Tribunal that it sentences no one to breathe it except citizens who have deserved death by committing crimes which policy does not permit to be tried in public.

It was to Cattaro that the Council of Ten[6] some fifteen years ago sent the celebrated advocate Contarini,[7] a Venetian nobleman whose eloquence had given him control over the Great Council [8] and who was about to alter the constitution. He died there at the end of a year. As for his accomplices, it was thought the part of wisdom to punish only the four or five leaders.

This noble Sgombro whom I have mentioned had a charming wife, who, I believe, is still alive. She is Signora Cornelia Gritti,[9] even more celebrated for her wit than for a beauty superior to the ravages of age. Finding herself her own mistress on her husband's death, she laughed at all the men who came forward to persuade her to sacrifice her freedom to them; but having never been a resolute enemy of love she always accepted their homage.

One Monday toward the end of July my valet woke me at daybreak, saying that the woman who came every Wednesday wished to speak with me. Here is the letter which she gave me with a very sad countenance:

"Sunday evening. A misfortune which befell me this morning is making me miserable because I have to hide it from the whole convent. I am losing my blood, I do not know how to stop the flow, and I have very little linen. Laura told me that I need a great deal of it in case the hemorrhage should continue, and I can trust no one. So send me some linen, my only friend. You see that I have had to confide in Laura, who can come to my room at any hour. If the hemorrhage kills me the whole convent will know what I died of; but I think of you; and I tremble. What will you do in your grief? Ah, my dear! What a pity!"

I dress quickly, using the time to think the matter over. I ask Laura what kind of hemorrhage it is, and she says plainly that it is the result of a miscarriage, and that we must act with the greatest secrecy for the sake of the Signorina's reputation. She tells me that she needs only linen and that it will not come to anything. This is what such women always say. I am scarcely dressed before I have another oar put to my gondola, and I go with Laura to the Ghetto,[10] where I buy a Jew's whole stock of sheets and more than two hundred napkins, and after putting them in a bag I go to Murano with her. On the way I write to my dear one in pencil that she must have perfect confidence in Laura and I assure her that I will not leave Murano until her bleeding has stopped. As she got out of the gondola Laura persuaded me that, since I did not wish to be seen, I would do well to hide in her house. She left me in a room on the ground floor littered with rags and in which I saw two beds. After putting all the linen she could under her skirt she went off to the patient, whom she had seen at nightfall the day before. I hoped she would find her out of danger and I could not wait to hear it.

She came back an hour later and told me that, having lost much blood all night, she was in bed and very weak, and that we must commend her to God, for if the hemorrhage did not stop she would succumb within twenty-four hours. When I saw the linen which she took out from under her skirt I very nearly dropped dead. It was sheer butchery. She assures me that there is no fear that the secret will not be kept, but says there is everything to fear for the poor child's life. A strange sort of consolation! But at the moment her stupidity could not make me laugh. She told me that when she had read my note she had smiled and that after kissing it she had said that since I was so near her she was sure she would not die.

I shuddered when the woman showed me a little shapeless lump in among the blood. She said that she was going out to wash everything and that she would come back and go to the convent with linen for the patient when everyone there was at dinner.

"Has she had visitors?"

"Everyone in the convent; but no one has any idea what brought on her illness."

"But with the heat this time of year she can only be using a very light coverlet, and it is impossible that the great mound her napkins must make will not be noticed."

"There is no fear of that, for she is sitting up."

"What does she eat?"

"Nothing. She must not eat."

She then left, and so did I. I went to see a physician named Payton, where I wasted my time and the money I gave him for a long prescription which I did not use. It would have told the whole convent what my angel's trouble was, and the convent physician would himself have made it public, perhaps in revenge. After going home for a few things I needed I returned to my hiding place, where a half hour later I saw Laura looking very sad as she gave me a note in which C. C. wrote me:

"My dear, I have not the strength to write to you. I am still bleeding, and there is no remedy. God disposes; but my honor is safe. My only consolation is knowing that you are here."

Laura terrified me by showing me ten or twelve more napkins soaked with blood. She thought it would comfort me to tell me that a pound of it would soak a hundred napkins; but I was beyond comforting. I was really in despair. Seeing myself the murderer of this innocent girl, I did not feel that I could survive her. Overwhelmed, I stayed in bed for six whole hours, never saying a word until Laura came back from the convent with twenty soaked napkins. It was night, so she could not go back. She had to wait for the next morning. I waited for it too, without sleeping or eating or even letting Laura's daughters undress me, for, though they were pretty, they filled me with loathing. I saw them as the instruments of my horrible incontinence, which had made me the executioner of an angel incarnate.

The sun was appearing above the horizon when Laura entered and dolefully gave me the news that the poor girl was no longer bleeding. She thought she was thus preparing me to hear the news of her death the same day.

"She is exhausted," she said, "she has only just strength enough to keep her eyes open, she looks as if she were made of wax, her pulse is almost too weak to feel."

"But my dear Laura, this news is not bad. She must have something to eat now."

"The physician has been sent for. It is he who will prescribe what is to be given her; but to tell you the truth I have no hope. As you can imagine, she will not tell the physician the truth, so God knows what he will prescribe for her. I whispered to her not to take anything, and she understood."

"If she does not die of inanition before tomorrow I am sure she will live, and her physician will have been Nature."

"God grant it! I will go back to see her at noon."

"Why not sooner?"

"Because her room will be full of people."

Needing to hope, I thought of sustaining my own life, I ordered a meal prepared, and in the meanwhile I began a letter to C. C. against the time when she would be strong enough to read it. Moments of repentance are very gloomy. I was to be pitied. I badly needed to see Laura again to learn what the physician's oracle had been. I had good reason to laugh at all oracles; nevertheless I was badly in need of this physician's, and above all of hearing that it was favorable.

Laura's daughters brought me a dinner, but I could swallow nothing. They amused me by eating it all themselves with ravenous appetites. Her eldest daughter, the showpiece, never looked at me. I thought the two younger ones were free and easy; but I examined them only to feed my painful repentance.

Laura came at last and told me that the patient was still in the same state of inanition, that her extreme weakness had greatly surprised the physician, who did not know to what to attribute it. He had prescribed cordials and light broths, and he had prognosticated that she would recover her health if she could sleep. When he ordered a night nurse for her the patient had given Laura her hand; so she promised me she would not leave her again. Her mother had gone to see her, and I was glad to hear it. I saw very well that if she could sleep she would recover, so I longed for morning. I gave Laura six zecchini and her daughters one apiece, and ate some fish for supper. I also went to bed undressed, despite the badness of the bed. When Laura's daughters saw me in bed they undressed without further ado and lay down in another, which was beside mine. Their confidence pleased me. The eldest sister must have known what was what. She went off to bed in another room, for she had a lover who was to marry her in the fall.

Very early the next morning Laura came in looking cheerful and told me that the patient had slept well and that she was going back to the convent to take her a dish of soup. However, it was too soon to cry victory, for she still needed to regain her strength and replace the blood she had lost. I now felt sure that she would recover her health; and so she did. But I stayed there another week, unable to make up my mind to go until C. C. practically ordered me to do so in a four-page letter. When I left, Laura wept for joy on finding herself rewarded by nearly all the fine linen I had bought for her for the patient, and her two younger daughters cried too, apparently because they had not managed to persuade me to give them at least a kiss during the ten days I spent in their house.

In Venice I returned to my old occupations; but without a real and satisfying love affair I could not be happy. The only pleasure I had was receiving every Wednesday a letter from my little wife, who encouraged me to wait instead of begging me to carry her off. Laura assured me that she had become more beautiful. I was dying to see her.

It was at the end of August that, Laura having told me of a profession[11] which had the whole convent in turmoil, I decided to give myself the pleasure of seeing my beautiful angel. Since the visiting rooms were sure to be full of people and the nuns would be receiving visitors at the convent gate, it was likely that the boarders would appear and that C. C. would be there too. There was no reason to fear that I would be noticed more than anyone else on a day when there would be a crowd of strangers. So I went, having neither said anything to Laura nor announced my visit to C. C. in my last letter.

I thought I should die with pleasure when I saw her four paces from me, staring at me in her surprise at seeing me there. I thought she was taller and more developed, that her face was even more beautiful, which I had considered impossible. I had eyes only for her, and I did not go back to Venice until the gate was closed.

But the letter which she wrote me three days later described her pleasure at seeing me too vividly for me not to try to think of some way of giving it to her often. I answered immediately that she would see me at mass at her church on every feast day; and I began at once. It cost me nothing. I did not see her; but as I knew that she saw me, her pleasure was enough to make mine complete. I had nothing to fear, for it was almost impossible that I should be recognized in a church to which no one went except the plain citizens of Murano and their womenfolk. After hearing one or two masses I got into a *traghetto* gondola,[12] whose gondolier could have no possible interest in knowing who I was. However, I remained on my guard. Knowing that her father's intention was to make C. C. forget me, I was sure that if he learned that I still put in an appearance he would confine her to another convent where I could have no contact with her.

Thus did I reason, but I was not well enough acquainted with the character of nuns or their peculiar kind of curiosity. Moreover it did not occur to me that, my person being noticeable and they seeing that I assiduously frequented their church, they would all conclude together that there must be some reason for it and would do their best to find it out.

After five or six feast days C. C. wrote me jocosely that I had become the puzzle of the entire convent, both nuns and boarders. The whole choir looked for me on the minute; they told one another when they saw me come in and take holy water; and it was observed that I never looked at the grating behind which all the recluses must be nor at any woman or girl who entered or left the church. The old nuns said that I must have some sorrow from which my only hope of being relieved was the protection of their Holy Virgin, in whom it was clear that I must have perfect trust; and the young ones said that I must be suffering from melancholia, a misanthrope who shunned the great world. My dear wife's writing me all this amused me. I wrote her that if she feared I might be recognized I would stop going, and she answered that she would be very sad if she were deprived of the pleasure of seeing me, which was her only happiness. Having learned of this general curiosity, however, I no longer dared to go to Laura's house. I was growing thin, I was wearing myself out; I could not long survive this sort of life. I was born to have a mistress and to live happily with her. Not knowing what to do, I gambled and I won nearly every day, yet for all that I was bored. After the five thousand zecchini I had won in Padua through the lucky hands of my partner I had followed Signor Bragadin's advice. I rented a casino,[13] where I dealt at faro on half shares with a magnate who protected me against the frauds of certain tyrannical aristocrats in competition with whom a mere private citizen is always in the wrong in my charming country.

1753.

On All Saints' Day, just as I was about to get into my gondola to return to Venice after hearing mass, I met a woman of the same type as Laura, who, after letting a letter drop at my feet, walked on. I pick it up and I see the same woman, satisfied that she had seen me do so, pursue her way. The letter was white and sealed with wax the color of aventurine.[14] The imprint represented a running knot. No sooner have I entered the gondola than I unseal it and read the following:

"A nun who has seen you in her church every feast day for the past two and a half months wishes you to make her acquaintance. A pamphlet which you lost and which has come into her hands assures her that you understand French. However, you may answer her in Italian, for she desires clarity and precision. She does not invite you to have her summoned to the visiting room, because before you obligate yourself to speak with her she wishes you to see her. So she will give you the name of a lady whom you can accompany to the visiting room, who will not know you, and hence will not be compelled to introduce you if by any chance you do not wish to be known.

"If this seems to you unsuitable, the same nun who writes you this letter will give you the address of a casino here in Murano where you will find her alone at the first hour of the night on the day you indicate to her; you can stay and sup with her, or leave a quarter of an hour later if you have business.

"Would you prefer to offer her supper in Venice? Let her know the day, the hour of the night, and the place to which she is to go, and you will see her leave a gondola masked, provided you are on the quay alone, without a servant, masked, and holding a candle.

"Being certain that you will answer me, and as impatient as you can imagine to read your answer, I beg you to deliver it tomorrow to the same woman who brought you this letter. You will find her an hour before noon in the Church of San Canziano[15] at the first altar on the right.

"Consider that if I had not supposed you to be well disposed and honorable, I should never have resolved to take a step which might give you an unfavorable opinion of me."

The tone of this letter, which I copy word for word, surprised me even more than its contents. I had business, but I dismissed everything to shut myself in my room and answer. Making such a request was sheer madness, yet I found a dignity in it which forced me to respect her. I was at first inclined to believe that the nun might be the one who was teaching C. C. French and who was beautiful, rich, and a flirt, and that my dear wife might have been indiscreet yet know nothing about this unheard-of step on her friend's part, and for that reason had been unable to notify me of it. But I dismissed the suspicion precisely because it pleased me. C. C. had written me that the nun who taught her French was not the only one who had a good command of the language. I could not doubt C. C.'s discretion and the candor with which she would have confessed it to me if she had confided anything at all to the nun. However, since the nun who had written me might be C. C.'s beautiful friend or might be someone else, I wrote her an answer in which I straddled the ditch as far as good manners permitted me to do so; here it is:

"I hope, Madame, that my answer in French will detract nothing from the clarity and precision which you demand and of which you set me an example.

"The subject is most interesting; it seems to me of the greatest moment under the circumstances, and obliged to give an answer without knowing to whom, do you not understand, Madame, that, not being a conceited fool, I must fear a snare? It is honor which obliges me to be on my guard. If it is true, then, that the pen which writes to me is that of a respectable lady who does me the justice to suppose me possessed of a soul as noble and a heart as well disposed as her own, she will find, I hope, that I can answer her only in the following terms:

"If you have thought me worthy, Madame, of making your acquaintance personally, your opinion of me being based only on my appearance, I consider it my duty to obey you if only to disabuse you should I by chance have involuntarily led you into error.

"Of the three arrangements which you have been so generous as to propose to me, I dare choose only the first, on the conditions which your very clear foresight has stipulated. I shall accompany to your visiting room a lady whom you will name to me and who will not know me. Hence there will be no question of introducing me. Be indulgent, Madame, to the specious reasons which oblige me not to name myself. In exchange, I promise you on my honor that your name will become known to me only that I may do you homage. If you see fit to speak to me I will answer you only with the most profound respect. Permit me to hope that you will be alone at the grating and to tell you for form's sake that I am a Venetian and free in the fullest sense of the word. The only reason which prevents me from deciding on the two other arrangements which you propose to me and which do me infinite honor is, permit me to repeat, my fear of being trapped. Those happy meetings can take place as soon as you have become better acquainted with me and no doubts trouble my soul, which abhors falsehood. Very impatient in my turn, I will go tomorrow at the same hour to San Canziano to receive your answer."

Having found the woman at the appointed place, I gave her my letter and a zecchino. The next morning I returned there and she came up to me. After giving me back my zecchino she handed me the following answer, asking me to go and read it and to come back afterward to tell her if she should wait for an answer. After reading it I went and told her that I had no answer to give her. This is what the nun's letter to me said:

"I believe, Monsieur, that I have been mistaken in nothing. Like yourself, I abhor falsehood when it can have consequences; but I consider it only a trifle when it harms no one. Of my three proposals you have chosen the one which does most honor to your perception. Respecting the reasons you may have for concealing your name, I write the Countess S.[16] what I ask you to read in the note herewith. You will seal it before having it delivered to her. She will be forewarned of it by another note. You will go to her house at your convenience; she will appoint an hour and you will accompany her here in her own gondola. She will not interrogate you, and you need give her no explanations. There will be no question of an introduction; but since you will learn my name, it will rest with you to come to see me masked whenever you wish, asking for me in the name of the same Countess. Thus we shall become acquainted without your being obliged to sacrifice any of the evening hours which may be precious to you. I have ordered the woman who brings this to wait for your answer in case you should be known to the Countess and hence unwilling to make this use of her. If my choice is agreeable to you tell the woman that you have no answer to send; whereupon she will take my note to the Countess. You may take the other to her at your convenience."

I told the woman that I had no answer to send when I was certain that I was not known to the Countess, whose name I had never heard. Here is the wording of the note I was to deliver to her:

"I beg you, my dear friend, to come and speak with me when you have time, and to name your hour to the masker who brings you this note so that he can accompany you. He will be punctual. You will greatly oblige your loving friend."

The address was to the Countess S., Riva del Rio Marin.[17] I thought the note a masterpiece of the spirit of intrigue. There was something lofty in this way of proceeding. I was made to play the role of a person who was being granted a favor. I saw it all clearly.

In her last letter the nun, showing no interest in who I was, approved my choice and tried to appear indifferent to nocturnal meetings; but she expected, and even seemed certain, that I would come and have her called to the visiting room after I had seen her. Her certainty increased my curiosity. She had reason to hope that I would do it if she was young and pretty. It was perfectly possible for me to delay for three or four days and find out from C. C. who the nun might be; but aside from its being an underhanded action, I was afraid I should spoil my chances and be sorry. She told me to call on the Countess at my convenience; her dignity demanded that she should not seem eager; but she knew that I must be so. She seemed too much at home in intrigue for me to believe her a novice and inexperienced; I feared I would repent of having wasted my time; and I prepared to laugh if I found I was with some old woman. In short, it is certain that I would not have gone had I not felt curious to see what sort of face a woman of this kind would put upon a meeting with me after she had offered to come to supper with me in Venice. Then, too, I was much surprised at the great freedom enjoyed by these holy virgins, who could so easily violate their rule of enclosure.

At three in the afternoon I sent a note in to the Countess S. She came out a minute later from the room in which she was entertaining guests and said that she would be glad if I would call at her house the next day at the same hour; and after dropping me a fine curtsy she withdrew. She was a domineering woman, beginning to fade a little but still beautiful.

The next morning, which was a Sunday, I went to mass at my usual hour, in my finest clothes and with my hair elegantly dressed, and already unfaithful in imagination to my dear C. C., for I was more concerned with displaying myself to the nun, be she young or old, than to her.

After dinner I mask and at the appointed hour go to call on the Countess, who was waiting for me. We go down, get into a commodious two-oared gondola, we arrive at the convent of the XXX[18] without having talked of anything but the beautiful autumn we were enjoying. She asks to see M. M.[19] The name astonishes me, for the bearer of it was celebrated. We go into a small visiting room, and five minutes later I see M. M. appear, go straight to the grating, open four square sections of it by pressing a spring, embrace her friend, then close the ingenious window again. The four sections made an opening eighteen inches square. Any man of my stature could have passed through it. The Countess sat down facing the nun and I on the other side in a position from which I could examine this rare beauty of twenty-two or twenty-three years at my ease. I decide at once that she must be the same nun whom C. C. had praised to me, the one who loved her dearly and was teaching her French.

Very nearly beside myself with admiration, I heard nothing of what they said. As for me, not only did the nun not once speak to me, she did not condescend to give me a single look. She was a perfect beauty, tall, so white of complexion as to verge on pallor, with an air of nobility and decision but at the same time of reserve and shyness, large blue eyes; a sweet, smiling face, beautiful lips damp with dew, which allowed a glimpse of two magnificent rows of teeth; her nun's habit did not let me see any hair; but whether she had it or not, its color must be light chestnut; her eyebrows told me as much; but what I found admirable and surprising were her hand and forearm, which I saw to the elbow: it was impossible to see anything more perfect. No veins were visible, and instead of muscles I saw only dimples. Despite all this I did not regret having refused the two meetings over a supper which the divine beauty had offered me. Sure that I should possess her in a few days, I enjoyed the pleasure of paying her the tribute of desiring her. I could not wait to be alone with her at the grating, and I thought I should have committed the worst of offenses if I had waited any longer than the next day to assure her that I had accorded her qualities all the justice they deserved. She continued not to look at me; but in the end it pleased me.

Suddenly the two ladies lowered their voices and put their heads together; as this indicated that I was one too many, I slowly walked away from the grating and looked at a painting. A quarter of an hour later they bade each other good-by, after embracing at the movable window. The nun turned away without giving me an opportunity even to bow to her. On the way back to Venice the Countess, perhaps tiring of my silence, remarked with a smile:

"M. M. is beautiful, but her mind is even more extraordinary."

"I have seen the one and I believe the other."

"She did not say a word to you."

"Since I did not wish to be introduced to her, she wished to ignore my being there. It was her way of punishing me.''

The Countess having made no reply, we arrived at her house without opening our mouths again. I left her at her door, because it was there that she dropped me the fine curtsy which means, ''Thank you. Good-by.'' I went elsewhere to muse over the strange adventure, whose inevitable consequences I was eager to see.

CHAPTER II

Countess Coronini. Wounded feelings. Reconciliation. First meeting. Philosophical digression.

SHE HAD not spoken to me, and I was glad of it. I was so overwhelmed that I might not have answered anything worth saying. I saw that she had no need to fear the humiliation of a refusal; yet it takes great courage in such a woman to run the risk of it. So much boldness at her age surprised me and I was at a loss to understand so much freedom. A casino at Murano! Able to go to Venice! I decided that she must have an acknowledged lover who was happy to make her happy. The idea set bounds to my sense of triumph. I saw that I was on the verge of becoming unfaithful to C. C.; but I did not feel restrained by any scruple. I thought that an infidelity of this kind, even if she were to discover it, could not offend her, because it would only be meant to keep me alive and so to preserve me for her.

The next morning I went to call on Countess Coronini,[1] who chose to live in the convent of Santa Giustina.[2] She was an old woman with a long experience of all the courts of Europe and who had made a reputation by taking a hand in their affairs. The desire for repose which follows disgust had made her choose the convent as her retreat. I had been introduced to her by a nun who was a relative of Signor Dandolo. This former beauty, finding that she no longer wished to exercise her considerable intelligence in the machinations of royal self-interest, kept it entertained with the frivolous gossip with which the city in which she lived supplied her. She knew everything and, as was only to be expected, always wanted to know more. She received all the ambassadors at her grating, and in consequence every foreigner was introduced to her, and several grave Senators from time to time paid her long visits. Curiosity was always the mainspring of these visits on either side; but it was concealed under the veil of the interest which the nobility may be expected to take in whatever is going on. In short, Signora Coronini knew everything and took pleasure in giving me very entertaining lessons in morals when I went to see her. As I was to call on M. M. in the afternoon I thought that I should succeed in learning something about the nun from the well-informed Countess.

As I found it perfectly easy, after some other subjects, to bring the conversation around to that of the convents in Venice, we were soon discussing the intelligence and reputation of a nun of the Celsi[3] family, who, though ugly, exercised great influence in whatever quarter she pleased. We then spoke of the young and charming nun of the Micheli family[4] who had taken the veil to prove to her mother that she was the more intelligent of the two. Speaking of several other beauties who were said to indulge in love affairs, I named M. M. and said that she must be of the same stamp, but that she was an enigma. The Countess smiled and answered that she was not an enigma to everybody but that she must be so to people in general.

"But what really is an enigma," she added, "is her suddenly having taken the veil when she is rich, highly intelligent, very cultivated, and, so far as I know, a freethinker. She became a nun for no reason, either physical or moral. It was sheer caprice."

"Do you think she is happy, Signora?"

"Yes, if she has not repented and if repentance does not overtake her—which, if she is wise, she will keep to herself."

Convinced by the Countess's mysterious tone that M. M. must have a lover, but resolved not to let it trouble me, I mask after dining without appetite, I go to Murano, I ring at the gate, and, with my heart racing, I ask for M. M. in the name of Countess S. The small visiting room was closed. I am shown the one I am to enter. I take off my mask, put it on my hat, and sit down to wait for the goddess. She was long in coming, but instead of making me impatient the wait pleased me; I feared the moment of our interview and even its effect. But an hour having gone by very quickly, such a delay seemed to me unnatural. Surely she had not been informed. I rise, resuming my mask, go back to the gate, and ask if I have been announced to Mother M. M. A voice answers yes, and that I had only to wait. I returned to my chair, a little thoughtful, and a few minutes later I see a hideous lay sister, who says:

"Mother M. M. is occupied the whole day."

The words were scarcely spoken before she was gone.

Such are the terrible moments to which a pursuer of women is exposed; there is nothing more cruel. They degrade, they distress, they kill. In my revulsion and humiliation, my first feeling was contempt for myself, a dark contempt which approached the limits of horror. The second was disdainful indignation toward the nun, on whom I passed the judgment she appeared to deserve. She was mad, a wretched creature, shameless. My only consolation was to think her such. She could not have acted toward me as she had done unless she was the most impudent of women, the most lacking in common sense; for her two letters, which were in my possession, were enough to dishonor her if I wanted to avenge myself, and what she had done cried for vengeance. She could only defy it if she was more than mad; her behavior was that of a raving maniac. I would already have thought her out of her mind, if I had not heard her talk rationally with the Countess.

Yet in the tumult which shame and anger aroused in my soul *affixa humo* ("fastened to the earth")[5] I was encouraged by discerning lucid intervals. I saw clearly, laughing at myself, that if the nun's beauty and stately bearing had not dazzled me and made me fall in love, and if a certain amount of prejudice had not entered in as well, the whole thing would not amount to much. I saw that I could pretend to laugh at it, and that no one would be able to guess that I was only pretending.

Aware, despite all this, that I had been insulted, I saw that I must take my revenge, but that there must be nothing base in it; and no less aware that I must not give her the least opportunity to crow over having played a practical joke on me, I saw that I must not show any vexation. She had sent me word that she was engaged, and that was all. I must pretend indifference. Another time she would not be engaged; but I defied her to trap me another time. I thought I ought to convince her that her behavior had only made me laugh. I must, of course, send her back the originals of her letters, but enclosed in a short and sufficient one from me. What greatly annoyed me was that I must certainly stop going to mass at her church, for since she had no idea that I went there for C. C., she might have supposed that I would be going only in the hope that she would make some apology and would again offer me the opportunities to meet her which I had rejected. I wanted her to be certain that I scorned her. For a moment I believed that the meetings she had proposed were merely figments to deceive me.

I fell asleep about midnight with this plan in mind, and on waking in the morning I found it ripe. I wrote a letter and after writing it I put it aside for another twenty-four hours to see if, when I read it over, it would show even a trace of the wounded feelings which were tormenting me.

I did well, for when I read it over the next morning I thought it unworthy of me. I quickly tore it up. There were expressions in it which revealed that I was weak, pusillanimous, and in love, and so would have made her laugh. There were others which betrayed anger, and others which showed that I was sorry to have lost all hope of possessing her.

The next day I wrote her another, after writing to C. C. that serious reasons forced me to stop going to hear mass at her church. But the next morning I thought my letter laughable, and I tore it up. It seemed to me that I had lost my ability to write, and I did not realize the reason for my difficulty until ten days after she had insulted me. I had one.

Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcumque in fundis acescit.

("Unless the vessel is clean, whatever is put in it turns sour.")[6]

M. M.'s face had made an impression on me which could not be effaced by the greatest and most powerful of abstract beings—by Time.

In my ridiculous situation I was tempted again and again to go and tell my troubles to Countess S.; but—thank God!—I never went any farther than her door. The thought coming to me at last that the harebrained nun must be living in terror because of her letters, with which I could ruin her reputation and do the greatest harm to the convent, I resolved to send them to her with a note in the following terms. But it was not until ten or twelve days after the incident.

"I beg you to believe, Madame, that it was by an oversight that I did not immediately send you your two letters, which you will find herewith. I have never thought of departing from what I am by taking a base revenge. I am obliged to forgive you for two pieces of folly, whether you committed them naturally and unthinkingly or to mock me; but I advise you not to act in the same manner toward some other man in the future, for not everyone is like me. I know your name; but I assure you it is as if I did not know it. I tell you this though it is possible that you care nothing for my discretion; but if that is the case I am sorry for you.

"You will no longer see me in your church, Madame, and it will cost me nothing, for I will go to another; yet I think it proper that I should tell you the reason. I consider it likely that you have committed the third folly of boasting of your exploit to some of your friends, and so I am ashamed to put in an appearance. Forgive me if despite my being, as I suppose, five or six years older than you, I have not yet trampled upon all prejudices; believe me, Madame, there are some which should never be shaken off. Do not take it amiss if I give you this little lesson, after the only too substantial one which you apparently gave me only in mockery. Be certain that I will profit by it all the rest of my life."

I felt that my letter was the gentlest treatment I could give the giddy nun. I went out and, calling aside a Friulian,[7] who could not recognize me under my mask, I gave him my letter, which contained the two others, and gave him forty soldi to take it at once to its address in Murano, promising him another forty when he should come back to tell me he had faithfully done his errand. The instructions I gave him were that he should deliver the packet to the portress, then leave without waiting for an answer even if the portress told him to wait. But it would have been a mistake on my part to wait for him. In our city the Friulians are as reliable and trustworthy as the Savoyards[8] were in Paris ten years ago.

Five or six days later, as I was coming out of the opera, I see the same Friulian carrying his lantern. I call him and, not taking off my mask, ask him if he knows me; after looking at me attentively he says he does not. I ask him if he had done the errand in Murano on which I sent him.

"Ah, Signore! God be praised! Since it is you I have something urgent to tell you. I took your letter as you ordered me to, and after delivering it to the portress I left despite her telling me to wait. When I got back I did not find you, but what of it? The next morning a Friulian of my acquaintance, who was at the gate when I delivered your letter, came and woke me to tell me I must go to Murano, because the portress insisted on talking to me. I went, and after making me wait for a time she told me to go into the visiting room, where a nun wished to speak with me. The nun, who was as beautiful as the morning star, kept me for an hour and more, asking me countless questions all directed to learning, if not who you are, at least some way of my discovering where I could find you; but it was all to no avail since I knew nothing about you.

"She left, ordering me to wait, and two hours later she reappeared with a letter. She gave it to me and said that if I could manage to deliver it to you and bring her the answer she would give me two zecchini; but that if I did not find you I should go to Murano every day and show her her letter, promising me forty soldi for each trip I made. Up to now I have earned twenty lire; but I am afraid she will get tired of it. You have only to answer her letter and I will earn the two zecchini."[9]

"Where is it?"

"Locked up where I live, for I am always afraid of losing it."

"Then how am I to answer it?"

"Wait for me here. You will see me back with the letter in a quarter of an hour."

"I will not wait for you, for I have no interest in answering it; but tell me how you persuaded the nun to believe that you could find me. You are a rascal. It is not likely that she would have entrusted her letter to you if you had not given her reason to expect you to find me."

"That is so. I described your coat to her, and your buckles, and your height. I assure you that for the last ten days I have looked carefully at every masker of your height, but in vain. It is your buckles there that I recognized; but I should not have recognized you by your coat. Alas, Signore! It will cost you nothing to answer only a line. Wait for me in that coffeehouse."

Unable any longer to overcome my curiosity, I decide not to wait for him but to go with him to his lodging. I did not think I was obliged to answer more than: "I have received your letter. Farewell." The next morning I would have changed buckles and sold the coat. So I go to his door with the Friulian, he goes for the letter, hands it to me, and I take him with me to an inn where, to read the letter at leisure, I engage a room, have a fire lighted, and tell him to wait for me outside. I unseal the packet, and the first thing which surprises me is the two letters she had written me and which I had thought I should return to her to set her heart at rest. At the sight I am seized by a palpitation which already heralds my defeat. Besides the two letters I see a short one signed "S." It was addressed to "M. M." I read it, and I find:

"The masker who escorted me to the convent and home again would never have opened his lips to say a word to me if I had not taken it into my head to tell him that the charms of your mind are even more winning than those of your face. He answered that he wished to become acquainted with the former and that he was certain of the latter. I added that I did not understand why you had not spoken to him; and he answered with a smile that you wanted to punish him and that since he had not wished to be introduced to you, you in your turn wished to ignore his presence. I wanted to send you this note this morning; but I could not. Farewell. S. F.''

After reading the Countess's note, which neither added nor subtracted an iota from the truth, and which might be a piece of evidence for the defense, my heart beat less violently. Delighted to discover that I am on the verge of being convinced that I was wrong, I pluck up my courage, and this is what I find in the letter from M. M.:

''From a weakness which I consider thoroughly excusable, curious to know what you might have found to say about me to the Countess on your way to visit me and when you took her back home, I seized the moment when you were walking up and down in the visiting room to ask her to inform me. I told her to send me word at once, or at latest the next morning, for I foresaw that in the afternoon you would certainly come to pay me a duty call. Her note, which I send you and which I ask you to read, reached me a half hour after you were sent away. First fatal mishap. Not having received her letter when you asked to see me, I did not have the courage to receive you. Second fatal weakness, for which I can easily be forgiven. I ordered the lay sister to tell you that I was 'ill the whole day.' A perfectly legitimate excuse whether it is true or false, for it is a polite lie in which the words 'the whole day' convey all. You had already left and I could not send someone running after you when the idiotic old woman came and reported to me what she had told you, not that I was 'ill,' but that I was 'occupied.' Third fatal mishap. You cannot imagine what I wanted to say, and to do, to the lay sister in my righteous anger; but here one can neither do nor say anything. One can only be patient, dissimulate, and thank God when mistakes arise from ignorance rather than from malice. I at once foresaw in part what did indeed happen, for human reason could never have foreseen it all. I guessed that, believing you had been duped, you would be disgusted, and I felt the blackest misery since I saw no way to let you know the truth until the feast day. I was certain that you would come to our church. Who could have guessed that you would take the thing with the extraordinary violence which your letter set before my eyes? When I did not see you appear in church my grief began to be unbearable, for it was mortal, but it drove me to despair and pierced my heart when I read, ten days after the event, the cruel, barbarous, unjust letter which you wrote me. It made me wretched, and I will die of it unless you come to justify yourself immediately. You thought you had been duped—that is all you can say, and you are now convinced that you were mistaken. But even believing that you were duped, you must admit that to take the course you did and to write me the terrible letter you sent me, you must imagine me a monster not to be found among women who, like myself, are well born and have been well brought up. I send you back the two letters which you sent back to me to soothe my fears. Know that I am a better physiognomist than you are, and that what I did I did not do out of 'folly.' I have never thought you capable of a base action, even if you were certain that I had brazenly duped you; but in my countenance you have seen only the soul of shamelessness. You will perhaps be the cause of my death, or at least you will make me wretched for all the rest of my life, if you do not wish to justify yourself; since, for my part, I believe I am justified completely.

"Consider that, even if my life is of no concern to you, your honor demands that you come to talk with me at once. You must come in person to recant all that you have written me. If you do not realize the terrible effect your infernal letter must have on the soul of an innocent woman, and one who is not out of her mind, permit me to feel sorry for you. You would not have the slightest knowledge of the human heart. But I am sure you will come, if the man to whom I am entrusting this letter finds you. M. M."

I did not need to read her letter twice to be in despair. M. M. was right. I at once masked to go out of the room and speak to the Friulian. I asked him if he had spoken with her that morning and if she looked ill. He replied that he thought she looked more dejected every day. I went back, telling him to wait.

I did not finish writing to her until daybreak. Here, word for word, is the letter which I wrote to the noblest of all women, whom, drawing the wrong conclusion, I had most cruelly insulted.

"I am guilty, Madame, and as unable to justify myself as I am completely convinced of your innocence. I cannot live except in the hope of your forgiveness, and you will grant it to me when you reflect upon what made me commit my crime. I saw you, you dazzled me, and, thinking of my honor,[10] it seemed to me chimerical; I thought I was dreaming. I saw that I could not be rid of my doubt until twenty-four hours later, and God alone knows how long they seemed to me. They passed at last, and my heart palpitated when I was in the visiting room counting the minutes. At the end of sixty—which, however, as the result of a kind of impatience entirely new to me, went by very quickly—I see an ill-omened figure which, with odious brevity, tells me that you are 'occupied' for the whole day; then it makes off. Imagine the rest! Alas, it was nothing short of a thunderbolt, *which did not kill me and did not leave me alive*. Dare I tell you, Madame, that if you had sent me, even by the hands of the same lay sister, two lines traced by your pen, you would have sent me away if not satisfied at least unperturbed. This is the fatal mishap, which you forgot to cite to me in your charming and most powerful justification. The effect of the thunderbolt was the fatal one which made me see myself as duped, mocked. It revolted me, my self-esteem cried out, dark shame overwhelmed me. I loathe myself and am forced to believe that under the countenance of an angel you fostered a fiendish soul. I leave in consternation, and in the course of eleven days I lose my common sense. I wrote you the letter of which you are a thousand times justified in complaining; but —can you believe it?—I thought it courteous. It is all over now. You will see me at your feet an hour before noon. I shall not go to bed. You shall pardon me, Madame, or I will avenge you. Yes, I myself will be your avenger. The only thing I ask of you, as a great favor, is that you will burn my letter or say nothing about it tomorrow. I sent it to you only after having written you four which I tore up after reading them, because I found expressions in them from which I feared you would read the passion which you have inspired in me. A lady who had duped me was not worthy of my love, were she an angel. I was not wrong but . . . wretched! Could I believe you capable of it after I had seen you? I will now lie down for three or four hours. My tears will flood my pillow. I order the bearer to go to your convent at once, so that I may be sure you will receive this letter when you wake. He would never have found me if I had not approached him as I left the opera. I shall have no more need of him. Do not answer me."

After sealing my letter I gave it to him, ordering him to go to the convent gate and to deliver it only into the hands of the nun. He promised to do so, I gave him a zecchino, and he set off. After spending six hours in impatience I masked and went to Murano, where M. M. came down as soon as I was announced. I had been shown into the small visiting room in which I had seen her with the Countess. I went down on my knees before her; but she hurriedly told me to get up, for I could be seen. Her face was instantly suffused by a fiery blush. She sat down, I sat down before her; and so we spent a good quarter of an hour looking at each other. I finally broke the silence by asking her if I could count on being forgiven, and she put her beautiful hand out through the grating; I bathed it with my tears and kissed it a hundred times. She said that our acquaintance having begun with such a fierce storm should make us hope for an eternal calm.

"It is the first time," she said, "that we are talking together; but what has happened to us is enough for us to believe that we know each other perfectly. I hope that our friendship will be equally tender and sincere, and that we can be indulgent toward each other's failings."

"When may I convince you of my feelings, Signora, outside these walls and in all the joy of my soul?"

"We will sup at my casino whenever you please—I need only know two days in advance—or with you in Venice, if that is not inconvenient for you."

"It would only increase my happiness; I must tell you that I am in easy circumstances and that, far from fearing to spend money I delight in it and that all I have belongs to the object I adore."

"I welcome both the fact and the confidence. I, too, can tell you that I am tolerably rich and that I feel I could refuse nothing to my lover."

"But you must have one."

"Yes, I have; and it is he who makes me rich and who is completely my master. For this reason I never leave him in ignorance of anything. Day after tomorrow at my casino you shall know more."

"But I hope that your lover—"

"Will not be there? You may be sure he will not. And have you a mistress?"

"Alas! I had one, but she has been torn from me. For six months I have lived in perfect celibacy."

"But you still love her."

"I cannot remember her without loving her; but I foresee that the seduction of your charms will make me forget her."

"If you were happy I am sorry for you. She was torn from you; and you have been consumed with grief, shunning society—I divined it. But if it falls out that I take her place, no one, my dear friend, shall tear me from your heart."

"But what will your lover say?"

"He will be delighted to see me in love and happy with a lover like you. Such is his nature."

"Admirable nature! Heroism beyond my strength."

"What sort of life do you lead in Venice?"

"Theaters, society, casinos, where I defy Fortune and find her sometimes kind and sometimes not."

"At the houses of foreign ambassadors too?"

"No, because I am too closely connected with certain patricians; but I know them all."

"How can you know them if you do not see them?"

"I met them in foreign countries. In Parma I knew the Duke of Montealegre,[11] the Spanish Ambassador; in Vienna Count Rosenberg;[12] in Paris the French Ambassador,[13] about two years ago."

"My dear friend, I advise you to leave, for it is about to strike noon. Come day after tomorrow at the same hour, and I will give you the necessary instructions so that you can sup with me."

"Alone?"

"Of course."

"Dare I ask you for a pledge? For this good fortune is so great."

"What pledge do you wish?"

"To see you stand at the small window, with myself in the place where Countess S. was."

She rose and with the most gracious smile pressed the spring, and after a kiss whose harshness must have pleased her as much as its sweetness, I left her. She followed me to the door with her amorous eyes.

Joy and impatience absolutely prevented me from eating and sleeping during the whole two days. It seemed to me that I had never been so happy in love and that I was to be so for the first time. In addition to M. M.'s birth, her beauty, and her intelligence, which together constituted her true worth, bias entered in to make the extent of my happiness incomprehensible. She was a vestal.[14] I was to taste a forbidden fruit. I was to infringe on the rights of an omnipotent husband, snatching from his seraglio the most beautiful of his sultanas.

If at the time my reason had not been enslaved I should have seen very well that my nun could not be essentially different from all the pretty women I had loved in the thirteen years I had been skirmishing on the fields of love; but what man in love dwells on such a thought? If it comes into his mind he rejects it with disdain. M. M. must be absolutely different from all the women in the universe and more beautiful.

Animal nature, which chemists call the "animal kingdom," instinctively secures the three means necessary to perpetuate itself. They are three real needs. It must feed itself, and in order that doing so shall not be a labor, it has the sensation called "appetite"; and it finds pleasure in satisfying it. In the second place it must preserve its own species by generation, and certainly it would not perform that duty—despite what St. Augustine[15] says—if it did not find pleasure in doing it. In the third place it has an unconquerable inclination to destroy its enemy; and nothing is better contrived, for since it must preserve itself it must hate whatever achieves or desires its destruction. Under this general law, however, each species acts independently. These three sensations—hunger, appetite for coitus, hate which tends to destroy the enemy—are habitual satisfactions in brute beasts, let us not call them pleasures; they can only be such comparatively speaking; for they do not reason about them. Man alone is capable of true pleasure, for, endowed with the faculty of reason, he foresees it, seeks it, creates it, and reasons about it after enjoying it. My dear reader, I beg you to follow me; if you drop me at this point, you are not polite. Let us examine the thing. Man is in the same condition as the beasts when he yields to these three instincts without his reason entering in. When our mind makes its contribution, these three satisfactions become pleasure, pleasure, pleasure: the inexplicable sensation which makes us taste what we call happiness, which we cannot explain either, although we feel it.

The voluptuary who reasons disdains greediness, lust, and the brutal vengeance which springs from a first impulse of anger; he is an epicure; he falls in love but he does not wish to enjoy the object he loves unless he is sure that he is loved; when he is insulted, he will not avenge himself until he has coldly arrived at the best way to relish the pleasure of his revenge. In the result he is more cruel, but he consoles himself by the knowledge that he is at least reasonable. These three operations are the work of the soul, which, to procure itself pleasure, becomes the minister of the passions *quae nisi parent imperant* ("which, if they do not obey, command").[16] We bear hunger in order to savor culinary concoctions better; we put off the pleasure of love in order to make it more intense; and we defer a vengeance in order to make it more deadly. Yet it is true that people often die of indigestion, that we deceive ourselves or allow ourselves to be deceived in love by sophisms, and that the object we wish to exterminate often escapes our vengeance; but we run these risks willingly.

CHAPTER III

Continuation of the preceding chapter. First assignation with M. M. Letter from C. C. My second assignation with the nun in my superb casino in Venice. I am happy.

NOTHING CAN be dearer to the thinking man than life; yet the greatest voluptuary is he who best practices the difficult art of making it pass quickly. He does not want to make it shorter; but he wants amusement to render its passing insensible. He is right, if he has not failed in any duty. They who believe that they have no duty save that of pleasing their senses are wrong, and Horace may have been wrong too in the passage where he told Julius Florus[1]: *Nec metuam quid de me judicet heres, Quod non plura datis inveniet* ("Nor will I fear my heir's judgment of me because he does not find more than I received").[2]

The happiest of men is he who best knows the art of being happy without infringing on his duties; and the unhappiest is he who has adopted a profession in which he is under the sad necessity of foreseeing the future from dawn to dark of every day.

Certain that M. M. would not break her word, I went to the visiting room two hours before noon. My expression made her instantly ask me if I was ill.

"No," I answered; "but I may look so in the uneasy expectation of a happiness too great for me. I have lost appetite and sleep; if it is deferred I cannot answer to you for my life."

"Nothing is deferred, my dear friend; but how impatient you are! Let us sit down. Here is the key to the casino[3] to which you will go. There will be people there, for we have to be served; but no one will speak to you and you need speak to no one. You will be masked. You are not to go there until half past the first hour of night,* [4] no sooner. You will go up the stairs opposite the street door and at the top of the stairs you will see, by the light of a lantern, a green door, which you will open to enter an apartment which you will find lighted. In the second room you will find me, and if I am not there you will wait for me. I will not be more than a few minutes late. You may unmask, sit by the fire, and read. You will find books. The door to the casino is in such-and-such a place."

Since her description could not be more precise, I express my delight that I cannot go wrong. I kiss the hand which gives me the key and the key as well before putting it in my pocket. I ask her if I will see her in secular clothes or dressed as a saint as I now saw her.

"I leave here dressed in my habit, but at the casino I put on secular clothes. There I have everything I need in the way of masking attire too."

"I hope that you will not put on secular clothes this evening."

"Why, if I may ask?"

"I love you so much in your coif, as you are now."

"Ah, I understand. You imagine that I have no hair, so I frighten you; but let me tell you that I have a wig which could not be better made."

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* According to the Italian reckoning this is two hours after sunset. (C.'s note.)

"Good God! What are you saying? The very name of 'wig' undoes me. But no. No, no; never doubt it—I will think you charming even so. Only be careful not to put it on in my presence. I see that you are mortified. Forgive me. I am in despair that I mentioned it to you. Are you certain that no one will see you leaving the convent?"

"You will be certain of it yourself when, making the circuit of the island in a gondola, you will see where the little quay is. It gives onto a room of which I have the key, and I am sure of the lay sister who waits on me."

"And the gondola?"

"It is my lover who vouches to me for the fidelity of the gondoliers."

"What a man your lover is! I imagine he is old."

"Certainly not. I should be ashamed. I am sure he is not forty. He has everything, my dear friend, to deserve love. Good looks, wit, a gentle nature, and perfect manners."

"And he forgives you your caprices."

"What do you mean by 'caprices'? He took me a year ago. Before him I knew no man, as before you I knew no one who inspired me with a fancy. When I told him everything he was rather surprised, then he laughed and only read me a short lecture on the risk I was running by putting myself in the power of a man who might be indiscreet. He wanted me to know who you are before I went any further; but it was too late. I vouched for you, and he laughed again at my vouching for someone I did not know."

"When did you confide it all to him?"

"Day before yesterday; but completely truthfully. I showed him copies of my letters and of yours, reading which made him say he thought you were French despite your having told me that you were Venetian. He is curious to know who you are, and that is all; but since I am not curious about it you need have no fear. I give you my word of honor that I will never make the slightest attempt to find out.''

''Nor I to find out who this man is, who is as extraordinary as yourself. I am in despair when I think of the bitter sorrow I caused you.''

''Let us say no more about it; but console yourself, for when I think about it I conclude that you could have acted otherwise only if you were a conceited fool.''

When I left she repeated the pledge of her love to me at the little window and she remained there until I was out of the visiting room.

That night at the appointed hour I found the casino without any difficulty, I opened the door and, following her instructions, I found her dressed in secular clothes of the utmost elegance. The room was lighted by candles in girandoles in front of mirrors and by four other candelabra on a table on which there were some books. M. M. seemed to have a beauty entirely different from that which I had seen in the visiting room. Her hair appeared to have been done in a chignon which emphasized its abundance, but my eyes merely glanced at it, for nothing would have been more stupid at the moment than a compliment on her fine wig. To fall on my knees before her, to show her my boundless gratitude by constantly kissing her beautiful hands, were the forerunners of transports whose outcome ought to be a classical amorous combat; but M. M. thought her first duty was to defend herself. Ah! those charming refusals! The strength of two hands repelling the attacks of a respectful and tender lover who is at the same time bold and insistent, played very little part in them; the weapons she used to restrain my passion, to moderate my fire, were arguments delivered in words as amorous as they were energetic and reinforced every moment by loving kisses which melted my soul. In this struggle, as sweet as it was painful to us both, we spent two hours. At the end of the combat we congratulated ourselves on each having carried off the victory; she in having been able to defend herself against all my attacks, I in having kept my impatience in check.

At four o'clock[5] (I am still using the Italian reckoning) she said she was very hungry and that she hoped she would not find me differing from herself. She rang, and a well-dressed woman who was neither young nor old and whose appearance betokened respectability came in and laid a table for two, and after putting everything we needed on another beside us, she served us. The service was of Sèvres porcelain.[6] Eight made dishes composed the supper; they were set on silver boxes filled with hot water which kept the food always hot. It was a choice and delicious supper. I exclaimed that the cook[7] must be French, and she said I was right. We drank only Burgundy, and we emptied a bottle of "oeil de perdrix" champagne[8] and another of some sparkling wine for gaiety. It was she who dressed the salad; her appetite was equal to mine. She rang only to have the dessert brought, together with all the ingredients for making punch. In everything she did I could not but admire her knowledge, her skill, and her grace. It was obvious that she had a lover who had taught her. I was so curious to know who he was that I said I was ready to tell her my name if she would tell me that of the happy man whose heart and soul she possessed. She said we must leave it to time to satisfy our curiosity.

Among her watch charms she had a little rock-crystal flask exactly like the one I had on my watch chain. I showed it to her, praising the essence of rose which it contained and with which a small piece of cotton was soaked. She showed me hers, which was filled with the same essence in liquid form.

"I am surprised," I said, "for it is very rare and it costs a great deal."

"And it is not for sale."

"That is true. The creator of the essence is the King of

France; he made a pound of it, which cost him ten thousand écus."

"It was a present to my lover, who gave it to me."

"Madame de Pompadour sent a small flask of it two years ago to Signor Mocenigo,[9] the Venetian Ambassador in Paris, through the A. de B.,[10] who is now the French Ambassador here."

"Do you know him?"

"I met him that day, having the honor to dine with him. As he was about to set out on his journey here, he had come to take his leave. He is a man whom Fortune has favored, but a man of merit and great wit and of distinguished birth, for he is a Count of Lyons.[11] His handsome face has won him the nickname of 'Belle-Babet';[12] we have a little collection of his poems,[13] which do him honor."

Midnight had struck and, since time was beginning to be precious, we leave the table, and before the fire I become insistent. I said that if she would not yield to love she could not refuse nature, which must be urging her to go to bed after such a fine supper.

"Are you sleepy, then?"

"Not in the least; but at this hour people go to bed. Let me put you to bed and sit by your side as long as you wish to stay there, or else permit me to retire."

"If you leave me you will make me very unhappy."

"No more unhappy than I shall feel at leaving you; but what are we to do here in front of the fire until dawn?"

"We can both sleep in our clothes on the sofa you see there."

"In our clothes? So be it. I can even let you sleep; but if I do not sleep will you forgive me? Beside you, and uncomfortable in my clothes, how could I sleep?"

"Very well. Besides, this sofa is a real bed. You shall see."

With that she rises, pulls the sofa out at an angle, arranges pillows, sheets, and a blanket, and I see a real bed. She tucks my hair under a large handkerchief and hands me another so that I can do her the same service, saying that she has no nightcap. I set to work, concealing my distaste for her wig, when something totally unexpected gives me the most agreeable surprise. Instead of a wig, I find the most beautiful head of hair. She tells me, after laughing heartily, that a nun's only obligation is not to let the outside world see her hair, and after saying so she throws herself down at full length on the couch. I quickly take off my coat, kick my feet out of my shoes, and fall more on her than beside her. She clasps me in her arms, and subjecting herself to a tyranny which insults nature, she considers that I must forgive her all the torments which her resistance cannot but inflict on me.

With a trembling and timid hand and looking at her with eyes which begged for charity, I undo six wide ribbons which fastened her dress in front and, ravished with joy because she does not stop me, I find myself the fortunate master of the most beautiful of bosoms. It is too late: she is obliged, after I have contemplated it, to let me devour it; I raise my eyes to her face, and I see the sweetness of love saying to me: "Be content with that, and learn from me to bear abstinence." Driven by love and by omnipotent nature, in despair because she will not let my hands move elsewhere, I make every imaginable effort to guide one of hers to the place where she could have convinced herself that I deserved her mercy; but with a strength greater than mine she refuses to remove her hands from my chest, where she could have found nothing to interest her. Nevertheless, it was there that her mouth descended when it detached itself from mine.

Whether from need or from the effect of lassitude, having passed so many hours unable to do anything but constantly swallow her saliva mixed with mine, I sleep in her arms, holding her clasped in mine. What woke me with a start was a loud chiming of bells.

"What is that?"

"Let us dress quickly, my dear, my love; I must get back to the convent."

"Then dress. I am going to enjoy the spectacle of seeing you disguised as a saint again."

"Gladly. If you are not in any hurry you can sleep here."

She then rang for the same woman, who I realized must be the great confidante of all her amorous mysteries. After having her hair done up, she took off her dress, put her watches, her rings, and all her secular ornaments in a desk, which she locked, put on the shoes of her order, then a corset in which, as in a prison, she confined the pretty children which alone had fed me on their nectar, and finally put on her habit. Her confidante having gone out to summon the gondolier, she flung herself on my neck and said that she would expect me the next day but one to decide on the night she would come to spend with me in Venice, where, she said, we would make each other completely happy; and she left. Very well pleased with my good fortune, though full of unsatisfied desires, I put out the candles and slept deeply until noon.

I left the casino without seeing anyone, and, well masked, went to call on Laura, who gave me a letter from C. C. which ran as follows:

"Here, my dear husband, is a good example of my way of thinking. You will find me ever more worthy to be your wife. You must believe that, despite my age, I can keep a secret and that I am discreet enough not to take your silence in bad part. Sure of your heart, I am not jealous of what can divert your mind and help you to bear our separation patiently.

"I must tell you that yesterday, going through a corridor which is above the small visiting room and wanting to pick up a toothpick I had dropped, I had to take a stool away from the wall. Picking it up, I saw through an almost imperceptible crack where the floor meets the wall your own person very much interested in conversing with my dear friend Mother M. M. You cannot imagine either my surprise or my joy. Yet those two feelings instantly gave place to my fear of being seen and making some babbling nun curious. After quickly putting the stool back in its place, I left. Ah, my dear! I beg you to tell me everything. How could I love you and not be curious about the whole story of this remarkable occurrence? Tell me if she knows you, and how you made her acquaintance. She is my dear friend, of whom I told you, and whom I did not think it necessary to name to you. It is she who has taught me French and she has given me books in her room which have enlightened me on a very important matter of which few women have any knowledge. Know that but for her the terrible illness which almost killed me would have been discovered. She gave me linen and sheets; I owe her my honor; and so she learned that I have had a lover, as I have learned that she has had one too, but we were never curious about our respective secrets. Mother M. M. is an incomparable woman. I am certain, my dear, that you love her and that she loves you, and since I am not in the least jealous of her I deserve that you should tell me all about it. But I am sorry for you both, for all that either of you can do can only serve, I believe, to excite your mutual passion. The whole convent believes that you are ill; I am dying to see you. So come at least once. Farewell."

The letter made me uneasy, for I felt very sure of C. C., but the crack might betray us to others. In addition, I now had to tell my darling a lie, for honor and love forbade me to tell her the truth. In the answer which I immediately sent her I said that she must at once inform her friend that she had seen her through the crack, talking to a masker. As for my having made the nun's acquaintance, I said that having heard of her rare qualities I had had her called to the grating, announcing myself under a false name, and that consequently she must refrain from talking about me, for she had recognized me as the same man who went to hear mass at her church. As for love, I assured her that there was no such thing between us, though I agreed that she was a charming woman.

On St. Catherine's Day,[14] which was C. C.'s name day, I went to mass in her church. Going to the *traghetto* to take a gondola, I observe that I am followed. I needed to make sure of it. I see the same man also take a gondola and follow me; this could be natural; but to make certain I disembark in Venice at the Palazzo Morosini del Giardino,[15] and I see the same man disembarking too. After that I am in no more doubt. I come out of the palace, I stop in a narrow street near the Flanders post,[16] and, knife in hand, I force him into the corner of the street and, putting the point to his throat, I insist on his telling me at whose order he is following me. He would perhaps have told me all if someone had not happened to enter the street. At that he got away, and I learned nothing. But seeing that it was only too easy for a busybody to know who I was if he persisted in trying to find out, I resolved not to go to Murano again except masked or at night.

The next day, which was the one on which M. M. was to let me know how she would arrange to come to supper with me, I went to the visiting room very early. I saw her before me, displaying on her face the signs of the contentment which flooded her soul. The first compliment she paid me was on my appearing at her church after three weeks during which I had not been seen there. She told me that the Abbess had been very pleased, because she said she was sure she knew who I was. I thereupon told her the story of the spy, and my resolve not to go to mass in her church again. She replied that I would do well to show myself in Murano as little as possible. She then told me the whole story of the crack in the old flooring and said that it had already been stopped up. She said she had been warned by a boarder at the convent who was fond of her, but she did not name her.

After these few remarks I asked her if my happiness was deferred, and she answered that it was deferred only for twenty-four hours because the new lay sister had invited her to supper in her room.

“Such invitations,” she said, “come seldom, but when they do one cannot refuse except at the cost of making an enemy of the person who extends the invitation.”

“Can one not say one is ill?”

“Yes, but then one must receive visitors.”

“I understand, for if you refuse you may be suspected of slipping away.”

“No, no—slipping away is not considered possible.”

“Then you are the only one who can perform the miracle?”

“You may be sure that I am the only one, and that gold is the powerful god who performs it. So tell me where you will wait for me tomorrow precisely at the second hour of the night.”

“Could not I wait for you here[17] at your casino?”

“No, for the person who will take me to Venice is my lover.”

“Your lover?”

“Himself.”

“That is something new! Well then, I will wait for you in the Piazza dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo, behind the pedestal of the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo da Bergamo.”[18]

“I have never seen either the statue or the square except in an engraving; but I will not fail to be there. You have told me enough. Nothing but terribly bad weather could keep me from coming; but let us hope for good. So good-by. We will talk much tomorrow evening, and if we sleep we shall go to sleep more content.”

I had to act quickly, for I had no casino. I took a second rower, so that I was in the San Marco quarter in less than a quarter of an hour. After spending five or six hours looking at a number of them, I chose the most elegant and hence the most expensive. It had belonged to Lord Holderness,[19] the English Ambassador, who had sold it cheaply to a cook on his departure. He rented it to me until Easter for a hundred zecchini in advance, on condition that he himself would cook the suppers and dinners I might give.

The casino had five rooms, furnished in exquisite taste. It contained nothing that was not made for the sake of love, good food, and every kind of pleasure. Meals were served through a blind window which was set back into the wall and filled by a revolving dumb-waiter which closed it completely. The masters and the servants could not see one another. The room was decorated with mirrors, chandeliers, and a magnificent pier glass above a white marble fireplace; and the walls were tiled with small squares of painted Chinese porcelain, all attracting interest by their representations of amorous couples in a state of nature, whose voluptuous attitudes fired the imagination. Some small armchairs matched the sofas which were placed to left and right. Another room was octagonal and walled with mirrors, with floor and ceiling of the same; the counterposed mirrors reflected the same objects from innumerable points of view. The room was next to an alcove, which gave by concealed doors onto a dressing room on one side and on the other a boudoir in which were a bathtub and an English-style water closet. All the wainscoting was embossed in ormolu or painted with flowers and arabesques. After telling him not to forget to put sheets on the bed and candles in all the chandeliers and in the candelabra in each room, I ordered him to prepare a supper for two for that evening, warning him that I wanted no wines except Burgundy and champagne and no more than eight made dishes, leaving the choice to him regardless of expense. He was to see to the dessert too. Taking the key to the street door I warned him that when I came in I wished to see no one. The supper was to be ready at the second hour[20] of night and was to be served when I rang. I observed with pleasure that the clock in the alcove had an alarm, for despite my love I was beginning to succumb to the power of sleep.

After giving these orders I went to a milliner's to buy a pair of slippers and a nightcap trimmed with a double ruffle of Alençon point.[21] I put it in my pocket. Since I was to give supper to the most beautiful of all the sultanas of the Master of the Universe, I wanted to make sure the evening before that everything would be in order. Having told her that I had a casino, I must not appear to be a novice in any respect.

It was the cook who was surprised when he saw me at the second hour all alone. I instantly berated him for not having lighted candles everywhere, when, as I had told him the hour, he could be in no doubt about it.

"I will not fail to do so another time."

"Then light up and serve."

"You told me it would be for two."

"Serve for two. Remain present at my supper this first time, so that I can point out to you everything I find good or bad."

The supper came in the dumb-waiter in good order, two dishes at a time; I commented on everything; but I found everything excellent in Saxon porcelain.[22] Game, sturgeon, truffles, oysters, and perfect wines. I only reproached him with having forgotten to set out hard-boiled eggs, anchovies, and prepared vinegars on a dish, to make the salad. He rolled up his eyes with a contrite look, accusing himself of having committed a great crime. I also said that another time I wanted to have bitter oranges to give flavor to the punch and that I wanted rum, not arrack. After spending two hours at table I told him to bring me the account of all that he had spent. He brought it a quarter of an hour later, and I found it satisfactory. After paying him and ordering him to bring me coffee when I should ring, I retired to the excellent bed which was in the alcove. The bed and the good supper won me the most perfect sleep. But for them, I should not have been able to sleep for thinking that on the next night I should have my goddess in my arms in that very bed. On leaving in the morning I told my man that for dessert I wanted all the fresh fruits he could find and, above all, ices. To keep the day from seeming long I gambled until nightfall and I did not find Fortune different from my love. Everything went just as I wished. In the depths of my soul I gave thanks for it to the powerful Genius of my beautiful nun.

It was at the first hour[23] of night that I took up my post by the statue of the heroic Colleoni. She had told me to be there at the second hour, but I wanted to have the sweet pleasure of waiting for her. The night was cold, but magnificent, and without the least wind.

Exactly at the second hour I saw a gondola with two rowers arrive and disembark a masker, who, after speaking to the gondolier at the prow, came toward the statue. Seeing a male masker, I am alarmed, I slip away, and I regret not having pistols. The masker walks around the statue, comes up to me, and offers me a peaceable hand which leaves me in no more doubt. I recognize my angel dressed as a man. She laughs at my surprise, clings to my arm, and without a word between us we make our way to the Piazza San Marco, cross it, and go to the casino, which was only a hundred paces from the Teatro San Moisè.

Everything is as I have ordered. We go upstairs, I quickly unmask, but M. M. gives herself the pleasure of walking slowly through every corner of the delicious place in which she was being received, delighted that I should see all the graces of her person in every profile and often in full face and admire in her clothing what kind of man the lover who possessed her must be. She was surprised at the magic which everywhere showed her her person from a hundred different points of view at the same time even when she stood still. The multiplied portraits of her which the mirrors offered her by the light of all the candles expressly placed for the purpose were a new spectacle which made her fall in love with herself. Sitting on a stool I attentively examined all the elegance of her attire. A coat of short-napped rose velvet edged with an embroidery of gold spangles, a matching hand-embroidered waistcoat, than which nothing could be richer, black satin breeches, needle-lace ruffles, buckles set with brilliants, a solitaire of great value on her little finger and on her other hand a ring which showed only a surface of white taffeta covered by a convex crystal. Her *bautta*[24] of black blond-lace was as beautiful as possible in both design and fineness. So that I could see her even better she came and stood in front of me. I search her pockets and I find a snuffbox, a comfit box, a phial, a case of toothpicks, a pair of opera glasses, and handkerchiefs exhaling scents which sweetened the air. I attentively examine the richness and workmanship of her two watches and of her fine seals hung as pendants from chains covered with small diamonds. I search her side pockets and I find flintlock pistols with a spring firing mechanism, of the finest English manufacture.

"All that I see," I say, "is beneath you, but permit my astonished soul to do homage to the adorable being who wishes to convince you that you are really his mistress."

"That is what he said when I asked him to take me to Venice and leave me there, adding that his wish was that I should enjoy myself there and become ever more convinced that he whom I was about to make happy deserved it."

"It is unbelievable, my dear. Such a lover is one of a kind, and I can never deserve a happiness by which I am already dazzled."

"Let me go and unmask by myself."

A quarter of an hour later she appeared before me with her beautiful hair dressed like a man's but unpowdered and with side locks in long curls which came down to the bottom of her cheeks. A black ribbon tied it behind, and it fell to her knees in a hanging plait. M. M. as a woman resembled Henriette,[25] and as a man a Guards officer named *L'Étorière*[26] whom I had known in Paris; or rather she resembled the youth Antinoüs,[27] whose statues are still to be seen, if her French clothes had permitted the illusion.

Overwhelmed by so many charms, I thought I felt ill. I threw myself on the sofa to support my head.

"I have lost all my confidence," I said; "you will never be mine; this very night some fatal mishap will tear you from my desires; perhaps a miracle performed by your divine spouse in his jealousy of a mortal. I feel prostrated. In a quarter of an hour I may no longer exist."

"Are you mad? I am yours this moment if you wish. Though I have not eaten I do not care about supper. Let us go to bed."

She felt cold. We sit down before the fire. She tells me that she has no vest on. I unfasten a diamond brooch in the shape of a heart which kept her ruffle closed, and my hands feel before my eyes see what only her shirt defended against the air, the two springs of life which ornamented her bosom. I become ardent; but she needs only a single kiss to calm me, and two words: "After supper."

I ring, and seeing her alarm I show her the dumbwaiter.

"No one will see you," I say; "you must tell your lover, who may not know of this device."

"He knows of it; but he will admire your thoughtfulness and will say that you are no novice in the art of pleasing and that clearly I am not the only woman who enjoys the delights of this little house with you."

"And he will be wrong. I have neither supped nor slept here except alone; and I hate deceit. You are not my first passion, my divine love; but you will be my last."

"I am happy, my dear, if you will be faithful. My lover is so; he is kind, he is gentle; but he has always left my heart empty."

"His must be so too, for if his love were like mine he would not permit you an absence of this kind. He could not put up with it."

"He loves me, as I love you; do you believe that I love you?"

"I must believe it; but you would not put up with—"

"Say no more; for I feel that, if you will not keep anything from me, I will forgive you everything. The joy which I feel in my soul at this moment is due more to my certainty that I shall leave you wanting nothing than to my certainty that I shall spend a delicious night with you. It will be the first in my life."

"Then you have not spent nights with your worthy lover?"

"Yes, but those nights were inspired only by friendship, gratitude, and compliance. Love is what counts. Despite that, my lover is like you. He has a natural vivacity and his wit is always ready, like yours; besides which both his face and his person are attractive, though he does not resemble you in looks. I also think he is richer than you are, though this casino might make one conclude the opposite. But do not imagine that I consider you less deserving than he because you confess that you are incapable of the heroism of permitting me an absence; on the contrary, if you told me that you would be as indulgent as he is to one of my caprices, I should know that you do not love me as I am very glad that you do love me."

"Will he wish to know the details of this night?"

"He will believe that it will please me if he asks me about it, and I shall tell him everything except some circumstances which might humiliate him."

After the supper, which she found choice and exquisite, as she did the ices and the oysters, she made punch, and in my amorous impatience, after drinking several glasses of it, I begged her to consider that we had only seven hours before us and that we should be doing very wrong not to spend them in bed. So we went into the alcove, which was lighted by twelve flaming candles, and from there to the dressing room, where, presenting her with the fine lace cap, I asked her to dress her hair like a woman. After saying that the cap was magnificent she told me to go and undress in the outer room, promising that she would call me as soon as she was in bed.

It took only two minutes. I flung myself into her burning arms, on fire with love and giving her the most lively proofs of it for seven continuous hours which were interrupted only by as many quarters of an hour devoted to the most feeling talk. She taught me nothing new so far as the physical side of the performance was concerned, but any quantity of new things in the way of sighs, ecstasies, transports, and unfeigned sentiments which find scope only at such moments. Each discovery I made elevated my soul to Love, who furnished me with fresh strength to show him my gratitude. She was astonished to find herself capable of so much pleasure, for I had shown her many things which she thought were fictions. I did what she did not think she was entitled to ask me to do to her, and I taught her that the slightest constraint spoils the greatest of pleasures. When the alarm chimed she raised her eyes to the Third Heaven[28] like an idolator, to thank the Mother and the Son[29] for having so well rewarded her for the effort it had cost her to declare her passion to me.

We dressed in haste, and seeing me put the beautiful cap in her pocket she assured me that it would always be most dear to her. After taking coffee we hurried to the Piazza dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo, where I left her, assuring her that she would see me on the next day but one. After watching her get into her gondola I went home, where ten hours of sleep restored me to my normal state.

CHAPTER IV

Continuation of the preceding chapter. Visit to the convent and conversation with M. M. Letter which she writes me and my answer. Another meeting at the casino in Murano in the presence of her lover.

ON THE next day but one I went to the visiting room after dinner. I send for her, and she comes at once and tells me to leave, for she is expecting her lover, but that I must come without fail on the following day. I leave. At the end of the bridge I see a poorly masked masker getting out of a gondola the gondolier of which I knew and had good reason to believe was then in the service of the French Ambassador. He was not in livery, and the gondola was plain, like all gondolas belonging to Venetians. I turn and see the masker going to the convent. I feel no more doubt, and I go back to Venice delighted to have made the discovery and pleased that the Ambassador was my senior partner. I resolve to say nothing about it to M. M.

I go to see her the next day and she tells me that her friend had come to take leave of her until the Christmas holidays.

"He is going to Padua," she says, "but everything is arranged for us to sup at his casino if we wish."

"Why not in Venice?"

"No, not in Venice, until he is back. He asked me not to. He has great judgment."

"Very well. When shall we sup at the casino?"

"Sunday, if you like."

"Let it be Sunday; I will go to the casino at dusk and will read while I wait for you. Did you tell your friend that you were not uncomfortable in my casino?"

"My dear, I told him everything; but one thing greatly troubles him. He wants me to beg you not to expose me to the danger of a big belly."

"May I die if it ever entered my mind. But don't you run the same risk with him?"

"Never."

"Then we must be very careful in future. I think, since there is no masking[1] during the nine days before Christmas, I shall have to go to your casino by water, for if I go by land I could easily be recognized as the same man who went to your church."

"That is very prudent. I can easily point out the quay to you. I think you can come during Lent too, when God wants us to mortify our senses. Isn't it odd that there is a time when God approves of our amusing ourselves and another when we can only please him by abstinence! What can an anniversary have in common with the divinity? I do not understand how the action of the creature can influence the creator, whom my reason can only conceive as independent. It seems to me that if God had created man with the power to offend him, man would be justified in doing everything he forbade him to do, if only to teach him how to create. Can one imagine God being sad during Lent?"

"My divine one, you reason perfectly; but may I ask you where you learned to reason, and how you managed to break away?"

"My friend gave me good books, and the light of truth quickly dissipated the clouds of superstition which were oppressing my reason. I assure you that when I reflect on myself I think I am more fortunate in having found someone who has enlightened my mind than unfortunate in having taken the veil, for the greatest happiness of all is to live and die at peace, which we cannot hope to do if we believe what the priests tell us."

"You are very right; but permit me to wonder at you, for enlightening an extremely prejudiced mind such as yours must have been could not be the work of a few months."

"I should have seen the light much less quickly if I had been less steeped in error. What separated the true from the false in my mind was only a curtain; reason alone could draw it; but I had been taught to scorn reason. As soon as I was shown that I should set the greatest store by it I put it to work; it drew the curtain. The evidence of truth appeared with the utmost clarity, my stupid notions disappeared; and I have no reason to fear that they will reappear, for I strengthen my defenses every day. I can say that I did not begin to love God until after I had rid myself of the idea of him which religion had given me."

"I congratulate you. You were more fortunate than I. You have gone further in a year than I in ten."

"Then you did not begin by reading what Lord Bolingbroke[2] has written. Five or six months ago I was reading Charron's[3] *La Sagesse*, and I don't know how our confessor found it out. He dared to tell me at confession that I must stop reading it. I answered that since my conscience was not troubled by it, I could not obey him. He said that he would not absolve me, and I answered that I would go to communion nevertheless. The priest went to Bishop Diedo[4] to ask what he should do, and the Bishop came to talk with me and gave me to understand that I should be guided by my confessor. I answered that my confessor's business was to absolve me, and that he did not even have the right to advise me unless I asked him for advice. I told him outright that, since it was my duty not to scandalize the entire convent, if he persisted in refusing me absolution I would go to communion nevertheless. The Bishop ordered him to leave me to my conscience. But I was not satisfied. My lover procured me a brief from the Pope which authorizes me to confess to anyone I choose. All my sisters are jealous of the privilege; but I used it only once, for the thing is not worth the trouble. I always confess to the same priest, who has no difficulty in absolving me, for I tell him absolutely nothing of any importance."

So it was that I came to know her as an adorable freethinker; but it could not be otherwise, for she had an even greater need to quiet her conscience than to satisfy her senses.

After assuring her that she would find me at the casino I went back to Venice. On Sunday after dinner I had myself rowed around the island of Murano in a two-oared gondola, to see where the quay for the casino was and also the small one by which she left the convent; but I could make out nothing. I did not find the quay for the casino until during the novena,[5] and the small quay for the convent six months later at the risk of my life. We shall speak of it when we come to that time.

About the first hour of night I went to the temple of my love and, waiting for my idol to arrive, I amused myself by looking at the books which made up a small library in the boudoir. They were few but choice. They included all that the wisest philosophers have written against religion and all that the most voluptuous pens have written on the subject which is the sole aim of love. Seductive books, whose incendiary style drives the reader to seek the reality, which alone can quench the fire he feels running through his veins. Besides the books there were folios containing only lascivious engravings. Their great merit lay in the beauty of the drawing far more than in the lubricity of the poses. I saw engravings for the *Portier des Chartreux,*[6] made in England, and others for Meursius,[7] or Aloisia Sigea Toletana, than which I had never seen anything finer. In addition the small pictures which decorated the room were so well painted that the figures seemed to be alive. An hour went by in an instant.

The appearance of M. M. in her nun's habit wrung a cry from me. I told her, springing to embrace her, that she could not have come in better time to prevent a schoolboy masturbation to which all that I had seen during the past hour would have driven me.

"But in that saintly dress you surprise me. Let me adore you here and now, my angel."

"I will put on secular clothes at once. It will take me only a quarter of an hour. I do not like myself in these woolens."

"No, no. You shall receive the homage of love dressed as you were when you brought it to birth."

She answered only with a *Fiat voluntas tua* ("Thy will be done") delivered with the most devout expression as she let herself fall on the commodious sofa, where I treated her with caution despite herself. After the act I helped her take off her habit and put on a plain robe of Pekin muslin which was the height of elegance. I then played the role of chambermaid while she dressed her hair and put on a nightcap.

After supper, before going to bed we agreed not to meet again until the first day of the novena when, the theaters being closed for ten days, masks are not worn. She then gave me the keys to the door giving onto the quay. A blue ribbon fastened to the window above it was to be the signal which would show it to me by day, so that I could later go there by night. But what filled her with joy was that I went to stay in the casino and never left it until her lover returned. During the ten days I stayed there I had her four times and thereby convinced her that I lived only for her. I amused myself reading, or writing to C. C., but my love for the latter had grown calm. The chief thing which interested me in the letters she wrote me was what she told me about her dear friend Mother M. M. She said that I had done wrong not to cultivate her acquaintance, and I answered that I had not pursued it for fear of being recognized. In this way I made her even more obliged to keep my secret inviolably.

It is not possible to love two objects at once, and it is not possible to keep love vigorous if one either gives it too much food or none at all. What kept my passion for M. M. always at the same pitch was that I could never have her except with the greatest fear of losing her. I told her it was impossible that, one time or another, some nun would not need to speak with her at a time when she was neither in her room nor in the convent. She maintained that it could not happen, since nothing was more respected in the convent than a nun's privilege of shutting herself up in her room and denying herself even to the Abbess. She had nothing to fear but the fatal circumstance of a fire, for then, when everything was in confusion and it was not natural that a nun would remain calm and indifferent, her absence must necessarily become known. She congratulated herself on having been able to win over the lay sister, the gardener, and another nun whom she always refused to name. Her lover's tact and his money had done it all, and he vouched for the fidelity of the cook and his wife, who together took care of the casino. He was sure of his gondoliers, too, despite the fact that one of them must certainly be a spy for the State Inquisitors.

On Christmas Eve she told me that her lover was about to arrive, that she was to go with him to the opera[8] on St. Stephen's Day and sup with him at the casino on the third day of Christmas. After saying that she would expect me for supper on the last day of the year she gave me a letter, asking me not to read it until I was at home.

An hour before dawn I packed my things and went to the Palazzo Bragadin, where, impatient to read the letter she had given me, I immediately locked myself in my room. It ran as follows:

"You nettled me a little, my dear, when day before yesterday, on the subject of my having to keep everything about my lover from you, you said that, satisfied with possessing my heart, you leave me mistress of my mind. Dividing heart and mind is a sophistical distinction, and if it does not seem so to you, you must admit that you do not love the whole of me, for it is impossible that I can exist without a mind and that you can cherish my heart if it is not in accord with it. If your love can be content with the contrary, it does not excel in delicacy.

"But since circumstances may arise in which you could convict me of not having acted toward you with all the sincerity which true love demands, I have resolved to reveal a secret concerning my lover to you, despite the fact that I know he is certain I will never reveal it, for it is treachery. Yet you will not love me the less for it. Reduced to choosing between the two of you, and obliged to deceive one or the other, love has conquered in me; but not blindly. You shall weigh the motives which had the power to tip the scales to your side.

"When I could no longer resist my desire to know you intimately I could not satisfy it except by confiding in my friend. I had no doubt of his willingness. He conceived a very favorable idea of your character when he read your first letter, in which you chose the visiting room, and he thought you showed yourself a man of honor when, after we became acquainted, you chose the casino in Murano in preference to your own. But as soon as he learned of it he also asked me to do him the favor of allowing him to be present at our first interview ensconced in a perfect hiding place from which he would not only see all that we did without himself being seen but also hear all that we said. It is a closet whose existence cannot even be guessed. You did not see it during the ten days you spent in the casino; but I will show it to you on the last day of the year. Tell me if I could refuse him the favor. I granted it; and nothing was more natural than to keep it a secret from you. So now you know that my friend witnessed all that we said and did the first time we were together. But do not take it amiss, my darling; you pleasesd him, not only by everything you did but also by all the amusing things you said to me. I felt very anxious when our conversation turned to the nature my lover must have to be so excessively tolerant; but fortunately all that you said could only be flattering to him. This is the complete confession of my treachery, which, as a sensible lover, you must forgive me, and the more so since it did you no harm. I can assure you that my friend is most curious to know who you are. That night you were natural and very likable; if you had known that you were being watched God knows what you would have been. If I had told you the thing it is even possible that you would not have consented, and you would perhaps have been right.

''But now I must risk everything for the sake of everything and make myself easy, knowing that I have done nothing for which I can be reproached. Know, my dear, that on the last day of the year my friend will be at the casino, and that he will not leave it until the next day. You will not see him, and he will see everything. Since you are not supposed to know, you understand how natural you must be in everything, for if you were not, my friend, who is very intelligent, might suspect that I have betrayed the secret. The principal thing you must be careful about is what you say. He has all the virtues except the theological one called faith, and on that subject you have free rein. You can talk of literature, travel, politics, and tell as many anecdotes as you please, and be sure of his approval.

"The question remains whether you are willing to let a man see you during the moments when you surrender to the furies of love. This uncertainty is now my torment. Yes or no: there is no middle course. Do you understand how painful my fear is? Do you feel how difficult it must have been for me to take this step? I shall not sleep tomorrow night. I shall have no rest until I have read your answer. I will then decide on a course in case you answer that you cannot be affectionate in someone's presence, especially if the 'someone' is unknown to you. Yet I hope that you will come nevertheless, and that if you cannot play the role of lover as you did the first time no bad consequences will ensue. He will believe, and I will let him believe, that your love has cooled."

Her letter surprised me greatly; then, after thinking it over, I laughed. But it would not have made me laugh if I had not known what sort of man it was who would witness my amorous exploits. Certain that M. M. must be very uneasy until she received my answer, I answered her at once, in the following terms:

"My divine angel, I want you to receive my answer to your letter before noon. You shall dine perfectly easy.

"I will spend the night of the last day of the year with you and I assure you that your friend, as our spectator, will see and hear nothing which can lead him to suppose that you have revealed his secret to me. Be sure that I will play my role perfectly. If man's duty is to be ever the slave of his reason, if he must, so far as he is able, permit himself nothing without taking reason as his guide, I can never understand how a man can be ashamed of letting a friend see him at a moment when he is giving the greatest proofs of love to a very beautiful woman. Such is my situation. Yet I must tell you that if you had forewarned me the first time you would have done wrong. I would have refused absolutely. I should have thought that my honor was involved; I should have thought that, in inviting me to supper, you were only the willing accomplice of a friend, a strange man dominated by this strange taste, and I would have formed such an unfavorable opinion of you that it would perhaps have cured me of my love, which at that time was only beginning to bud. Such, my charmer, is the human heart; but at present the case is different. Everything you have told me about your worthy friend has shown me his character, I consider him my friend too, and I love him. If a feeling of shame does not keep you from letting him see you fond and loving with me, how—far from being ashamed of it—can I fail to be proud of it? Can a man blush at what makes him proud? I cannot, my dear, either blush over having conquered you or over letting myself be seen in moments when I flatter myself I shall not appear unworthy of your conquest. Yet I know that, by a natural feeling which reason cannot disapprove, most men feel a repugnance to letting themselves be seen at such moments. Those who cannot give good reasons for their repugnance must have something of the cat in their nature; but they can have good reasons for it and yet feel under no obligation to explain them to anyone. The chief reason is probably that a third person who is looking on and whom they see cannot but distract them, and that any distraction can only lessen the pleasure of intercourse. Another important reason could also be considered legitimate, that is, if the actors knew that their means of obtaining pleasure would appear pitiable to those who should witness them. Such unfortunates are right in not wishing to arouse feelings of pity in the performance of an act which would seem more properly to arouse jealousy. But we know, my dear, that we certainly do not arouse feelings of pity. Everything you have told me makes me certain that your friend's angelic soul must, in seeing us, share our pleasures. But do you know what will happen, and what I shall be very sorry for, since your lover can only be a most likable man? Seeing us will drive him frantic, and he will either run away or have to come out of his hiding place and go down on his knees to me, begging me to give you up to the violence of his amorous desires in his need to calm the fire which our transports will have kindled in his soul. If that happens I will laugh and give you up to him; but I will leave, for I feel that I could not remain the unmoved spectator of what some other man might do to you. So good-by, my angel; all will be well. I hasten to seal this letter, and I will take it to your casino this instant.''

I spent these six holidays with my friends and at the Ridotto,[9] which at that period was opened on St. Stephen's Day. As I could not deal, since only patricians wearing the official robe[10] were allowed to make bank there, I played day and night, and I constantly lost. Whoever punts cannot but lose. The loss of four or five thousand zecchini, which was my entire wealth, only made my love stronger.

At the end of the year 1774 a law issued by the Great Council forbade all games of chance and caused the closing of the Ridotto, as it was called. The Great Council was amazed when it saw, on counting the ballots, that it had passed a law which it could not pass, for at least three quarters of those who had cast ballots had not wanted it, and yet three quarters of the ballot proved that they had wanted it. The voters looked at one another in astonishment. It was a visible miracle of the glorious Evangelist St. Mark, who had been invoked by Signor Flangini, then First Corrector,[11] now a Cardinal, and by the three State Inquisitors.

On the appointed day I arrived at the casino at the usual hour, and there was the beautiful M. M. dressed as a woman of fashion, standing with her back to the fireplace.

"My friend," she said, "has not yet come; but as soon as he is here I will give you a wink."

"Where is the place?"

"There. Look at the back of that sofa against the wall. All the flowers in relief which you see have holes in their centers which go through to the closet behind. There is a bed, a table, and everything a man needs to stay there for seven or eight hours entertaining himself by watching what is done here. You shall see it when you wish."

"Did he have it built himself?"

"Certainly not, for he could not foresee that it might be of use to him."

"I understand that the spectacle may give him great pleasure; but since he cannot have you when nature will give him the greatest need of you, what will he do?"

"That is his concern. Besides, he is free to go if he is bored, and he can sleep, but if you are natural he will enjoy it."

"I shall be, except that I shall be more polite."

"No politeness, my dear, for you will at once become unnatural. Where did you ever hear of two lovers in the fury of love thinking of being polite?"

"You are right, dear heart; but I will be delicate."

"That you may, just as you always are. Your letter pleased me. You treated the subject thoroughly."

M. M. was wearing nothing over her hair, but it was negligently dressed. A sky-blue quilted dress was her only attire. She had on ear-buttons studded with brilliants; her neck was completely bare. A fichu of silk gauze and silver thread, arranged in haste, half revealed the beauty of her bosom and displayed its whiteness where her dress opened in front. She had on slippers. Her shy and modestly smiling face seemed to be saying: "This is the person you love." What I found most unusual and what pleased me excessively was her rouge, which was applied as the court ladies apply it in Versailles. The charm of such painting lies in the carelessness with which it is placed on the cheeks. The rouge is not meant to look natural, it is put on to please the eyes, which see in it the tokens of an intoxication which promises them amorous transports and furies. She said that she had put on rouge to please her lover, who liked it. I answered that such a taste led me to think him French. When I said this she winked at me: her friend had arrived. So it was then that the comedy was to begin.

"The more I look at your face, the more angry I am at your spouse."

"They say he was ugly."

"It has been said: so he deserves to be cuckolded, and we shall work at it all night. I have lived in celibacy for the past week, but I need to eat, for I have nothing in my stomach but a cup of chocolate and the whites of six fresh eggs which I ate in a salad dressed with Lucca oil[12] and Four Thieves vinegar." [13]

"You must be ill."

"Yes; but I shall be well when I have distilled them one by one into your amorous soul."

"I did not know that you were in need of *frustratoires*." [14]

"Who could need them with you? But my fear is reasonable, for if I miss you, I will blow out my brains."

"What does 'miss' mean?"

"In the figurative sense it means 'fail in one's purpose.' Literally it means that when I want to shoot my pistol at my enemy, the priming doesn't catch. I *miss* him."

"Now I understand you. And it would be a misfortune, my dark-haired love, but not enough to make you blow out your brains."

"What are you doing?"

"I am taking off your cloak. Give me your muff,[15] too."

"That will be difficult, for it is nailed."

"Nailed?"

"Put your hand in it. Try."

"Oh, the wretch! Is it the egg whites that gave you such a nail?"

"No, my angel, it is your whole charming person."

At that I picked her up, she held me around the shoulders to make less weight for me, and, having dropped my muff, I grasped her by the thighs and she steadied herself on the nail; but after a turn around the room, fearing what would follow I set her down on the carpet, then sat down myself and made her sit on me, whereupon she had the kindness to finish the job with her beautiful hand, collecting the white of the first egg in the palm of it.

"Five to go," she said; and after cleaning her beautiful hand in a potpourri of aromatic herbs, she gave it to me to kiss again and again. Calmed, I spent an hour telling her amusing stories; then we sat down at table.

She ate for two, but I for four. The service was of porcelain but at dessert of silver gilt, as were the candelabra, each of which held four candles. Seeing that I admired their beauty she said they were a present her friend had made her.

"Did he give you snuffers too?"

"No."

"Then I conclude that your lover must be a great lord, for great lords know nothing of snuffing."

"The wicks of our candles do not need snuffing."

"Tell me who taught you French, for you speak it too well for me not to be curious to know."

"Old La Forêt, who died last year. I was his pupil for six years; he taught me to compose verses too; but I have learned words from you which I never heard pass his lips: *à gogo, frustratoire, dorloter.*[16] Who taught them to you?"

"Good society in Paris, Madame de Boufflers[17] for example, a woman of profound intelligence who one day asked me why the Italian alphabet contained *con rond.*[18] I laughed, and did not know how to answer."

"I think they are abbreviations used in the old days."

After making punch we amused ourselves eating oysters, exchanging them when we already had them in our mouths. She offered me hers on her tongue at the same time that I put mine between her lips; there is no more lascivious and voluptuous game between two lovers, it is even comic, but comedy does no harm, for laughter is only for the happy. What a sauce that is which dresses an oyster I suck in from the mouth of the woman I love! It is her saliva. The power of love cannot but increase when I crush it, when I swallow it.

She said that she was going to change her dress and come back with her hair ready for the night. Not knowing what to do I amused myself looking at what she had in her desk, which was open. I did not touch her letters but, opening a box and seeing some condoms,[19] I quickly wrote the following verses and substituted them for what I had stolen:

Enfants de l'amitié, ministres de la peur,
Je suis l'amour, tremblez, respectez le voleur,
Et toi, femme de Dieu, ne crains pas d'être mère
Car si tu fais un fils, il se dira son père.
S'il est dit cependant que tu veux te barrer
Parle; je suis tout prêt, je me ferai châtrer.

("Children of friendship, ministers of fear, I am Love, tremble, and respect the thief. And you, wife of God, do not fear to become a mother, for if you bear a son he will say he is its father. Yet if you are determined to bar your door, speak; I am ready, I will have myself gelded.")

M. M. reappeared in a new guise. She had on a dressing gown of India muslin embroidered with flowers in gold thread, and her nightcap was worthy of a queen.

I threw myself at her feet to beg her to yield to my desires then and there; but she ordered me to hold my fire until we were in bed.

"I do not want," she said with a smile, "to be bothered with keeping your quintessence from falling on the carpet. You shall see."

With that she goes to her desk, and instead of the condoms she finds my six verses. After reading them, then reading them over again aloud, she calls me a thief and, giving me kiss after kiss, she tries to persuade me to restore the stolen goods. After reading my verses slowly aloud once more, pretending to reflect on them, she goes out on the pretext of looking for a better pen, then comes back and writes the following answer:

Dès qu'un ange me f..., je deviens d'abord sûre
Que mon seul époux est l'auteur de la nature.
Mais pour rendre sa race exempte des soupçons
L'amour doit dans l'instant me rendre mes condoms.
Ainsi toujours soumise à sa volonté sainte
J'encourage l'ami de me f... sans crainte.

("When an angel f...s me I am at once sure that my only husband is the author of nature. But to make his lineage free from suspicion Love must instantly give me back my condoms. Thus always obedient to his sacred will, I encourage my friend to f... me without fear.")

I thereupon returned them to her, giving a very natural imitation of surprise; for really it was too much.

Midnight had struck, I showed her her little Gabriel, who was sighing for her, and she made the sofa ready, saying that as the alcove was too cold, we would sleep there. The reason was that in the alcove her friend could not see us.

While waiting I tied up my hair in a Masulipatam[20] kerchief which, going round my head four times, gave me the redoubtable look of an Asiatic despot in his seraglio. After imperiously putting my sultana in the state of nature and doing the same to myself, I laid her down and subjugated her in the classic manner, delighting in her swoons. A pillow which I had fitted under her buttocks and one of her knees bent away from the back of the sofa must have afforded a most voluptuous vision for our hidden friend. After the frolic, which lasted an hour, she took off the sheath and rejoiced to see my quintessence in it; but finding, even so, that she was wet with her own distillations, we agreed that a brief ablution would restore us *in statu quo*. After that we stood side by side in front of a large upright mirror, each putting one arm around the other's back. Admiring the beauty of our images and becoming eager to enjoy them, we engaged in every kind of combat, still standing. After the last bout she fell onto the Persian carpet which covered the floor. With her eyes closed, her head to one side, lying on her back, her arms and legs as if she had just been taken down from a St. Andrew's cross,[21] she would have looked like a corpse if the beating of her heart had not been visible. The last bout had exhausted her. I made her do the "straight tree,"[22] and in that position I lifted her up to devour her chamber of love, which I could not reach otherwise since I wanted to make it possible for her, in turn, to devour the weapon which wounded her to death without taking her life.

Reduced after this exploit to asking her to grant me a truce, I set her on her feet again; but a moment later she challenged me to give her her revenge. It was my turn to do the "straight tree" and hers to grasp me by the hips and lift me up. In this position, steadying herself on her two diverging pillars, she was horrified to see her breasts splattered with my soul distilled in drops of blood.

"What do I see?" she cried, letting me fall and herself falling with me. Just then the alarm chimed.

I called her back to life by making her laugh.

"Have no fear, my angel," I said, "it is the yolk of the last egg, which is often red."

I myself washed her beautiful breasts, which human blood had never soiled before that moment. She was very much afraid that she had swallowed some drops of it; but I easily persuaded her that even if it were so, it would do no harm. She dressed in her habit and then left, after imploring me to go to bed there and to write and tell her how I was before I went back to Venice. She promised to do as much for me the next day. The caretaker would have her letter. I obeyed. She did not leave until a half hour later, which she certainly spent with her friend.

I slept until evening, and scarcely had I waked before I wrote her that I was well. I went to Venice, where, to fulfill my promise, I looked up the same painter who had made my portrait for C. C. He needed only three sittings. I had him make it a little larger than the first, because M. M. wanted it in a medallion concealed under some sacred image which would hide it from everyone, she alone possessing the secret of uncovering it. It was the jeweler's task to produce a secret device different from the first. The same painter made me an Annunciation, in which the Angel Gabriel appeared as dark-haired and the Holy Virgin as a blonde, opening her arms to the divine messenger. The famous painter Mengs used the same idea in the Annunciation[23] which he painted at Madrid twelve years later.

CHAPTER V

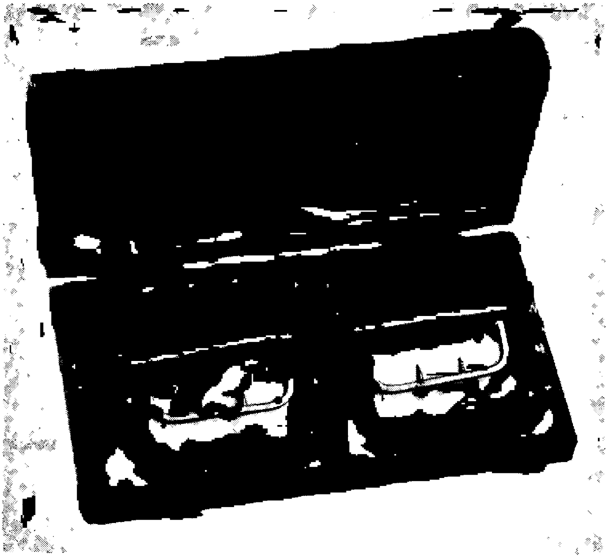
I give M. M. my portrait. Her present to me. I go to the opera with her. She gambles and replenishes my purse. Philosophical conversation with M. M. Letter from C. C. She knows all. Ball at the convent: my exploits as Pierrot. C. C. comes to the casino instead of M. M. I spend an absurd night with her.

1754.

ON THE second day of the year, before going to the casino I went to Laura's house to give her a letter for C. C. and to receive one which made me laugh. M. M. had initiated the girl not only into the mysteries of Sappho,[1] but also into pure metaphysics. She had become a freethinker. She wrote that, not wishing to give an account of her doings to her confessor but at the same time not wanting to lie to him, she had stopped telling him anything. "He told me," she wrote, "that perhaps I confessed nothing to him because I did not examine my conscience well, and I answered that I had nothing to tell him, but that if he liked I would commit some sin on purpose, so that I could have something to tell him."

Here is a copy of the letter from M. M. which I found at the casino:

"I am writing to you in bed, my dark-haired dear, because I feel as if my hips were completely out of joint;



Pair of Shoe Buckles in Case

but it will go away, for I am eating and sleeping well. What brought balm to my blood was the letter in which you assured me that the loss of yours had no ill effect. I shall be certain of it on Twelfth-night in Venice. Write me if I can count on that. I want to go to the opera. I forever forbid you egg whites in salad. In future when you go to the casino you must ask if anyone is there, and if you are told there is, you must go away; my friend will do likewise; so you will never meet; but it will not be for long, for he is mad about you and determined that you shall make his acquaintance. He says he did not believe there was a man of your vigor in the universe; but he insists that, making love as you do, you are defying death, for he maintains that the blood you spurted out must have come from the brain. But what will he say when he learns that you think nothing of it? But here is something to make you laugh: he wants to eat salads of egg whites, and I am to ask you to give me some of your Four Thieves vinegar; he says he knows it exists, but it is not to be had in Venice. He told me he spent a sweet and cruel night, and he expressed a certain uneasiness for me, too, for he thought my efforts were beyond the delicacy of my sex. That may well be; but in the meanwhile I am delighted at having outdone myself and having been put to such a noble test of my strength. I love you to adoration; I kiss the air, thinking that you are there; and I cannot wait to kiss your portrait. I hope that mine will be as dear to you. I believe we are born for each other, and I curse myself when I think that I have put a barrier between us. The key which you see here is to my jewel-box. Search it; take whatever you see addressed 'To my Angel.' It is a small present which my friend wanted me to give you in exchange for the nightcap you gave me. Farewell."

The small key which I found in the letter was to a casket in the boudoir. Impatient to see the nature of the present which her friend had inspired her to give me, I go and open the little casket, and I undo the packet. I find a letter and a shagreen case. Here is the letter:

"What will make this present dear to you, my loving friend, is my portrait, of which our friend, who has two, is happy to deprive himself when he thinks that you will become its owner. In this box you will find my portrait twice concealed by two different secret devices. You will see me as a nun if you remove the bottom of the snuffbox lengthwise; and if you push the corner of it you will see a hinged cover open, under which I appear as you have made me. It is impossible, my dear, that any woman has ever loved you as I love you. Our friend encourages my passion. I cannot decide if I am more fortunate in my friend or in my lover, for it is beyond my powers to imagine anything better than either."

In the case I found a gold snuffbox, which a few traces of Spanish snuff showed had been used Following the instructions I found her at the bottom of it, dressed as a nun, standing, and in half profile. Raising the false bottom showed her to me lying naked on a black silk mattress in the pose of Correggio's Magdalen.[2] She was looking at a Cupid who had his quiver at his feet and was seated on her nun's habit. It was a present of which I did not think myself worthy. I wrote her a letter in which she could not but find the deepest gratitude truly depicted. In the same small casket I saw all her diamonds in drawers and four purses filled with zecchini. Handsome behavior being one of my great admirations, I shut the casket and went back to Venice, happy if I could only have found the will and the means to escape from the sway of Fortune by ceasing to gamble.

The jeweler gave me the medallion of the Annunciation just as I wished it to be. It was made to be worn hanging from the neck. A link through which the neck cord was to pass contained the secret device. If it was pulled hard, the Annunciation sprang up and revealed my portrait. I attached it to a gold chain of Spanish links six ells long, which made it a most noble present. I put it in my pocket and in the evening of Epiphany Day I posted myself at the foot of the fine statue which the grateful Republic had erected to the hero Colleoni after having him poisoned,[3] if backstairs history tells true. *Sit divus, modo non vivus* ("Let him be a god so long as he is not alive")[4] is a saying of the enlightened monarch which will endure as long as there are monarchs.

At exactly two o'clock[5] I saw M. M. get out of the gondola dressed, and very well masked, as a woman. We went to the opera at San Samuele, and at the end of the second ballet we went to the Ridotto, where she greatly enjoyed looking at all the patrician ladies, whose rank gives them the privilege of sitting down with their faces unmasked. After walking about for half an hour we went to the room set apart for the great bankers. She stopped at Signor Momolo Mocenigo's[6] bank; at that time he was the handsomest of all the young patrician gamesters. As there was no play at his table, he was lolling easily in front of two thousand zecchini, with his head bent toward the ear of a masked lady sitting beside him. She was Signora Marina Pisani,[7] whose adoring cavalier he was.

M. M. having asked me if I wished to play, and I having answered no, she said that she was taking me for her partner and, not waiting for me to reply, she draws out a purse and puts a roll of coins on a card. The banker, moving only his hands, shuffled, then cut, and M. M. won her card and then the paroli. The Signore pays, takes a new pack of cards, and begins whispering to the lady beside him, quite indifferent to four hundred zecchini which M. M. had already put on the same card. The banker continuing his conversation, M. M. said to me in good French: "Our stakes are not high enough to interest the Signore; let us go." So saying, she takes away her card and moves on. I pick up the money without answering the Signore, who says:

"Your masker is too intolerant."

I rejoin my beautiful gamester, who was surrounded. She stops at the bank of Signor Piero Marcello,[8] another charming young man, at whose side was Signora Venier,[9] Signor Momolo's sister. She plays, and loses five rolls one after the other. Having no more money, she takes coins by handfuls from the pocket in which I had the four hundred zecchini, and in five or six deals she has the bank at death's door. She stops, and the noble banker congratulates her on her luck. After pocketing all the money she had won I give her my arm and we go downstairs and set off to have supper. Noticing that several busybodies were following us I took a *traghetto* gondola, and had it land where I wished. This is the way to escape from busybodies in Venice.

After eating a good supper I emptied my pockets. For my share I found I was in possession of nearly a thousand zecchini; she asked me to do hers up in rolls and put them in her little casket and keep the key to it. I finally gave her the medallion containing my portrait, whereupon she reproached me for not having done her the favor sooner. After having tried in vain to discover the secret, she was delighted to learn it, and she thought me a very good likeness.

Remembering that we had only three hours before us I urged her to undress.

"Yes," she said; "but be careful; for my friend maintains that you may die on the spot."

"And why does he think you are not in equal danger, since your ecstasies are more frequent than mine?"

"He says that the liquid which we women distill cannot come from the brain, since the womb has no connection with the seat of understanding. It follows, he says, that the child is not the mother's son in respect to the brain, which is the seat of reason, but the father's; and I think it is true. According to this system woman has at most only the quantity of reason which she needs;

she has none over to give a portion of it to the fetus."

"Your lover is wise. According to this system we must forgive women all the follies they commit for love's sake, and men none. That is why I shall be in despair if I find that you have become pregnant."

"I shall know that in a few weeks, and if I am pregnant so much the better. I have decided what course I shall take."

"And what course is that?"

"To entrust myself entirely to my friend and to you. I am certain that neither of you will let me be brought to bed in the convent."

"That would be a stroke of fate which would determine our destiny. I should have to carry you off and take you to England and marry you."

"My friend thinks that it would be possible to bribe a physician who would declare that I was suffering from some malady of his own invention and order me to go and drink mineral waters at the springs, which the Bishop might allow. At the watering place I would be cured, then I would come back here; but I would far rather that we united our destinies until death. Could you live comfortably anywhere, as you do here?"

"Alas, no! But with you could I be unhappy? We will talk of this when it becomes necessary. So now let us go to bed."

"Let us. If I bear a son my friend will take care of him as his father."

"Could he believe that he is?"

"You can both take the credit; but some resemblance will show me the truth."

"Yes—for example if in time to come he writes pretty verses you can conclude that he is his."

"Who told you that he can write verses?"

"Admit that he wrote the six in answer to mine."

"I will not admit it. Good or bad, they are mine, and I mean to convince you of it on the spot."

"No, no. Let us go to bed, or Love will challenge Apollo to a duel."

"An excellent idea! Take this pencil and write. At the moment I am Apollo."

She then dictated the following four lines:

> *Je ne me battrai pas. Je te cède la place.*
> *Si Venus est ma sœur, commune est notre race.*
> *Je sais faire des vers. Un moment de perdu*
> *Ne pourra pas déplaire à l'amour convaincu.*
>
> (I will not fight. I yield the ground to you. If Venus is my sister, we are kindred. I can write verses. A moment lost cannot offend a confident Love.")

I thereupon asked her pardon on my knees, admitting that she was also versed in mythology; but could I suppose that a Venetian lady of twenty-two who had been brought up in a convent could be so talented? She said that she had an insatiable desire to convince me that she deserved my heart, and she asked me if I thought her a shrewd gamester.

"Shrewd enough to make the banker tremble."

"I do not always play so high, but having taken you as my partner I defied Fortune. Why did you not play?"

"Because having lost four thousand zecchini during the last week of the year, I had no money left; but I will play tomorrow and Fortune will favor me. Meanwhile here is a little book I took from your boudoir. It is Pietro Aretino's postures. In these three hours I want to try some of them."

"That is very like you. But some of them are impossible and even silly."

"True, but four are very interesting."

It was in these labors that we spent the three hours. The chimes of the clock put an end to our celebration. After escorting her back to her gondola I went home to bed; but I could not sleep. I got up and went to pay some pressing debts. One of the greatest pleasures a wastrel can enjoy is that of paying certain debts. The money M. M. had won for me brought me luck all night, and I reached the end of the Carnival having won every day.

Going to the casino in Murano three days after Twelfth-night to put ten or twelve rolls in M. M.'s casket, I found the caretaker's wife with a letter from her for me. I had just received one from C. C. by Laura. After giving me as good news of her health as I could wish, M. M. asked me to find out if the same jeweler who had set her medallion had by any chance set a ring which displayed a St. Catherine which must also conceal a portrait; she wanted to know the secret of it. She said that it was a boarder of whom she was fond who had the ring, that it was very thick, and that the girl did not know that there must be a secret device for opening it. I answered that I would obey all her commands. But here is C. C.'s letter, which is amusing because of the quandary in which it put me. The letter from C. C. was of very recent date; M. M.'s had been written two days earlier.

"Oh, how happy I am! You love my dear friend Mother M. M. She has a medallion as thick as my ring. She can have received it only from you; it must contain your portrait. I am sure that the painter who painted her Annunciation is the same one who painted my patron saint; the jeweler must be the same one too. I feel very sure that it was you who gave it to her. Content to know all, I did not want to risk grieving her by telling her that I had discovered her secret. But my dear friend, being either more frank or more curious, did not do likewise. She told me she was certain that my St. Catherine served to cover a portrait, which must be that of the person who had given it to me. I answered that it was true my ring came from my lover, but that I did not know it could contain his portrait. She replied that if such was the case, and I was willing, she would try to find out the secret and afterward she would reveal hers to me too. Certain that she could not find the secret, I gave her my ring, saying that discovering it would please me. The nun who is my aunt sending for me just then, I left my ring with her, and she gave it back to me after dinner, saying that she had been unable to discover anything, but she was still certain the portrait must be in it. She is convinced of it, but I assure you that in this respect she will not find me obliging, for if she saw you she would guess everything and then I should have to tell her who you are. I am sorry that I must keep something from her, but I am not at all sorry either that you love her or that she loves you, and I pity you so much for being cruelly reduced to making love at a grating that I would gladly let you take my place. I should make two people happy at one stroke. Farewell."

I answered that she had guessed rightly that my portrait was in M. M.'s medallion; but I urged her to continue to keep my secret, assuring her that the fancy I had taken for her dear friend in no way detracted from the constancy of my passion for her. Thus did I equivocate, to keep up the intrigue, which I yet saw coming to its end in the closeness of their friendship.

Having learned from Laura that on such-and-such a day a ball was to be given in the large visiting room of the convent, I made up my mind to go to it masked in such a way that my two dear friends could not recognize me. I was certain that I should see them. During the Carnival in Venice nuns are allowed to have this innocent pleasure. There is dancing in the visiting room, and they remain inside, watching the festivities from behind their wide gratings. At the end of the day the festivities are over, everyone leaves, and they retire well satisfied to have been present at one of the pleasures of the laity. The ball was to take place on the day on which M. M. had invited me to sup at her casino; but that did not prevent me from going masked to the visiting room, where I was sure to see my dear C. C. as well.

Wanting to make certain that my two friends would not recognize me, I decided to mask as Pierrot.[10] There is no costume better fitted to disguise a person, provided he is neither a hunchback nor lame. The wide tunic of a Pierrot, the long, very wide sleeves, the wide trousers which come down to the heels, conceal everything distinctive in his figure by which someone who knew him intimately could recognize him. A cap which covers his whole head, his ears, and his neck hides not only his hair but also the color of his complexion, and a piece of gauze in front of the eyes of his mask prevents anyone from seeing whether they are black or blue.

So, having eaten a dish of soup, I mask after this fashion and, heedless of the cold (for the whole costume being of white linen, one cannot be more lightly clad), I board a gondola, have it drop me at a *traghetto,* and there take another gondola which conveys me to Murano. I had no cloak. In my trouser pockets I had only a handkerchief, the keys to the casino, and my purse.

I go down to the visiting room, which was full, but everyone makes way for the strange mask, whose characteristics were unknown in Venice. I walk on, assuming the gait of a booby as the nature of the mask demands, and I enter the circle of dancers. I see Punches, Scaramouches, Pantaloons, Harlequins. At the gratings I see all the nuns and all the boarders, some seated, others standing, and though I do not let my eyes linger on any of them I see M. M. and, on the opposite side, my loving C. C., who was standing up to enjoy the spectacle. I proceed around the entire circle, walking as if I were drunk, looking everyone up and down, but more looked at and studied. Everyone was trying to make me out.

I stop in front of a pretty girl disguised as a female Harlequin and rudely take her hand to make her dance a minuet with me. Everyone laughs and draws back to make room for us. The Harlequiness dances in perfect character with her costume, and I with mine: I amused the company vastly by constantly appearing to be on the verge of falling, though I always kept my balance. Each time the general apprehension was followed by laughter.

After the minuet I danced twelve furlanas[11] with extraordinary energy. Out of breath, I let myself drop and pretended to sleep, and when my snores were heard everyone respected Pierrot's slumbers. Next there was a contradance which lasted an hour and in which I thought it best not to join; but after the contradance up comes a Harlequin who, with the impertinence permissible to his character, spanks me with his lath. This is Harlequin's weapon. Having, as Pierrot, no weapon, I catch him by the belt and run about the room carrying him, he meanwhile continuing to hit me with his lath on my behind. His Harlequiness, who was the charming girl who had danced with me, comes running to rescue her friend and also hits me with her lath. At that I put the Harlequin down, snatch his lath, and take the Harlequiness on my shoulders, hitting her on the behind and running at full speed all over the room to the laughter of the company and the frightened cries of the girl, who was afraid that if I fell she would show her thighs or her drawers. But an impertinent Punch put a sudden end to the whole comical struggle. He came up behind me and tripped me so hard that I could not keep from falling. Everyone booed him. I quickly got up and, very much annoyed, began an out-and-out wrestling match with the insolent fellow. He was as tall as I am. Since he was awkward and had no resources but his brute strength, I made him bite the dust and I handled him so roughly that his coat came unbuttoned, whereupon he lost his hump and his false belly. To the sound of the clapping and laughter of all the nuns, who had perhaps never enjoyed such a spectacle, I seized the moment, dashed through the crowd, and escaped.

Dripping with sweat, I called a gondola, shut myself up in it, and had it take me to the Ridotto to avoid catching a chill. Night was falling, I was not to be at the casino in Murano until two o'clock, and I could not wait to see M. M.'s surprise when she saw Pierrot before her. So I spent the two hours playing at all the small banks, going from one to another, winning, losing, indulging in all sorts of antics in complete freedom of body and soul, sure that no one recognized me, enjoying the present and snapping my fingers at the future and at all those who are pleased to exercise their reason in the dreary task of foreseeing it.

But two o'clock strikes and reminds me that love and a delicious supper await me to bring me new pleasures. With my pockets full of silver I leave the Ridotto, I hurry to Murano, go to the casino, and enter the bedroom, where I think I see M. M. in her habit standing with her back to the fireplace. I approach to see the effect of the surprise on her face, and I am turned to stone. What I see is not M. M., but C. C. in a nun's habit; even more surprised than I am, she neither speaks nor moves. I drop into an armchair to give myself time to get over my astonishment and recover my intellectual faculties.

When I saw C. C. I was as if struck by lightning. My soul was left as motionless as my body, lost in an inextricable labyrinth.

"It is M. M.," I said to myself, "who is playing this trick on me; but how did she manage to find out that I am C. C.'s lover? C. C. has betrayed my secret. But if she has betrayed me how dare she appear before me? If M. M. loves me how can she have deprived herself of the pleasure of seeing me and sent me her rival? It cannot be meant as a favor for no one carries doing favors to such lengths. It is meant to be a stinging, scornful insult."

My self-esteem did not fail to produce strong arguments to refute the possibility, but in vain. Shivering in the cold gloom of my disappointment, I alternately saw that I was tricked, deceived, trapped, scorned.

In this fashion I spent half an hour, bleak and silent, keeping my eyes fixed on C. C.'s face while she, too, looked at me without a word, more embarrassed and nonplussed than I, for she could at most recognize me as the same masker who had cut such capers in the visiting room.

Being in love with M. M., and having gone there only for her sake, I did not have the easy recourse open to the so-called reasonable man—I could not make the best of the situation by substituting the one for the other, despite the fact that I was far from scorning C. C., whose merits were at least as great as M. M.'s. I loved her, I adored her; but at that moment she was not the one for me to have. It would have been an outright denial of love, which could not but rouse my reason to indignation. It seemed to me that if I settled for doing the honors to C. C. I should be contemptible; it seemed to me that honor forbade me to lend myself to such deceit; in addition, I was glad both to gain the opportunity of reproaching M. M. with an indifference very far from love and of refraining from acting in a way which would ever lead her to suppose that she had done me a favor. Add that during all this time I was inclined to believe that she was in the hiding place and her friend with her.

I had to resolve on a course, for I could not think of spending the whole night there masked as I was and saying nothing. I considered deciding to leave, the more so because neither M. M. nor C. C. could be certain that the Pierrot was I; but I dismissed the idea with horror when I thought of the intense mortification C. C.'s beautiful soul would suffer if she ever learned that I was the Pierrot; it was with the greatest grief that I thought that she might even now suspect it. I was her husband; I was the man who had seduced her. These reflections lacerated my soul.

I suddenly begin to imagine that M. M. is in the secret closet and that, if she is, she will show herself when she considers the time is ripe. With this thought in mind, I decide to remain. I untie the handkerchief which bound the white mask of Pierrot to my head, and I relieve my charming C. C. from anxiety by showing her my face.

"It could only be you," she says, "but I breathe again. You seemed surprised to see me. Did you not know that you would find me here?"

"You may be sure I knew nothing about it."

"If you are displeased, I am in despair; but I am innocent."

"My adorable love, come to my arms. How can you suppose that I could be displeased to see you? You are always my better half; but I beg you to release my soul from the cruel labyrinth in which it is lost, for you could not be here unless you have betrayed our secret."

"I! I could never have done that, even if it cost me my life."

"Then how can you be here? How did your dear friend manage to discover everything? No one on earth can have told her that I am your husband. Perhaps Laura—"

"Laura is loyal. My dear love, I cannot even guess."

"But how were you persuaded to put on this disguise, to come here? You are able to leave the convent, and you have never told me so important a secret?"

"Can you believe that I would not have told you anything so important if I had ever left it? Today was the first time—two hours ago; and nothing is so simple or so natural as what made me do what I have done."

"Tell me about it, my love; my curiosity is boundless."

"Your curiosity is dear to me, and I will tell you everything. You know how fond M. M. and I are of each other; our affection could not be greater; you must be sure of it from all that I have written to you. Well, then —two days ago M. M. asked the Abbess and my aunt to let me sleep in her room instead of the lay sister, who had a bad cold and had gone to cough in the infirmary. She was given permission, and you cannot imagine how happy we were to find ourselves free for the first time to sleep together in the same bed.

"Today, a moment after you left the visiting room where you made us laugh so much, and where neither M. M. nor I could ever have imagined that it was you, she went out. I followed her, and as soon as we were alone she said she needed me to do her a service on which her happiness depended. I replied that she had only to tell me what it was. She thereupon opened a drawer and to my great surprise dressed me as you see me now. She kept laughing, and I laughed too, not knowing where the joke might end. When she saw that I was all dressed she said that she was going to trust me with a great secret, which she fearlessly confided to my loyalty. 'Know, my dear friend,' she said, 'that I was going to leave the convent tonight and not come back until tomorrow morning. But now it has been decided that it is not I who will go, but you. You have nothing to fear, and you need no instructions, for I am sure that in your situation you will not be at a loss. In an hour a lay sister will come here, I will speak to her privately, then she will tell you to follow her. Accordingly, you will go out with her by the small door and cross the garden until you reach the room which gives on the little quay. There you will get into a gondola, saying nothing to the gondolier except, "To the casino." You will be there in five minutes, you will get out, and you will enter a small room in which you will find a fire burning. You will be all alone there, and you will wait.' 'Wait for whom?' I said. 'No one. That is all you are to know. Nothing will happen to you which will offend you. Trust to me. At the casino you will eat supper and go to bed, too, if you wish, for no one will disturb you. I beg you not to ask me any further questions, for I cannot tell you more.'

"Tell me, my dear, what I could do after hearing this, and after having promised her that I would do whatever she asked? Begone, base suspicion! I laughed, and expecting only something pleasant, as soon as the lay sister came I followed her, and here I am. After being bored for three quarters of an hour, I saw Pierrot.

"I can assure you on my honor that the very moment I saw you appear my heart told me that it was you; but the next moment, when I saw you start back after looking at me closely, I knew just as clearly that you felt that you had been tricked. You sat here in such a gloomy silence that I should have thought it very wrong if I had been the first to break it, and the more so since, despite what my heart told me, I could not but fear that I was mistaken. Pierrot's mask might hide someone else —but certainly no one who could be dearer to me than you after eight months during which only force has kept me from embracing you. Now that you must be sure I am innocent, let me congratulate you on your knowing this casino. You are fortunate, and I wish you happiness. M. M. is the only woman, after me, who is worthy of your affection, the only woman with whom I can be content to share it. I pitied you; I pity you no more, and your happiness makes me happy. Kiss me."

I should have been an ingrate and a barbarian if I had not then clasped to my breast with unfeigned signs of the most sincere affection the angel of goodness and beauty who was there only for friendship's sake. But after convincing her that I considered her entirely justified, I did not fail to express my tender feelings and then to launch into theories equally reasonable and unreasonable to account for M. M.'s extraordinary behavior, which I considered very dubious and next to impossible to interpret to her credit. I told her in so many words that, apart from the pleasure it gave me to see her, it was obvious that her friend had played a vile trick on me which I could not but resent for its patent offensiveness.

"I do not see that," C. C. replied. "My dear friend must have contrived to find out, though I don't know how, that you were my lover before you met her. She might well have believed that you still love me, and she believed—for I know her soul—that she was giving us a sacred proof of perfect friendship by procuring us, without forewarning, the highest happiness for which two lovers can hope. I cannot but love her for it."

"You are right, my dear one; but your situation is very different from mine. You have no other lover, and, unable to live with you, I could not resist M. M.'s charms. I have fallen madly in love with her; she knows it; and, with her intelligence, she cannot have done what she has done except to show me her scorn for me. I admit that I feel it most keenly. If she loved me as I love her she could never have done me the excruciating favor of sending you here in her stead."

"I do not agree with you. Her soul is as great and noble as her heart is generous, and just as I am not displeased to know that you love her and are loved by her and that you have made each other happy, as appearances tell me you have, so she is not displeased to know that we love each other and indeed is delighted to have an opportunity to convince us that she approves of it. She wants you to understand that she loves you for yourself, that your pleasures are hers, and that she is not jealous of me, who am her dearest friend. To convince you that you should not be displeased that she has discovered our secret, she tells you, by sending me here, that she is satisfied that you should share your heart between her and me. You know that she loves me, and that I am often her wife or her fond husband; so, just as you do not object to my being your rival and to my often making her happy, she does not want you to suppose that her love is like hate, for such is the love of a jealous heart."

"You plead your friend's cause like an angel, my dear wife, but you do not see the thing in its true light. You have intelligence and a pure soul; but you have not my experience. M. M. loves me only to amuse herself, knowing perfectly well that I am not such a fool as to be taken in by what she has now done. I am miserable, and it is she who makes me so."

"Then I, too, should have cause to complain of her. She has shown me that she has all power over my lover and that, having made him her own, she finds no difficulty in giving him back to me. On top of that, she shows me that she scorns the affection I feel for her, by putting me in a position to show it to someone else."

"Now your argument is getting shaky. The case between her and you is entirely different. The love you and she indulge in is only a game by which you delude your senses. The pleasures you enjoy do not exclude others; what could make you jealous of each other would be a love of the same kind between women; but M. M. could not feel offended that you had a lover, just as you could not if she had one—provided in either case that the lover was not the other's."

"But that is precisely our case, and you are wrong. We are not a bit offended that you love us both. Didn't I write you that I wished I could give you my place? Does that make you think I scorn you too?"

"Your wish, my dear, to give me your place when you did not know that I was her lover arose from the fact that your love had changed into friendship, and for the time being I must be glad of it; but I have good reason to be offended if M. M. entertains the same sentiment, for I love her now and I am certain that I can never marry her. Do you understand that, my angel? Being sure that you will become my wife I am equally sure of our love, which will have time enough to be rekindled; but M. M.'s love will not return. Is it not humiliating for me if all I have done and all I have been able to do is to make myself an object of contempt? As for you, you cannot but adore her. She has initiated you into all her mysteries; you owe her eternal gratitude and friendship."

Such is the substance of our discussion, which continued until midnight, when the tactful caretaker brought us an excellent supper. I could not eat, but C. C. had a good appetite. Despite my gloom I had to laugh when I saw a salad of egg whites. She said that I was right to laugh, because the yolks, which were the best part, had been removed. I took pleasure in admiring the increase in her beauty, though I felt not the least desire to show her my feeling. I have always held that there is no merit in being faithful to a person one truly loves.

Two hours before dawn we went back to sit in front of the fire. C. C., seeing me sad, showed the most delicate respect for my situation—not a trace of provocation, no posture which deviated from the strictest decency. Her words were loving and tender, but she never once dared to reproach me for my coldness.

Toward the end of our long conversation she asked me what she was to say to M. M. when she returned to the convent.

"She expects," she said, "to see me perfectly happy and full of gratitude for her generous gift of this night. What shall I tell her?"

"The plain truth. You must not keep one word of our conversation from her, or one of my thoughts if you can remember them. You must tell her that she has made me unhappy for a long time to come."

"I should distress her too much if I told her that, for she loves you, and the medallion which contains your portrait is her dearest possession. I will do my very best to make it up between you quickly. I will send you a letter from me by Laura, unless you assure me that you will go to her house for it tomorrow."

"Your letters will always be dear to me; but you will see that M. M. will not want to have things out. There is one point on which she may not believe you.''

''Yes, I know—the strength of mind we had to spend eight hours together like brother and sister. If she knows you as I know you she will think it impossible.''

''In that case tell her the opposite if you wish.''

''No, no! It would be a very ill-timed lie. I can dissimulate a little; but I shall never learn to lie. I love you, too, because all through this night you have not pretended that you still love me.''

''Believe me, my angel, I am sick with grief. I love you with all my soul; but now I am in a situation to be pitied.''

''You weep, my dear; I beg you to spare my heart. I cannot forgive myself for having said that to you; but believe that I had no intention of reproaching you. I am sure that in a quarter of an hour M. M. will be weeping too.''

When the hour struck, having no more hope that M. M. would appear to justify herself, I kissed C. C., I resumed my disguise to cover my head and so shelter myself from a very strong wind whose whistlings I heard, and I hurried down the stairs after giving C. C. the key to the casino and telling her to return it to M. M.

CHAPTER VI

I am in great danger of perishing in the lagoons. Illness. Letters from C. C. and M. M. Reconciliation. Assignation at the casino in Murano. I learn the name of M. M.'s friend, and I consent to have him to supper at my casino with our common mistress.

I RUN to the *traghetto,* expecting to find a gondola, and I find none.

According to Venetian police regulations this can never happen, for at all hours each *traghetto* is required to have at least two gondolas ready for the public service; nevertheless, it sometimes happens, though rarely, that there is none. This was one of the times. There was a very strong wind from the west, and the disgusted gondoliers had apparently gone home to bed. What was I to do at the end of the quay an hour before daylight and almost naked? I might have gone back to the casino if I had had the key. The wind was blowing me off my feet, and there was no house I could enter to take shelter from it.

I had in my pockets at least three hundred filippi[1] which I had won at the Ridotto, and a purse full of gold; I had reason to fear the robbers of Murano, very dangerous and determined cutthroats who enjoy and abuse a number of privileges which the policy of the government grants them in return for the work they do in the glass factories with which the island abounds; to keep them from emigrating the government grants all of them Venetian citizenship. I expected to encounter a pair of them, who would have stripped me to my shirt, for I did not even have in my pocket the usual knife which all honest men in Venice carry to defend their lives. Unfortunate predicament! I was to be pitied and I was shaking with cold.

Through the cracks in the blinds of a wretched one-story house I see light. I decide to knock modestly at the door of the little house. Someone calls:

"Who is knocking?"

The blind is opened.

"What do you want?" says a man who is amazed to see me in such a costume. I beg him to let me in, giving him a filippo, a coin which was worth eleven lire, telling him my perilous situation in a few words. He comes and opens the door, and I ask him to go and fetch me a gondola which will take me to Venice for a zecchino. He quickly dresses, thanking Providence and assuring me that he will get me one immediately. He puts on his cloak and leaves me in his bedroom, where I see his whole family in one bed, all amazed at my appearance. A half hour later in comes my man and tells me that a two-oared gondola is at the quay, but that the gondoliers insisted on having the zecchino in advance. I agree, I thank him, and I leave, fearing nothing, for I see that the two gondoliers are stout fellows.

We make good progress as far as San Michele;[2] but scarcely have we passed the island before the wind increases with such fury that I see I am in danger of perishing if I go on; for though I was a good swimmer I was sure neither of my own strength nor of the possibility of resisting the current. I order the gondoliers to tie up to the island; but they answer that I am not in the hands of cowards and to have no fear. Knowing the character of our gondoliers I decide to say nothing; but the gusts of wind redoubled, the foaming waves were coming in over the side of the gondola, and my men, despite their strong arms, could not drive it forward.

We were only a hundred paces from the mouth of the Rio dei Gesuiti[3] when a furious gust of wind knocked the man at the poop into the water, but he caught hold of the gondola and had no difficulty getting aboard again. Having lost his oar he took another; but the gondola, going about, had already traveled two hundred paces to my left and broadside on in one minute. The situation was desperate. I shout to them to abandon the *felce** [4] to the sea, throwing a handful of silver pieces on the carpet of the gondola. I was instantly obeyed, whereupon my two hearties, using all their energy, showed Aeolus[5] that his strength must yield to theirs. In less than four minutes we entered the Rio dei Mendicanti,[6] and, praising them, I ordered them to take me to the quay of the Palazzo Bragadin in Santa Marina,[7] where I had no sooner arrived than I got into bed under blankets to recover my natural heat; a good sleep would have restored me to my usual state, but nothing I could do would bring it. Five or six hours later Signor Bragadin and the other two inseparables came to see me and found me in the throes of fever; but that did not keep Signor Bragadin from laughing when he saw my Pierrot costume on the couch. After congratulating me on having escaped safe and sound, they left me to myself. Toward evening I began to sweat so profusely that my bed had to be changed during the night, and in the morning I had a recurrence, accompanied by delirium. The next morning I ached all over. The stiffness kept me from moving. The fever having abated, I could hope to recover my health only by a good diet.

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* What envelops the gondola. (C.'s note.)

Very early on Wednesday I saw Laura. I told her that I could neither write nor read, but asked her to come back the next day. She put on my night table what she had brought for me, and she left having seen enough of my condition to tell C. C. how I was.

It was not until evening that, feeling a little better, I had my servant lock my door so that I could read what C. C. had written me. The first thing which pleased me was the key to the casino, which she returned to me, for I already very much regretted having left it. I already felt that I had done wrong, and having the key in my hands again was balm to my blood. In the packet I see a letter from M. M., and I read it avidly.

"The details which you have read, or will soon read, in C. C.'s letter will, I hope, make you forget the wrong I did when I hoped to give you the pleasantest of surprises. I saw and heard everything, and you would not have gone off without the key if I had not fallen asleep an hour before you left. So keep the key which C. C. is sending back to you and use it to return to the casino tomorrow evening, since Heaven has preserved you from the storm. Your love perhaps entitles you to complain, but not to ill-treat a woman who has certainly shown you no sign of scorn."

Here is C. C.'s long letter, which I translate only because I think it is interesting:

"I beg you, my dear husband, not to send this key back to me unless, become the most cruel of men, you take pleasure in grieving two women whose only love you are. Knowing your heart, I am certain that you will go to the casino tomorrow night, and that you will make it up with M. M., who cannot go there this evening. You will see that you can insist you are right only if you are stupid. Meanwhile, here is all that you do not know and must be very glad to learn.

"As soon as you left in that terrible storm, which kept me very uneasy, just as I was about to go downstairs to return to the convent I was greatly surprised to see M. M. before me. She said dejectedly that from a place where we could not see her she had seen and heard everything. She had several times been tempted to appear; but she had never made up her mind to it because she was always afraid of arriving at the wrong moment and particularly at the moment when her presence would have prevented the reconciliation which must take place between two people who could not but be in love with each other. Yet she would have decided upon it toward the end of our conversation if she had not fallen asleep. She woke as the clock chimed, just when, after giving me a key of which I knew nothing, you left as if you were fleeing from some den of infamy. M. M. said that she would tell me everything in her room and we left in a terrible storm and in great distress, thinking of you, who, she said, if you had been sensible should have stayed in the casino. As soon as we were in her room we undressed, I to resume my secular clothing and she to go to bed. I sat down by her bedside, and here, almost in her own words, is the account she gave me: 'When you left your ring with me to go and see what your aunt wanted, I examined it so carefully that I suspected the little blue dot. As it had nothing to do with the white enamel border around the arabesque I saw that the secret might be in it. So I took a pin and pushed it. Imagine my surprise and my great satisfaction when I discovered that we loved the same man, and at the same time the grief I felt at the thought that I was keeping him from you. Delighted with my discovery and instantly resolving to make use of it to procure you the pleasure of supping with him, I quickly pushed down your St. Catherine and gave it back to you pretending to have discovered nothing. What joy! At that moment I felt that I was the happiest of women. Acquainted with your heart, knowing that you knew that your lover loved me, since I had let you see his portrait in my medallion, and seeing that you were not jealous, I should have considered myself contemptible if I could have entertained sentiments different from yours—and the more so since your right over him could not but be stronger than mine. As for the care you always took to keep your lover's name a dead secret from me, I at once guessed that it could only be at his order, and I admired the beauty of your soul in your fidelity. Your lover, I judged, must be afraid that he would lose us both if we should discover that neither of us possessed his heart entirely. You cannot believe what pity I felt for you when I reflected that you continued to appear indifferent even after seeing his portrait in my possession must have made you certain that he did not love you alone. Enchanted with the soundness of my reasoning, I gave myself up to it heart and soul, determined to act accordingly and in a manner to convince you both that M. M. deserves your love, your friendship, and your esteem. My satisfaction was unimaginable when I considered that all three of us would be a hundred times happier when there were no more secrets between us. With this thought in mind, I arranged everything to play such a trick on you both as could not but bring the affection you feel for me to the highest pitch. I substituted you for myself, thus perfecting my scheme, which I thought the masterpiece of human intelligence in its kind. You let me dress you as a nun, and, with a readiness which bespoke the greatest confidence in me, you went to my casino not knowing where you were going; after taking you there, the gondola came back for me and I secreted myself where, sure that I could not be seen, I could not fail to see and hear whatever took place between you. Being the author of the play, it was only natural that I should give myself the pleasure of being its audience. I was sure that I did not risk seeing anything unpleasant.

" 'I reached the casino a quarter of an hour after you, and you cannot imagine my delighted surprise when I saw the same Pierrot who had amused us in the visiting room and whom neither you nor I had been clever enough to recognize. But his appearance as Pierrot was the only surprise in the play which I enjoyed. My fear, my uneasiness, and my disappointment began at once, and I contrived my own unhappiness. Our lover misconstrued everything, he left in despair, he still loves me; but his only thought is to be cured of his passion, and he will be. His returning this key is enough to tell me that he will not come back to the casino. Accursed night—in which, intending only to make three people happy, I have made three people unhappy, and which will cost me my life if you do not bring him to see reason, for I feel that I cannot live without him. You certainly have some way of writing to him, you know him, you know where you can send this key back to him with a letter which will persuade him to come to the casino tomorrow evening or the next to talk with me at least once; and I have hope. Sleep today, my dear friend, and tomorrow write him the whole truth, take pity on your poor friend and forgive her if she loves your lover. I will write him a short letter too, which you will enclose in yours. I am the reason why he no longer loves you, you ought to hate me, and you still love me, I adore your soul, I saw his tears, I saw how much and how he loves me, I know him now; I did not know there were men who loved as he does. I have spent a night in hell. Do not think that I am angry, my dear friend, because I heard you confide to him that we loved each other as husband and wife; it does not displease me; it is not an indiscretion to have told it to him, whose mind is as free from prejudice as his heart is good.'

"Her words ended in tears. I tried to comfort her by promising to write to you and I retired to my own bed, where I slept for four good hours; but M. M. could not sleep. However, she got up in the morning; we found the convent full of sad news which could not but greatly concern us. We heard that an hour before dawn a fishing boat had gone down in the Lagoon, that two gondolas had capsized, and that the people in them had drowned. Imagine our anxiety; we did not dare to ask questions. An hour before dawn was just the time you had left. M. M. returned to her room, I followed her and took care of her when she fainted for fear you had perished. More courageous than she, I told her that you could swim; but chills heralding a fever obliged her to go back to bed. We were in this state when, a half hour later, my aunt, who is always merry, came in laughing and said that in the storm before dawn the same Pierrot who had made us laugh so much had very nearly been drowned. 'Poor Pierrot!' I said. 'Tell us all about it, my dear aunt. I am very glad he was saved. Who is he? Does anyone know?' 'Yes,' she answered, 'the whole story is out, for the gondola which took him home is ours. The prow gondolier has just told us that Pierrot spent the night at the Briati ball,[8] and that, wanting to go back to Venice and finding no gondolas at the *traghetto,* he gave ours a zecchino to take him home. The poopman, his companion, fell into the Lagoon; but do you know what our fine Pierrot did then? He threw all the money he had on the *zenia** and threw the *felce* of the gondola into the sea, and then, the wind being west, they took him home, entering Venice by the Rio dei Mendicanti. The gondoliers happily divided thirty filippi in silver which they picked up from the carpet, and then went back and recovered the *felce*. Pierrot will remember Murano and the Briati ball. The gondolier says he is the son of Signor Bragadin, the brother of the Procuratore; they took him to the palace nearly dead with fright and cold, for he was dressed in linen and had no cloak.'

"After this account my aunt left and we remained there looking at each other as if we had returned from death to life. M. M. asked me, smiling, if it was true that you were Signor Bragadin's son. I could only answer her that it might possibly be so, but that your name did not show that you were his bastard, still less his legitimate son, for the Signore had never married. M. M. answered that she would be very sorry if you were a Bragadin. I then felt I must tell her your real name, and about Signor Bragadin's attempting to obtain me as your wife and the result of it, which was putting me in the convent. And so, my dear, your little wife has no more secrets to hide from M. M. I hope that you will not accuse me of indiscretion, for it is better that our loving friend should know the pure and simple truth than truth mixed with falsehood. What amused us and made us really laugh was the assurance with which everyone says that you spent the night at the Briati ball. When people do not know something which is needed to round out a story, they make it up; and the probable often substitutes very nicely for the true. What I can tell you is that the news brought balm to the soul of our dear friend, she slept very well last night, and has regained her beauty only from the hope that you will come to the casino at once. She has read this letter three times and kissed me more than thirty. I could not be more eager than I am to give her the letter which you will write her. Laura will wait. Perhaps I shall see you again at the casino, and in a better humor, I am sure. Farewell."

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* The carpet of a gondola. (C.'s note.)

It was more than enough to bring me to my senses. When I finished reading I admired C. C. and adored M. M.; but I was ill and stiff, though I had no fever. Being certain that Laura would come back early the next morning, I could not keep from writing to them both—only a little, but enough to assure them that I was myself again. I wrote C. C. that she had done well to tell her friend my name, and the more so because, having ceased to appear in the church, I no longer had any good reason to conceal my identity. For the rest, I assured her that

I admitted I was at fault and that I would give M. M. the greatest possible assurances of it as soon as I was fit to leave my bed. Here is a copy of the letter I wrote to M. M.:

"I left the key to the casino with C. C. to give back to you, my charmer, because I believed I was deliberately tricked, scorned, and dishonored by you. In this self-delusion, I felt it impossible to let you see me, and despite my love I trembled with horror at the thought of seeing you. Such was the effect upon me of an act on your part which I should have considered heroic if my intelligence had been equal to yours. I am beneath you in everything, and at our first meeting I shall convince you of the sincerity with which my repentant soul implores your forgiveness. Except for this, I have no reason to wish to recover my health. The stiffness which cripples me did not allow me to write to you yesterday. I can assure you that in the middle of the Murano canal, when I was within inches of death, I thought that Heaven was punishing me for the fault I had committed in sending you back the key to the casino, for when I found no boats at the *traghetto* I should have returned there if I had had it in my pocket; and, as you see, I should not now be ill and unable to move. Is it not clear that, if I had perished, it would only have been a just punishment for my crime in sending you the keys? Praise be to the God who brought me back to my senses, chastising me in a manner which shows me all the error of my ways. In future I will keep a better watch over myself, and nothing shall again have power to make me doubt your love. But what do you think of C. C.? She is an angel incarnate and she is like you. You love us both, and she loves us equally. I am the only weak and imperfect creature who cannot imitate you both. Yet I think I would give my life for one of you as freely as for the other. I feel a curiosity which I dare not confide to paper; but you will satisfy it, I am sure, the first time we see each other. It will be a miracle if we can meet again before a week from today. Farewell, my angel."

The next day Laura found me sitting up and on the way to recovery. I asked her to tell it to C. C. when she gave her the letter I had written her, and she left after giving me a letter from C. C. which required no answer. Her letter contained one from M. M.; there was nothing in either of them but doubts and fears and desperately loving questions about my health.

It was before dinner six days later that I went to the casino in Murano, where the caretaker gave me a letter from M. M.

"Impatient," she wrote, "to know that your health has returned and that you have resumed possession of the casino where you now are and of all its privileges, I write you this note, my dear one, to ask you to let me know definitely when we shall meet again and where. Whether you want me to come here or to Venice is all one to me. In neither place will we have a witness."

I answered that I was in good health and that we would meet again on the next day but one at the usual hour in the place from which I was writing to her.

I was on fire to see her again. I considered myself at fault in a manner which made me ashamed. Knowing her character, I should have seen beyond doubt that what she had done, far from indicating scorn, had been the most refined exercise of a love whose aim was my pleasure rather than its own. She could not have guessed that I loved her alone. Just as her love for me did not prevent her from accommodating the Ambassador, so she supposed that I might accommodate C. C. She did not consider the different constitution of the two sexes and the privileges which Nature accords to women.

On the next day but one, the fourth day of February in the year 1754, I was again face to face with my beautiful angel. She was wearing her habit. Our mutual love declaring us equally guilty, we fell on our knees before each other at the same moment. We had both mistreated love, she treating it too childishly and I too Jansenistically.[9] Since the forgiveness which we were compelled to ask of each other could not be expressed in words it could only consist in a stream of kisses back and forth, all their power being felt by our loving souls, delighted for the moment that they needed no other language to express their desires and the joy with which they were flooded.

Transported with emotion, impatient to give each other proofs of the sincerity of our repentance and of the fire which urged us on, we rose without letting go of each other and we fell together on the sofa, where we remained inseparable until the time came for a long sigh which we would not have restrained even if we had been sure that it heralded our death. Such was the picture of the rekindling of our love, sketched out, executed in flesh and blood, and finished off by the great painter, all-wise Nature, who, inspired by love, could never paint another either truer or more interesting.

In the tranquillity in which perfect conviction leaves the soul, I laughed with M. M. when I saw that I had taken off neither my cloak nor my *bautta*.

"Is it certain," I asked as I took them off, "that our reconciliation has had no witness?"

At that she picked up a candlestick and, taking me by the hand, led me into the room which contained the large cupboard which I had concluded was the repository of the great secret. She opened it and, after she removed a board which covered the back of it, I saw a door, through which we entered a closet where I saw everything necessary for a person who had to spend a few hours in it. There were a sofa which became a bed when wanted, table, easy chair, desk, candles on flat candlesticks, in short, everything needed by a curious voluptuary one of whose principal pleasures must have been to remain there as the unknown spectator of others' pleasures. Beside the sofa I saw a movable board. M. M. drew it aside; and through twenty holes spaced a little way apart I saw the whole bedroom, in which the spectator must have seen dramas whose author had been Nature and in which he had had no reason to be dissatisfied with the actors.

"And now," said M. M., "I will satisfy the curiosity which you very prudently did not dare to commit to paper."

"You cannot know—"

"Be still. Love is divine, and a diviner; he knows all. Admit that you wish to know if our friend was here on the fatal night which cost me so many tears."

"I admit it."

"So there! He was; and you will not be sorry to learn that you enchanted him completely and that you have all his friendship. He admired your character, your love, your sentiments, and your probity; he approved of the passion you have inspired in me. It was he who consoled me that morning by telling me it was impossible that you would not come back to me as soon as I had acquainted you with my true feelings, my intention, and my good faith."

"But you and he must often have fallen asleep, for without something to interest it is impossible to spend eight hours in darkness and silence."

"His interest and mine were equally keen; besides, we were not in the dark except when you and she were on the sofa, where you could have seen the light coming through the holes in these flowers. We drew this curtain and we supped, listening closely to all your conversation while we were at table. His interest in it was even greater than mine. He told me that he had never known the human heart so well as on that occasion, and that you must never have suffered as much as you did that night; he pitied you for it; but C. C. astonished him as much as she did me, for it is impossible that a girl of fifteen should reason as she reasoned in her efforts to justify me, and should say all that she said with the help of no other art than that with which nature and truth supplied her, unless she has the soul of an angel. If you marry her you will have a divine wife. When I lose her I shall be miserable; but your happiness will make it up to me. I cannot understand either how you could fall in love with me when you loved her or how she can manage not to hate me when she knows that I stole your heart from her. C. C. is a goddess. She tells me that she told you of her sterile pleasures with me only to disburden her conscience of the crimes she thought she was committing against the loyalty she believed she owed you.''

When we sat down at table M. M. remarked that I had become thinner. We grew merry recollecting past dangers, my masquerading as Pierrot, the Briati ball, where she had been told there was another Pierrot, and the extraordinary effect of the disguise, which made a person unrecognizable, for she thought the Pierrot in the visiting room was shorter and thinner than I. She reflected that if I had not happened to take the convent gondola and if I had not gone to the visiting room dressed as Pierrot, she would not have known who I was, for the nuns would not have been curious to know what happened to me; and she added that she breathed again when she learned that I was not a patrician as she feared, for otherwise she might in time have encountered a difficulty which would have driven her to despair.

I knew very well what she had to fear, but pretending not to know:

``I cannot imagine,'' I said, ``what you might fear if I had been a patrician.''

``My dear, the reason for my fear is such that I cannot tell it to you unless you give me your word of honor that you will do me the favor I will ask of you.''

``What could prevent me from doing you any favor you could ask of me, provided it was in my power and did not jeopardize my honor, now that there are no more secrets between us? Speak, my dear one; tell me your reason and count upon my affection and hence on my willingness to do anything that would please you."

"Very well. I want you to give a supper at your casino. I will come to it with my friend, who is dying to make your acquaintance."

"And after supper you will leave with him?"

"You see that it must be so."

"And your friend already knows who I am?"

"I felt it necessary to tell him. Otherwise he would not have dared to sup with you."

"Now I have it! Your friend is a foreign ambassador."[10]

"Exactly."

"But when he does me the honor to sup with me he will not remain incognito."

"That would be outrageous. I will introduce him to you by his name and title."

"And could you suppose that I would hesitate to grant you this favor? Tell me if even you can do me a greater one. Set the day, and be sure that I shall await you impatiently."

"I should have been sure of your willingness if you had not taught me to doubt."

"I deserve your jibe."

"Please laugh at it. Now I am satisfied. The person who will sup with you is Monsieur de Bernis, the French Ambassador. Remember that he is aware that you must know he is my lover, but that you must not show that you are aware that he knows of our mutual affection."

"I know my duty, my love. This supper party crowns my wishes. You were right to be concerned over my rank, for if I were a patrician the State Inquisitors would have come prying in good earnest, and the terrible consequences of that make me tremble. If you had confided your uneasiness to me, I would have told you who I am, for the only reason for my secrecy was that, if I were known, C. C.'s father would put her in some other convent. Can you tell me the day for our supper? I am impatient."

"Today is the fourth; we can sup together on the eighth. We shall come to your casino after the second ballet at the opera. Just give me the directions, so that we can find it without having to ask anyone the way."

I thereupon wrote down for her all the directions for reaching the door of my casino either by water or, if they preferred, by the streets. Delighted with a prospect which would do me honor, I begged my angel to come to bed. I explained to her that I was recovering from an illness and that, having supped with a good appetite, once in bed I should no doubt offer my first homage to Morpheus. So she set the alarm for ten o'clock[11] and we went to bed in the alcove. From ten to twelve—for the nights were growing short—we made love.

We had fallen asleep not only without separating but with our mouths, which had treasured our last sighs, still clinging together. It was this position which kept us from cursing the alarm which six hours later warned us that we must finish the race which we had only interrupted. M. M. was a well-spring of light. Her cheeks, animated by joy, showed me the bright roses of Venus which heralded it. I told her so, and she, trying to understand me, urged me to look closely at her beautiful breasts, which by their unusual throbbing seemed to invite my lips to deliver them from the amorous spirits which were troubling them. After drinking in as much of them as I could, I hastened to her mouth, open to receive the kiss which signified her defeat and which I accompanied with mine.

Morpheus might perhaps have gained a second victory over us, if the clock had not warned us that we had only time enough left to dress.

She returned to the convent after confirming our engagement for the eighth. After sleeping until noon I went back to Venice, where I gave my cook orders for the supper, the thought of which brought me the greatest pleasure.

CHAPTER VII

Supper for three with Monsieur de Bernis, the French Ambassador, at my casino. M. M.'s proposal; I accept it. Consequences. C. C. is unfaithful to me but I cannot complain.

IN SUCH a situation I thought that I should have felt happy; but I was not. I loved gambling; and as I could not deal I went and punted at the Ridotto and lost day and night. My vexation over my losses made me miserable. But why did I gamble? I did not need to, for I had all the money I wanted to satisfy my wishes. Why did I gamble when I felt my losses so keenly? What made me gamble was avarice. I loved to spend, and my heart bled when I could not do it with money won at cards. In those four days I lost all the money M. M. had won for me.

On the night of February 8th I went to my casino; and at the appointed hour I saw M. M. with her distinguished gallant, whom she introduced to me by his name and title as soon as he took off his mask. He said that he had been most anxious to renew our acquaintance since the Signora had told him that we had met in Paris.

While he spoke he looked at me attentively, as one does when one is trying to remember a face. He complained of his poor memory. I put him at ease on that article by telling him that we had not spoken, so that he had not looked at me enough for my person to make an impression on his memory.

"The day," I said, "on which I had the honor to dine with Your Excellency at Signor Mocenigo's, your attention was entirely occupied by the Lord Marshal,[1] the Prussian Ambassador. You were to set off on your journey here four days later. After dinner you took your leave."

He remembered me then, recollecting that he had asked someone if I was the embassy secretary.

"But from this moment," he said, "we can never forget each other. The mysteries which unite us are of a nature to make us intimate friends."

After this remarkable couple had made themselves comfortable we sat down at table, where it was of course my part to do the honors. The Ambassador, an epicure, having highly approved of the Burgundy, the champagne, and the Graves, which I gave him after oysters from the Arsenal,[2] asked me where I had obtained them and was delighted to learn that it was from Count Algarotti.[3]

My whole supper was choice, and my attitude toward them both was that of a private citizen to whom a king in the company of his mistress should do the greatest of honors. I saw that M. M. was enchanted with my respectful behavior toward her and by all the things I said which induced the Ambassador to listen to me with the greatest attention. Seriousness never interfered with jesting on His Excellency's part, who in this was perfectly of the French temper. Everything was accompanied by an apt witticism; and M. M., skillfully turning the conversation, brought up the subject of the combination of circumstances which had led to her making my acquaintance.

Speaking of my passion for C. C., she gave him a most enticing description of her person and her character, to which he listened as if he had known nothing about the girl. It was the part he was obliged to play, for he was not aware that I knew he was in the hiding place. He told M. M. that she would have made me the most charming of presents if she had brought her to our supper. She answered that it would have been too risky for her.

"But," she added, addressing me in a tone of magnanimous condescension, "if you wish, I could arrange for you to sup with her at my casino, for she sleeps in my room."

The proposal greatly surprised me; but it was not the moment to show my surprise.

"It is impossible, Signora," I said, "to add anything to the pleasure one feels when one is with you; nevertheless, I could not but consider it a favor."

"Well, I will give it further thought."

"But," the Ambassador said to her, "if I am to be of the party I think you should warn her that a friend of yours will be present besides her lover."

"That will not be necessary, Your Excellency," I said, "for I will write to her to do whatever the Signora tells her to. I will make it my duty to do so tomorrow."

"Then I invite you to supper," said M. M., "day after tomorrow."

I then begged the Ambassador to be prepared to be indulgent to a girl of fifteen who had no experience of society.

It was then that I told them, in all its details, the story of O-Morphi.[4] My account gave him the greatest pleasure. He asked me to let him see her portrait. He said that she was still at the Parc aux Cerfs,[5] to the delight of the King, to whom she had already given a child.[6] They left at eight o'clock, well pleased; and I remained at the casino.

The next morning, in accordance with my promise to M. M., I wrote to C. C., not telling her that someone she did not know would be at the party. After giving my letter to Laura I went to the casino, where the caretaker gave me a letter from M. M., who wrote as follows:

"Ten o'clock has struck and I am going to bed; but if I am to have any hope of sleep I must first unburden my conscience. You may have consented to the supper with our young friend only out of politeness. Tell me the truth, my dear, and I will put an end to the whole thing without in any way implicating you; leave it to me. But if you like the idea of the supper, she shall come. I love your soul even more than I do your body."

Her fear was well justified, but I should have felt too ashamed if I had gone back on my word; and M. M. knew me too well to believe me capable of it. Here is my answer:

"Will you believe that I expected your letter? Yes, I was expecting it, for I know your mind and I know the idea that you must have of mine now that my sophisms have twice given you cause to fear me. I repent of it, my indulgent dear, when I think that my having made you suspect me must have lessened your love. So I beg you to forget my delusions and to believe in future that my soul is of the same stamp as yours. The supper which has been planned will give me real pleasure. My acceptance of it was prompted by gratitude rather than by politeness. Believe this. C. C. is inexperienced, and I am delighted that she should begin learning to appear in society. I commend her to you, and I beg you to show her even more of your kind attentions if that is possible. I am mortally afraid that you will persuade her to take the veil; but be sure that it would drive me to despair. Your friend is a king among men."

After thus cutting off my retreat, I allowed myself all the reflections which, knowing the human heart, I could not but make. I saw clearly that the Ambassador had become interested in C. C., that he had told M. M. so, and that, compelled by her part of the bargain to satisfy all his wishes, she had undertaken to do whatever she could to accomplish his purpose. This she could not do without my consent, nor would she have dared to suggest the arrangement to me. They had conspired to bring up the subject in such a way that politeness, my feelings, and my sense of propriety would force me to agree. The Ambassador, whose very profession demanded the skill to carry on an intrigue, had been successful in this one, and I had fallen into the trap. It was done; and it was now my part to accept whatever was to come with good grace, not only to keep from looking a fool but also not to seem ungrateful to a man who had granted me unparalleled privileges. But the consequence might well be a cooling of my feelings toward both M. M. and C. C.

M. M. had realized all this on her way home and she had hurried to set everything to rights, or at least to justify herself to me, by writing me that she would put an end to the whole thing without implicating me. She knew that I would not accept her offer. Self-esteem, which is stronger than jealousy, will not allow a man who aspires to be accounted intelligent to show that he is jealous, and especially if he is matched with another man who outshines him only by being free from every trace of that base passion.

The next morning, going to the casino a little earlier, I found no one but the Ambassador, who received me in the most friendly fashion. He said that if he had known me in Paris he would have found a way to introduce me at court, where, he insisted, I would have had the greatest success. "That may well be," I say to myself today when I think of it; "but to what would that success have led me?" I should have been one of the victims of the Revolution, as the Ambassador himself would have been if his position had not taken him to Rome to die in 1794. He died there unhappy though rich,[7] unless he changed his way of thinking before his death, which I consider unlikely.

I asked him if he enjoyed being in Venice, and he answered with a smile that he could not but enjoy it since he was in good health and, having money enough, could procure all the pleasures of life more easily there than anywhere else, but he added that he did not believe he would be allowed to remain the Ambassador there very long. He asked me to say nothing of this to M. M., for it might grieve her.

She arrived with C. C., whose surprise I saw when she found that I was not alone. I encouraged her by greeting her most lovingly, while the stranger showed every sign of pleasure when she answered his compliment in his own language. We applauded the skill of the mistress who had taught her so well.

But considering C. C. something which was to belong to me, my desire to see her shine drove out any base feeling of jealousy which might have preoccupied me. I brought her to a pitch of gaiety, making her talk on subjects on which I knew that she was charming. Applauded, listened to, flattered, and encouraged by the expression of satisfaction on my face, C. C. appeared a miracle to the man whom I nevertheless did not wish to see fall in love with her. What a contradiction! I myself did what anyone else would have earned my hatred by doing.

During supper the Ambassador showed C. C. all kinds of attentions. Wit and gaiety presided over our delightful party, and witticism followed witticism without the slightest lapse from decency.

If a critical observer, who knew nothing of the circumstances, had tried to guess if love made one of the company, he might perhaps have suspected it but he could never have been sure. M. M. never displayed anything but friendship toward the Ambassador, esteem toward me, and fond consideration toward C. C. The Ambassador, maintaining an attitude of respect mingled with gratitude toward M. M., showed the greatest interest in C. C.'s remarks, doing all that he could to draw attention to them yet referring everything to me with the most generous understanding. Of the four of us, the one who had least difficulty in playing her role was C. C., for, having no share in the conspiracy, she had only to follow her nature. So she played her role to perfection. Success is assured; but the nature must be beautiful—otherwise the tyro is certain to be hissed.

We had spent five equally happy hours; but the one who showed it the most was the Ambassador. M. M. looked like a person satisfied with her work, and I appeared to approve. C. C. seemed proud of having been able to delight all three of us, and vain that the stranger had appeared to bestow his greatest attention on her. She looked at me smiling, and I understood the language of her soul perfectly: she wanted to make me think of the difference between this company and that in which her brother had given her such an ugly example of society the year before.

At eight o'clock we talked of breaking up, and it was the Ambassador who expended himself in compliments. Thanking M. M. for having given him the pleasantest supper he had enjoyed in all his life, he obliged her to offer him its counterpart on the next day but one, keeping up appearances by asking me if I would attend it with equal pleasure. Could she doubt that I would accept? I do not think so. The appointment made, we parted.

Reflecting the next day on this exemplary supper, I had no difficulty in foreseeing how the thing would end. The Ambassador had not made women the stepping-stones to his successful career except by possessing and practicing the art of coddling love. Very voluptuous by nature, he made his nature serve his turn; pampering himself, he awakened desires, without which he was perfectly right not to want fruition. I saw that he was obviously in love with C. C.; and I could not believe that he was the man to enjoy no more than the light of her beautiful eyes. I was sure that he had a definite plan, which M. M., despite all her loyalty, was to manage, but with such delicacy and skill that I should see no evidence of it. Although I knew I was not one to push compliance too far, I nevertheless foresaw that I should end by being taken in and losing C. C. to them. I was not disposed either to fall in with the scheme or to raise obstacles to it. Knowing that my little wife was incapable of going to lengths which could displease me, I chose to shut my eyes, relying on the difficulty of seducing her. It was an intrigue of which I greatly feared the consequences yet whose end I was curious to see. I knew that this repetition of the supper did not mean that the same play would be performed again; I was certain that there would be vital changes.

I thought that all I need do was to adhere to the same line of conduct; thus enabled to set the tone, I promised myself that I should find a way to baffle them. But after all these reflections C. C.'s inexperience, which despite all that she had learned still kept her a novice, made me afraid. It would be easy to abuse her duty to be polite; but here the thought of M. M.'s innate delicacy reassured me. After she had seen how I had spent ten hours with the girl and convinced herself that I intended to marry her, I could not suppose her capable of such heinous treason. All these reflections, which were essentially only those of my weakness, jealousy, and shame, decided nothing. I could only let things take their course and look on.

At the usual hour I went to the casino and I found my two beauties before the fire.

"I greet you, my angels. Where is our Frenchman?"

I unmask; I sit down between them, showing that I loved them both equally by bestowing a full measure of kisses now on one, now on the other. Although I knew that they knew I had undeniable rights over them, I nevertheless remain strictly within the bounds prescribed by decency. I congratulate them on their attachment to each other, and I see that they are delighted to find that they need not blush for it. So we spent an hour, during which I never thought of permitting myself the slightest overt act, for, since M. M. was uppermost in my heart, C. C. could not but be insulted by any proof I might have given her of it.

Three o'clock having struck and the amiable Frenchman not making his appearance, M. M. was beginning to be uneasy, when the caretaker came up and gave her a letter which our friend had written her:

"A courier who arrived two hours ago prevents me from being happy tonight. I must spend the whole of it replying. I hope that you will not only forgive me but pity me too. May I hope that you will grant me on Friday the pleasure of which an adverse Fortune deprives me tonight? Let me know tomorrow. I hope I shall find you in the same company."

"We must bear our disappointment," said M. M., "it is not his fault; the three of us will eat supper. Will you come on Friday?"

"Yes, with pleasure. But what is the matter?" I said to C. C. "The news seems to have made you sad."

"Not sad; I feel sorry for my dear friend and for you, for I have scarcely ever met a man so polite and obliging."

"I congratulate you, my dear; I am delighted that he has made such an impression on you."

"What do you mean by that? Could anyone fail to be charmed by his behavior?"

"Better and better! I agree with you, my dear child. Now tell me that you are in love with him."

"Even if I loved him it doesn't follow that I would go and tell him so. Besides, I am sure that he loves my wife."

So saying, she rises and sits down on her lap, and the two fond friends begin giving each other caresses which make me laugh and which gradually arouse my interest. I am of a mind to excite and enjoy a spectacle with which I had long been familiar.

M. M. fetches the engravings for Meursius,[8] representing a fine series of amorous encounters between women, and, with a malicious glance at my face, asks me if I would like her to order a fire lighted in the room with the alcove; divining her idea, I answer that I should be glad of it, for since the bed was very big we could all three lie in it. She was afraid I might suspect that her friend was in the hiding place. So the table is placed in front of the alcove, and I am thus relieved of my fear that I might be seen. Supper is served, and we eat it hungrily. M. M. was teaching C. C. to make punch. Having them before me, I admired the progress C. C. had made in beauty.

"In nine months," I said, "your bosom will have achieved its utmost perfection."

"It is like mine," M. M. added. "Do you want to see?"

Whereupon she interrupts her punch to unfasten her dear friend's dress, who offers no resistance, then immediately unfastens her own to enable me to judge; at which I am instantly intoxicated with the desire to compare and judge everything. Keeping up the game, I put *L'Académie des dames*[9] on the table and show M. M. a posture I wanted to see. She asks C. C. if she is willing to demonstrate it for me, and she answers that they would have to undress and get into the bed. I beg them to do me the favor.

After laughing heartily over what they were going to show me, I set the alarm for eight o'clock and in less than five minutes we are all in a state of nature and prey to pleasure and love. They set to work with a fury like that of two tigresses which seem ready to devour each other.

The sight of my two beauties in combat making me ardent, I am at a loss how to begin. For the honor of sentiment I should have given the preference to C. C., but I feared M. M.'s jibes, for she was sure to crow over my love which I wanted her to believe was hers alone. C. C. was thinner than M. M., yet she had bigger hips and thighs; her ornaments were brown, the other's blonde, and they were both equally skilled in a combat which was tiring them without the possibility of their reaching a conclusion.

Unable to resist any longer, I fling myself on them, and, pretending to separate them, I put M. M. under me, but she escapes, throwing me onto C. C., who receives me with open arms and makes me give up my soul in less than a minute, accompanying my death by her own, with neither of us ever thinking of taking any precautions.

Recovered from our ecstasy, we attack M. M., C. C. animated by gratitude and I eager for the revenge which she owed me for having forced me to be unfaithful to her. I held her in subjection for a good hour, enjoying the sight of C. C., whose looks seemed to say that she was proud of having given her friend a lover worthy of her.

My heroines surrendered to my remonstrances. With one accord we succumbed to sleep until the chime should sound, certain that we would make good use of the two hours which would remain to us until we must leave.

Thus refreshed, the sight of one another in a state of nature gave us a new vigor. C. C. having complained with dignity that with her I had had only a last gasp of life, M. M. urged me to make it up to her, but she did not find me reluctant. After a long combat inspired by a formal resolve on both our parts to crown it by marriage if it should have consequences which we made it our duty to defy, M. M. wanted to run the same risk, surrendering completely to love. Braving whatever might come, she gave me an unqualified order not to spare her, and I obeyed her. All three of us, intoxicated by desire and *frustratoires* and transported by continual furies, played havoc with everything visible and palpable which Nature had bestowed on us, freely devouring whatever we saw and finding that we had all become of the same sex in all the trios which we performed. A half hour before dawn we parted, weary, exhausted, at the end of our strength, satisfied and humiliated that we had to admit it, but not surfeited.

Reflecting the next day upon this overanimated night, during which, as always, pleasure had conquered reason, I felt a certain remorse. M. M. wished to convince me that she loved me by combining her love with all the virtues which I made a part of mine: honor, probity, truth. But her temperament, which enslaved her mind, led her into excesses, and she made every preparation to indulge herself in them, meanwhile waiting for a chance to turn me into her accomplice. She pampered love and flattered it to make it compliant and thus gain the power to direct it as she would yet at the same time to feel that she was immune from reproach. She thought she had the right to demand my admiration. She chose to overlook the fact that I could complain of her having taken me by surprise. She knew that I could do that only by acknowledging that I was weaker or more cowardly than herself, which I must be ashamed to confess.

I was certain that the Ambassador's absence had been arranged between them. They had foreseen that I would guess it and that gratitude and my sense of honor would prompt me to be no less forward than they to sacrifice nature to sentiment and to the obligation I should feel to be as generous and polite as they had been.

The Ambassador having led off by procuring me a delicious night, how could I bring myself to oppose his wish for a night of the same kind? They had reasoned well. My mind resisted, but I knew that I must yield them the victory. They saw no obstacle to their plans in

C. C.; they were sure of her once they were not hindered by my presence; and I knew that they were right. It was M. M.'s part to make C. C. feel mortally ashamed if she should fail to imitate her. Poor C. C.! I saw her debauched, and it was my doing. Alas! I had not spared them. What was I to do if, a few months later, they proved to be pregnant? I saw them both on my hands. In this wretched struggle between reason and prejudice, nature and sentiment, I could not make up my mind either to go to the supper or to stay away. "If I go, the night will pass decently, and I shall show that I am ridiculous, jealous, niggardly, ungrateful, and impolite. If I stay away, C. C. will be lost, at least in my estimation. I feel that I will no longer love her and that I will certainly have no more thought of marrying her."

With this combat in my soul, I feel an absolute need for some certainty. I mask and I go straight to the French Embassy.[10] I tell the Swiss that I have a letter for Versailles and that he would do me a favor if he would give it to the courier who was to return there as soon as he had received His Excellency's dispatch. He answers that no special courier has been seen there for two months.

"What! Did not a courier arrive last evening?"

"Last evening His Excellency supped at the Spanish Ambassador's."[11]

Thus informed beyond peradventure, I saw that I must swallow the pill. I must abandon C. C. to her fate. If I write to the dear girl not to go, I shall be behaving like a churl.

Toward nightfall I go straight to the casino in Murano and I write M. M. a note in which I ask her to excuse me if unexpected and urgent business of Signor Bragadin's obliged me to spend the whole night with him. That done, I return to Venice in a very bad humor and go to pass the night at the Ridotto, where I lost my money three or four times over.

On the next day but one I went to the casino in Murano, certain that I should find a letter from M. M. The caretaker hands it to me; I open it and find another from C. C. Everything had become common between them. Here is C. C.'s letter:

"We were very sorry, my dear husband, when we learned that you could not come to supper. My dear M. M.'s friend, who arrived a quarter of an hour later, was not less disappointed. We expected that we should sup gloomily; but not a bit of it. The gentleman's charming comments put us in high spirits; and you cannot imagine, my dear, how gay we became when the champagne followed the punch; but he was as gay as we were. In our trios he did not tire us, but he made us laugh a lot. I assure you he is a charming man with every quality to make him loved; but he is in no way your equal. Be certain that I will never love anyone except you and that you will always be sole lord of my heart."

Despite my resentment, her letter could not but make me laugh. But M. M.'s was even stranger:

"I am certain, my angel, that you lied out of politeness; but you may be sure that I expected it. It was a splendid present which you generously made to our friend in exchange for his present to you in letting his M. M. give you her heart. It would be yours in any case, my dear, but it is sweet when one can season the pleasures of love with the charms of friendship. I was sorry not to see you; but I saw afterwards that if you had come we should not have had a very amusing evening, for despite his great intelligence our friend has some natural prejudices. C. C.'s mind is now as unprejudiced as ours; and she owes it to me. I can boast that I have completed her education for you. I wish you had been hidden in the observatory; I assure you that you would have spent delicious hours there. On Wednesday I shall be all alone, and all yours, at your casino in Venice. Send me word if you will be at the statue at the usual hour. If you cannot, fix another day.''

I had to write to the two girls in the same spirit. I was bitter, and I must appear to be all sweetness: *Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin* (''It's what you asked for, Georges Dandin'').[12] I have never been able to decide whether I was truly ashamed or merely embarrassed; and it would take me too long to thresh out the problem now. In my letter to C. C. I had the strength of mind to congratulate her and encourage her to imitate M. M. in all things as the true model of perfection.

I wrote to the latter that she would find me waiting obediently, as always, at the foot of the statue. In my letter, which was full of false congratulations on the education she was giving C. C., I told her only this one equivocal truth: *''I thank you for the place in the observatory which you wished I had occupied. I could not have held out there.''*

On Wednesday I was at the meeting place in good time. She arrived dressed as a man. She declined both the opera and the theater.

''Let us go,'' she said, ''to the Ridotto and either lose our money or double it.''

She had six hundred zecchini and I had about a hundred. Fortune was against us. After losing everything, she went to a place where she knew she would find her friend and asked him for money. He came back an hour later and gave her a purse containing three hundred zecchini. She began punting again and she had recouped her losses; but not satisfied with that, she lost again, and after midnight we went to supper. She saw that I was sad, though I tried not to show it. For her part, she was beautiful, gay, playful, amorous, always the same.

She thought she would restore my spirits by telling me in detail the whole history of the night she had spent with C. C. and her friend. It was just what she ought not to do, but the mind only too often falls into the error of supposing that another's is as much at ease and as free as it is itself. I could not wait for us to get to bed and so put an end to a story whose voluptuous details did not have the effect on me they should have had. I feared that I should be in no condition to cut a good figure in bed; and to cut a bad one takes no more than the dread of it. A young man in love never fears that his love will be inadequate; if he does, love takes its revenge and abandons him.

But in bed my charming mistress's beauty, her caresses, and the purity of her soul banished all my bad humor. The nights having grown shorter, we had no time for sleep. After spending our two hours with love, we were still in love when we parted. She made me promise to go to the casino for money to play in partnership with her. I went there and took all the gold I found, and, determinedly doubling my stakes according to the system known as the martingale,[13] I won three or four times a day during the rest of the Carnival. I never lost the sixth card. If I had lost it, I should have been out of funds, which amounted to two thousand zecchini. In this way I was increasing my dear M. M.'s little capital, when she wrote to me that politeness demanded that the four of us should sup together on the last Monday in Carnival, and I agreed.

It was the last time that I supped with C. C. She was very gay; but having decided on my course I showed particular attention only to M. M. Not in the least embarrassed by my presence, the girl devoted hers entirely to her new suitor.

Foreseeing, however, that embarrassing moments were inevitable, I asked M. M. to arrange things so that the Ambassador could spend an uninterrupted night with C. C. and I with her, and she managed it very well.

After supper he talked of faro, which the two beauties did not know,* and to show them what it was he called for cards and made a bank of a hundred double louis, which he saw to it that C. C. won. Not knowing what to do with so much money, she asked her dear friend to take care of it for her until she should leave the convent to be married.

After the game M. M. said that, having a headache, she would go to bed in the alcove and she asked me to go with her and put her to sleep. Thus we left the novice alone with the Ambassador. Six hours later, when the chime told us that we must end our orgy, we found them sleeping. For my part, I spent a night as amorous as it was peaceful with M. M. and with never a thought of C. C. So we finished out the Carnival.

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* Because at the Ridotto only basset was played. (C.'s note.)

CHAPTER VIII

Monsieur de Bernis departs, leaving me his rights to the casino. Wise advice which he gives me; how little I follow it. Danger of perishing with M. M. Mr. Murray, the English envoy. We are without a casino and our meetings cease. M. M. dangerously ill. Zorzi and Condulmer. Tonina.

ON THE first Friday in Lent I found at her casino a letter from M. M. in which she gave me two sad pieces of news. The first was that C. C.'s mother having died,[1] the poor girl was in despair. The second was that, her lay sister having recovered from her cold, she had returned to her room and at the same time the nun who was C. C.'s aunt and who was especially fond of her had obtained permission from the Abbess for her to sleep in her apartment. This ended the Ambassador's hope of supping with her again. All these misfortunes seemed to me of little account in comparison with a greater which I feared. C. C. might be pregnant. Though the feelings which bound me to her were no longer love, they were still strong enough to keep me from ever abandoning her. M. M. invited me to supper with her friend on the following Monday. I went and I found both the Ambassador and M. M. very sad—he because he had lost C. C., she because she no longer had her in her room and did not know what to do to console her for the misfortune of losing her mother.

Toward midnight the Ambassador left us, saying sadly that he believed he would have to spend some months in Vienna on a matter of great importance. At the same time we agreed to meet for fast-day suppers every Friday.

As soon as we were alone she told me that the Ambassador would be grateful to me if in future I would come to the casino two hours later. Rational though he was, he could not abandon himself to love in the presence of a third person. At all our suppers until he went to Vienna[2] he always left us at midnight. It was no longer in order to go and hide in the closet, for we always went to bed in the alcove, and in any case, having made love before I arrived, he had no desires left. M. M. found me still in love and even more ardent, for since I could see her only once a week I always waited impatiently for Friday. C. C.'s letters, which she brought me, touched me to tears. After losing her mother, she could no longer count on friendliness in any of her relatives. She called me her only friend and, speaking of the grief she felt at the thought that as long as she remained in the convent she could not hope to see me, she begged me ever to remain a faithful friend to M. M.

It was on Good Friday that, arriving at the casino at suppertime, I found the couple very sad. They did not eat, they scarcely spoke; it troubled me, and good manners and discretion prevented me from asking the reason. M. M. having gone somewhere, the Ambassador told me that she was unhappy and that she well might be since he had to leave for Vienna two weeks after Easter.

"I will even tell you," he said, "that I may not come back; but you must not say so to her, for she would be in despair."

When she returned to the table I saw that her eyes were swollen. This is what he said to her:

"My departure is unavoidable, for I am not my own master; but my return is certain as soon as I finish the business which obliges me to go. The casino remains yours, but friendship and prudence oblige me to advise you, my dear, not to set foot in it during my absence, for once I am gone I can no longer count on the fidelity of the gondoliers I employ, and I doubt if our friend here can hope to find any who are incorruptible. I will tell you further that I not only believe our doings are known to the State Inquisitors, who dissimulate their knowledge from policy, but that I also cannot vouch for our secret's being kept at the convent once the nun whom you know becomes certain that your reason for going out can no longer be to sup with me. The persons for whose fidelity I can vouch are the caretaker and his wife. Before I leave I will order them to regard our friend as another myself. You can make arrangements with them, and all will be well until I return if you behave circumspectly.

"I will write to you through my caretaker, and his wife will convey my letters to you as she has been doing, and you will use the same means to answer me. I must go, my dear, but my heart remains with you. Until my return I leave you in the hands of a friend whom I am very glad to have met. He loves you, he has a heart, he knows the world, and he will not let you make any mistakes."

The news was such a blow to M. M. that she asked us to let her leave, as she felt she must go to bed. We set the Thursday after Easter for our next supper.

After she left, the Ambassador impressed upon me the absolute necessity of keeping it from her that he might not return.

"I am going to work," he said, "with the Vienna cabinet on a project which will set all Europe talking.[3] Write me everything; and if you love her, protect her honor and, above all, if the necessity arises, have the strength to speak out against anything which could expose you to calamities which you could foresee and which would be fatal to you both. You know what happened to Signora da Riva, who was a nun in the convent of St. XXX.[4] She simply disappeared as soon as they discovered she was pregnant, and Monsieur de Froulay,[5] then the French Ambassador as I am now, soon afterward went mad and died. J. J. Rousseau[6] once told me that it was from poison; but he is a visionary. His poison was the grief he felt because he could do nothing for the unfortunate woman, whom the Pope finally dispensed from her vows, and she married and is now living in Parma.

"So let your feelings of friendship be stronger than your love, see her sometimes in the visiting room, and refrain from taking her to the casino, for the gondoliers will betray you. Our certainty that neither she nor her friend is pregnant lessens my grief a great deal; but admit that you have been very imprudent! You risked a terrible misfortune! Think of the desperate course you would have had to follow, for I am sure you could not have abandoned her. She believed that it was easy to bring on an abortion by taking certain drugs, but I disabused her. In God's name be prudent in future, and write me everything. It is my duty to be concerned for her fate."

He took me to Venice and went home. I spent a most uneasy night, and the next day I went back to the casino to write the sorrowing M. M. a letter designed to console her and to impress upon her how necessary it was for us to adopt a prudent course of conduct.

In her answer, which I received the next day, I saw the liveliest image of the despair which weighed on her soul. Nature had fostered in her a temperament which made the cloister intolerable to her, and I foresaw the terrible struggles, both with her and with myself, which I must be prepared to undergo.

We saw one another on the Thursday after Easter. I had sent her word that I would come at midnight. She had spent four hours with her friend, sadly lamenting her cruel destiny. After supper he left, asking me to stay with her—which I did, certainly never thinking of those pleasures which can find no place when the heart is preoccupied by a great grief. She had grown thinner, and she aroused a compassion in me which banished every other feeling. I held her in my arms for an hour, printing countless kisses on her appealing face, well content to find that my soul was wholly concentrated on respecting her grief. I should have thought I was insulting her if I had invited her to distract herself by frenzies in which her soul, even as mine, could not have indulged. She said when I left her that she had never felt so sure that I loved her as she had that night, and she begged me to remember that I was now her only friend.

The next week the Ambassador summoned the caretaker before supper and in his presence wrote out a document, which he made him sign, in which he transferred to me all his rights to whatever was in the casino and ordered him to serve me in everything just as he now served him.

We were to sup together for the last time on the next day but one; but I found M. M. alone, looking like a statue of white Carrara marble.

"He is gone," she said, "and he commends M. M. to you. Tomorrow evening he will leave Venice. Fatal being, whom I shall perhaps not see again and whom I did not know I loved! It is now when I lose him that I realize it. I was not happy before I knew him; but I did not think myself unhappy. I feel that I am so now."

I spent the whole night with her trying to calm her grief. I knew the nature of her soul, as transported by pleasures when she felt she was happy as it was sensible to pain when grief overwhelmed her. She told me the hour at which I should go to the visiting room on the next day but one, and I was delighted to find her less sad. She showed me a short letter which our friend had written her from Treviso. Then she said that I must come to see her two or three times a week and that she would often come to the grating accompanied by another nun, and sometimes by still another, because she foresaw that the visits I would pay her would become the talk of the convent when it was discovered that I was the same man who always went to mass at their church; so she told me to have myself announced by a different name to prevent any suspicion from arising in the mind of C. C.'s aunt. But she said that this would not keep her from coming to the grating alone when she needed to talk to me without a witness. She asked me to do her another favor, which I had no difficulty in granting. She wanted me to promise her that I would sup and spend the night at the casino at least once a week and after supper write her a short letter, which the caretaker's wife would convey to her as always.

In this way we spent two weeks quietly enough, until she recovered her vivacity and her amorous inclinations returned in full force. The news which she gave me, and which was balm to my soul, was that C. C. no longer had anything to fear.

Still in love and reduced to having no resource but an awkward grating, we were inflamed. We racked our brains to devise some way of meeting freely. M. M. assured me that she could still count on the fidelity of the gardener's wife for getting out and in without any fear of being seen, since the little door close to the convent by which she entered the garden was not visible from any window and indeed was thought to have been walled up, and that no one could see her either when she crossed the garden to reach the lodge on the little quay, which was also thought to be unusable. We only needed a one-oared gondola, and she thought it impossible that, with the help of money, I could not find a gondolier upon whom we could rely. I was unhappy to realize that she suspected me of having very little love for her.

I proposed to go all alone in a boat of which I would myself be the boatman and from which I would disembark, enter the garden, and then, shown the way by herself or the lay sister, her room, in which I would spend the whole night and even the whole of the next day if she was sure that she could keep me hidden; but the plan made her tremble: she shuddered to think of the risk I would run.

"But," she said, "since you can row, come in the boat, let me know the hour and, if possible, the minute; the faithful woman will be on the watch and you can be sure you will not wait more than four minutes; I will get into the boat, we will go to the casino, and we will be happy for a time."

I promised her that I would consider it; and this was the way I found to satisfy her:

I bought a small boat and, without telling her, I went to the island alone at night and rowed around it to see all the walls of the convent on the Lagoon side. A small closed door which caught my eye could only be the one onto the quay by which she habitually left. But to go from there to the casino the necessary rounding of half the island was no small matter, for the dry season forced me to fetch a wide course. With only one oar it took me at least a quarter of an hour.

As soon as I felt sure of it, I communicated my plan to M. M., who greeted it joyously. We settled on Friday, the day after Ascension Day, and on the same day I went to the visiting room masked, and we set our watches together; then I went to the casino to order supper for two.

An hour after sunset I went to San Francesco della

Vigna,[7] where I had my boat in a *cavana*[8] which I rented. After having it bailed and put in good order I quickly dressed in the costume of the gondoliers and, stationed on the poop, I went directly to the little quay of the convent, the door of which opened at the very moment I arrived and where I did not have to wait the four minutes. Scarcely was the door open before M. M. came out, the door was shut again, and she got into the boat concealed in the hood of her cloak. Without in the least forcing my speed, in a quarter of an hour I reached the casino, where she got out at once and I followed two minutes later, for I had to fasten the boat to a chain and secure it with a padlock to safeguard it from thieves, who amuse themselves at night stealing as many boats as they can when they find them fastened only with rope. I was dripping sweat; but that did not prevent my angel from falling on my neck; gratitude challenged love; proud of my exploit, I smiled at the impulses of her soul. Since I had forgotten to bring a shirt with me, she gave me one of her shifts after drying me off and applying powder to absorb the sweat which covered my head. We did not sup until after we had spent two hours in prey to the flame which burned us even more violently than at the beginning of our acquaintance; but for all her protests I cheated her at the moment of danger, too greatly fearing the picture which our friend had drawn and which was ineffaceably imprinted on my mind. M. M., gay and wanton, finding me quite different in the guise of a gondolier, animated our encounters with the freest expressions; but she did not need to add anything to my ardor, for I loved her more than myself.

The nights were short. She had to return to the convent at six o'clock,[9] and four o'clock was just striking when we sat down at table. But what happened then not only to mar our joy but to make our hair stand on end was a storm coming up in the west. We could only console ourselves by counting on the nature of these storms, which usually last no more than an hour; we hoped that it would not be an unusual one and that it would not leave behind it a wind which would be too strong for me, who, though brave, had neither the experience nor the strength of a gondolier.

In less than a half an hour the storm bursts with thunder and lightning, the thunder roars incessantly, and after a heavy rain the sky clears again, but without a moon, which cannot shine during Ascension Week.[10]

Five o'clock strikes, but what I had foreseen happened. After the storm the west wind, which was contrary for me, was blowing hard: *ma tiranno del mar Libecchio resta* ("but Libecchio remains the tyrant of the sea").[11] This *libecchio,* which Ariosto rightly calls "the tyrant of the sea," is the southwest; I said nothing, but it terrified me. I tell M. M. that we must sacrifice an hour of pleasure to prudence: we must leave at once, for if the wind increases it will be impossible for me to round the point. She listens to reason and she goes to the chest, to which she also had a key, to take forty or fifty zecchini which she needed. She was delighted when she saw four times as much money as she had had at the end of Lent. She thanked me for not having told her and, saying that she wanted only my heart, she went down and lay at full length in the bottom of the boat. I mounted the poop, full of courage and fear at the same time, and in five minutes I rounded the point. But beyond it I encountered a resistance greater than my strength. Except for that resistance, I should have needed only ten minutes. Without a rower at the prow I thought it impossible that I could combat the wind and the current; I was rowing with all my strength; but all I could do was to keep the boat from going backward. After half an hour of this trying effort I felt that I was losing my breath and I dared say nothing; I could not think of resting, for the least rest would instantly have driven me back. M. M. lay there in silence, afraid to speak, for she knew that

I would not have the strength to answer her. Finally I felt sure that I was lost.

Far off I see a boat approaching rapidly; certain that I shall be rescued, I wait for it to pass me, for otherwise the wind would have prevented it from hearing my voice. As soon as I see it on my left, only two fathoms away, I cry:

"Help! for two zecchini!"

The boat at once lowers sail, rows to me with four oars, makes fast, and I ask only for one man to take me to the opposite point of the island. They demand a zecchino, which I hand over at once, promising another to whoever will get me to the point by manning the poop. In less than ten minutes, I rowing at the prow, we were off the little quay of the convent; but our secret was too precious to me to be risked. We reached the point, where I dismissed my man, giving him his zecchino. From there, with the wind in my favor, I easily reached the small port, where M. M. disembarked, saying only these words to me:

"Go and sleep at the casino."

I thought her advice very good, and I followed it. I had the wind in my favor, and if I had done the opposite I should have been in the same peril. I went to bed, I slept eight hours, I wrote to M. M. that I was well and that we would see each other at the grating; then I went to San Francesco, where, after having my boat put back in the *cavana,* I masked and went to the Liston.

The next day M. M. came to the grating alone so that I could share in the many reflections which her mind needed to make after all that had happened to us. But the result of our reflections was not to determine us never again to expose ourselves to such a danger; we only decided to anticipate the storm, if it should recur, by leaving everything the moment we saw it rising. It took us no more than a quarter of an hour. This was the only precaution which love allowed us to adopt. We fixed our second meeting for the Tuesday in Whitsun Week. Had we not encountered the boat bound for Torcello, I should have had to go back to the casino with M. M., who, it being then impossible for her to return to the convent, would have remained with me. I should have had to leave Venice with her and I could not have returned there, and, her fate being linked with mine, my life would have been governed by a destiny entirely different from the one whose vicissitudes have combined to bring me, at the age of seventy-two, to Dux, where I am today.

We continued for three months to see each other once a week, always in love and never troubled by the slightest mishap. M. M. could not keep from reporting it to the Ambassador, to whom I was also obliged to write an account of all that happened to us. He answered that he congratulated us on the happiness we were enjoying, but that he could foresee nothing but misfortunes if we did not resolve to make an end.

Mr. Murray,[12] the English Resident, a handsome man, full of wit, learned, and a prodigious lover of the fair sex, Bacchus, and good eating, was keeping the celebrated Ancilla,[13] who, encountering me in Padua, wanted me to make his acquaintance. After treating me to three or four suppers, this gallant man became my friend in the same way that the Ambassador had been, with only the difference that the latter liked to be the spectator and the former liked to provide the spectacle himself. I was never unwelcome at his amorous encounters, in which, to tell the truth, he acquitted himself well, the voluptuous Ancilla being delighted to have me for a witness; but I never gave them the satisfaction of joining in their bouts. I loved M. M.; but that was not the chief reason. Ancilla was always hoarse and constantly complained of a pain in her throat. I feared the pox, despite the fact that Murray was in good health. She died of it in the autumn,[14] and a quarter of an hour before she expired her lover Murray, in my presence, yielded to her insistence and paid her the homage of a devoted lover despite a cancer which disfigured her. The thing became known all over the city, for it was he himself who told it, citing me as witness. It was one of the most striking spectacles I have seen in all my life. The cancer which ate away her nose and half of her beautiful face came up again from her esophagus two months after she believed she was cured of the pox by mercury ointment, which was administered to her by a surgeon named Lucchesi, who had undertaken to cure her for a hundred zecchini. She promised them to him in writing on condition that she would not pay them to him until after he had himself played the role of devoted lover to her. Lucchesi was unwilling to go so far, and since she obstinately refused to pay him unless he fulfilled the stipulated condition, the matter was taken before the magistrate. In England Ancilla would have won her case, but in Venice she lost it. The judge in his decision said that an unfulfilled criminal condition could not invalidate the contract. A very wise decision.

Two months before the cancer had eaten away the charming face of the celebrated courtesan and made it revolting, Signor Memmo,[15] my friend, later Procuratore di San Marco, asked me to take him to her house. At the height of the conversation a gondola arrives, and we see that the person getting out of it is Count Rosenberg,[16] Ambassador from the Court of Vienna. Signor Memmo was panic-stricken, for a Venetian nobleman cannot be in the company of an envoy of a foreign court without becoming guilty of a grave crime. So Signor Memmo rushes out of Ancilla's room and takes to his heels, and I follow him; but near the stairs he meets the Ambassador, who, seeing that he is trying to hide, bursts out laughing. I instantly board Signor Memmo's gondola with him and accompany him to the house of Signor Cavalli,[17] Secretary to the State Inquisitors, who lives a hundred paces away on the same Grand Canal. The only way Signor Memmo had of saving himself from at least a serious reprimand was to go at once and tell the story to the Secretary of the tribunal, who would see that the thing was innocent; he was very glad that I was with him to testify to the harmlessness of the occurrence.

Signor Cavalli receives Signor Memmo with a smile, saying that he had done very well to come and confess without losing any time. Signor Memmo, in the utmost astonishment, then told him the brief story of the meeting, and the Secretary gravely said that he was informed of it and that he did not doubt the truth of his account, since the circumstances were the same as those which he already knew.

Leaving Signor Cavalli's we discussed the occurrence sufficiently to decide that it could not possibly be known to him; but the maxim of the tribunal was never to let it be thought that it was in the dark concerning anything.

After Ancilla's death Resident Murray remained without an official mistress; but, changing from one to another, he always had the prettiest girls in Venice. This amiable epicurean left two years later[18] for Constantinople, where he remained for twenty years as his country's envoy. He returned to Venice in 1778, intending to settle down and end his days in peace there without taking any further hand in politics; but he died in the Lazaretto[19] a week before finishing his quarantine.

Fortune, which continued to treat me well at cards, my meetings with M. M., the secret of which no one could any longer betray since the nuns, who alone could reveal it, were concerned to keep it inviolable, combined to make my life very happy; but I foresaw that as soon as the Ambassador should decide to disabuse M. M. of her continued hope that she would see him back in Venice, he would also recall the servants to whom he was still paying wages in Venice and we should be without a casino. In addition I could no longer continue to go to Murano rowing alone in a small boat once the bad weather set in.

The first Monday in October—the day on which, with the opening of the theaters, masking began—I go to San Francesco, I mount the poop of my boat, and I go to Murano to fetch M. M., who was waiting for me; from there I go to the casino and, the nights having grown longer, we sup, then go to bed, and, at the sound of the alarm, prepare to exchange an amorous good morning, when a noise I seem to hear from the direction of the canal sends me to the window. I am greatly surprised to see a large boat row away, taking mine with it. I tell the robbers that I will give them ten zecchini if they will leave it for me; but they laugh, they refuse to believe me, and they make off, certain that at that hour I could neither raise a hue and cry nor go after them. The loss distresses me, and even M. M. is in despair, for she does not see how I can make it good. I quickly dress, thinking no more of love and with my only consolation the fact that I still had two hours in which to go and find a boat at all costs. I should have had no difficulty if I could have called a gondola; but the gondoliers would have been certain the next day to tell all Murano that they had taken a nun back to such-and-such a convent. So my only resource was to find a boat and buy it. I put pistols in my pocket and, after getting an oar and a rowlock, I leave, assuring M. M. that I will return with a boat even if I have to steal the first one I find. It was with this idea that I was taking the oar and the rowlock. The robbers had filed the chain of my boat with a smooth file. I had no files.

I go to the big bridge, where I knew that there were boats, and I see a quantity of them of all sorts, and tied, but there were people on the quay. Running like a madman I see a tavern open at the end of the quay. I go in and ask the waiter if there are any boatmen there; he answers that there are two who are drunk. I go and speak to them and ask them which of them wants to earn four lire to take me to Venice at once. My proposition sets them quarreling over which shall have the preference. I quiet them by giving forty soldi to the one who was the more drunk, and I go out with the other.

"You've drunk too much," I say, "lend me your boat and I will return it to you tomorrow."

"I don't know you."

"I'll leave you a deposit. Here are ten zecchini; but who will vouch for you, for your boat is not worth that and you might leave it on my hands."

He then takes me back to the same tavern, and the waiter stands surety that if I come back that day with the boat the tavernkeeper will return me my money. Very glad that he had succeeded, he takes me to his boat, puts two rowlocks and another oar in it, and goes off well satisfied to have cheated me, as I was to have submitted to being cheated. The whole business had cost me an hour. I arrived at the casino, where M. M. was in the greatest uneasiness; but as soon as she saw me all her gaiety reappeared. I took her to the convent and I went to San Francesco, where the man who rented me the *cavana* thought I was making fun of him when I told him that I had exchanged my boat for this one. I masked and I went home to bed, for the strain had exhausted me.

At this same time my destiny decreed that I should make the acquaintance of the patrician Marcantonio Zorzi,[20] a great wit and famed for his skill at writing couplets in the Venetian language. He also loved the theater, and, aspiring to the honor of being an author, he had written a comedy which the public had hissed. Having taken it into his head that his play had failed only because of a cabal mounted against him by the Abate Chiari,[21] poet of the Teatro di Sant'Angelo,[22] he became the declared enemy of all the Abate's comedies.

I had no difficulty in being accepted into the circle of this Signor Zorzi, who had a good cook and a pretty wife. He knew that I did not like Chiari as an author, and Signor Zorzi paid people who mercilessly hissed all his plays. My amusement consisted in criticizing them in Martellian verse,[23] a sort of doggerel then in fashion; Signor Zorzi circulated copies of my criticisms. These maneuvers made me a powerful enemy in the person of Signor Condulmer,[24] who also disliked me because I seemed to have monopolized the good graces of Signora Zorzi, whom he had been courting assiduously before my appearance. However, Signor Condulmer had good reason to dislike me because, since he owned a good share of the Teatro di Sant'Angelo, the failure of the poet's plays injured him. The boxes could only be sold at a very low price. He was sixty years of age, he loved women, gambling, and usury; but he passed for a saint because he showed himself every morning at mass at San Marco, weeping before a crucifix. He was made a Councilor[25] the following year and as such was for eight months a State Inquisitor. In that eminent position he did not find it difficult to suggest to his two colleagues that I should be put under the Leads as a disturber of the public peace. My reader will hear of this nine months hence.

The beginning of the winter[26] brought the astonishing news of the alliance concluded between the House of Austria and France. The political system of all Europe became entirely different in consequence of the unexpected treaty, which until then had seemed beyond probability to all thinking minds. The part of Europe which had the most reason to rejoice at it was Italy, because she was suddenly delivered from the fear of becoming the unhappy theater of war whenever the least difference should arise between the two courts. The celebrated treaty had sprung from the head of a young minister who until then had done nothing in politics except play the role of wit. The surprising treaty, which perished after forty years, was hatched in the year 1750 between Madame de Pompadour, Count (later Prince) Kaunitz, the Viennese Ambassador, and the Abbé de Bernis, who became known only the following year when the King appointed him Ambassador to Venice. It reunited the Houses of Austria and Bourbon in friendship after two hundred and forty years of enmity. Count Kaunitz, having returned to Vienna at the same time, brought the Empress Maria Theresa a letter from the Marquise de Pompadour which put the finishing touch to the great negotiation. The Abbé de Bernis concluded it at Vienna[27] the same year, still as Ambassador of France to Venice. Three years later,[28] as Minister of Foreign Affairs, he re-established the Parlement, after which he was created a cardinal, then disgraced, then given a post in Rome, then died. *Mors ultima linea rerum est* ("Death is the final boundary line of all things").[29]

Nine months[30] after he left he announced his recall to M. M., putting it as gently as possible; but if I had not forestalled the blow by preparing her little by little to rise above it, she would have succumbed under it. It was to me that he gave his instructions. All the furnishings of the casino were to be sold and whatever they brought was to go to M. M., except the books and the engravings, which the caretaker was to convey to him in Paris.

While M. M. did nothing but weep, I carried out all the instructions. By the middle of January 1755 we no longer had a casino. She took away two thousand zecchini and her diamonds and pearls, thinking she might sell them some other time to buy herself an annuity, and she left me our winnings at cards, in which we always shared and shared alike. At this time I had three thousand zecchini, and we no longer saw each other except at the grating; but she fell ill and her life was in danger. I saw her at the grating on February 2nd; her face displayed the signs of approaching death. She gave me the case with all her diamonds, all the money she had except a small sum, all the scandalous books, and all her letters, saying that I should return everything to her if she escaped from the illness on which she was entering and that everything would be mine if she died. She said that C. C. would be at pains to write me all her news and she begged me to have pity on her and continue to write to her, for she could look for no consolation except from my letters; she hoped to have the strength to read until the last moment of her life. I assured her, melting into tears, that I would stay in Murano until she had recovered her health. She said as she left me that she was sure C. C.'s aunt would let her be with her.

In the greatest grief, I had a sack full of books and packets of letters put into a gondola; and having pocketed the purses filled with money I returned to Venice, where I put everything in a safe place in the Palazzo Bragadin.[31] An hour later I went back to Murano to ask Laura to find me a furnished room in which I could live in complete freedom. She answered that she knew where there were two furnished rooms and a kitchen which I could have very cheaply and even without saying who I was if I would pay a month in advance to an old man who lived on the ground floor; he would give me all the keys, and if I liked I need never see anyone. She gave me the address, I went there at once, and finding everything more than satisfactory I paid for a month, he gave me the key to the street door and immediately made up the beds. It was a casino at the foot of a blind alley ending at the canal. I went back to Laura's and told her I needed a maidservant who would bring in meals for me and who could make my bed, and she promised me one for the next day.

I then returned to Venice, where I packed as if I had to make a long journey. After supper I took my leave of Signor Bragadin and my two other friends, telling them that I should be away for several weeks on very important business.

The next morning I took a *traghetto* gondola and went to my new little casino, where I was very much surprised to find Tonina, Laura's pretty fifteen-year-old daughter, who, blushing but with a presence of mind which I had not known she possessed, said that she would not be afraid to serve me with as much zeal as her mother herself could have shown.

In my afflicted state I could not be grateful to Laura for such a present, and I even decided at once that, since the thing could not lead where she wished it to, her daughter could not remain in my service. Meanwhile I treated her gently, I told her that I was certain of her good will, but that I wanted to talk with her mother. I said that as I wished to spend the whole day writing I would not eat until nightfall, and that I left it to her to see that adequate meals were brought in for me. After leaving my room she came back and gave me a letter, saying that she had forgotten to give it to me at once.

"You must never forget," I said, "for if you had waited another minute before giving me this letter a great misfortune might have resulted."

She blushed for shame. It was a short letter from C. C., in which she told me that her dear friend was in bed and that the convent physician had found that she had a fever. She promised me a long letter the next day. I spent the day setting my room in order, then writing to M. M. and to my poor C. C. Tonina came to bring me candles and say that my dinner was ready. I told her to serve it to me, and seeing that she had set only one place I made her set another, saying that she would always eat with me. I had very little appetite, but I found everything good except the wine. Tonina promised to find me some better wine, and she went off to bed in my anteroom.

After sealing my letters I went to see if Tonina had locked the door of her room on the stairway side, and I found it bolted. I sighed when I saw the girl, who was in a deep sleep or pretending to be, and whose idea I easily saw through; but I had never in my life felt so afflicted; I judged the intensity of my feeling by the indifference with which I looked at her and by my certainty that neither she nor I ran the slightest risk.

In the morning I called her very early, and she came in fully and neatly dressed. I gave her my letter for C. C., which contained one for M. M., and I told her to take it to her mother at once and return to make me coffee. At the same time I told her that I would dine at noon. She then said that she had cooked dinner for me the evening before, and that if I had been satisfied with it she would do the same every day. After telling her that it would please me if she did so, I gave her another zecchino. She said that she still had six lire left from the one I had given her the day before; but when I told her that I made her a present of the difference and that I would do the same thing every day, I could not prevent her from kissing my hand ten times. I was careful not to take it from her and embrace her, for I should but too easily have yielded to my natural inclination for amusement, which would have dishonored my grief. *Et faveo morbo cum juvat ipse dolor* ("I foster my sickness when the pain itself gives me pleasure").[32]

So the day passed like the one before. Tonina went to bed very glad that she had pleased me in her role of servant and that I had not again said that I wanted to talk with her mother. After sealing my letter, fearing that I should wake too late, I called the girl in a low voice, not wanting to wake her if she was asleep; but she heard me and came to find out what I wanted, wearing only a petticoat over her shift. Seeing too much, I at once turned my eyes away. Without looking at her I gave her the letter addressed to her mother, ordering her always to take it to her in the morning before entering my room.

She went back to her bed, and aware of my weakness I was saddened. I saw that Tonina was so pretty that, thinking how easily she would have cured my grief, I felt ashamed. My grief was precious to me. I fell asleep resolved to tell Laura to rid me of her talisman, but in the morning I could not bring myself to do it. I was afraid of causing the kindhearted girl the most painful of mortifications.

CHAPTER IX

Continuation of the preceding chapter. M. M. recovers. I return to Venice. Tonina consoles me. Weakening of my love for M. M. The physician Righelini. My strange conversation with him. Its consequences in regard to M. M. Mr. Murray undeceived and avenged.

DURING the following days she did not go off to bed until after receiving my letter, and I was grateful to her, because for two entire weeks M. M.'s illness grew so much worse that I expected every moment to receive word of her death. On the last day of the Carnival C. C. wrote me that her dear friend had not had the strength to read my letter, and that she was to receive the last sacraments the next day. Stricken by the news, I could neither get up nor eat. I spent the day writing and weeping, and Tonina did not leave my bedside until midnight; but I could not close my eyes.

The next morning Tonina gave me a letter from C. C., in which she told me that, between life and death, M. M. might live for another two or three weeks; a slow fever never left her, her weakness was extreme, she could take only broths, and her confessor was hastening her death by his boring sermons. I melted into tears. I could only soothe my grief by writing, and Tonina, with her sound sense, said that I was fostering it and that I would die of it. I myself saw that grief, staying in bed, eating almost nothing, and writing all day would drive me mad. I had imparted my sorrow to the poor girl, who no longer knew what to say to me. Her occupation had become drying my tears. I pitied her.

On the eighth or tenth day of the Carnival, after assuring C. C. that if M. M. died I should survive her by only a few days, I begged her to tell her dying friend that, if I was to live myself, I needed her promise that she would let me carry her off if she recovered. I told her that I had four thousand zecchini and her diamonds, worth six thousand, amounting to a capital which would give us enough to live well on anywhere in Europe.

C. C. wrote me the next day that the patient, after listening attentively while she read her my plan, had been seized with spasmodic twitchings and that when they subsided a high fever had risen into her brain, so that for three whole hours she had raved in French in a way which would have scandalized the nuns who were present if they had understood what she was saying. This ominous effect of my letter made me desperate.

I saw that I should die too if I did not go back to Venice, for C. C.'s two letters, which I received morning and night, made a mockery of my love twice a day. My dear M. M.'s delirium lasted three days. C. C. wrote me on the fourth that, after sleeping for three hours, she had been able to reason and had told her to write me that she was sure she would recover if she could be certain that I would carry out the plan I had proposed to her. I answered that she should have no doubt of it, and the more so since my life depended upon my being certain that she would consent to it. And so, both deceived by our own hope, we recovered. Each letter from C. C. telling me that her friend was on the road to health was balm to my soul; my appetite returned and I listened with pleasure to the simple-minded Antonina, who had got into the habit of not going to bed until she saw that I was asleep.

Toward the end of March M. M. herself wrote me that she thought she was out of danger and that, with the help of a proper diet, she hoped she would be able to leave her room after Easter. I replied that I would not leave Murano until after I had seen her at the grating, where we would agree in good time on the plan which would make us happy until death. On the same day I thought I should go to dine with Signor Bragadin, who, having heard no news of me for seven weeks, must be uneasy.

After telling Tonina not to expect me until about the fourth hour[1] of the night, I went to Venice without a cloak because, having gone to Murano masked, I had none. I had spent forty-eight days without ever leaving my room, forty of them in grief, and fifteen of those scarcely eating or sleeping. I had just conducted an experiment on myself which was highly flattering to my self-esteem. I had been waited on by a girl as pretty as they come, who had done everything to please me, gentle as a lamb, and whom, without any conceit on my part, I could believe to be, if not in love with me, at least inclined to grant me all the favors I might ask; and despite all that I had been able to resist all the power which her young charms had wielded over me during the first two weeks. I had reached the point, after the illness which had kept me prostrate for almost three weeks, of no longer fearing her. Being used to seeing her had dissipated my amorous sensations and had replaced them by feelings of friendship and gratitude, for her attentions to me had been most assiduous. She had spent whole nights in an armchair near my bed, and she had ministered to me as if she had been my mother.

It is true that I had never given her a single kiss, that I had been careful never to undress in her presence, and that, except for the first time, she had never entered my room less than decently dressed; nevertheless, I knew that I had fought. I felt proud of having gained the victory. What annoyed me was that neither M. M. nor C. C. would have believed the thing if they had heard of it, and that Laura herself, to whom her daughter must certainly have told everything, would only have pretended to believe it.

I arrived at Signor Bragadin's just as the soup was being served. He received me with cries of joy, laughing because he had always said that I would give them just such a surprise. Besides my two other friends, De La Haye, Bavois, and the physician Righelini[2] were at the table.

"What! without a cloak!" said Signor Dandolo.

"Because, having set out masked, I left it in my room."

The laughter redoubled, and I sat down. No one asked me where I had been for so long, since politeness demanded that it be left to me to bring up the subject; but the curious De La Haye could not refrain from making a little thrust at me, though with a smile.

"You have grown so thin," he said, "that evil tongues will be saying the worst about you."

"What will they say?"

"That you may well have spent the Carnival and nearly the whole of Lent in a warm room in the house of a skillful surgeon."

After allowing the company to laugh, I answered De La Haye that to escape such a hasty judgment I would leave that same evening. For all his saying "No, no," I told him that I thought too highly of his opinion not to act in accordance with it. Seeing that I was speaking seriously, my friends showed their displeasure, and the critic remained silent.

Righelini, who was an intimate friend of Murray's, said that he could not wait to bring him the news of my resuscitation and tell him that everything that had been said about my disappearance was nonsense. I said that we would sup at his house and that I would leave again after supper. To reassure Signor Bragadin and my other friends I promised to dine with them on April 25th, St. Mark's Day.

When the Englishman Murray saw me, he fell on my neck. He introduced me to his wife, a Lady Holderness,[3] who most obligingly invited me to supper. After telling me any number of stories which had been invented about me, Murray asked me if I knew a short novel [4] by the Abate Chiari which had been published at the end of the Carnival, and he made me a present of it, assuring me that it would interest me. He was right. It was a satire which tore Signor Marcantonio Zorzi's circle to shreds and in which the Abate made me cut a very poor figure; but I did not read it until some time afterward. Meanwhile I put it in my pocket. After supper I went to a *traghetto* to take a gondola and returned to Murano.

Midnight had struck, and, the sky being cloudy, I did not stop to see if the gondola was in good condition. It was raining just a little, and when the rain became heavier, I wanted to protect myself by drawing the blinds, but I found neither blinds nor the heavy cloth which usually covers the *felce*. A slight cross wind made the rain soak me. The harm was not great. I arrive at my little casino, I grope my way up the stairs, I knock at the door of my anteroom, where Tonina had already gone to bed. She had waited for me until four o'clock, and it was an hour after midnight.

As soon as Tonina heard my voice she came and opened the door. She had no light, I needed one, she fetches the tinderbox, and since I was in her room she gently warns me, with a little laugh, that she is in her shift. I answer offhandedly that unless she is dirty it does not matter. She does not reply and she lights a candle. She bursts out laughing when she sees me wetter from the rain than anyone has a right to be.

I said that all I needed her to do for me was to dry one side of my hair, and she quickly brought powder and powder puff; but since her shift was very short and wide across the shoulders, I repented too late. I foresaw that I was lost, and all the more lost since she was laughing heartily because, having both hands encumbered with the powder puff and the powder box, she could not hold her shift up to prevent me from seeing a budding bosom whose power only a dead man would not feel. How was I to turn my eyes away? I fasten them there so openly that poor Tonina blushes.

"Come," I said, "take the front of your shift between your teeth and I will see nothing."

I put it there myself, but then I see half of two thighs which make me cry out. Not knowing how to hide her top and bottom from me at the same time, Tonina quickly sits down on the sofa, and I remain on fire, unable to make up my mind to anything.

"What now?" she says in an agitated voice. "Shall I go and get dressed to put on your nightcap?"

"No. Come sit on my lap and blindfold my eyes. Then I will blindfold yours, for I need you to help me undress."

She came; but I could bear it no longer, I clasped her in my arms, and there was no more thought of playing blindman's buff. I laid her on my bed, where, after I had covered her with kisses and sworn that I would be hers until death, she opened her arms in such a way that I saw she had long desired the moment. I picked the beautiful flower, finding it, as always, better than any of those I had picked during fourteen years.

At the end of our second encounter sleep overtook me and when I woke I found that I was in love with Tonina as I thought I had never been in love with any girl. She had got up without waking me. She came a quarter of an hour later, and giving her a thousand kisses I ask her why she had not waited for me to bid her good morning. Her only answer is to hand me C. C.'s letter. I thank her; I lay the letter aside, and I take her in my arms.

"What a wonder!" she said, laughing. "Are you in no hurry to read it? Inconstant man! Why would you not let me cure you six weeks ago? Blessed rain! But I do not reproach you. Love me as you have loved her who writes to you every day and I will be content."

"Do you know who she is?"

"She is a boarder, beautiful as an angel; but she is in there, and I am here. You are my master; and it rests only with you to be my master always."

Delighted that I could leave her in error, I promise her eternal love and ask her to come back to bed. She replies that, on the contrary, I ought to get up to dine, and she persuades me by describing a choice dinner in the Venetian fashion. I ask her who prepared it, and she answers that it was she herself, that it was an hour after noon, and that she had been up for five hours.

"You slept nine hours. We will go to bed tonight very early."

Tonina seemed to me to have become another person. Her face had the triumphant expression which is bestowed by satisfied love. I did not understand how I could have failed to perceive her rare qualities the first time I had seen her at her mother's house; but I was too much in love with C. C.; besides, she was not then mature. I got up, I drank coffee, and I asked her to put off our dinner for a couple of hours.

I found M. M.'s letter all tenderness, but not so interesting as the one of the day before. I at once set about answering her, and I was surprised to find it a burden. However, I filled four pages with the story of my short journey to Venice.

Tonina's company made my dinner delicious. Considering her at once my wife, my mistress, and my servant, I congratulated myself on being happy so easily. It was the first day on which I ate with her as her lover; so she found me all eagerness to give her unmistakable proofs of it. We spent the whole day at table talking of our love; nature does not afford a wider subject when the speakers are judge and plaintiff. She said, with enchanting sincerity, that, knowing very well that I could not fall in love with her because my heart and soul were filled with another, she only hoped to win me at some moment of surprise, and that she had seen that it was at hand when I had told her that she need not dress to light a candle. She said that until then she had told her mother the plain truth and that she had never believed her; but that now, to punish her, she would tell her nothing. Tonina was intelligent, and she could neither write nor read. She was delighted to have become rich without anyone in Murano being able to say the slightest thing about her which could reflect on her honor. I spent twenty-two days with the girl; and today, when I recall them, I count them among the happiest of my life. I did not return to Venice until toward the end of April, as soon as I had seen M. M. at the grating, finding her greatly changed; nevertheless, sentiment helped me to act toward her in such a way that she could not be aware either that I no longer loved her as I had before or that I had abandoned the plan which had restored her to life and on which she was still counting. I was too much afraid that she would fall ill again if I deprived her of that hope. I kept my casino, which cost me only three zecchini a month, going to see M. M. twice a week and sleeping there on those days with my dear Tonina.

After keeping my word to my friends and dining with them on St. Mark's Day I went with the physician Righelini to the visiting room of the Vergini[5] to attend a profession. The Convento delle Vergini is under the jurisdiction of the Doge of Venice; the nuns address him as "Most Serene Father"; they are all Venetian ladies from the leading families.

I having praised Mother M. E., who was a perfect beauty, to Righelini, he whispered to me that he was sure he could arrange for me to see her if I was curious enough to pay for it. A hundred zecchini for her and ten for the go-between was the price; he assured me that Murray had had her and that he could have her again. Seeing my surprise, he said there was not a nun in Venice whom one could not have for money if one knew how to go about it. "Murray," he said, "had the liberality to pay five hundred zecchini to have a nun from Murano whose beauty is amazing. Her lover was the French Ambassador."

Though my passion for M. M. was declining, I felt my heart gripped as if by an icy hand. I had to resist all the power of sentiment in order to find the strength to seem indifferent to this piece of news. Despite my certainty that it was pure fiction, I was far from letting the subject drop without getting as much light on it as possible. I quietly answered Righelini, who was intelligent and a man of honor, that one might perhaps have some nun for money, but that it must happen very seldom because of the usual difficulties in convents; and as for the nun in Murano who was famous for her beauty, if it was M. M., a nun in the XXX convent, I told him that not only did I not believe Murray had had her but neither had even the French Ambassador, who must have confined himself to visiting her at the grating, where I did not know what one could accomplish.

Righelini answered coldly that the English Resident was a man of honor and that he had heard from his own lips that he had had her.

"If he had not confided it to me under the seal of secrecy," he said, "I would get him to tell you so himself. I beg you never to let him know what I have told you."

"You need say no more."

But the same evening, supping at Murray's casino with

Righelini, and only the three of us being present, I spoke enthusiastically of the beauty of Mother M. E. whom I had seen at the Vergini.

"Between Masons," the Resident said to me, "you can have her for a certain price, and not a very high one, if you want to; but you must know how to go about it."

"You have been talked into believing it."

"No, I am convinced of it. It is not as difficult as you think."

"If you are convinced I congratulate you and I no longer doubt it. I do not believe that a more perfect beauty is to be found in the convents of Venice."

"You are mistaken. Mother M. M., at the XXX in Murano, is still more beautiful."

"I have heard talk of her, after seeing her once; but is it possible to have her for money too?"

"I believe so," he said with a smile, "and when I believe something it is with good reason."

"You amaze me. Nevertheless, I would wager that you have been misled."

"You would lose. Since you have seen her only once, you would perhaps not recognize her from her portrait."

"I should indeed, for her face is striking."

"Wait a moment."

He gets up from the table, leaves the room, and comes back a minute later with a box in which there were eight or ten miniature portraits, all in the same costume. They were heads with hair down and bare bosoms.

"So those," I said, "are the rare beauties whom you have enjoyed."

"Yes, and if you recognize any of them be discreet."

"You may be sure of that. I know these three. This one looks like M. M.; but admit that you may have been deceived, unless you had her by going into the convent yourself or bringing her out yourself, for after all there are women who look alike."

"How on earth can I have been deceived? I had her here, dressed in her habit, all one night. It was to herself that I gave a purse containing five hundred zecchini, and I gave the pimp another fifty."

"You must, I suppose, have called on her in the visiting room before and after you had her here?"

"No, never, for she was afraid that her official lover would learn of it. You know that he was the French Ambassador."

"She received him in the visiting room."

"She went to his house dressed as a woman of fashion whenever he wished. I know it from the same man who brought her here to me."

"Did you have her several times?"

"Once. That is enough. But I can have her when I please for a hundred zecchini."

"This is no doubt all true, but I wager five hundred zecchini that you have been tricked."

"I will answer you in three days."

I did not believe a word of it; but I needed to be certain. I shuddered when I thought that it might be true. It would have been a crime which did not deserve to be forgiven, and which, moreover, would have relieved me of a number of obligations. I was sure that I should find her innocent; but if I was to find her guilty, I would gladly lose five hundred zecchini. In short, I needed to be certain; but on the most conclusive evidence. The uncertainty rent my soul. If Murray had been tricked, M. M.'s honor demanded that I find some way to undeceive the honest Englishman. Here is how Fortune helped me.

Three or four days later the Resident said to me, in Righelini's presence, that he was sure he could have the nun for a hundred zecchini, and that he would not wager more than that.

"If I win," he said, "I shall have her for nothing; if I lose, I will give her nothing. My Mercury[6] tells me that I must wait until a masking day. The question now is to decide what we must do to be convinced, for otherwise neither of us will feel obliged to pay the wager; and to convince ourselves seems to me a difficult matter, for my honor will not permit me, if it is really M. M. who is with me, to let her know that I have betrayed her secret.''

''That would be unpardonable. Here is my plan, which cannot but satisfy us both, for after we have executed it we shall be convinced that we have fairly won or lost. As soon as you believe that you have secured the nun, you will leave her on some pretext and join me at a place where you can be sure I will be waiting for you. We will at once go to the convent, and I will have M. M. come down to the visiting room. When you have seen her, and even spoken with her, will you be convinced that the woman you have left in your house is nothing but a whore?''

''Completely convinced, and I shall never in my life have paid a wager more willingly.''

''I make you the same offer. If when I send for her the lay sister tells us that she is ill or busy, we will leave, and you will have won. You will go to supper with her and I will go where I please.''

''That is perfect. But since it can only be at night, it is possible that when you send for her the portress will answer that at that hour she does not announce visitors.''

''Then I shall have lost too.''

''So you are sure that if she is in the convent she will come down?''

''That is my concern. I repeat: if you do not speak with her, I declare myself satisfied that I have lost a hundred zecchini and even a thousand if you like.''

''No one can speak more plainly, my dear friend, and I thank you in advance.''

''I only insist that you come exactly on time, and that the hour is not too unusual for a convent.''

''An hour after sunset. Will that do?''

''Excellent.''

"I will also see to making the masker wait where I have her, even if it is the real M. M."

"She will not wait long if you can have her brought to you at a casino I have in Murano, where I secretly keep a girl with whom I am in love. I will arrange for her not to be there that day and I will give you the key to the casino. I will even have a little cold supper ready for you."

"That is perfect. I must know where the casino is so that I can tell my Mercury."

"Of course. I will have both of you to supper tomorrow evening, and all three of us will observe the greatest secrecy. We will go to my casino by gondola and we will leave after supper by a door onto the street; in that way you will learn how to go there by water and by land. You will only need to show M. M.'s guide the quay and the door. On the day he is to bring her to you, you will have the key and no one will be there except an old man who lives in a little room downstairs, from which he will see neither those who come in nor those who go out. My little girl will see nothing and will not show herself. Rest assured that I will arrange it all perfectly."

"I begin to believe," said the Resident, delighted with my arrangement, "that I have lost the wager; but I will see the thing out with the greatest pleasure."

I left them after making an appointment to meet them again the following evening.

In the morning I went to Murano, to tell Tonina that I would come to supper with her bringing two friends and to leave her some bottles of good wine, for my dear Englishman was a great and capable drinker. Tonina, delighted at the pleasure it would give her to do the honors of the table, only asked me if my two friends would leave after supper; and I saw that she was very happy when I said yes. After spending an hour in the visiting room with M. M., who was recovering her health and beauty every day, I went back to Venice and at the second hour of the night I returned to Murano with the Resident and Righelini, reaching my little casino by water.

The dinner was made delicious by the graces and the bearing of my dear Tonina. What a pleasure for me to see Righelini enchanted and the Resident reduced to silence by his admiration! When I was in love my manner did not encourage my friends to ingratiate themselves with the object of my love, though I was more obliging when time had cooled my flame.

After midnight we rose from table, and after showing Murray the way from the door of my casino to the place where I would wait for him on the night I was to take him to the convent, I went back to the casino to pay Tonina all the compliments she deserved both for the excellent plain supper she had prepared and for her charming behavior at table. She praised my friends, greatly astonished that the Resident had left fresh as a rose after emptying six bottles. Murray looked like a fine Bacchus painted by Rubens.

On Whitsunday Righelini came to tell me that Murray had arranged everything with M. M.'s alleged Mercury for the next day but one. I gave him the keys to the two doors of my casino, and told him to assure him that at the first hour of the night I would be at the door of the cathedral church.[7] My impatience brought on palpitations which would not subside; I spent two nights unable to sleep. Despite my being certain and more than certain that M. M. was innocent, I was nevertheless very uneasy. But what was the cause of my uneasiness? It seemed that it could only come from my impatience to see the Resident undeceived. In his mind M. M. must be nothing but a low hussy until the moment he became convinced that he had been tricked. The idea wrung my heart.

Murray was as impatient as I, but with the difference that he, seeing the thing as a comedy, laughed over it, while I, seeing it as a tragedy, shuddered.

So on Tuesday morning I went to my casino in Murano to order Tonina to set out a cold supper, bottles, and everything necessary in my room and then to withdraw to the room of the old owner of the house, where she was to remain until after the guests had left. She assured me that I would be obeyed, without asking me a single question. After that I went to the visiting room and sent for M. M.

Not expecting my visit, she asks me why I had not gone to accompany the *Bucentaur*, which, the weather being fair, was to set out that day. After I had made several disconnected remarks, as she was quick to perceive, I finally came to the important matter.

"I must," I say, "ask you to do me a favor, and the peace of my soul demands that you grant it to me blindly without asking me for the reason."

"Command me, dear heart, I will refuse you nothing if only it is within my power."

"I will come this evening at the first hour of night, I will have you called to this grating, and you will come. You will stay with me only a moment. I shall be with someone. You will say two or three words to him, as politeness demands, then you will leave. Now let us try to find a pretext which will justify the unusual hour."

"It shall be done. But you cannot imagine how difficult it is in this convent to come down to the visiting room at night, for at twenty-four o'clock the visiting rooms are closed and the keys are with the Abbess. But since it is only a matter of five minutes I will tell the Abbess that I am expecting a letter from my brother which must be delivered to me this evening so that I can answer it at once. You will give me a letter, and the nun who will be with me will see it."

"You will not come alone?"

"No. I should not even dare to ask it."

"Very well. It makes no difference. Only try to come with some old nun whose sight is dim."

"I will leave the candle behind."

"No, no, my angel. On the contrary, you must set it on the rail of the grating, for it is important that the masker who will be with me sees your face."

"That is strange. But I have promised to obey you blindly. I will come down with two candles. May I hope that you will give me the answer to this enigma the first time we meet again?"

"I give you my word of honor that I will tell you all about it no later than tomorrow."

"I am curious to hear it."

After this agreement the reader will believe that my heart was at rest. Not a bit of it. I went back to Venice tormented by the fear that Murray would come to the door of the cathedral that evening only to tell me that his Mercury had informed him that the nun had been obliged to put it off. If that had happened I should certainly not have thought M. M. guilty; but I should have seen that the Resident had a right to think that I had been the reason why the nun had failed him. In that case I would certainly not have taken him to the visiting room. I would have gone there alone and very sad.

The day seemed extremely long to me. I put in my pocket a sham sealed letter, and at the hour agreed upon I took up my post at the door of the cathedral. Murray did not keep me waiting. I saw him a quarter of an hour later, masked as I was, hurrying toward the door.

"The nun," I said—"is she there?"

"Yes, my friend. Let us go to the visiting room if you wish, but you will see you will be told that she is ill or busy. We will call the wager off if you like."

"What are you saying? I will not call it off."

I go to the convent gate, I ask for M. M., and the portress restores me to life by saying that I was expected and that I had only to go into the visiting room. I go in with my friend, and I see that it is lighted by four candles. Can I recollect those moments without loving my life? It was not the innocence of the generous and noble M. M. which I then acknowledged, but her divine intelligence. Murray was no longer laughing. M. M. enters, dazzling, with a lay sister, each of them carrying a flat candlestick. She addresses a most flattering compliment to me in very good French. I hand her the letter; she looks at the address and the seal, then puts it in her pocket. After thanking me, she says that she will answer at once. She then looks at the Resident and says that perhaps she has made him miss the first act of the opera.

"The honor of seeing you, Signora, is worth all the operas in the world."

"I have the impression that the Signore is English."

"Yes, Signora."

"The English nation is now the first in the world. Signori, I am your very humble servant."

I had never seen M. M. so beautiful as she was at that moment. I left the visiting room on fire with love and feeling a contentment which was entirely new to me. I made my way to the casino, paying no attention to the Resident, who, no longer being in a hurry, followed me slowly. I waited for him at the door.

"Well," I said, "are you convinced now that you were tricked?"

"Be quiet. We shall have time enough to talk. Let us go up."

"You want me to go up?"

"Please do. What do you expect me to do for four hours with the whore who is upstairs? We will tan her hide."

"Better turn her out."

"No, for at two hours after midnight her pimp is to come for her. She would run and tell him, and he would escape my vengeance. We'll throw them both out the window."

"Calm yourself. M. M.'s honor demands that this matter be known to no one. Come, let us go up. We will have some fun. I am curious to see the slut."

Murray enters first. As soon as she sees me she puts a handkerchief over her face and tells the Resident that his behavior is disgraceful. Murray does not answer.

She was standing, she was not as tall as M. M., she had spoken to him in bad French. Her *bautta,* her cloak, and her mask were on the bed; however, she was dressed as a nun. I could not wait to see her face. I gently ask her to do me the favor.

"Who are you?" she says.

"You are in my house and you do not know who I am?"

"I am here because I have been betrayed. I did not believe I was dealing with a scoundrel."

Murray then tells her to be still, calling her by the name of her honorable trade, and the hussy got up to take her cloak, saying that she wanted to leave; but he pushed her back, telling her she must wait for her pimp and not make a noise if she did not want to go to prison instantly.

"I in prison!"

So saying she raised one hand to the opening of her dress; but I at once seized it and the Resident seized the other. We push her into a chair and we confiscate the pistols which she had in her pockets. Murray tears open the front of her sacred woolen robe and takes a stiletto eight inches long from her. The slut was weeping in torrents.

"Will you stay here quietly," said the Resident, "until Capsucefalo[8] comes, or do you want to go to prison?"

"And when Capsucefalo comes?"

"I promise to let you go."

"With him?"

"Perhaps."

"Well, I will stay here quietly."

"Have you any more weapons?"

At this question the hussy took off her dress and her petticoat and, if we had not stopped her, would have stripped naked, hoping to obtain from our animal nature what she could not hope from our reason.

What greatly astonished me during all this time was that I could see in her only a counterfeit resemblance to M. M. I said so to the Resident and he agreed with me; but, arguing with his usual astuteness, he made me admit that the power of a preconceived idea could have made many other men fall into the same trap.

CHAPTER X

The affair of the sham nun ends amusingly. M. M. learns that I have a mistress. She is avenged on the infamous Capsucefalo. I ruin myself at cards; urged on by M. M., I gradually sell all her diamonds to try my luck, which doggedly runs against me. I surrender Tonina to Murray, who provides for her. Her sister Barberina takes her place.

"SIX MONTHS ago," he said, "I happened to be at the door of the convent with Smith,[1] our Consul; I have forgotten what ceremony provided the occasion. Having seen the nun in question among ten or twelve others, I said to Smith that I would not hesitate an instant to pay five hundred zecchini to have her with me for two or three hours. Count Capsucefalo heard me and said nothing. Smith said that no one could have her except at the grating, like the French Ambassador, who often visited her. Capsucefalo came the next morning to tell me that if I had meant what I said he was sure he could arrange for me to spend a night with the nun wherever I pleased, provided she was sure the secret would be kept. He said that he had just been speaking with her and that when he had named me to her she had answered that she had seen me with Smith and that she would be very glad to sup with me, more from inclination than for the five hundred zecchini. He said that he was the only person she trusted and that it was he who took her to Venice to a casino belonging to the French Ambassador whenever she ordered him to. He ended by saying that I need have no fear of being tricked, for it was to herself alone that I should give the money when I had her with me; after all that, he took from his pocket the portrait you have seen—here it is. I bought it from him two days after I believed I had slept with her. That came about two weeks after we agreed on the terms. Though masked, she arrived in her nun's habit; but I am vexed with myself for not at least suspecting the deceit when I saw her long hair, for I knew that nuns had their hair cut. She said that those who prefer to keep it under their caps are free to do so, and I believed her."

The hussy was speaking the truth; but I did not feel it necessary to tell the Resident so just then. I examined her features with equal attention and surprise, holding the portrait, which was painted with the bosom bare. I said that so far as bosoms were concerned, painters invented them; and the shameless wench seized the occasion to show me that the copy was true to the original. I turned my back on her. The fact is that on that night I laughed at the axiom *Quae sunt aequalia uni tertio sunt aequalia inter se* ("Things which are equal to a third thing are equal to each other"), for the portrait resembled M. M. and it also resembled the strumpet, and the latter did not resemble M. M. Murray admitted it, and we spent an hour philosophizing. Since she insisted that she was innocent, we became curious to know how the rascal had induced her to consent to such a masquerade, and here is her story, which we saw bore the stamp of truth.

"It was two years ago that I became acquainted with Count Capsucefalo and his acquaintance was useful to me. If he did not give me money himself, he put me in the way of getting plenty of it from the people to whom he introduced me. One day near the end of last autumn he came to my house to tell me that if I was up to disguising myself as a nun in the clothes he would bring me and pretending to be a nun with an Englishman who would spend the night with me alone as my lover, I should have a hundred zecchini. He assured me that I had nothing to fear, that he would himself take me to the casino where the gull would be waiting for me, and that he would come at the end of the night to take me back to my supposed convent. I liked the plot. I laughed with anticipation. I said I was willing. On top of that, I ask you if a woman of my trade can resist the temptation to earn a hundred zecchini. Finding the whole thing very amusing, I begged to be allowed to do it; I assured him that I would play my role perfectly. The bargain was made. The only coaching I needed was in the dialogue. He said that the Englishman was bound to talk to me of nothing but my convent, and, for form's sake, ask me what lovers I had, and that I was to cut him off short and answer that I didn't know what he was talking about and even say lightly that the nearest I came to being a nun was to dress up like one, and, to convince him, I was to laugh and show him my hair. 'That,' he said, 'will not keep him from believing you are the nun he's in love with, since he will have made up his mind that you can't be anyone else.' Seeing all the ingenuity of the scheme, I did not stop to ask either the name of the nun whose part I was to play or to what convent she belonged. The only thing that interested me was the hundred zecchini. And the proof is that, though I slept with you and found you charming and even a man rather to be paid than to pay, I never bothered to find out who you are. Even now I don't know to whom I am talking. You know how we spent the night, I found it delicious, and God knows with what pleasure I was promising myself another like it today. You gave me five hundred zecchini, but I had to be satisfied with a hundred, as Capsucefalo had told me I should and as he told me yesterday you would give me a hundred tonight which I would share with him. You have discovered everything; but I have no fear, for I can mask as I please and I can't stop men who sleep with me from thinking I am a saint if it amuses them. You found weapons on me; but I can't be found guilty for that, because I only brought them to defend my life in case any violence was offered me. I cannot see that I am guilty of anything."

"Do you know me?" I asked.

"No. But I often see you passing under my windows. I live in San Rocco,[2] in the first house on the left after the bridge."

In the light of her story we concluded that Capsucefalo deserved the iron collar and the galleys a hundred times over; but we considered that the woman, being a whore, was innocent. She must have been at least ten years older than M. M., and she was pretty; but she was blonde and my dear mistress was light chestnut and at least three inches taller.

After midnight we sat down at table and ate what Antonina had prepared for us with excellent appetites. We had the firmness to leave the poor devil of a wench where she was without offering her a single glass of wine. We thought it our duty. In our conversation at table the Resident treated me to commentaries both friendly and witty on the eagerness I had shown to convince him that he had not had M. M. He said it was not natural that I should have done all I had done unless I was in love with her. I replied that, being condemned and confined to the visiting room, I was to be pitied; he answered that he would gladly pay a hundred guineas a month merely for the privilege of visiting her at the grating. So saying, he gave me the hundred zecchini he owed me, thanking me for winning them from him. I simply put them in my pocket.

Two hours after midnight we heard a soft knocking at the street door.

"Here is our friend," I said. "Restrain yourself and be sure he will confess everything."

He enters and he sees Murray and the beauty. He does not notice that there is a third person until he hears the anteroom door being locked. He turns and sees me. He knew me. Not losing his self-possession, he says:

"Ah! It's you, is it? Very well. You are aware of the need for secrecy."

Murray laughs and tells him to sit down. Holding the hussy's pistols, he asks him where he will take her before dawn, and he replies that he will take her home.

"It is possible," said the Resident, "that you will both go to prison."

"No," he answered, "because there would be too much talk and you would be laughed at. Come," he said to the wench, "get dressed and we will go."

The Resident pours him a glass of Pontacq[3] and the pimp drinks to his health. Murray praises a fine cluster of white diamonds which he was wearing on his finger, and, pretending to be interested, draws it off. He declares it perfect and asks what it cost him.

"It is worth," said Capsucefalo, decidedly taken aback, "four hundred zecchini."

"I will keep it at that price," answers the Resident.

The other lowered his head. This display of modesty makes Murray laugh. He tells the woman to get dressed and be off with her friend. It took but a moment. They left after making us the lowest of bows and curtsies.

I thereupon embraced Murray, congratulating him and thanking him for having ended the matter so quietly, for making a noise about it could have injured three innocent people. He replied that the guilty parties would be punished and that no one would ever be able to find out the reason. I then sent down for Tonina, to whom the Englishman offered wine, but she excused herself. He looked at her with burning eyes. He left, thanking me most sincerely. After he was gone Tonina was convinced in my arms that I had not been in the least unfaithful to her. After sleeping for six hours and eating dinner with her I went to the visiting room to tell my noble M. M. the whole story.

The account which I gave her, not forgetting the smallest detail, the description of all my uneasiness, to which she listened without once blinking, brought to her face the various shades of feeling which could not but arise from the various sensations of her beautiful soul. Fear, anger, indignation, approval of the measures I had taken to clear everything up, her joy at seeing that everything I had done proved that I still loved her and was worthy of her—all this appeared before my eyes to reproach me with my deceitfulness in making her believe that my only thought was to carry out my plan of taking her to France.

She was delighted to learn that the masker who had been with me was the English Resident; but I saw her stung to noble disdain when I told her that he would give a hundred guineas a month to have the privilege of visiting her at the grating. She thought she had reason to be angry with him because he had enjoyed her in imagination and because he had found the portrait, which I had shown her, a good likeness. She could not recognize herself in it. She said, with a shrewd smile, that she was sure I had not let my little maid see the sham nun, because she might have been taken in.

"Then you know that I have a young maid?"

"And what's more, that she's pretty. She is Laura's daughter. And if you love her I am very glad and so is C. C.; but I hope you will find a way to show her to me; as for C. C., she knows her."

After promising to let her see the girl, I truthfully told her the whole story of my love affair and I saw that she was pleased. Just as I was about to leave she said she thought it was her duty to have Capsucefalo assassinated, for he had dishonored her. I swore that if the Resident did not avenge us within the week I would fulfill her wish myself.

Procurator Bragadin, the elder brother of my kind patron, died about this time. His brother's death made him quite rich. But as the family was on the verge of extinction, a woman who had been his mistress and who had given him a natural son who was still alive, took it into her head to become his wife. The marriage would have legitimatized the son and the family would not have died out. By dint of assembling the Collegio[4] she would have been granted citizenship, and all would have been well. She wrote me a note asking me to come and see her. We did not know each other. Just as I was leaving to go there, Signor Bragadin sent for me. He requested me to ask the oracle if he should follow De La Haye's advice in the matter which he had promised him he would not tell me about but which the oracle could not fail to know. The oracle answers that he should follow no advice except that of his own reason, and I at once go to call on the lady.

She tells me all the circumstances, she introduces her son to me, and she says that if the marriage could take place, a deed would be executed before a notary by virtue of which upon Signor Bragadin's death I would become the proprietor of an estate which yielded five thousand scudi a year.

Instantly understanding that the business must be the same as the one which De La Haye had proposed to Signor Bragadin, I reply without hesitating that since Monsieur de La Haye had already discussed the matter with Signor Bragadin I would have no part in it. After making this brief answer I bowed to them.

I thought it very strange in De La Haye that he should intrigue to marry off my friends without my knowledge. It was only two years earlier that, if I had not opposed it, he would have married off Signor Dandolo. I was not at all concerned over the extinction of the Bragadin family, but I was very much concerned for the life of my dear benefactor, whom the activity of marriage would have killed. He was sixty-three years old and he had had an apoplectic stroke.

I went to dine with Lady Murray. Englishwomen who are daughters of lords keep their title. After dinner the Resident told me that he had communicated the whole story of the sham nun to Signor Cavalli, Secretary to the State Inquisitors, and that the Secretary had informed him the day before that everything he could wish had been done; but here is what he had learned at the coffeehouse. Count Capsucefalo had been sent to Cephalonia,[5] his birthplace, with orders never to return to Venice. The courtesan had vanished.

What is admirable in these economical dispositions by the tribunal is that no one ever knows the reason for them. Secrecy is the soul of that redoubtable magistracy, which, though unconstitutional, is necessary to the preservation of the State. I saw that M. M. was overjoyed when I told her what had happened.

At this same time I was being ruined at cards. Playing by the martingale, I lost very large sums; urged on by M. M. herself, I sold all her diamonds, leaving her in possession of only five hundred zecchini. There was no more question of an elopement. I still played, but for small stakes, dealing at casinos against poor players. Thus I waited for my luck to come back.

The English Resident, after having me to supper at his casino with the celebrated Fanny Murray,[6] asked me to invite him to supper at my little casino in Murano, which I was still keeping only because of Tonina. I did him the favor, but without imitating his generosity; he found my little Tonina gay and polite, but within bounds which were not to his taste. The next morning he wrote me a note, of which this is a copy:

"I am irretrievably in love with your Tonina. If you will surrender her to me, this is the provision I am prepared to make for her. I will take a casino, which I will rent in her name, and I will furnish it for her, immediately making her a present of the furniture, on condition that I shall be free to go to see her whenever I please and shall have all the rights in her to which an accepted lover is entitled. I will give her a chambermaid and a cook, and thirty zecchini a month for a table for two persons, not including the wines, which I will furnish myself. In addition I will give her an annuity of two hundred scudi, which will become her property when we have known each other one year. I give you eight days to answer me."

I wrote him that I needed only three,[7] that Tonina had a mother whom she respected, and that judging by appearances I thought she was pregnant.

I at once saw that if I did not fall in with this proposal I should have cruelly ruined the girl's chances in life. I went to Murano the same day and told her everything.

"Then you want to leave me?" she said, weeping. "You no longer love me."

"I love you with all my heart, and I insist that the proposal I am making to you proves it."

"No, because I can't belong to two men."

"You will belong only to your new lover. Consider that you come into possession of a dowry which can bring you a very good marriage and that I am not in a position to make any such provision for you."

"Come to supper with me tomorrow."

The next day she said that the Englishman was handsome, that when he spoke Venetian he made her laugh, and that she could love him if her mother was willing.

"In case," she said, "our temperaments do not agree, we will separate at the end of a year, and I will be the gainer by an income of two hundred scudi. I am willing. Talk to my mother."

Laura, whom I had not seen since she had given me her daughter, did not need to ask me for time to think it over. She said that Tonina would be in a position to support her and that she would leave Murano, where she was tired of serving. She showed me a hundred and thirty zecchini which Tonina had earned in my service and which she had entrusted to her. Her daughter Barberina, who was a year younger than Tonina, came to kiss my hand. I thought her striking, and I gave her all the silver money I had and told Laura that I would wait for her at her daughter's.

The good mother gave Tonina her maternal blessing, saying that she only asked her for three lire a day so that she could go to live in Venice with her family, and Tonina promised them to her. She had a boy whom she wanted to make a priest, and Barberina, who was to become a good seamstress. Her eldest daughter was already married. After concluding this important business I went to the visiting room, where M. M. made me the present of coming with C. C. I felt unfeigned pleasure in seeing her prettier than ever, though sad and in mourning because of her mother's death. She could stay with me only a quarter of an hour, being afraid that she might be seen and reprimanded, for she was still forbidden to go to the visiting room. I told M. M. the whole story of Tonina, who was going to live in Venice with the Resident, and I saw that the thing displeased her. She said that as long as I had Tonina she was sure of seeing me often, and that she would not see me often after she was gone. But the time of our eternal separation was drawing near.

It was on the same evening that I took Murray the news. He said that I could bring her with me to supper at the casino, which he designated to me, on the next day but one and leave her with him; and I did so.

In my presence the generous Englishman handed

Tonina the contract for an annuity of two hundred Venetian ducati drawn on the Bakers' Guild.[8] This is the equivalent of two hundred and forty florins. By another document he made her a present of everything in the casino except the china after she had lived with him for a year. He told her she would have a zecchino a day for the table and the servants and that if she was pregnant he would see to it that she was delivered with every comfort and that he would give me the child. In addition he told me that she would be free to receive me, and even to give me proofs of her affection until her pregnancy was over, and that she could receive her mother and also go to see her whenever she pleased. Tonina embraced him, expressing the most lively gratitude and assuring him that from that moment she would love no one but him and would only feel friendship for me. During all this scene she was able to hold back her tears; but I could not hold back mine. Murray made her happy; but I was not there to see it for long. The reason will be revealed a quarter of an hour hence.

Three days later Laura appeared in my house and, after telling me that she was already settled in Venice, asked me to take her to see her daughter. I did her the favor at once, and I was delighted to hear her alternately thanking God and me, not knowing to which of the two she was under the greater obligation. Tonina praised her lover to me in the highest terms, and did not complain that I had not come to see her, which greatly pleased me. Tonina's casino was in Cannaregio and her mother had gone to live in Castello.[9] I took her home and when we arrived there she asked me to get out of my gondola to see her little house, where she had a garden. I acceded, without remembering that I should find Barberina there.

The girl, who was as pretty as her sister though of a different type, began by arousing my curiosity. It is curiosity which makes a man who is inured to vice inconstant. If all women had the same looks and the same mental characteristics, a man would not only never become inconstant, he would never even fall in love. He would take some woman by instinct and remain content with her until he died. The economy of our world would be entirely different. Novelty is the tyrant of our soul; we know that what we do not see is more or less the same thing; but what they let us see makes us think the contrary; and that suffices them. Niggards by nature in letting us see what they have in common with other women, they force our imagination to suppose them something entirely different.

Young Barberina, who regarded me as an old acquaintance, whose own mother had taught her to kiss my hand, who had several times undressed down to her shift in my presence never supposing that there was anything about her to excite me, who knew that I had made her sister's fortune and the whole family's, and who of course thought she was the prettier because she had a whiter skin and darker eyes, realized that her only chance of conquering me was to take me by storm. Her good sense told her that, as I never went to her house, I could never fall in love with her unless she convinced me that she would grant me all the favors I could desire without its costing me the slightest effort. This reasoning was innate in her; her mother had not given her the slightest coaching.

After I had been shown her two rooms, her small kitchen, and the cleanliness of the housekeeping, Barberina asked me if I would like to go and see the garden. Her mother told her to give me some green figs if they were ripe.

In the little garden, which was twelve yards square, there was nothing but salad greens and a fig tree. I did not see any figs, but Barberina said that she saw some high up and that she would go for them if I would kindly hold the ladder for her. She climbs up, and to manage to reach some which are at a distance she stretches out one arm, throwing her body out of balance and holding to the ladder with the other hand.

"Ah, my charming Barberina! If you knew what I see!"

"What you've often seen of my sister's."

"True. But you are prettier."

Not troubling to answer me but pretending that she could not reach the figs, she puts one foot on a high branch, presenting me with a picture than which the most consummate experience could not have imagined one more seductive. She sees that I am in ecstasies, she does not hurry, and I am grateful for it. Helping her down, I ask her if the fig I was touching had been picked, and she lets me find out for myself, remaining in my arms with a smile and a sweetness which at once make me her captive. I give her an amorous kiss, which she returns with all the joy of soul which shone in her lovely eyes. I ask her if she will let me pick it, and she answers that her mother had to go to Murano the next morning and would stay there all day, that I would find her alone, and that she would refuse me nothing.

Such is the language which makes a man happy when it comes from the lips of a novice, for desires are really nothing but torments, they are positive pains, and we value enjoyment only because it frees us from them. From this we see that those who prefer a little resistance to a great receptivity are lacking in judgment.

I go upstairs again with the young darling, I embrace her in the presence of her mother, who laughs when she hears me say that she is a jewel beyond price. I give the sweet child ten zecchini, and I go away congratulating myself and at the same time berating Fortune for ill-treating me so that I could not immediately set Barberina up in the same style as her sister.

My dear Tonina had told me that politeness demanded that I should sup with her, and that if I came that day I would find Righelini there.

What amused me at her supper was the perfect accord between Tonina and the Resident. I congratulated him on having lost a certain taste. He answered that he would be sorry to have lost any of his tastes.

"You used," I said, "to enjoy practicing love without veiling its mysteries."

"That was Ancilla's taste, not mine."

The answer pleased me, for I could not have watched him making love to Tonina except with great pain. When I happened to say that I was without a casino, Righelini told me that I could have two rooms on the Fondamenta Nuove[10] cheaply. This is a considerable quarter of Venice with a northern exposure, as pleasant in summer as it is unpleasant in winter. Murano is opposite to it, and I had to go there at least twice a week. So I told Righelini that I would be glad to look at the two rooms.

At midnight I said good-by to the rich and happy Resident, and went off to bed so that I could go early the next morning to San Giuseppe[11] in Castello, where I was to spend the day with Barberina.

"I am sure," she said at once, "that my mother will not be back until this evening, my brother eats dinner at school. Here is a cold fowl, ham, cheese, and two flagons of Scopolo wine.[12] We will dine soldier fashion whenever you please."

"How did you manage to get together such an appetizing dinner?"

"My mother did it all."

"Then you told her what we are going to do?"

"All I told her was that you said you would come to see me; and I gave her the ten zecchini. She said no harm would be done if you became my lover, since my sister was no longer living with you. The news surprised me and pleased me. Why did you leave my sister?"

"We haven't left each other, for I supped with her last night; but we are no longer living together as lovers. I surrendered her to a friend of mine, who has provided for her handsomely."

"Good! Please tell her that I have taken her place and that you found me such that you can swear I have never loved anybody."

"And if the news grieves her?"

"So much the better. Will you do me the favor? It's the first one I've asked of you."

"I promise to tell her everything."

After this preamble we breakfasted, and then in perfect singleness of purpose went to bed, more as if we were going to sacrifice to Hymen than to Love.

The rite being a new experience for Barberina, her transports, her unformed ideas, which she expressed to me with the utmost ingenuousness, and her yieldings seasoned with the charms of inexperience would not have surprised me if I had not found that I was feeling inexperienced myself. I had the impression that I was enjoying a fruit whose sweetness I had never so fully tasted in the past. Barberina was ashamed to let me know that I had hurt her, and the same desire to dissimulate spurred her to do everything to convince me that the pleasure she felt was greater than the pleasure she really did feel. She was not yet a grown girl; the roses of her burgeoning breasts had not yet budded; her attainment of puberty as yet existed only in her young mind.

We got up for dinner, then we went back to bed, where we remained until evening. When Laura returned she found us dressed and happy. After making the beautiful child a present of twenty zecchini I left, assuring her of eternal love and certainly with no intention of deceiving her; but what destiny was preparing for me was incompatible with my plans.

The next day I went with the physician Righelini to see the two rooms; they were to my liking and I took them at once, paying three months in advance. The daughter of the mistress of the house, who was a widow, had been bled. She was a patient whom Righelini had been attending for nine months and whom he could not cure. I went into her room with him, and I thought I saw a statue of wax. I said it was beautiful but that the sculptor should give it some color; at which the statue smiled. Righelini said that I should not be surprised at her pallor, for she had just been bled for the hundred and fourth time. She was eighteen years old,[13] and having never had her menses she felt as if she were dying three or four times a week; and she would die, I was told, if a vein was not opened at once. He was thinking of sending her to the country, hoping much from the change of air. After telling the Signora that I would sleep in her house that night, I left with the physician. Talking to me of the girl's illness, he said that the real remedy to cure her would be a strong lover.

"As her physician," I answered, "you could also be her pharmacist."

"I should be risking too much, for I might be forced into marriage, which I fear more than death."

CHAPTER XI

The beautiful patient. I cure her. Plot hatched to ruin me. Incident at the house of the young Countess Bonafede. The Erberia. House search. My conversation with Signor Bragadin. I am arrested by order of the State Inquisitors.

SO AFTER supping early with Signor Bragadin I go to my new casino to enjoy the cool air from the balcony of my bedroom. On entering the balcony I am surprised to find it occupied. A strikingly well-proportioned young lady rises and asks me to forgive her for the liberty she had taken.

"I am," she said, "she whom you took this morning for a wax statue. We do not have a light as long as the windows are open, because of the gnats; but when you wish to go to bed we will close them and go. This is my younger sister, and my mother is in bed."

I replied that the balcony should be at her service, that it was early, and that I only asked her permission to put on a dressing gown and remain in her company. She entertained me for two hours with remarks as intelligent as they were amusing, and at midnight she left. Her young sister lit a candle for me, then went away, wishing me a good sleep.

Getting into bed and thinking of the girl, it seemed to me impossible that she was ill. She spoke with energy, she was gay, cultivated, and very witty. I could not understand by what fatal mischance, if her illness required no remedy but what Righelini had said was the only one, she could still not be cured of it in a city like Venice, for despite her pallor she seemed to me perfectly deserving of an active lover and intelligent enough to make up her mind that, in one way or another, she would take a remedy than which nothing could be sweeter.

In the morning I ring to be got up, and it is the younger sister who enters; there were no servants in the house, and I did not want one of my own. I ask her for hot water to shave with and I ask her how her sister is feeling, and she says she is not ill, that her pallor is not a disease, but that she only needed to be bled every time her breath failed her.

"That does not keep her," she said, "from eating well and sleeping even better."

While the little girl was telling me all this I hear a violin.

"It's my sister," she said, "learning to dance the minuet."

I quickly dress to go and watch her, and I see a very pretty young lady whom an old dancing master was teaching to dance, though he let her turn in her toes. All that the girl lacked was the hue of the living soul. Her whiteness was too much like snow, it had no flush of rose.

The dancing master invites me to dance a minuet with his pupil, and I accept but I ask him to play *larghissimo.* He replies that it would tire the Signorina too much, but she tells him that she is not weak. After the minuet I saw her, with a touch of color in her cheeks, obliged to sink into a chair. However, she told the dancer that in future she wanted to dance only in that way. I said to her when we were alone that the lesson the man gave her was too short and that he did not correct her mistakes. I taught her to toe out, to offer her hand gracefully, to bend her knees in time, and when at the end of an hour I saw that she was a little overtired I asked her to forgive me and went to Murano to call on M. M.

I found her very sad. C. C.'s father having died,[1] she had been removed from the convent to marry an advocate.[2] She had left her a letter for me, in which she said that if I would again promise to marry her when I thought the time had come she would wait and persist in refusing the hand of any suitor who might appear. I answer her frankly that having no adequate income and there being no likelihood that I could expect to have one very soon, I left her at liberty, and I even advised her not to refuse anyone who asked for her hand and if she thought he could make her happy. Despite this sort of dismissal, C. C. did not marry XXX until after my escape from the Leads, when no one expected to see me back in Venice. I did not see her again until nineteen years later. For the past ten years she has been a widow and unhappy. If I were in Venice now I would not marry her, because marriage at my age is only a farce; but it is certain that I would unite her destiny with mine.

I laugh when I hear certain women calling men whom they accuse of inconstancy "perfidious." They would be right if they could prove that when we swear to be true to them we intend to fail them. Alas! *We love without consulting our reason, and our reason has no more to do with it when we stop loving.*

At this same time I received a letter from the Ambassador, who wrote another of the same purport to M. M. He told me that I should devote the powers of my mind to nothing but bringing M. M. to reason. He said that I could not be guilty of a greater imprudence than carrying her off to Paris, where despite all his influence she would not be safe. Charming even in her unhappiness, she infected me with her grief.

A small event caused us to reflect.

"We have just buried," she said, "a nun who died yesterday of consumption in the odor of sanctity at the age of twenty-eight. Her name was Maria Concetta. She knew you and she told C. C. your name when you used to come here to mass every feast day. C. C. could not help asking her to be discreet. The nun said you were a dangerous man of whom a girl should beware. C. C. told me all this after your masquerading as Pierrot disclosed your identity."

"What was her name when she was in the world?"

"Marta S."[3]

"Now I understand it all."

I then told M. M. the whole story of my love affair with Nanetta and Marta, ending with the letter she had written me in which she said that, though indirectly, she owed me her eternal salvation.

Within a week or ten days the conversations in which I engaged my hostess's daughter on my balcony until midnight and the lesson I gave her every morning had produced two very natural effects. The first was that she no longer lost her breath, and the second that I had fallen in love with her. Her menses had not come, but she had not needed to send for the surgeon. Righelini came to examine her, and finding that she was better he prognosticated that before autumn she would have the relief of nature, without which she could only be kept alive by art. Her mother considered me an angel whom God had sent her to cure her daughter, and the latter felt a gratitude which, in a woman, is distant from love by only the smallest of steps. I had persuaded her to dismiss her dancing master.

But at the end of ten or twelve days I thought I saw her dying before my eyes just as I was about to give her her dancing lesson. Her breath completely failed her; it was far worse than an attack of asthma. She dropped into my arms as if she were dead. Her mother, who was used to seeing her in this condition, at once sent for the surgeon, and her young sister fell to unlacing her dress and petticoat. The firmness of her bosom, which needed no color to be the perfection of beauty, surprised me. I covered it, telling her that the surgeon would bungle the bleeding if he saw it; but looking at me with expiring eyes she pushed my hand away with the greatest gentleness as soon as she realized that it was giving me pleasure to hold it there.

The surgeon arrived, quickly drew blood from her arm, and in an instant I saw her pass from death to life. He at once applied a compress, and it was over. Since he had drawn only a scant four ounces of blood and I learned from her mother that she never needed to have more drawn, I saw that the thing was not such a wonder as Righelini made it out to be. If he bled her in the same fashion twice a week he drew three pounds of blood from her in a month; it was what her menses ought to have given, and her vessels being obstructed in that direction, nature, always intent upon its own preservation, threatened her with death if she did not relieve it of the superfluity which denied it freedom of motion.

With the surgeon scarcely gone, she rather astonished me by saying that if I would wait a moment in the drawing room she would come and dance; and she came, feeling as well as if nothing had happened.

Her bosom, on which two of my senses could give a good report, had captivated my soul; she interested me so much that I returned at nightfall. I found her in her room with her sister. She said that she would come to enjoy the fresh air on my balcony at two o'clock[4] because she was expecting her godfather, who, having been an intimate friend of her father's, had come every evening to spend an hour and a half with her for the past eight years.

"How old is he?"

"Between fifty and sixty. He is married. He is Count S.[5] He is very fond of me, but like a father. He loves me today as he loved me in my earliest childhood. His wife even comes to see me sometimes and invites me to dinner. In the autumn I shall go to the country with her. He knows that you are lodging with us, and he has no objection to it. He does not know you, but if you wish you may make his acquaintance tonight."

This whole discourse, which told me everything there was to know without my having to ask indiscreet questions, delighted me. The Greek's[6] affection could only be of the flesh. He was the husband of the Countess with whom I had first seen M. M., two years earlier.

I found the Count most polite. He thanked me, adopting a fatherly tone, for the friendship I showed his goddaughter and asked me to come the next day and dine with her at his house, where he would have the pleasure of introducing me to his wife. I have always liked theatrical effects; and my meeting with the Countess should prove to be a quite interesting one. His invitation was most courteous, and I saw that the young lady was delighted when, after he left, I praised him. She said that he was in possession of all the documents necessary to obtain from the house of Persico[7] her family's entire inheritance, amounting to forty thousand scudi, one quarter of which belonged to her, not counting her mother's dowry, which she would make over to her daughters, so that she would bring the man she would marry a dowry of fifteen thousand ducati correnti, as would her sister.

The young lady was trying to make me fall in love with her and to ensure my constancy by being chary of her favors, for when I tried to gain any she checked me by remonstrances to which I dared not reply; but I was about to make her change her game.

The next day I accompanied her to the Count's house, not informing her that I knew the Countess. I believed she would pretend not to know me; but not a bit of it. She gave me the warm greeting which is commonly bestowed on old acquaintances. When her husband, in some surprise, asked her where we had met she answered that we had seen each other at Mira[8] two years before. We spent the day very gaily.

Taking the young lady home in my gondola toward nightfall, I demanded some favors; but in their stead I received only reproaches which annoyed me so much that, after leaving her at her house, I went to sup with Tonina, where, the Resident coming in very late, I spent almost the entire night. So the next morning, having slept until noon, I did not give her a lesson. When I asked her to excuse me, she said that I must not put myself to any trouble. That evening she did not come to the balcony, and I was annoyed. The next morning I go out early, and no lesson; and that evening on the balcony I talk to her only of indifferent things; but in the morning a loud noise wakes me, I leave my room to see what it is, and my hostess tells me that her daughter cannot breathe. Quick, the surgeon!

I enter her room, and my heart bleeds to see her expiring. It was the beginning of July, she was in bed, covered with nothing but a sheet. She could speak to me only with her eyes. I ask her if she has palpitations, I put my hand on the place, I kiss the center, and she has not the strength to resist me. I kiss her lips, which are cold as ice, and my hand quickly moves a foot and a half lower and takes hold of what it finds. She pushed it weakly away, but with a great deal of strength in her eyes, which tell me enough to convince me that I am affronting her. At that moment the surgeon arrives, he opens her vein, and she immediately breathes. She wants to get up; I advise her to stay in bed and persuade her by saying that I will send for my dinner and eat it beside her. Her mother says that bed cannot but do her good. She puts on a corset and tells her sister to put a light coverlet over the sheet, for everyone could see her as if she were naked.

Burning with love because of what I had done, resolved to seize the moment of my good fortune if it came, I ask my hostess to send word to Signor Bragadin's kitchen to send me a dinner, and I sit down by the beautiful patient's bedside, assuring her that she would be cured if she could love.

"I am sure that I should be cured; but whom can I love when I am not sure that I am loved?"

The conversation becoming more animated, I slip my hand onto the thigh which is nearest to me and I beg her to let me stay there; instead, continuing to beg, I move upward and I arrive where I believe I am causing her a very pleasant sensation by tickling her. But she draws away, saying in a voice full of feeling that what I am about to do to her perhaps is the cause of her illness. I answer that it may be so, and from her confessing it I foresee that I shall arrive at what I desire and I feel inspired with the hope of curing her if what everyone says is true. I take care not to offend her modesty, by sparing her any indiscreet questions, and I declare myself her lover, promising to demand nothing from her except what she may see fit to bestow as food for my affection. She ate half of my dinner with a good appetite, she got up when I dressed to go out, and when I came back at two o'clock I found her sitting on my balcony.

On the balcony, where I sat down facing her, after a quarter of an hour of amorous talk she allowed my eyes to enjoy all her charms, which the starlight made even more interesting and which she let me cover with kisses. In the tumult which her overmastering passion raised in her soul, clinging to me in the closest of embraces, giving herself up to instinct, the enemy of every artifice, she made me happy with such fervor that I knew beyond doubt that she thought she was receiving more pleasure than she was giving me. I immolated the victim without steeping the altar in blood.

When her sister came to say that it was late and she was sleepy, she told her to go to bed; and as soon as we were alone we went to bed without the slightest preliminaries. We spent the whole night, I animated by love and the desire to cure her, she by gratitude and the most extraordinary degree of pleasure. Toward daybreak she went away to sleep in her room, leaving me very tired but not exhausted. The fear of making her pregnant had kept me from dying yet without ceasing to live. She slept with me for three whole weeks, and her breath never failed her and her menses came. I would have married her were it not that, toward the end of this same month, the catastrophe which will soon come out descended on me.

My reader may remember that I had reason to bear a grudge against the Abate Chiari on account of a satirical novel which Murray had given me to read and of which he was the author. A month before the time to which I have now come, I had expressed myself in terms from which it might well be believed that I would have my revenge, and the Abate was on his guard. About the same time I received an anonymous letter which said that, instead of thinking of having the Abate cudgeled, I would do better to think of myself, since the greatest of misfortunes was hanging over me. All people who write anonymous letters should be scorned, for they can only be traitors or fools; but one should never scorn the advice they give. That was my mistake.

About this same time a certain Manuzzi,[9] originally a jeweler by trade and then a spy for the State Inquisition, who was unknown to me, made my acquaintance, leading me to believe that he could get me diamonds on credit upon certain conditions which made it necessary for me to receive him where I was living. Looking at a number of books I had lying about, he paused over some manuscripts which dealt with magic. Enjoying his astonishment, I showed him those which taught the art of becoming acquainted with all the elemental spirits.[10]

The reader can well imagine that I scoffed at these books, but I had them. Five or six days later the traitor came to my house and said that a collector whom he could not name was ready to give me a thousand zecchini for my five books; but that he wanted to see them beforehand to determine if they were genuine. Since he undertook to return them to me twenty-four hours later, and I really set no value on them, I entrusted them to him. He did not fail to return them to me the next day, saying that the person had found that they were forgeries; but I learned some years later that he took them to the Secretary to the State Inquisitors, who thus learned that I was an arch-magician.

During the same fatal month Signora Memmo,[11] mother of the Signori Andrea, Bernardo, and Lorenzo, having taken it into her head that I was leading her sons toward atheism, approached the old Cavaliere Antonio Mocenigo,[12] Signor Bragadin's uncle, who bore me a grudge because he said that I had led his nephew astray by my cabala. Matters of this nature were under the jurisdiction of the Holy Office,[13] but since it was difficult to have me locked up in the prisons of the ecclesiastical Inquisition, they decided to take the matter to the State Inquisitors, who undertook to investigate my behavior. It was the very thing to ruin me.

Signor Antonio Condulmer, the red[14] State Inquisitor and my enemy because he was a friend of the Abate Chiari, seized the opportunity to cast me in the role of disturber of the public peace. An embassy secretary told me some years later that an informer, with two witnesses, had accused me of believing only in the devil. They testified that when I lost my money at cards, a time at which all true believers blasphemed God, no one heard me curse anyone but the devil. I was accused of eating meat every day, of going only to showy masses, and there were strong reasons for believing that I was a Freemason. To all this they added that I frequented foreign embassies and that since I lived with three patricians it was certain that, knowing everything that was done in the Senate, I revealed it for the large sums of money which I was seen to lose.

All these charges decided the all-powerful tribunal to treat me as an enemy of my country, a conspirator, and an arch-criminal. For two or three weeks several people in whom I could believe told me to take a journey abroad because the tribunal was looking into my affairs. No more was necessary; for the only people who can live happily in Venice are those whose existence is unknown to the formidable tribunal; but I made light of all their advice. Heeding them would have made me uneasy, and I detested uneasiness. I said that since I felt no remorse I could not be guilty, and that not being guilty I had nothing to fear. I was a fool. I reasoned like a free man. What also kept me from thinking seriously about an uncertain misfortune was the real misfortune which weighed on me day and night. I lost every day, I had debts everywhere, I had pawned all my jewels, even my portrait boxes,[15] though I had set those aside, putting them in the care of Signora Manzoni, with whom I had left all my important papers and my love letters. I saw that people were avoiding me. An old Senator told me that the tribunal knew that the young Countess Bonafede had gone insane from the drugs and love philters I had given her. She was still in the hospital and in her fits of madness she never failed to name me and heap curses on me. I must tell my reader this brief story. The young Countess, to whom I had given a few zecchini some days after my return to Venice, thought she could induce me to continue visits which could not but be profitable to her. Pestered by her letters, I had gone to see her a few more times, and I had always left her money; but except for the first time she had never found me willing to give her any proofs of love. At the end of a year she resolved upon a crime of which I could never convict her but of which I had very good reason to believe her guilty.

She wrote me a letter so couched as to persuade me to see her at such-and-such an hour on a matter of great importance. Curiosity took me there at the appointed hour. She at once fell on my neck, saying that the important matter was love. I laughed. I found her prettier than usual and cleaner. She talked of the Fortress of Sant'Andrea,[16] and she stimulated me to such effect that I was ready to satisfy her. I take off my cloak and I ask her if her father is at home; she answers that he has gone out. Needing to visit the privy I go out and, trying to return to her room, I lose my way and enter the room next to it, where I am surprised to see the Count with two villainous-looking men.

"My dear Count," I said, "your daughter the Countess just told me that you were not at home."

"I instructed her to say so myself, because I had business with these people, which I will finish some other day."

I make to leave; but he stops me; he sends away the two men and says he is delighted to see me. He tells me the story of his misfortunes. The State Inquisitors had suspended his pension, he was on the verge of being turned out into the street with his whole family and reduced to begging for charity. He was living in this house, managing by one device or another not to have paid the rent for three years; but that was all over, he was to be evicted. He said that if he only had enough to pay the first three months he would move at night and go into another house. As it is merely a matter of twenty ducati correnti, I take six zecchini from my pocket and give them to him. He embraces me, he weeps for joy, he calls his daughter, he tells her to keep me company, he takes his cloak, and he leaves.

I notice the door between the room I am in and the one I had been in with the girl, and I see that it is ajar.

"Your father," I say, "would have caught me in the act, and it is not hard to guess what he would have done with the two *sbirri* who were with him. The plot is obvious; it is God who saved me."

She denies it, she weeps, she falls on her knees, I do not look at her, I take my cloak, and I flee. I answered no more of her notes and I did not see her again. It was in the summer. The season, passion, hunger, and poverty addled her brains. She went mad to the point that one day at noon she went out stark naked, running about the Campo San Pietro[17] and asking whoever she met and the men who arrested her to take her to my house. This wretched story made the rounds of the city and was a great annoyance to me. The mad girl was locked up and did not recover her reason until five years later; but she only came out of the hospital to go begging for charity through the streets of Venice like all her brothers, except the eldest, whom twelve years later I found serving as a *garzón*[18] at Madrid in the bodyguard of His Catholic Majesty.

It was a year since the thing had happened, but it was dragged up again in the fatal month of July in this year 1755. All these black, heavy clouds gathered above my head to strike me with a thunderbolt. The tribunal ordered Messer Grande[19] to secure my person "alive or dead." This is the formula used in all the warrants for arrest issued by the redoubtable triumvirate. Its slightest order is never promulgated except on pain of death to him who infringes it.

Three or four days before the feast of St. James,[20] whose name I bear, M. M. presented me with several ells of silver lace which I was to wear on the eve of my name day. I went to see her, dressed in my fine coat, and said that I would come again the next day to ask her to lend me some money, since I was at my wits' end where to turn to find any more. She had set aside five hundred zecchini when I had sold her diamonds.

Certain that I would receive the amount on the morrow, I spent the day playing and losing, and that night I lost five hundred zecchini on my word. At daybreak, needing to calm myself, I went to the Erberia.[21] The place called the Erberia is on a quay on the Grand Canal, which crosses the city; and it is so named because it is in fact the market for herbs, fruits, and flowers.

The people who go to walk there so early say that they go for the innocent pleasure of seeing two or three hundred boats arriving with all sorts of greenstuff, fruits of all kinds, and flowers of the season, which the inhabitants of the small islands which surround the capital bring there and sell cheaply to the wholesalers, who sell them at a profit to middlemen, who sell them at a high price to retailers, who distribute them at a still higher price all over the city. But it is not true that the youth of Venice go to the Erberia before sunrise to enjoy that pleasure; it is only their pretext.

Those who go there are men and light women who have spent the night at casinos or inns or gardens, devoting themselves to the pleasures of the table or to the furies of gaming. The fashion of going to walk there proves that a nation can change its character.

The Venetians of an earlier age, as secretive in their love affairs as they were in their politics, are blotted from memory by the moderns, whose style is to make a secret of nothing. The men who go there with women want to arouse the envy of their fellows by advertising their conquests. The men who go alone try to make discoveries or to occasion jealousies; and the women go there more to be seen than to see. They are perfectly content to let everyone know that they are no prudes. Smartness is excluded by the havoc which has been wreaked upon dress. On the contrary, it seems that the women wish to display themselves as votaries of disorder, and that they want whoever sees them to draw conclusions from it. The men who escort them are expected to advertise the boredom inspired in them by a willingness too often repeated and to appear indifferent to anyone's guessing that the wrecks of an earlier smartness which their beauties flaunt are the proofs of their success. Everyone who walks there is expected to look tired out and to show every sign of needing to go to bed.

After strolling for half an hour I go to my casino, where everyone should still be in bed. I take the key from my pocket; but I did not need it. I see that the door stands open and, what is more, the lock has been broken. I go upstairs and I find all the family up and I hear my hostess lamenting. She tells me that Messer Grande with a band of *sbirri* had entered her house by force and turned everything upside down, saying that he was looking for a trunk full of salt, which was strictly contraband. He knew that the trunk had been brought in the evening before. She said that a trunk had in fact been unloaded from a gondola but that it belonged to Count S., who had nothing in it but his clothes. Messer Grande had seen it and had left without saying anything. He had also searched my room. She demanded reparation, and seeing that she was justified I promised to speak to Signor Bragadin about it that day; and I went to bed; but the insult which had been offered the house stuck in my gorge and I could sleep only three or four hours.

I go to Signor Bragadin's, I tell him the whole story, and I demand revenge. I forcibly put to him all the reasons my honest hostess had for insisting on a reparation proportionate to the offense, since the laws guaranteed the peace of every family whose conduct was irreproachable. After thus delivering myself to him, my two other friends being present, I saw all three of them sunk in thought. The wise old man said that he would answer me after dinner.

At dinner, during which De La Haye never said a word to me, I saw that they were all sad. I could only attribute the reason for it to their friendship for me. The intimacy between these three respectable and prominent persons and myself had always been the talk of the whole city. It was concluded that the thing could not be natural; hence it could only be the result of sorcery. They were pious in the highest degree, and there was not a greater libertine in Venice than I. Virtue, people said, could be indulgent to vice, but could not love it.

After dinner Signor Bragadin took me to his study with my two other friends, whose presence was never unwelcome. He said with the greatest calmness that instead of thinking of obtaining revenge for the insult Messer Grande had offered the house in which I lived, I should be thinking of escaping to a place of safety.

"The trunk filled with salt," he said, "is only a pretext. It was you whom they wanted and whom they thought they would find. Your angel made them miss you; run! I was a State Inquisitor for eight months,[22] and I know the kind of arrests the tribunal orders made. Doors are not broken down to seize a box of salt. It is also possible that they missed you on purpose. Believe me, my dear son—leave at once for Fusina and from there post day and night to Florence and stay there until I write you that you can come back. Have four rowers put to my gondola and go. If you have no money I will give you a hundred zecchini for the present. Prudence demands that you go."

I answer that since I know I am not guilty of anything I could not fear the tribunal and that consequently I could not follow his advice, though I saw that it was very prudent. He answers that the tribunal of the State

Inquisitors could find me guilty of crimes of which I had no knowledge. He urged me to ask my oracle whether I should follow his advice or not, and I declined, saying that I asked only when I was in doubt. As my final argument I put it to him that if I fled I should be showing a fear which would declare me guilty, for an innocent person, having no remorse, can have no fears either.

"If silence," I said, "is the soul of that great tribunal, you can never know after I leave whether I was right or wrong to go. The same prudence which, according to Your Excellency, orders me to go will also prevent me from returning. Must I then take an eternal leave of my country?"

He then tried to persuade me to sleep, at least that night, in my apartment in the palace, and I am still ashamed that I refused him the favor.

Constables cannot enter the palace of a patrician without a formal order from the tribunal; but such an order is never given.

I said that the precaution of sleeping in his palace would safeguard me only during the night and that I could be found anywhere during the day if the order was out to arrest me.

"They have the power if they want to use it," I said; "but it is not my part to be afraid."

The good old man then touched me by saying that perhaps we should not see each other again; and I begged him not to make me sad. In answer he thought for a moment, then smiled and embraced me, quoting the Stoic maxim, *Fata viam inveniunt* ("Destiny finds the way").[23]

I embraced him in tears, and I left. But his prediction was fulfilled. I did not see him again. He died eleven years later. I set out from the palace without the least shadow of fear in my soul, but in great distress because of my debts. I did not have the heart to go to

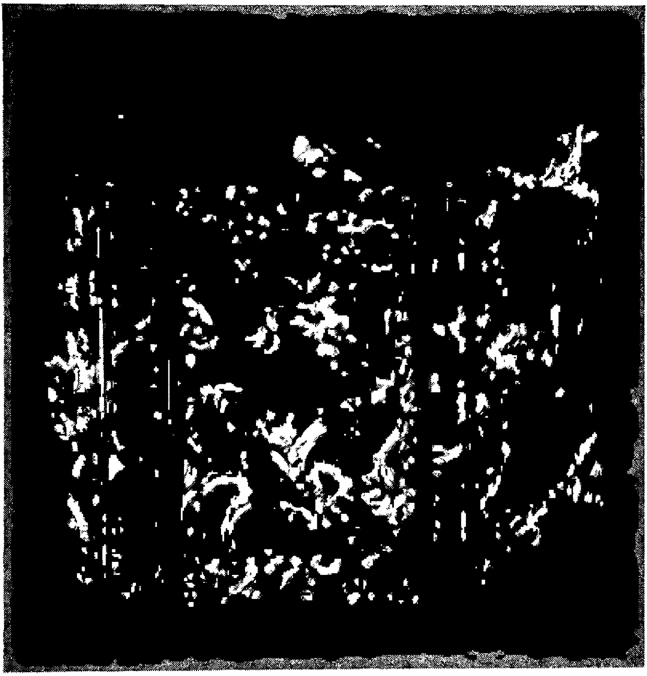
Murano to ask M. M. for the five hundred zecchini I should have paid immediately to the man who had won them from me the evening before; I preferred to go and ask him to wait for a week. After that I went home and, after consoling my hostess as well as I could and embracing her daughter, I went to bed. It was nightfall on the 25th of July 1755.

The next morning at daybreak Messer Grande entered my room. To wake, to see him, and to hear him ask if I was Giacomo Casanova took no more than the first moment. As soon as I answered that I was the person he had named, he ordered me to give him whatever papers I had, whether written by me or by anyone else, to dress, and to go with him. I having asked him by whose authority he gave me the order, he answered that it was by the authority of the tribunal.

CHAPTER XII

Under the Leads. Earthquake.

THE WORD "tribunal" petrified my soul, leaving me only the physical ability to obey him. My desk was open; all my papers were on the table at which I wrote, I told him he could take them; he filled a bag which one of his men brought him, and he said I must also surrender certain bound manuscripts which there was reason to suppose I possessed; I showed him where they were, and then I saw it: the jeweler Manuzzi had been the infamous spy who had accused me of having these books when he had gained entrance to my house, leading me to believe that he could arrange for me to buy diamonds and, as I said, that he could get me a purchaser for the books; they were the *Key of Solomon,*[1] the *Zecorben,*[2] a *Picatrix,*[3] a complete treatise on the planetary hours[4] favorable to making the necessary perfumes and conjurations for conversing with demons of all classes. Those who knew that I had these books thought I was a magician, and it rather pleased me. Messer Grande



Notebook with Pencil Case

also took the books I had on my night table: Ariosto, Horace, Petrarch, the *Philosophe militaire*[5] in manuscript, which Mathilde[6] had given me, the *Portier des Chartreux,* and the little book of lubricious postures by Aretino which Manuzzi had also reported, for Messer Grande asked me for it too. The spy Manuzzi looked like an honest man, a necessary quality in his trade; his son made a fortune in Poland by marrying an Opeska[7] whom he did away with, or so they say, for I know nothing about it and even do not believe it, though I do know that he was capable of it.

While Messer Grande thus made a harvest of my manuscripts, my books, and my letters, I automatically got dressed, neither rapidly nor slowly; I made my toilet, I shaved, C. D.[8] dressed my hair, I put on a shirt with a lace ruff and my fine coat, all without thinking what I was doing and without saying a word, even as Messer Grande, who never took his eyes off me, did not dare to object to my dressing as though I were going to a wedding.

When I left my room I was surprised to find thirty or forty constables in the drawing room. They had done me the honor to think so many were needed to secure my person, whereas according to the axiom *ne Hercules quidem contra duos* ("not even Hercules against two"),[9] only two were necessary. It is strange that in London, where everyone is brave, only one man is used to arrest another, and that in my dear country, where people are cowards, thirty are sent. The reason may be that the coward who is forced to become an assailant must be more afraid than the man assailed, and the latter for that very reason may become brave; and in fact in Venice one often sees one man defend himself against twenty *sbirri* and get away after giving them a beating. In Paris I helped a friend of mine escape from forty bumbailiffs, whom we put to flight.

Messer Grande ordered me into a gondola, where he sat down beside me, keeping only four men and sending the rest away. Arrived at his headquarters, he locked me into a room after offering me coffee, which I refused. I spent four hours there during all of which I slept, waking every quarter of an hour to make water—a very strange phenomenon, for I had never suffered from strangury, the heat was excessive, and I had not supped; nevertheless I filled two large chamber pots with urine. It had been my experience on other occasions that surprise caused by an act of oppression produced the effect of a strong narcotic on me, but it was only now that I learned that it is highly diuretic. I leave it to the physicians. I had a good laugh in Prague, where I published my *Flight from the Leads*[10] six years ago, when I learned that the fine ladies considered my account of the phenomenon a piece of swinishness which I might well have omitted. I would perhaps have omitted it in talking to a lady; but the public is not a lady, and I like to be instructive. Furthermore it is not swinishness; there is nothing dirty or foul-smelling about it despite the fact that we have it in common with swine, just as we have eating and drinking, which no one has ever dubbed swinishness.

It is likely that at the same time that my terrified mind was reduced to displaying its weakness by the collapse of its thinking faculty, my body, too, as if it were in a wine press, had to expel a good part of the fluids which, in their continual circulation, activate our power to think; and that is how a terrifying surprise can bring on sudden death and—God preserve us!—send us to Paradise, for it can drive our soul from our blood.

When the Terza[11] bell rang, the chief constable entered and said he had orders to put me "under the Leads."[12] I followed him. We got into another gondola and, after taking a long way around through small canals, we entered the Grand Canal and disembarked at the Quay of the Prisons.[13] After going up several flights of stairs we crossed a high enclosed bridge[14] which provides the communication between the prisons and the Doge's Palace over the canal called the Rio del Palazzo.[15] Beyond this bridge we walked the length of a gallery, entered a room, then another, where he presented me to a man dressed in the robe of a patrician, who, after looking at me, said:

"*È quello; mettetelo in deposito.*" ("That is he; put him away.")

This personage was the Secretary to Their Excellencies the Inquisitors, the Circospetto[16] Domenico Cavalli, who apparently felt ashamed to speak Venetian in my presence, for he pronounced judgment on me in Tuscan. Messer Grande then turned me over to the warden of the Leads, who was there holding a bunch of keys and who, followed by two constables, made me go up two small flights of stairs, proceed through a gallery, then another separated from it by a locked door, then still another, at the end of which he used another key to open a door through which I entered a large, ugly, dirty garret, twelve yards long by two wide, badly lighted by a high dormer. I supposed this garret was my prison, but I was mistaken. The man, who was the jailer, took a thick key, he opened a heavy door lined with iron, three and a half feet high and with a round hole eight inches in diameter in the center of it, and ordered me to enter just as I was looking attentively at an iron mechanism which was fastened to the strong wall with nails and had the shape of a horseshoe; it was an inch thick and had a diameter of five inches from one of its parallel ends to the other. I was wondering what it could be when he said with a smile:

"I see, Signore, that you are trying to guess what this machine is for, and I can tell you. When Their Eminences order someone strangled, he is made to sit on a stool with his back to this collar and his head is placed so that the collar goes round half of his neck. The two ends of a skein of silk which goes round the other half of it pass through this hole leading to a winch to which they are fastened and a man turns it until the patient has rendered up his soul to Our Lord, for his confessor never leaves him—praise be to God!—until he is dead."

"It is most ingenious, and I imagine, Signore, that it is you who have the honor of turning the winch."

He did not answer. My height being five feet nine inches, I stooped low to enter; and he locked me in. Hearing him ask me through the grating what I wanted to eat, I answered that I had not yet thought about it. He went away, locking all his doors again.

Overwhelmed and bewildered, I put my elbows on the sill of the grating. It was two feet in all directions, crossed by six iron bars an inch thick which formed sixteen openings five inches square. It would have lighted my cell well enough if one of the main roof timbers, a square beam a foot and a half thick and entering the wall below the dormer, which was diagonally across from me, had not cut off what light came into the garret. Having made the round of this terrible prison, keeping my head down for it was only five and a half feet high, I found, chiefly by groping, that it formed three quarters of a square twelve feet by twelve. The quarter next to the missing one was to all intents and purposes an alcove large enough to contain a bed, but I found neither a bed nor a chair nor a table nor any kind of furniture except a bucket for the needs of nature and a board fastened to the wall, one foot wide and four feet above the floor. On it I put my beautiful floss-silk cloak, my fine coat which had started its life so badly, and my hat trimmed with Spanish point lace and a white feather. The heat was extreme. In my astonishment nature led me to the grating, the only place where I could rest leaning on my elbows; I could not see the dormer, but I saw the light which illuminated the garret and rats as big as rabbits which were walking about. These hideous animals, whose sight I loathed, came directly under my grating without showing the least sign of fear. I quickly drew the inner blind over the round hole in the center of the door, for a visit from them would have frozen my blood. Sunk in the deepest reverie, my arms still crossed on the sill, I spent eight hours there motionless, silent, and never leaving my post.

When twenty-one o'clock[17] struck, I began to feel uneasy because I saw no one appearing, not even to find out if I wanted to eat, not even to bring me a bed, a chair, or at least bread and water. I had no appetite, but I thought my jailers should not know it; never in my life had I had such a bitter taste in my mouth; yet I felt certain that before the day ended someone would appear; but when I heard twenty-four o'clock strike I succumbed to something very like madness, howling, stamping my feet, cursing, and accompanying all this useless noise which my strange situation drove me to make with loud cries. After half an hour of this exercise in fury, seeing no one come, with not the slightest sign to make me imagine that anyone could have heard my ravings, and shrouded in darkness, I closed the grating, fearing that the rats would jump into the cell. I threw myself at full length on the floor after wrapping my hair in a handkerchief. Such a pitiless desertion seemed to me unthinkable, even if I had been sentenced to death. My consideration of what I could have done to deserve treatment so cruel could continue no longer than a minute, for I found no cause for arresting me. As a great libertine, a bold talker, a man who thought of nothing but enjoying life I could not find myself guilty, but seeing that I was nevertheless treated as such, I spare my reader all that rage and indignation and despair made me say and think against the horrible despotism which was oppressing me. Yet my anger and the grief which preyed on me and the hard floor on which I lay did not keep me from falling asleep; my constitution needed sleep; and when a person is young and healthy his constitution can satisfy its need without his giving it any thought.

The midnight bell woke me. That is a terrible awakening which brings regret for the nothingness or the illusions of sleep. I could not believe that I had spent three hours insensible of any discomfort. Not changing my position but still lying as I was on my left side, I put out my right arm to get my handkerchief, which my memory assured me I had placed there. As I groped along with my hand—God! what a surprise when I find another hand as cold as ice! Terror electrified me from head to foot and every one of my hairs stood on end. Never in my life was I seized with such fear, and I had never thought I was subject to it. I certainly spent three or four minutes not only motionless but unable to think. Recovering a little, I allowed myself the relief of believing that what I had touched was only a figment of my imagination; in this conviction I again stretch out my arm to the same spot and I find the same hand, which, frozen with horror and giving a piercing shriek, I grasp and drop, drawing back my arm. I shudder; but regaining control over my mind, I decide that while I was asleep a corpse had been placed near me; for I was certain that when I lay down on the floor nothing had been there. I immediately imagine the body of some innocent wretch, perhaps one of my friends, who had been strangled and laid beside me so that when I woke I should find an example of the fate which I must expect. The thought infuriates me; for the third time I extend my arm to the hand, I grasp it, and at the same moment get up, intending to pull the corpse toward me and so ascertain the fact in all its atrocity; but as I try to raise myself on my left elbow the same cold hand which I am holding comes to life, draws away, and, to my great surprise, I instantly realize that the hand in my right hand is none other than my left, which, numbed and stiffened, had lost motion, feeling, and warmth, the effect of the soft, yielding, cozy bed on which my poor self was lying.

The incident, though comic, did not cheer me. On the contrary it gave me cause to make the darkest reflections. I realized that I was in a place where if the false seemed true, realities must seem dreams; where the understanding must lose half of its privileges; where a distorted imagination must make reason the victim either of chimerical hopes or terrible despair. I at once put myself on guard against anything of that nature; and at the age of thirty years I for the first time in my life turned for help to philosophy, all the germs of which were in my soul and which I had never before had occasion either to value or to employ. I believe that the great majority of men die without ever having thought. I continued to sit where I was until eight o'clock;[18] the half-light of the new day appeared; the sun should rise at quarter past nine; I longed to see the day begin; a presentiment which I thought infallible assured me that I should be sent home; I was burning with desires for revenge which I did not conceal from myself. I seemed to be leading the people to exterminate the government and massacre the aristocrats; everything was to be brought to dust; I was not satisfied to leave the slaughter of my oppressors to executioners, it was I myself who should massacre them. Such is man: he does not suspect that what speaks such words in him is not his reason but his greatest enemy, anger.

I waited less time than I was prepared to wait; and that went some way toward calming my fury. At half past eight the profound silence of the place, the Hell of living humanity, was broken by the squeak of the bolts in the vestibules of the corridors which had to be traversed to reach my cell. I saw the jailer in front of my grating asking me if I had had "time to think about what I wanted to eat." One is lucky when the insolence of a villain assumes the mask of raillery. I answered that I wanted a rice soup, boiled beef, a roast, bread, water, and wine. I saw that the churl was surprised not to hear the lamentations he expected. He went away; but a quarter of an hour later he came back to say that he was astonished that I did not ask for a bed and whatever I needed because, said he,

"If you flatter yourself that you have been put here only for one night, you are mistaken."

"Then bring me everything you think I shall need."

"Where am I to go for it? Here is a pencil and paper. Write it all down."

I wrote him instructions where to go to get me a bed, shirts, stockings, dressing gown, slippers, nightcaps, an armchair, a table, combs, mirrors, razors, handkerchiefs, the books which Messer Grande had taken from me, ink and pens and paper. When I read him the list, for the rascal could not read, he told me to cross out books, ink, paper, mirror, razor, for they were all forbidden under the Leads by the regulations, and he asked me for money to buy my dinner. I had three zecchini and I gave him one of them. He left the garret and I heard him set off an hour later. During the hour, as I learned afterward, he waited on seven other prisoners who were confined up there in cells at a distance from one another to prevent any communication.

Toward noon the jailer appeared, followed by five constables appointed to serve the state prisoners. He opened my cell to bring in the furniture I had ordered and my dinner. The bed was put in the alcove, my dinner was set out on a small table. My table service consisted of an ivory spoon which he had bought with my money, knife and fork being forbidden as were all metal implements.

"Order what you want to eat tomorrow," he said, "for I can only come here once a day at dawn. The most illustrious Secretary ordered me to tell you that he will send you suitable books, since those you want are forbidden."

"Thank him for his kindness in putting me in a cell by myself."

"I will give him your message, but you would do well not to make such jokes."

"I am not joking, for it is better, I think, to be alone than with the criminals who must be here."

"What, Signore? Criminals? I should resent that very much. There are only respectable people here, who, however, have to be sequestered from society for reasons which only Their Excellencies know. You have been put in a cell alone to increase your punishment, and you want me to convey your thanks for it?"

"I did not know that."

The ignoramus was right, as I had learned only too well a few days later. I discovered that a man shut up in solitude and deprived of any possibility of occupying himself, alone in an almost dark place, where he does not and cannot see anything except, once a day, the person who brings him food, and in which he cannot walk upright, is the most wretched of mortals. He longs for Hell, if he believes in it, only to have companionship. Confined there, I reached the point of longing for the company of a murderer, a maniac, a man with some stinking disease, a bear. Solitude under the Leads drives one to despair; but to know it one must have experienced it. If the prisoner is a man of letters, give him a writing desk and paper and his wretchedness will decrease by nine tenths.

After the jailer left I put the table near the hole to get a little light, and I sat down to dine by the glimmer which came from the skylight; but I could swallow only a little soup. Having had nothing to eat for forty-five hours, it is no wonder if I was ill. I spent the day in my armchair, without accesses of fury, longing for the morrow and preparing my mind to read the books which had been so graciously promised me. I passed a sleepless night to the disagreeable noise the rats made in the garret and in company with the clock of San Marco, which, when it struck the hours, seemed to be in the room with me. A kind of torture of which few of my readers will have any knowledge caused me intolerable pain: it was a million fleas romping all over my body, avid for my blood and my skin, and piercing them with a voracity of which I had no conception; the accursed insects gave me convulsions, made my muscles contract spasmodically, and poisoned my blood.

At the first light of dawn Lorenzo[19] (for such was the jailer's name) had my bed made and the place swept and dusted, and one of his *sbirri* brought me water to wash in. I wanted to go out into the garret, but Lorenzo told me it was not allowed. He gave me two thick books, which I refrained from opening, not being certain that I could control a first burst of indignation which they might arouse in me and which the spy would have reported. After leaving me my victuals and cutting two lemons for me, he went away.

After quickly eating my soup to eat it hot, I put one book under the light which reached the hole from the dormer, and I saw that I could easily read it. I look at the title, and I see *La Cité mystique de Soeur Marie de Jésus appelée d'Agreda.*[20] I had never heard of it. The second book was by a Jesuit whose name I have forgotten.[21] He instituted a new special adoration directed to the heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Of all the human parts of our divine mediator, it was the heart which, according to the author, should be especially adored—the strange idea of an ignorant fool, reading the first page of whose book was enough to revolt me, for I thought that the heart was an organ no worthier than the lungs. The *Cité mystique* interested me a little.

I read everything that the extravagance of the heated imagination of an extremely devout Spanish virgin, given to melancholy, shut up in a convent, and guided by ignorant and flattering confessors, could bring forth. All these chimerical and monstrous visions were adorned with the name of revelations; in love with the Holy Virgin and admitted to her intimate friendship, she had received a command from God himself to write the life of his divine mother; the information which she needed and which no one could have read anywhere had been supplied her by the Holy Spirit.

So she began the history of the mother of God not at her birth but at the moment of her most immaculate conception in the womb of St. Anne. This Sister María of Agreda was the Superior of a convent of Franciscan nuns[22] which she founded in her own house. After narrating in detail all that her great heroine did during the nine months before her birth, she said that at the age of three years she was sweeping her house, aided by nine hundred servants, all angels, whom God had bestowed on her, under the personal command of their own prince, Michael, who came and went between her and God and God and her on their reciprocal embassies. What is striking in this book is the certainty which is borne in upon the judicious reader that there is nothing in it which the more than fanatical author could think she had invented; invention cannot go so far; everything is told in perfect good faith; they are the visions of a sublimated cerebellum which, without a trace of pride, drunk with God, believes that it reveals nothing but what the Holy Spirit dictates to it. The book was printed with the permission of the Inquisition. I could not get over my astonishment. Far from increasing or exciting in my mind a fervor or a zeal for religion, the work tempted me to regard as fabulous all that we have in the way of mysticism and of dogma as well.

The nature of the book entails certain consequences.

A reader with a mind more susceptible to the miraculous and fonder of it than mine is in danger, when he reads it, of becoming a visionary and a maniacal scribbler like the virgin herself. The need to occupy myself with something led me to spend a week over this masterpiece of hyperexalted invention; I said nothing about it to the stupid jailer; but I could bear no more. As soon as I fell asleep I was aware of the plague with which Sister d'Agreda had infected my mind, weakened by melancholy and bad food. My extravagant dreams made me laugh when I recalled them in my waking hours, for I wanted to write them down, and if I had had writing materials I should perhaps have produced a work up there even madder than the one Signor Cavalli had sent me. From that time on I saw how mistaken they are who attribute a certain strength to the human mind; its strength is only relative, and a man who studied himself thoroughly would find nothing in him but weakness. I saw that though men do not often go mad, it is nevertheless true that the thing is easy. Our reason is like gunpowder, which, though very easy to ignite, nevertheless never catches fire unless fire is applied to it; or like a drinking glass, which never breaks unless it is broken. The Spanish woman's book is just what is needed to drive a man mad; but for the poison to take effect, he must be confined under the Leads alone and deprived of any other occupation.

In the month of November 1767, when I was traveling from Pamplona to Madrid, my driver Andrea Capello stopped for dinner in a town in Old Castille which was so gloomy and ugly that I felt curious to know its name. Oh, how I laughed when I was told that it was Agreda![23] "So it was here," I said to myself, "that the brain of that holy madwoman gave birth to her masterpiece, which, if I had never had anything to do with Signor Cavalli, I should never have known!" An old priest, who conceived the highest esteem for me as soon as I questioned him about the life of that fortunate friend of the mother of her Creator, showed me the very place where she had written, assuring me that the father, mother, and sister of the divine biographer had all been saints. He told me, and it was true, that Spain had solicited Rome for her canonization together with that of the Venerable Palafox.[24] It was perhaps this mystical city[25] which gave Father Malagrida[26] the desire to write the life of St. Anne, which the Holy Spirit also dictated to him; but the poor Jesuit had to suffer martyrdom for it—all the more reason for securing his canonization when the Society revives and recovers its ancient splendor.[27]

At the end of nine or ten days I had no more money. Lorenzo asked me where he should go for some, and I laconically answered: "Nowhere." What offended this ignorant, curious, and talkative man was my silence. The next morning he told me that the tribunal granted me fifty soldi[28] a day, which he was to disburse and of which he would render me an account each month, and that he would use what I had left over as I instructed him. I told him to bring me the *Gazette de Leyde*[29] twice a week and he answered that it was not allowed. Seventy-five lire a month were more than I needed, since I could no longer eat. The extreme heat and the inanition brought on by lack of food had enervated me. It was the season of the pestilential dog days; the power of the sun's rays striking on the lead plates which covered the roof of my prison kept me as it were in a sweating room; the perspiration which oozed from my epidermis streamed onto the floor to left and right of my armchair, in which I sat stark naked.

Not having once gone to stool during the two weeks I had been there, I went and I thought I should die from pains of which I had no conception. They came from internal hemorrhoids. It was there that I acquired that tormenting malady, from which I have never recovered;

this keepsake, which now and again reminds me of its source, does nothing to make me cherish it. If natural philosophy does not teach us remedies to cure a number of diseases, it at least provides us with infallible means of acquiring them. However, my malady gained me compliments in Russia; it is so greatly esteemed that I did not dare to complain of it when I was there ten years later. The same thing happened to me in Constantinople, when I had a cold in the head and complained of it in the presence of a Turk; he said nothing, but he thought to himself that such a dog as I was unworthy of it.

On the same day violent chills showed me that I was attacked by fever. I stayed in bed and the next morning I said nothing about it; but on the day after, when Lorenzo found all my food still untouched, he asked me how I was.

"Perfectly well."

"No, Signore, for you do not eat. You are ill, and you will see the magnanimity of the tribunal, which will supply you with a physician, medicines, medicaments, and a surgeon, all for nothing."

Three hours later I saw him without any of his henchmen, carrying a candle, and preceding a grave personage whose imposing physiognomy informed me that he was a physician.[30] I was at the height of the fever which had been burning my blood for three days. He questioned me, and I answered that to my confessor and my physician I never spoke except without a witness. He told Lorenzo to leave. Lorenzo refused, and the learned doctor left, saying that I was in danger of death. It was what I wanted. I also felt some satisfaction in doing something which would show the pitiless tyrants who had confined me there the inhumanity of their proceedings.

Four hours later I heard the noise of bolts. The physician came in, holding a branched candlestick, and Lorenzo remained outside. I was in an extreme languor, which I found truly restful. A person who is really ill is free from the torment of boredom. I was delighted to see the villain left outside, for I could not bear him since he had explained the iron collar to me.

In a short quarter of an hour I told the learned doctor everything.

"If you want to recover your health," he said, "you must banish grief."

"Write me a prescription for that and take it to the only apothecary who can fill it. Signor Cavalli is the bad physician who gave me the *Heart of Jesus* and the *Mystical City.*"

"Those two drugs may well have given you your fever and hemorrhoids; I will not abandon you."

He left after himself making me a large quantity of lemonade, which he asked me to drink frequently. I spent the night in exhaustion, dreaming of mystical extravagances.

The next morning, two hours later than usual, I saw him with Lorenzo and a surgeon who bled me. He left me a medicine which he told me to take in the evening and a bottle of broth.

"I have obtained permission," he said, "to have you moved to the garret, where it is not as hot as it is here, where the atmosphere is stifling."

"I decline the favor, for I loathe the rats, of whose existence you are not aware, and which will certainly get into my bed."

"How distressing! I told Signor Cavalli that he came very near to killing you with his books, and he said to return them to him and he would give you Boethius[31] instead. Here it is."

"He is an author who is superior to Seneca, and I thank you."

"I leave you a syringe and barley water; keep yourself amused with enemas."

He made me four visits and he pulled me through;

my appetite came back. By the beginning of September I was in good health. My only real afflictions were the extreme heat, the fleas, and the boredom, for I could not always read Boethius. Lorenzo told me that I had permission to leave my cell to bathe while I was waiting for my bed to be made and the place to be swept, the only way to reduce the number of the fleas which were eating me alive. It was a respite. I took advantage of the eight or ten minutes to walk energetically; the terrified rats did not dare to show themselves. The same day on which Lorenzo allowed me this relief, he gave me an accounting of my money. He was left owing me twenty-five or thirty lire, which I was not allowed to put in my purse. I let him keep them, telling him to have masses said for me. He thanked me as fulsomely as if he himself were the priest who was to celebrate them. I did the same every month, and I never saw any receipts from a priest; it is certain that the least injustice Lorenzo could do me was to appropriate my money and say my masses himself in some tavern.

I went on in this way, persuading myself every day that I should be sent home; I never went to bed without a sort of certainty that the next day someone would come to tell me that I was free; but when, always frustrated in my hope, I began thinking that a fixed term of imprisonment might have been meted out to me, I decided that it could not end later than October 1st, the day on which the reign of the new Inquisitors[32] began. I accordingly concluded that my imprisonment would continue as long as the present Inquisitors remained in office, and that was why I had never seen the Secretary, who, if the matter had not been decided, would come to examine me, convict me of my crimes, and pronounce my sentence:[33] I thought it could not fail to be so because it was only natural—a poor argument under the Leads, where nothing is done according to nature. I imagined that the Inquisitors must have recognized their injustice in my innocence and hence were keeping me there only as a matter of form and for the sake of their reputation, but that they would certainly have to set me free when their reign ended. I even felt that I could forgive them and forget the wrong they had done me. "How," I said to myself, "could they leave me here at the disposition of their successors, to whom they could have given no sufficient grounds for condemning me?" I thought it impossible that they could condemn me and write my sentence without communicating it to me and telling me the reason for it. That the right was on my side seemed to me incontestable, and I argued accordingly; but my argument had no currency in respect to the rules of a tribunal which differs from the legal tribunals of every government on earth. When this tribunal proceeds against a delinquent, it is already sure that he is such; so what need has it to talk with him? And when it has condemned him, what need is there to give him the bad news of his sentence? His consent is not necessary; it is better, they say, to let him hope; if he is told, that will not shorten his stay in prison by one hour; the wise man tells his business to no one; and the only business of the Venetian tribunal is to judge and to sentence; the guilty person is a machine which does not need to take any part in the business in order to co-operate in it; he is a nail which, to go into a plank, needs only to be hammered.

I knew something about these practices of the colossus under whose feet I lay; but there are things on earth which no one can ever say he knows well until he has experienced them. If among my readers there is one to whom these rules appear unjust, I forgive him because, to tell the truth, they certainly appear to be so; but he should know that, once established, they become necessary, for a tribunal of this sort could not continue to exist except by virtue of them. They who keep them in force are Senators chosen from among those who are best qualified and are known as the most virtuous.[34]

On September 30th I spent the night unable to sleep; I was impatient to see the new day appear, for I felt sure that I should be set free The pitiless men who had put me there had ended their reign. But day appeared, Lorenzo came with my food, and announced nothing new. I spent five or six days in rage and despair. I believed it was possible that, for reasons which I could not guess, it had been decided to keep me there the rest of my life. This terrible idea made me laugh, for I knew that I had the power to remain there only a very short time, once I had made up my mind to gain freedom at the risk of my life. Either they would kill me or I would succeed in it.

Deliberata morte ferocior ("Become more implacable by resolving to die"),[35] at the beginning of November I formed the plan of escaping by force from a place where I was being kept by force; it became my only thought. I began looking for, inventing, studying a hundred ways to succeed in an enterprise which many might have attempted before me but in which no one had succeeded.

During these same days a strange event showed me the pitiable state of mind to which I was reduced. I was standing in the garret looking up at the dormer; I also saw the very thick beam. Lorenzo was coming out of my cell with two of his men when I saw the enormous beam not quiver but turn toward its right side and then at once resume its original position by a slow, uninterrupted movement in the opposite direction; feeling at the same time that I had lost my balance, I was convinced that it was an earthquake shock, and the astonished constables said the same; delighted by the phenomenon, I did not say a word. Four or five seconds later the movement occurred again, and I could not keep from uttering these words: *"Un altra, un altra, gran*

Dio, ma più forte" ("Another, another, great God, but stronger"). The constables, terrified by what they considered the impiousness of a desperate and blaspheming madman, fled in horror. Examining myself afterward, I saw that I had counted it among possible events that the Doge's Palace could collapse and at the same time I could regain my freedom: the falling palace was to deposit me safe, sound, and free on the beautiful pavement of the Piazza San Marco. It was thus that I began to go mad. The shock came from the same earthquake which flattened Lisbon about the same time.[36]

CHAPTER XIII

Various occurrences. Companions. I prepare my escape. Change of cell.

TO PREPARE my reader to understand my escape from such a place I must describe the premises to him. These prison cells, intended to hold state criminals, are actually in what is known as the garret of the Doge's Palace. The fact that its roof is covered not with tiles or bricks but with lead plates three feet square and a line[1] thick gives the name of the Leads to the prisons themselves. The only entrance to them is through the palace doors or through the prison building, by which I was brought in, crossing the Bridge of Sighs which I have already mentioned. One can go up to the prisons only by passing through the room in which the State Inquisitors meet; their secretary alone has the key to it, which the warden of the Leads has to return to him as soon as he has finished attending to the prisoners early in the morning. This is done at daybreak, because later the constables coming and going would be too much seen in a place filled with all the people who have business with the heads of the Council of Ten, who meet every day in the adjoining room known as the Bussola,[2] through which the constables must necessarily pass.

The prison cells are under the roof, and on opposite sides of the palace. Three are to the west, one of which was mine, and four are to the east. The gutter along the roof over those to the west gives onto the palace courtyard; the gutter to the east is perpendicularly above the canal called the Rio del Palazzo. On that side the cells are very light and one can stand upright in them, advantages lacking to the prison in which I was and which was called *il trave.*[*] The floor of my cell was directly above the ceiling of the Inquisitors' room, in which they usually assemble only at night after the daily session of the Council of Ten, of which all three of them are members.

Knowing all this as I did and having a perfect conception of the topography of the premises, the only way I could think of to escape which had any chance of succeeding was to make a hole in the floor of my prison; but I should need to have instruments, a difficult matter in a place where all outside communication was forbidden and neither visits nor corresponding with anyone were allowed. Having no money to bribe a constable, I could not count on any of them. Supposing that the jailer and the two underlings who accompanied him were obliging enough to let me strangle them, for I had no arms, another constable was stationed at the door of the locked gallery, which he opened only when one of his fellows who wanted to go out gave him the password. The one thought in my mind was to escape, and not finding the way in Boethius I stopped reading him. I thought of it constantly because I was certain that I should find it only by thinking of it. I have always believed that when a man takes it into his head to accomplish some project and pursues it to the exclusion of anything else, he must succeed in it despite all difficulties; such a man will become the Grand Vizier, he will become Pope, he will overthrow a monarchy, provided that he begins early; for the man who has reached the age which Fortune disdains no longer succeeds in any undertaking, and without her help one can hope for nothing. The thing is to count on her and at the same time to defy her reverses. But this is one of the most difficult of political calculations.

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[*] The word means beam. It was the enormous beam which deprived my cell of light. (C.'s note.)

In the middle of November Lorenzo told me that Messer Grande had taken a prisoner and that Secretary Businello,[3] the new Circospetto, had ordered him to put him in the worst of all the cells, so he was going to put him with me; he assured me that when he had explained to him that I had regarded having been put by myself as a favor he had answered that I must have become wiser in the four months I had been there. The news did not trouble me nor was I displeased to learn of the change of Secretary. This Signor Pietro Businello was a worthy man whom I had known in Paris when he was there on his way to London as Resident for the Republic.

An hour after the Terza bell I heard the screech of the bolts and I saw Lorenzo followed by two constables holding a handcuffed young man who was weeping. They locked him into my "home" and went off without even a word. I was on my bed, where he could not see me. His surprise amused me. Having the luck to be five feet tall, he stood upright, looking closely at my armchair, which he thought was for his own use. He sees the Boethius on the sill of the grating. He dries his tears, opens it, and disdainfully throws it down, perhaps disgusted by seeing it was in Latin. He goes to the left side of the cell and is amazed to find clothes; he approaches the alcove; he thinks he sees a bed; he puts out his hand, he touches me, and he begs my pardon; I tell him to sit down; and our acquaintance is made.

"Who are you?" I ask him.

"I am from Vicenza, my name is Maggiorin,[4] my father is coachman to the Poggiana[5] family, he kept me in school until I was eleven, where I learned to read and write, then I went to work in a wigmaker's shop, where I learned to dress hair very well. I became valet to Count XX. Two years later his only daughter came home from the convent and, dressing her hair, I fell in love with her as she did with me. After exchanging promises of marriage we surrendered to nature, and the Countess, who is eighteen as I am, became pregnant. A very devout maid discovered our relationship and the Countess's pregnancy and told her that her conscience obliged her to reveal all to her father; but my wife was able to make her keep quiet by assuring her that within a week she would have her confessor tell him the whole story. But instead of going to confession she warned me and we resolved to leave. She took a good sum of money and some diamonds which had belonged to her late mother, and we were to set off that night for Milan; but after dinner the Count sent for me, and, handing me a letter, ordered me to leave at once to deliver it directly to the person here in Venice to whom it was addressed. He spoke so kindly and calmly that I could never have suspected what happened to me. I went to fetch my cloak and in passing I said good-by to my wife, assuring her that there was nothing to fear and that she would see me back the next day. She fainted. As soon as I arrived here I took the letter to the person, who made me wait while he wrote the answer, after receiving which I went to a tavern to eat a bite and set off at once for Vicenza. But as I left the tavern the constables seized me and took me to the guardroom; I was there until the time they brought me here. I believe, Signore, that I can consider the young Countess my wife."

"You are mistaken."

"But nature—"

"Listening to nature leads a man from one folly to another until he is imprisoned under the Leads."

"Then I am under the Leads?"

"Even as I am."

He began to weep hot tears. He was a very good-looking young man, sincere, honest, and terribly in love, and I forgave the Countess, at the same time condemning the impudence of the Count, who could have had her hair dressed by a woman. In his tears and lamentations he talked of nothing but his poor Countess; he inspired me with the greatest pity. He thought someone would come back to bring him a bed and food, but I undeceived him, and I was right. I gave him some food, but he could swallow nothing. He spent the whole day complaining of his fate but only because he could not comfort his mistress and could not imagine what would become of her. She was already more than justified in my eyes, and I was sure that if the Inquisitors had been invisibly present in my cell, hearing everything the poor youth said to me, they would not only have sent him back but have married him to his mistress despite law or custom; and they might have locked up the Count her father, who had put the straw near the fire. I gave him my pallet, for though he was clean I could not but fear the dreams of a young man in love. He understood neither the magnitude of his crime nor the Count's need to have him punished in secret to save the family honor.

The next day he was brought a pallet and such a dinner as is to be had for fifteen soldi, which the tribunal allowed him "out of charity." I told the jailer that my dinner was enough for us both and that he could use what the tribunal allowed the young man to have three masses a week said for him. He gladly undertook the commission, congratulated him on being with me, and said we could walk in the garret for half an hour. I found the walking very good for my health and for my plan of escaping, which did not come to maturity until eleven months later. At the end of the rat-infested garret I saw a quantity of old household furniture lying on the floor to left and right of two chests and in front of a great pile of notebooks. I took ten or twelve of them to read for diversion. They were all criminal cases, which I found most entertaining reading, for I was free to read what in its time must have been highly secret. I saw strange answers to suggestive interrogations regarding seductions of virgins, attentions carried too far by men employed in girls' orphanages, facts about confessors who had abused their female penitents, schoolmasters convicted of pederasty, and guardians who had cheated their wards; some of them dated back two or three centuries, the style and the customs of which gave me a few hours of pleasure. Among the household implements lying about I saw a warming pan, a kitchen boiler, a fire shovel, tongs, old candelabra, earthenware pots, and a pewter syringe. I thought that some illustrious prisoner had been granted the privilege of using these implements. I also saw a sort of perfectly straight bolt as thick as my thumb and a foot and a half long. I did not touch them. The time had not yet come to look for a use for anything.

One fine day toward the end of the month my companion was taken away. Lorenzo told me he had been sentenced to the prisons known as "the Four."[6] They are within the precincts of the prison building.[7] They belong to the State Inquisitors. The prisoners who are there enjoy the privilege of calling the jailers whenever they need to; the cells are dark; but their inhabitants are provided with an oil lamp; everything is made of marble, and there is no fear of fire. I learned long afterward that poor Maggiorin remained there for five years and was afterward sent to Cerigo[8] for ten. I do not know if he died there. He was good company for me, and I realized it when, left alone again, I relapsed into melancholy. However, the privilege of walking in the garret for half an hour every day was still allowed me. I examined everything in it. One of the big chests was filled with fine paper, pieces of cardboard, untrimmed goose quills, and balls of string; the other was nailed shut. A piece of black polished marble an inch thick, six inches long, and three wide caught my eye; I took it with no particular purpose and put it under my shirts in my cell.

A week after Maggiorin left, Lorenzo told me I was likely to have a new companion. The fellow, who was by nature nothing but a gossip, began to be annoyed because I never asked him a question. His duty was not to gossip, and, having no chance to display his discretion to me, he imagined that I never interrogated him because I supposed he knew nothing; his self-esteem was hurt, and to show me that I was wrong he began to chatter without being questioned.

He told me he believed I should often have new visitors, for the six other cells each held two people who were not of a sort to be sent to "the Four." After a long time, seeing that I did not ask him what the distinction was, he said that in "the Four" there was a hodgepodge of all sorts of people whose sentences, though they did not know them, were recorded in writing; he added that those who, like myself, were in his charge "under the Leads" were all people of the greatest distinction and guilty of crimes which inquisitive persons could not guess.

"If you knew, Signore, what sort of people they are who share your fate! You would be astonished, for it's true they tell me you are intelligent; but, begging your pardon— You know there's no use your being intelligent only to be entertained here . . . You understand me . . . fifty soldi a day is something . . . they give a citi-

zen three lire,[9] *a gentleman four, and a foreign Count eight—I ought to know, for it all goes through my hands.''*

At this point he pronounced his own eulogy, made up entirely of negative qualities:

''I am neither a thief nor a traitor nor a miser nor cantankerous nor cruel like all my predecessors, and when I've drunk an extra pint I grow kinder; if my father had sent me to school I'd have learned to read and write and perhaps I'd be Messer Grande; but it's not my fault. Signor Andrea Diedo[10] thinks highly of me, and my wife, who's only twenty-four and who prepares your food every day, goes to speak with him whenever she likes and he has her shown right in even when he's in bed, a favor he doesn't do to any Senator. I promise you you'll have all the new arrivals with you, though not for long, for as soon as the Secretary has learned from their own lips what he needs to know he sends them on to their destination, either to ''the Four'' or to some fort or to the Levant or, if they're foreigners, to the frontiers of the State, for the government doesn't consider itself free to deal with the subjects of other princes unless they're in its service. The clemency of the tribunal, Signore, has no equal; and there's not another in the world which makes life so easy for its prisoners; people say it is cruel because it won't let them write or have visitors, but that's nonsense, because writing and seeing people is a waste of time; you'll tell me you have nothing to do, but we who work here can't say as much.''

Such, or very nearly such, was the first harangue with which the scoundrel honored me and which, to tell the truth, I found amusing. I saw that if the man had been a little less stupid he would have been more malicious. I decided to profit by his stupidity.

The next morning they brought my new cell-mate, who was treated the first day as Maggiorin had been. I learned that I needed a second ivory spoon, for the first day the newcomer was left with nothing to eat; it was up to me to treat him.

The man, to whom I showed myself at once, made me a deep bow. My beard, which was already four inches long, was even more imposing than my figure. Lorenzo often lent me his scissors to cut my toenails; but I was forbidden to cut my beard under threat of severe penalties. One gets used to everything.

My new companion was a man of fifty, of the same height as myself, slightly stooped, gaunt, with a big mouth and long dirty teeth; he had small hazel eyes and long red lashes, a round black wig which stank with oil, and a coat of coarse gray cloth. Despite accepting my dinner he was deliberately distant; he did not say a word to me all day and I did likewise; but he changed his tactics the next day. Early in the morning he was brought a bed which belonged to him and some linen in a bag. But for me, Maggiorin could not have changed his shirt. The jailer asked him what he wanted for dinner and for money to buy it with.

"I have no money."

"A rich man like you has no money?"

"I haven't a soldo."

"Very well. I will go at once and bring you a pound and a half of ration biscuits[11] and a jug of excellent water. Those are the regulations."

He brought them before he went away, leaving me with the scarecrow.

I hear him sigh, I feel sorry for him, and I break the silence.

"Do not sigh, Signore, you shall dine with me; but it seems to me you made a great mistake in coming here without money."

"I have some; but it's not the thing to tell these harpies."

"Most sagacious—if it didn't condemn you to bread and water! May I ask you if you know the reason for your being in prison?"

"Yes, Signore, I know it; and to show you how pitiful it is I will tell you my story in a few words.

"My name is Sgualdo Nobili.[12] I am the son of a peasant, who had me taught to write and who at his death left me his little house and the patch of ground belonging to it. My birthplace is in Friuli, a day's journey from Udine. A swift stream called the Corno, which too often damaged my little property, determined me to sell it ten years ago and settle in Venice. I was paid eight thousand lire for it in fine gold zecchini. I had been told that in the capital of this glorious Republic everyone enjoyed an honorable freedom and that an industrious man with a capital such as mine could live there very comfortably by lending against pledges. Sure of my thrift, my judgment, and my knowledge of the world, I determined to practice that trade. I rented a small house in the Cannaregio quarter, I furnished it, and, living by myself, I spent two untroubled years which made me richer by ten thousand lire, for, wanting to live well, I spent a thousand on my household expenses. I was sure that I should soon be ten times as rich. About that time I lent a Jew two zecchini on a number of handsomely bound books, among which I found Charron's *Wisdom*.[13] I have never been fond of reading, I had never read anything but Christian doctrine; but Charron's *Wisdom* showed me how fortunate one is who can read. This book, Signore, which perhaps you do not know, is excellent. When one has read it one finds that one does not have to read any others; for it contains everything that a human being needs to know; it rids him of all the prejudices with which he was infected in childhood; it delivers him from the terrors of a future life; it opens his eyes, it shows him the road to happiness, it makes him wise. Find a way to read it and disregard the fools who will tell you that it is forbidden."

From this discourse I knew my man, for I knew Charron, though I was not aware that he had been translated. But what books are not translated in Venice? Charron, a great admirer of Montaigne,[14] thought that he was outdoing his model, but he did not. He gave a methodical form to a number of things which Montaigne puts down without order and which, dropped here and there by that great man, did not seem liable to censure; but Charron, a priest and a theologian, was justly condemned. He has not been much read. The stupid Italian who translated him did not even know that the translation of the word *sagesse* is *sapienza*. Charron had the impertinence to give his book the title of Solomon's. My cell-mate continued:

"Freed by Charron from my scruples and all my old false impressions, I worked at my business to such effect that in six years I had nine thousand zecchini. You must not be surprised, for in this rich city gambling, debauchery, and idleness have everyone disorganized and needing money, and the wise profit by what the fools throw away.

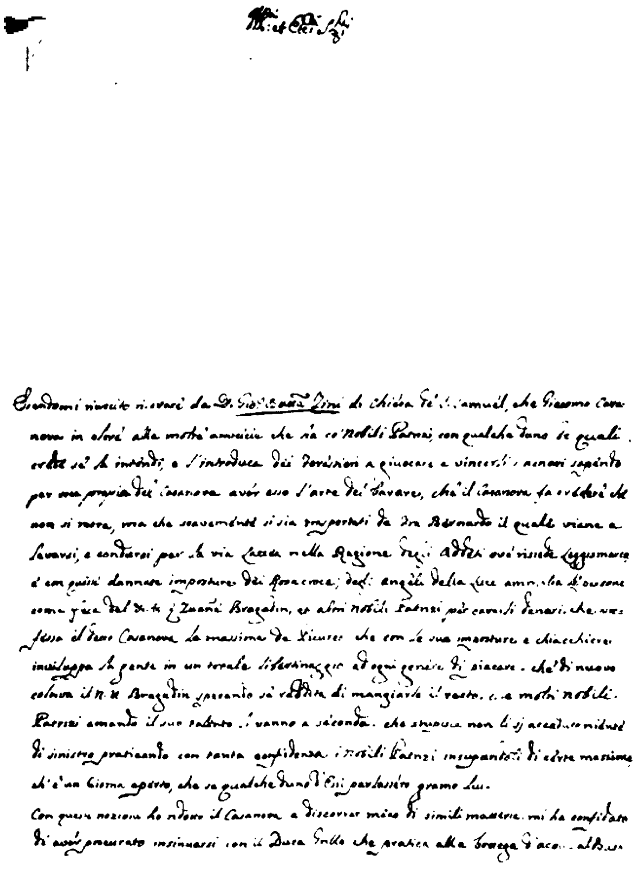
"Three years ago a certain Count Seriman[15] made my acquaintance and, seeing what my thrift had made me, asked me to take five hundred zecchini from him, invest them in my business, and give him half the profits. He only asked a receipt, in which I undertook to return the amount to him on demand. At the end of the year I gave him seventy-five zecchini, which amounted to fifteen per cent, and he gave me a receipt, but he showed his dissatisfaction. He was wrong, for, having money enough, I did not use his in my transactions. The second year I did the same, out of pure generosity; but we went on to quarrel, so that he demanded the return of his money. I answered that I would deduct the hundred and fifty zecchini he had received; but that made him furious and he immediately served me with an extrajudiciary[16] demanding the return of the entire amount. A clever lawyer undertook my defense and gained me two years; three months ago I was offered a compromise, and I refused; but fearing violence I turned to the Abate Giustiniani, confidential agent of the Marchese di Montealegre,[17] the Spanish Ambassador, who rented me a small house on the Lista,[18] where one is safe from surprises. I was perfectly willing to give Count Seriman back his money, but I claimed the right to deduct the hundred zecchini I had paid in legal costs for the suit he had brought against me. My lawyer came to see me a week ago with the Count's, and I showed them the two hundred and fifty zecchini in a purse, which I was prepared to give them and not a soldo more. They left, both dissatisfied. Three days ago the Abate Giustiniani sent me word that the Ambassador had seen fit to permit the State Inquisitors to send their men to my house to serve a warrant. I did not know that it could be done. I awaited their visit courageously, after putting all my money in a safe place. I would never have believed that the Ambassador would have let them arrest me as they did. At daybreak Messer Grande came to my house, demanded three hundred and fifty zecchini, and, upon my answering that I did not have a soldo, he carried me off; and here I am."

After this narrative I made my own reflections on the infamous scoundrel who had been put in my company and on the honor he had done me to think that I was a scoundrel like himself, for otherwise he would not have told me the whole story, supposing that I was one to applaud it. In all the stupid remarks he made to me for three days on end, always quoting Charron, I saw the truth of the proverb, *Guardati da colui che non ha letto che un libro solo* ("Beware of the man who has read only one book"). Charron had made him an atheist, and he openly boasted of it. An hour after the Terza on the fourth day Lorenzo came and told him to accompany him downstairs to talk with the Secretary. He dressed quickly, and instead of his own shoes he put on mine without my noticing it. He went down with Lorenzo; a half hour later he came upstairs again crying and took from his shoes two purses in which he had three hundred and fifty zecchini and which, preceded by Lorenzo, he carried to the Secretary. He came up again afterward, took his cloak, and left; Lorenzo told me later that he had been released. The next morning his clothes were sent for. I have always believed that the Secretary made him confess that he had the money by threatening him with torture—which, as a threat, may still be good for something.

On the first day of the year 1756 I received my New Year's gifts. Lorenzo brought me a dressing gown lined with fox fur, a silk coverlet stuffed with cotton, and a bearskin bag to put my legs into during the cold weather, which was as extreme as the heat I had endured in August. As he gave them to me he said that, by order of the Secretary, I could have the use of six zecchini a month to buy all the books I wanted and the *Gazette* as well, and that it was a present from Signor Bragadin. I asked Lorenzo for a pencil and wrote on a scrap of paper: *"I am grateful to the mercy of the tribunal and the virtue of Signor Bragadin."*

One must have been in my situation to understand the sentiments which this bounty aroused in my soul; in the intensity of my gratitude I forgave my oppressors and I almost abandoned my plan of escaping; so pliable is man when misfortune degrades him. Lorenzo told me that Signor Bragadin had come before the three Inquisitors and had gone down on his knees and wept as he begged them for the favor of allowing me to receive this proof of his constant affection if I was still among the living; and that they had been so touched that they could not refuse him. I immediately wrote down the titles of all the books I wanted.

One fine morning as I was walking in the garret my



Ill.mi et Ecc.mi Sig.ri

Essendomi riuscito ricavare da D. Gio: Batta Zini di chiesa de S. Samuel, che Giacomo Casanova in oltre alla molta amicizia che ha co' Nobili Patrizj, con qualche d'uno de quali crede se la intenda, e s'introduca dai medesimi a giuocare e vincerli i denari sapendo per una propria del Casanova aver esso l'arte del barare, che il Casanova fa credere che non si trova, ma che scaltramente si sia trasportato da Don Bernardo il quale viene a levarsi, e condursi per la via Larga nella Ragione degli Addetti ove risiede [illegible] e con quivi dannate imposture dei Rosacroce, degli angeli della luce ammalia le persone come fece dal detto N. H. Zuane Bragadin, et altri Nobili Patrizi per carpirli denari. che professa il detto Casanova la massima da Epicureo che con le sue imposture e chiacchiere inviluppa la gente in un totale libertinaggio ad ogni genere di piacere. che di nuovo coltiva il N. H. Bragadin sperando di redditi di mangiarsi il resto, e a molti Nobili Patrizi amanti il suo talento i vanno a seconda. che stupisce non li sia accaduto niente di sinistro praticando con tanta confidenza i Nobili Patrizi insegnando loro di esser massime ch'è un Cisma aperto, che se qualche d'uno d'Essi parlassero [illegible] lui.

Con questa nozione ho ridotto il Casanova a discorrer meco di simili materie. mi ha confidato di aver procurato insinuarsi con il Duca Grillo che pratica alla bottega d'acque [illegible]

G. B. Manuzzi's Report to the Inquisitors, July 17, 1775

eyes lingered over the long bolt which was there on the floor and I considered its possibilities as a weapon of attack and defense; I picked it up and took it into my cell, putting it under my coat with the piece of black marble; as soon as I was alone I found that the latter made a perfect whetstone, for, after rubbing the end of the bolt against the marble for a long time I saw that it showed a flat edge.

Interested in this strange kind of work, in which I was a novice, and to which I was inspired by the hope of possessing a tool which must be strictly forbidden up there, and further urged on by pride in managing to produce a weapon without the necessary instruments to make it with, even exasperated by the very difficulties—for I had to rub the bolt almost in darkness, working on the sill, only able to keep the stone from slipping with my left hand, and having no oil with which to wet and soften the iron on which I wanted to put a point—I used nothing but my saliva and I toiled for two weeks filing down eight triangular facets which at their apexes formed a perfect point; the facets were an inch and a half long. The result was an octagonal stiletto as well proportioned as one could have expected from a good cutler. It is impossible to imagine the pain and boredom I suffered and the patience I needed to accomplish this distasteful piece of work with not a tool except a loose piece of stone; for me it was torture of a kind *quam siculi non invenere tyranni* (''which even the Sicilian tyrants did not invent'').[19] I could no longer move my right arm and my shoulder seemed to be out of joint. The palm of my hand had become one great sore after the vessels broke; despite my pain I did not stop my work; I was determined to see it perfected.

Proud of my production and not yet having decided how and for what I might use it, I thought about hiding it in some place where it would escape even a search; I hit upon the idea of putting it in the stuffing of my armchair, not on top, however, where, by taking up the cushion, anyone could see the unevenness it would cause in the surface, but by turning the chair upside down; I then pushed the bolt into it all the way, so that for anyone to find it he would have to know it was there. Thus did God provide me with what I needed for an escape which was to be a wonder if not a miracle. I admit that I am proud of it; but my pride does not come from my having succeeded, for luck had a good deal to do with that; it comes from my having concluded that the thing could be done and having had the courage to undertake it.

After three or four days spent in reflecting on the use to which I should put the bolt which I had transformed into a pike as thick as a walking stick and twenty inches[20] long, whose excellent sharp point showed me that it was not necessary to turn iron into steel in order to give it one, I saw that I had only to make a hole in the floor under my bed.

I was sure that the room below could only be the one in which I had seen Signor Cavalli; I was sure that it was opened every morning; and I was sure that I could easily let myself down, once the hole was made, by using my bedclothes, of which I would make a sort of rope and fasten the upper end of it to a trestle of my bed. Once in the room I would remain concealed under the tribunal's great table, and in the morning, as soon as I saw the door opened, I would go out by it and be in a place of safety before I could be pursued. I thought it probable that Lorenzo left one of his constables in the room as a guard, and if that were the case I would have killed the man at once by plunging my pike into his throat. Everything was well thought out; but since the floor might be double or even triple the work could have taken me one or two months; I thought it would be very difficult to keep the constables from sweeping my cell for so long. If I had forbidden them to do it I should have made them suspicious, and the more so since, to rid myself of the fleas, I had insisted that they sweep every day, so that the broom itself would have revealed the hole to them; I had to be absolutely certain that this misfortune would not befall me.

In the meanwhile I forbade them to sweep, at the same time not saying why I forbade it. A week or ten days later Lorenzo asked me why; I said that it was because the dust rising from the floor went into my lungs and might bring on tubercles.

"We will sprinkle water on the floor," he said.

"Certainly not, for the dampness can cause a plethora."

But a week later he ordered his men to sweep; he had them carry the bed out of my cell and, on the excuse of getting the place thoroughly cleaned, he lit a candle. I saw that it was suspicion which prompted this performance; but I showed indifference. I then hit on the way to advance my plan. The next morning I bloodied my handkerchief by pricking my finger and I waited for Lorenzo in bed.

"I had such a fit of coughing," I said, "that a vein in my chest broke and made me throw up all the blood you see; have the physician sent to me."

The learned physician came, he ordered me bled and wrote me a prescription. I told him that Lorenzo had brought on my trouble by insisting on sweeping. He reproached him and said that a young wigmaker[21] had just died of consumption from the same cause, for, according to him, dust once inhaled was never exhaled. Lorenzo swore he thought he was rendering me a service and that he would never have any sweeping done again as long as he lived. I laughed to myself, because the physician could not have spoken to better purpose if he had been my confederate. The constables who heard his doctrine were delighted to learn it and counted it among their acts of charity that henceforth they only swept the cells of those who were surly to them.

After the physician left, Lorenzo asked me to forgive him and assured me that all his other prisoners were in good health despite his having their rooms swept every day. He called them "rooms."

"But it is an important matter," he said, "and I will explain it to them, for I regard you all as my children."

I really needed the bleeding; it ended my sleepnessness and cured me of the spasmodic contractions which terrified me.

I had gained a great point; but the time to begin working had not yet come. The cold was intense and my hands could not hold the pike without freezing. My undertaking demanded a man foresighted enough to avoid anything which could easily be foreseen and a spirit bold and intrepid enough to resign itself to chance in case anything foreseen did not occur. The man who must act thus is most unfortunate; but a sound political calculation teaches that for the sake of all it is expedient[22] to risk all.

The overlong nights of winter distressed me. I had to spend nineteen mortal hours in absolute darkness; and on foggy days, which are not uncommon in Venice, the light which came in through the window and the hole in the door was not enough for me to read my book by. Since I could not read I went back to thinking of my escape, and a mind always fixed on one idea can go mad. Having an oil lamp would have made me happy; I thought about it, and I rejoiced when I believed I had found a way to obtain one by a ruse. To make the lamp I had to have the ingredients which would compose it. I needed a vessel, linen or cotton wicks, oil, a flint and steel, matches, and punk. The vessel could be a small earthenware pot, and I had the one in which my eggs were cooked in butter. I managed to get Lucca oil bought for me on the excuse that salad dressed with ordinary oil made me ill. From my quilt I pulled out enough cotton to make some wicks. I pretended to be tormented by a bad toothache, and I told Lorenzo I needed some pumice stone; he did not know what it was, and I substituted a gun flint, saying that it would produce the same effect if it was soaked in strong vinegar for a day and then applied to my tooth, when it would relieve the pain. Lorenzo said that my vinegar was of the best and that I could put a flint in it myself, and he threw me three or four. A buckle on the belt of my breeches would serve me as a steel; all I still needed was sulphur and tinder, but I had no idea how to go about getting them. But here is the way I found by dint of thinking about it, and the way Fortune took a hand in it.

I had a sort of measles which, after drying up, had left scabs on my arm that made me itch uncomfortably; and I told Lorenzo to ask the physician for a remedy. The next morning he brought me a note, which the Secretary had read, in which the physician had written: "One day of dieting and four ounces of oil of sweet almonds, and the skin will be cured; or application of an ointment of flowers of sulphur; but this topical remedy is dangerous."

"I don't care about the danger," I said to Lorenzo; "buy some of the ointment and bring it to me tomorrow; or give me some sulphur, I have butter and I will make the ointment myself; have you any matches? Give me some."

He took out all the matches he had in his pocket and gave them to me. How easily one is comforted when one is in distress!

I spent two or three hours considering what I could substitute for the punk, the only ingredient I did not have and which I could not imagine an excuse for obtaining, when I suddenly remembered that I had ordered my tailor to line my taffeta coat with punk under the arms and cover it with oilcloth, to prevent the stain from sweat which, chiefly in summer, spoils all coats at that particular place. My coat was there before me, it was brand-new, and my heart pounded; my tailor might have forgotten my order, and I was between hope and dread. I had to take only two steps to make sure, and I did not dare. I was afraid I should not find the punk and would have to give up so dear a hope. I finally make up my mind, I approach the board on which I had put my coat, and, suddenly feeling that I am unworthy of such a grace, I go down on my knees praying God that the tailor had not forgotten my order. After this fervent prayer I unfold my coat, I unsew the oilcloth, and I find the punk. My joy was great. It was natural that I should thank God, since I had looked for the punk confiding in his goodness; and I did so with an overflowing heart.

Examining my act of thanksgiving, I did not consider that I had been a fool, as I did when I reflected on the prayer I had offered to the master of all when I went to look for the punk. I would not have done it before I was put under the Leads, nor would I do it today; but being deprived of physical freedom stupefies the faculties of the soul. One should pray to God to grant graces, not to reverse the course of nature by miracles. If the tailor had not put the punk under the arms of my coat, I ought to have been sure that I should not find it; and if he had, I ought to have been sure that I should find it. So why was I troubling the master of nature? The meaning of my first prayer could only be: "Lord, let me find the punk even if the tailor forgot it, and if he put it in do not make it disappear." Some theologian might find my prayer pious, holy, and perfectly reasonable, for he would say it was based on the power of faith; and he would be right, just as I, who am not a theologian, am right to consider it absurd. In any case I do not need to be a great theologian to consider my act of thanksgiving praiseworthy. I thanked God that the tailor's memory had not failed him, and my gratitude was justified by the principles of a sound philosophy.

No sooner was I in possession of the punk I needed than I put oil into a pot, then a wick, and I saw a lamp. What a satisfaction it was to owe the boon only to myself and to break a most cruel regulation! For me, there were no more nights. Farewell salad! I was very fond of it, but I did not regret it; I thought that oil was created only to give us light. I decided to begin breaking the floor on the first Monday in Lent, for during the license of the Carnival I feared visitors from day to day; and I was right. On Quinquagesima Sunday at noon I heard the noise of the bolts, and I saw Lorenzo followed by a very fat man whom I at once recognized as the Jew Gabriel Schalon,[23] celebrated for his ability to raise money for young men by ruinous deals; we knew each other, so we exchanged the usual greetings the occasion demanded. The company of this man was not of a sort to please me, but I had to be patient; he was locked in. He told Lorenzo to go to his house to fetch his dinner, a bed, and everything he needed; and he answered that they would talk about it the next day.

This Jew, who was brainless, ignorant, talkative, and stupid except in his trade, began by congratulating me on my having been chosen above all others to share his company. My only answer was to offer him half of my dinner, which he refused, saying that he ate only food which was pure and that he had every expectation of eating his supper at home.

"When?"

"Tonight. You remember that when I asked him for my bed he said that we would talk about it tomorrow. That obviously means I do not need it. Can you suppose that they would leave a man like me without anything to eat?"

"That is how I was treated."

"No doubt; but there is some difference between you and me; and, strictly between ourselves, the State Inquisitors made a blunder when they had me arrested and they must now be wondering how to set their mistake right."

"They may give you a pension, for you are a man to be treated with consideration."

"Your conclusion is very sound; for there is not a broker on the Exchange more useful than myself to domestic trade, and the Five Savi[24] have profited greatly by the advice I have often given them. My imprisonment is a strange mistake, which may well be a lucky one for you."

"Lucky? How?"

"A month will not pass before I will have you out of here. I know to whom I must speak and what to say."

"Then I count on you."

The idiotic scoundrel thought he amounted to something. He insisted on telling me what people were saying about me; and since he only reported what the greatest fools in the city could find to say he bored me. I took up a book, and he had the impertinence to ask me not to read. His passion was talking, and always about himself.

I did not dare to light my lamp, and, when night drew on, he made up his mind to accept some bread and Cyprus wine and my pallet, which had become the bed for all new arrivals. The next morning he was brought food from his house and a bed. I had this stone around my neck for eight or nine weeks,[25] for before sentencing him to "the Four" the Secretary had to talk with him several times to bring to light his shady deals and to make him cancel some illegal contracts he had made. He confessed to me himself that he had bought certain revenues from Signor Domenico Micheli[26] which could not belong to the buyer until after the death of the Cavaliere Antonio, his father.

"It is true," he said, "that the seller lost a hundred per cent on the transaction, but it must be considered that the buyer would have lost everything if the son had died before the father."

When I saw that my unwelcome companion was not leaving, I resolved to light my lamp; he promised secrecy, but he kept quiet only as long as he remained with me; for, though there were no consequences, Lorenzo learned of it. In short the man was a burden to me and prevented me from working at my escape.

He also prevented me from the reading which kept me amused; demanding, ignorant, superstitious, blustering, timid, sometimes giving in to tears and despair, he tried to make me join in his noisy remonstrances by showing me that his imprisonment was ruining his reputation; I assured him that, so far as his reputation went, he had nothing to fear, and he took my gibe for a compliment. He refused to admit that he was avaricious, and to convince him that he was I demonstrated to him that if the State Inquisitors gave him a hundred zecchini a day and at the same time opened the gate of the prison for him, he would not leave in order not to lose the hundred zecchini. He had to agree, and he laughed over it.

He was a Talmudist, as all Jews are today; and he tried to make me believe that he was very much attached to his religion because of its wisdom. Being the son of a rabbi, he was learned in its ceremonies; but in my subsequent study of the human race I have seen that the majority of men believe that the most essential part of religion is discipline.

The Jew was excessively fat and, never leaving his bed and sleeping by day, he soon could not sleep at night, while he heard me sleeping quite well. Once he took it into his head to wake me when I was in my deepest sleep.

"In God's name," I said, "what do you want? Why did you wake me? If you die, I'll forgive you."

"Alas, my dear friend, I cannot sleep, have pity on me and let us talk a little."

"And you call me your dear friend? Hateful man! I believe that your insomnia is a real torture, and I am sorry for you; but if ever you dare again to relieve your misery by depriving me of the greatest good Nature allows me to enjoy in the misfortune which overwhelms me, I will get out of my bed and come and strangle you."

"Forgive me, I beg you, and be sure that I will never wake you in future."

It is possible that I would not have strangled him, but it is certain that he put the temptation in my way. A man in prison who is in the arms of sweet slumber is not in prison, and the sleeping slave does not feel the chains of slavery, just as kings do not reign in sleep. Hence the prisoner must regard the man thoughtless enough to wake him as an executioner come to deprive him of his freedom and plunge him back into wretchedness; add that the prisoner who sleeps usually dreams that he is free and that the illusion replaces the reality for him. I heartily congratulated myself on not having begun my work before the man arrived. He demanded that the place be swept, the constables whose task it was made me laugh when they told him that it brought me to death's door; he insisted. I pretended to be ill from it, and the constables would not have carried out his order if I had objected; but my interests demanded that I should be obliging.

On the Wednesday in Holy Week Lorenzo told us that after the Terza the Signor Circospetto would come up to pay us the customary Easter visit, which serves both to bring peace to the souls of those who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament and for him to learn if they have any complaint concerning the jailer's performance of his duties.

"And so, Signori," he said, "if you wish to complain of me, complain; dress yourselves fully, for that is the rule."

I ordered Lorenzo to have a confessor sent to me the next day.

So I dressed up, and the Jew did likewise, at the same time taking his leave of me because he felt sure that the Circospetto would set him free as soon as he had talked with him; he said that his presentiment was of a kind which had never deceived him. I congratulated him. The Secretary arrived, the cell was opened, the Jew emerged and fell on his knees; I heard nothing but tears and cries, which continued for four or five minutes without a word from the Secretary. He came back, and Lorenzo told me to go out. With my eight-months beard and wearing a coat designed by love and intended for the heat of July on that very cold day, I was a figure fit to inspire laughter and not to arouse pity. The terrible cold made me shake like the edge of the shadow cast by the darkness which the setting sun brings on—which annoyed me only because the Secretary might think I was shaking with fear. Since I came out of the cell stooped over, my bow was already made; I drew myself up, I looked at him neither proudly nor cringingly, without speaking or moving; the Circospetto, equally motionless, remained silent too; the mute scene between us continued for two minutes. Seeing that I said nothing, he bent his head half an inch and left. I returned to my cell, undressed, and got into bed to revive my natural heat. The Jew was astonished that I had not spoken to the Secretary, whereas my silence had said much more than he had thought he was telling him with his cowardly cries. A prisoner of my sort in the presence of his judge should never open his mouth except to answer questions.

The next day a Jesuit came to confess me, and on Holy Saturday a priest from San Marco came to give me the

Holy Eucharist. Since my confession appeared too laconic to the missionary priest who heard it he saw fit to remonstrate with me before he absolved me.

"Do you pray to God?" he asked.

"I pray to him from morning to night and from night to morning, even when I am eating and sleeping, for in the situation in which I am, everything that takes place in me, even my moments of agitation or impatience or folly, can only be prayer before the divine wisdom, which alone sees my heart."

The Jesuit heard my specious sermon on prayer with a slight smile and repaid it by a metaphysical discourse of a nature quite incompatible with mine. I would have refuted it completely if, wise in his profession, he had not had the skill to astonish me and reduce me to less than the size of a flea by a sort of prophecy which awed me.

"Since it was from us," he said, "that you learned the religion you profess, practice it as we practice it, and pray to God as we taught you to do, and know that you will never leave here except on the day dedicated to the saint who is your patron."

After speaking these words he gave me absolution and left. The impression they made on me was incredible; try as I would, I could not get them out of my head. I considered all the saints I found in the calendar.

The Jesuit was the spiritual director of Signor Flaminio Corner,[27] the old Senator, then a State Inquisitor. The Senator was a famous man of letters, a great politician, very devout, and the author of works all of which were pious, extraordinary, and written in Latin.[28] His reputation was spotless.

Informed that I was to leave the place on my patron saint's day by a man who might well know, I rejoiced to have learned that I had a patron saint and to understand that he was concerned for me; but since I had to pray to him, I had to know him. Who was he? The

Jesuit himself could not have told me if he knew, for he would have betrayed the secret; but "Come," I said to myself, "let's see if I can guess." It could not be St. James of Compostela,[29] whose name I bore; for it was precisely on his feast day that my door had been broken down by Messer Grande. I took the calendar and, looking for the nearest saint's day, I came to St. George,[30] a saint of some renown, but of whom I had never thought. So I settled on St. Mark, whose day came on the twenty-fifth of the month, and to whose protection I, as a Venetian, could lay some claim; so I addressed my prayers to him, but in vain. His feast day went by, and I was still there. I took the other St. James,[31] the brother of Jesus Christ, who comes with St. Philip, but I was wrong again; so I settled on St. Anthony,[32] who, or so they say in Padua, performs thirteen miracles a day; but no less in vain. In this way I passed from one to another and insensibly became accustomed to hoping in vain for protection from the saints. I was convinced that the saint in whom I should trust was my pointed bolt. Nevertheless, the Jesuit's prophecy came true. I got out of there on All Saints' Day, as my reader will see, and it is certain that, if I had one, my protector must be honored on that day, for they are all included.

Two or three weeks after Easter I was delivered from the Jew; but the poor man was not sent home; he was sentenced to "the Four," where he remained for two years, and afterwards went and finished his days in Trieste.

As soon as I was alone I went to work with the greatest eagerness. I needed to hurry before the arrival of some new guest who would insist that the place be swept. I pulled out my bed, lighted my lamp, and flung myself on the floor pike in hand, after spreading out a napkin beside me to receive the bits of wood which I excavated with the point of the bolt; the thing was to break away the board by driving the iron into it; at the beginning of my labors the fragments were no bigger than a grain of wheat, but later they became good-sized pieces. The board was of larch and sixteen inches wide; I began to dig into it where it joined the next one; there was neither a nail nor an iron clamp, and my job was perfectly straightforward. After working six hours I tied my napkin up and set it aside so that I could go and empty it the next morning behind the pile of notebooks at the end of the garret. The fragments I had broken off were four or five times bigger in bulk than the hole from which I had taken them; its circumference was roughly thirty degrees of a circle, its diameter[33] about ten inches. I put my bed back in place, and in the morning when I emptied my napkin I had no reasons to fear that my fragments would be seen.

On the second day I found under the first board, which was two inches thick, a second board which I supposed was of the same size. Never having suffered the misfortune of visitors, and always tormented by fear of it, in three weeks I succeeded in breaking completely through three boards, under which I found the kind of flooring incrusted with small bits of marble which is known in Venice as *terrazzo marmorin.*[34] It is the usual flooring of rooms in all houses in Venice which do not belong to poor people. The great noblemen even prefer *terrazzo* to parquetry. I was appalled when I saw that my bolt was not biting into it; it was in vain that I bore down and pushed; my point slipped. It discouraged me completely. Then I remembered Hannibal, who, according to Livy,[35] had opened a passage through the Alps by chopping away the rock which he had softened through the action of vinegar—a thing I had considered incredible, not so much because of the power of the acid but because of the prodigious quantity of vinegar he must have had. I thought Hannibal had succeeded in it not *aceto* ("by vinegar") but *asceta,* which in the Latin of Padua might be the same as *ascia*[36] ("ax"), and that the error might stem from the copyists. Nevertheless I poured into my excavation a bottle of strong vinegar which I had; and the next morning, whether as the result of the vinegar or of greater patience, I saw that I should succeed, for it was not a matter of breaking the small pieces of marble but of pulverizing the cement between them with the point of my implement; and I was greatly relieved when I found that the great difficulty occurred only at the surface; in four days I destroyed the entire piece of paving without damaging the point of my pike. Its facets shone even more brightly.

Under the *marmorin* flooring I found another board, as I expected; it must be the last, that is, the first counting up in the roofing of any room whose beams support its ceiling. I began my work on this board with somewhat greater difficulty because my hole had become ten inches deep. I constantly commended myself to the mercy of God. Those freethinkers who say that prayer is of no use do not know what they are talking about. I know that after praying to God I always felt stronger; and that is enough to prove its usefulness, whether the increase in strength comes directly from God or is a physical result of one's confidence in him.

On June 25th, the day on which only the Republic of Venice celebrates the prodigy of the Evangelist St. Mark's appearing in the emblematic form of a winged lion in the ducal church toward the end of the eleventh century, an event which showed the Senate in its wisdom that it was time to dismiss St. Theodore,[37] whose credit was no longer powerful enough to aid it in its plans of aggrandizement, and to take for its patron the sainted disciple of St. Paul (or, according to Eusebius,[38] St. Peter) whom God now sent it—at three hours past noon on that day, when, stark naked, running with sweat, and lying flat on my stomach, I was working at the hole, in which, in order to see, I had set my lighted lamp, I was mortally terrified to hear the shrill grating of the bolt in the door to the first corridor. What a moment! I blow out my lamp, I leave my pike in the hole, throw my napkin into it, I rise, I hastily put the trestles and the boards of my bed in the alcove, I throw the pallet and the mattresses on top of it; and not having time to put on the sheets, I fall on it as if dead just as Lorenzo is opening my cell. One minute earlier, and he would have caught me in the act. Lorenzo would have stepped on me if a cry I gave had not made him crouch back into the doorway, saying emphatically:

"My God, I pity you, Signore, for it is as hot here as in an oven. Get up and thank God, who sends you excellent company. Come in, come in, Illustrissimo Signore," he said to the unfortunate who was following him. The churl pays no attention to my nakedness, and the Illustrissimo enters, making his way around me, while, not knowing what I was doing, I gather up my bedclothes, throw them on the bed, and can nowhere find the shirt which decency demands that I put on. The newcomer thought he was entering Hell. He exclaimed:

"Where am I? Where are they putting me? What heat! What a stench! With whom am I?"

At that Lorenzo called him out, asking me to put on a shirt and come into the garret; he told him that he had orders to bring him a bed from his house and everything he asked for, and that until his return he could walk in the garret and that meanwhile the cell would be purged of the stench, which was only the smell of oil. What a surprise for me to hear him say that the stench was only oil! As a matter of fact it came from the lamp, which I had extinguished without snuffing it. Lorenzo did not ask me a single question about it; so he knew everything; the Jew had told him. How lucky I was that he could not have told him more! At that moment I began to feel somewhat kindly toward Lorenzo.

After quickly putting on a fresh shirt and a dressing gown, I came out. The new prisoner was writing in pencil a list of what he wanted. He was the first to speak when he saw me:

"It's Casanova!"

I at once recognized the Abate Count Fenaroli,[39] of Brescia, a man of fifty years, amiable, rich, and a favorite in the choicest society. He came and embraced me, and when I said I would have expected to see anyone else on earth up there except himself, he could not hold back his tears, which provoked mine.

As soon as we were alone I said to him that when his bed arrived I would offer him the alcove but that he should do me the favor of refusing it and that he should not ask for the cell to be swept, adding that I would tell him the reasons when there was more time. I explained the reason for the stench of oil, and after assuring me that he would keep everything secret he said that he considered himself fortunate to have been put with me. He said that no one knew what my crime was, so everyone was trying to guess it. Some said I was the head of a new religion; others said Signora Memmo had convinced the tribunal that I was teaching her sons atheism. Still others said that Signor Antonio Condulmer, one of the State Inquisitors, had had me imprisoned as a disturber of the public peace because I hissed the Abate Chiari's comedies and was planning to go to Padua on purpose to kill him.

All these accusations had some basis which gave them an air of probability, but they were all fabrications. I did not care enough about religion to be interested in founding a new one. Signora Memmo's three sons, all of them highly intelligent, were more the sort to lead others astray than to be led astray themselves, and Signor Condulmer would have been kept too busy if he had tried to lock up everyone who hissed the Abate Chiari. As for the Abate, who had been a Jesuit, I had forgiven him. The celebrated Father Origo,[40] likewise a Jesuit, had taught me how to avenge myself on him by speaking well of him at large gatherings. My praises provoked my hearers to satires, and I was avenged without any trouble to myself.

Toward evening a bed was brought, together with an armchair, linen, scented waters, a good dinner, and good wines. The Abate could eat nothing; but I did not imitate him. His bed was set up without moving mine and we were locked in.

I began by taking from the hole my lamp and my napkin, which, having fallen into the lamp, had become soaked with oil. I laughed heartily. An accident which has no consequences and which is occasioned by causes which could have tragic ones is a good reason for laughter. I put everything in order; and I lit my lamp, the story of which made the Abate laugh. We spent a sleepless night, not so much because of the million fleas which were devouring us as because our talk was so interesting that we could not bring ourselves to end it. Here is the story of his arrest, as he himself told it to me:

"Yesterday at twenty o'clock[41] a party consisting of Signora Alessandri,[42] Count Paolo Martinengo,[43] and myself boarded a gondola; we reached Fusina at twenty-one and Padua at twenty-four, intending to see the opera and return here immediately afterward. During the second act my evil genius sent me to the gaming room, where I saw Count Rosenberg, the Ambassador from Vienna, with his mask off, and ten paces from him Signora Ruzzini,[44] whose husband is about to leave for the same court as Ambassador of the Republic. I bowed to them both and I was going to leave when the Ambassador said to me loudly: '*You are very fortunate to be able to pay your court to so charming a lady; it is only at moments like this that the part I play in the most beautiful country in the world becomes my torment. Tell her, I beg you, that the laws which prevent me from speaking to her here have no power in Vienna, where I shall see her next year and where I shall make war on her.*' Signora Ruzzini, who saw that we were speaking of her, asked me what the Count had said and I repeated it to her word for word. 'Answer him,' she said, 'that *I accept his declaration of war and that we shall see which of us two is the better warrior.'* I did not think I was committing a crime by repeating her answer, which was merely a compliment. After the opera we ate a fowl and we were back here at fourteen o'clock. I was going to bed to sleep until twenty, when a *fante* brought me a note which ordered me to be at the Bussola at nineteen o'clock to hear what the Circospetto Businello, Secretary to the Council of Ten, had to say to me. Astonished by the order, which is always an ill omen, and much troubled that I had to obey it, at the appointed hour I appeared before the minister, who, without saying even a word to me, ordered me put here."

Nothing was more innocent than his offense; but there are laws in the world which one can break innocently and the transgressors of which are no less guilty for that. I congratulated him on knowing what his crime was, on his crime itself, and on the manner of his arrest, and since his offense was a very slight one I told him that he would remain with me only a week and then be ordered to go and live on his estate in Brescia for six months. He answered sincerely that he did not believe he would be left there a week—a perfect example of the man who, feeling no guilt, cannot conceive that he will be punished. I let him keep his illusion; but what I told him proved to be the case.[45] I made up my mind to be a good companion to him in order to give him as much comfort as I could in the great distress his imprisonment caused him. I sympathized in his misfortune to such a point that I entirely forgot my own during all the time he was with me.

The next morning at daybreak Lorenzo brought coffee and a big basket containing dinner for the Count-Abate, who did not understand how anyone could suppose a man would want to eat at such an hour. We were allowed to walk for an hour and then were locked in. The fleas which tormented us made him ask me why I did not have the place swept. I could not bear to have him either think me a swine or believe that my skin was thicker than his; I told him, and even showed him, everything. I saw that he was surprised, and indeed mortified because he had in a sense forced me to entrust him with so weighty a secret. He encouraged me to work and to finish the hole that day if possible, so that he could himself let me down and afterward pull up my rope; for his part, he did not wish to make his crime more serious by flight. I showed him the model of a device by which I was sure that when I had got down I could pull the sheet I had used as a rope down after me; it was a bit of stick fastened at one end to a long string. My sheet was to be secured to the trestle of my bed only by this stick, which would go into the two halves of a loop in the rope under the trestle; the string which operated the stick was to go to the floor of the Inquisitors' room, where, as soon as I found myself on my feet, I would pull on it. He had no doubt of its working, and he congratulated me on it, the more so since the precaution was absolutely necessary, since if the sheet had stayed there it would be the first thing to catch the eyes of Lorenzo, who could not come up to where we were except by passing through that room; he would look for me at once, find me, and arrest me. My noble companion was convinced that I should give up my work, since there was great danger of my being caught at it and the more so as it would take me several more days to finish the hole, which was to cost Lorenzo his life. But could the thought of purchasing freedom at the price of his life lessen my eagerness to obtain my freedom? I should have done what I did if the consequence of my escape would have been the death of all the constables in the Republic and even of the State itself. Love of country becomes nothing but a phantasm in the mind of the man whom his country is oppressing.

But my good humor did not prevent my dear companion from succumbing to moments of melancholy. He was in love with Signora Alessandri, who had been a singer and who was the mistress or the wife of his friend Martinengo, and he must have had her favors; but the more a lover is in favor, the more miserable he becomes if he is torn from the arms of the woman he loves. He sighed, tears flowed from his eyes, and he admitted that he loved a woman who combined all the virtues. I sincerely condoled with him, taking care not to comfort him by saying that love is only a trifle, a distressing sort of consolation which only fools offer to lovers; it is not even true that love is nothing but a trifle.

The week which I had predicted passed very quickly; I lost his precious companionship; but I did not give myself time to regret it. I took good care never to ask this honorable man to keep my secret; the least doubt on my part would have been an insult to his noble soul.

On July 3rd Lorenzo told him to be ready to leave at the Terza, which during that month rings at twelve o'clock. For this reason he did not bring him his dinner. During the whole week the only nourishment he took was soup, fruits, and Canary wine.[46] It was I who ate well, to the great satisfaction of my friend, who admired my cheerful temperament. We spent the last three hours vowing the tenderest friendship. Lorenzo appeared, went down with him, and reappeared a quarter of an hour later to take away all of this most amiable man's possessions.

On the next day Lorenzo gave me an accounting of his expenditures during the month of June, and I saw that he was touched when, finding that I had a balance of four zecchini, I told him that I made his wife a present of them. I did not tell him that it was the recompense for my lamp; but he may have thought so.

Devoting myself entirely to my work, I saw it reach perfection on August 23rd. The delay was caused by a very natural mishap. When, digging into the last board, always with the greatest care to make it only extremely thin, I got very close to its opposite surface, I put my eye to a small hole through which I ought to see the Inquisitors' room, as in fact I did see it; but at the same time I saw, at a very short distance from the same hole, which was no bigger than a fly, a perpendicular surface about eight inches across. This was what I had always feared: it was one of the beams supporting the ceiling. I saw that I should have to make the hole bigger in the direction away from the beam; for the latter made the space so narrow that my rather portly person could never have got through it. I had to enlarge the opening by a fourth, still always fearing that the space between the two beams would not be enough. After the enlargement a second little hole of the same size showed me that God had blessed my work. I stopped up the little holes, both to prevent the small fragments from dropping into the room and to make it impossible for a ray from my lamp to pass through and so reveal my operation to anyone who might have seen it.

I set the night before St. Augustine's Day[47] as the time for my escape, because I knew that the Great Council met on that feast and hence there would be no one in the Bussola, which was next door to the room through which I must necessarily pass on my way out. I therefore decided to leave on the night of the 27th.

At noon on the 25th something happened to me which makes me tremble even now as I record it. At noon precisely, I heard the screech of the bolts; I thought I should die. A violent palpitation of my heart, which was beating three or four inches below its proper place, made me fear that my last hour had come. I dropped into my armchair in panic. Coming into the garret, Lorenzo put his head to the grating and said in joyous tones:

"I congratulate you, Signore, on the good news I bring you."

Instantly supposing that he meant my freedom, for I knew of no other news which could be good, I saw that I was lost. The discovery of the hole would have led to my pardon being revoked.

Lorenzo enters and tells me to come with him.

"Wait till I get dressed."

"It doesn't matter, for you are only going from this vile cell to another which is light and brand-new, where you will see half of Venice from two windows, where you can stand upright, where—"

But I could bear no more, I felt that I was dying.

"Give me some vinegar," I said. "Go and tell the Signor Secretary that I thank the tribunal for this kindness and that I beg him in God's name to leave me here."

"You make me laugh. Have you gone mad? You are to be taken out of Hell and put in Paradise, and you refuse? Come, come, you must obey; stand up. I will give you my arm and I will have your clothes and your books brought you."

Astonished and in no position to say another word, I rose, I left the cell, and I instantly felt a slight relief when I heard him order one of his men to follow him with my armchair. As always, my pike was hidden in its stuffing, and that was at least something. I wished I were also being followed by the fine hole I had made with such effort, and which I had to abandon; but it was impossible. My body moved on; but my soul remained behind.

Supporting myself on Lorenzo's shoulder, while the fellow supposed he was giving me courage with his jokes, I passed through two narrow corridors and, after going down three steps, entered a large and very light room, at the far left-hand corner of which I went through a small door into a corridor which was two feet wide and twelve long and had two grated windows to my right, through which I clearly saw the upper part of the whole section of the great city which lay on that side, as far as the Lido. But I was in no state to be consoled by a fine view.

The door of the cell was in the corner of this corridor; I saw a grated window which was opposite one of the two which lighted the corridor, so that the prisoner, though shut in, could enjoy much of the pleasant prospect. Most important of all, since the window was open, it let in a gentle, cool wind which tempered the unbearable heat and which was veritably balm to the poor creature who had to breathe in the cell, especially during this season.

I did not make these observations at the time, as the reader can well imagine. As soon as Lorenzo saw me in the cell, he had my armchair brought, and I instantly flung myself into it; then he left, saying that he would have my bed and all my belongings fetched at once. The stoicism of Zeno,[48] the ataraxia of the Pyrrhonists,[49] present our judgment with most extraordinary images. They are praised, they are derided, they are admired, they are laughed at, and the wise admit their possibility only with restrictions. Any man who is called upon to judge of a moral possibility or impossibility has every reason to start only from himself, for if he is honest he cannot admit an inner power in anyone unless he feels the seed of it in himself. What I find in myself on this subject is that, through a power gained by great application, a man can succeed in keeping from crying out in his sufferings and can resist being swept away by his first impulses. That is all. *Abstine* (''abstain'') and *sustine*[50] (''bear'') are the tokens of a good philosopher, but the material sufferings which afflict the Stoic will not be less than those which torment the Epicurean, and grief will be more painful for him who conceals it than for him who obtains a real relief by complaining.

The man who tries to seem indifferent to an event which determines his condition only appears to be so, unless he is an idiot or in a frenzy. He who boasts of perfect tranquillity lies, and I beg Socrates' pardon a thousand times. I will believe in Zeno completely if he will tell me that he has found the secret of preventing nature from turning pale, blushing, laughing, and crying.

I sat in my armchair like a man in a stupor; motionless as a statue, I saw that I had wasted all the efforts I had made, and I could not repent of them. I felt that I had nothing to hope for, and the only relief left to me was not to think of the future.

My thoughts rising up to God, the state in which I was seemed to me a punishment visited on me directly by him because, though he had left me time to finish my whole task, I had abused his mercy by putting off my escape for three days. It was true that I could have gone down three days earlier, but I did not think I deserved so severe a punishment for having delayed in consequence of the most prudent consideration possible, or for exercising a caution enforced on me by a forethought which, on the contrary, deserved to be rewarded, since if I had obeyed only my natural impatience I would have defied every danger.

To fly in the face of the reasoning which had made me put off my escape until August 27th, I should have had to receive a revelation; and reading Maria de Agreda had not turned me into an idiot.

CHAPTER XIV

Underground prisons called "the Wells." Lorenzo's revenge. I enter into a correspondence with another prisoner, Father Balbi; his character. I plan my escape with him. The method. My stratagem for sending him my pike. Success. I am given an infamous companion; portrait of him.

A MINUTE later two *sbirri* brought me my bed and left, only to return at once with all my clothes; but two hours passed during which I saw no one, though the doors to my cell were open. The delay caused me much thought but I could reach no conclusion. Having everything to fear, I tried to attain a state of tranquillity such that I could resist whatever tribulation might come.

Besides "the Leads" and "the Four," the State Inquisitors had nineteen other terrible prison cells underground in the Doge's Palace; to these they sentenced criminals who had deserved death. All the highest judges on earth have always believed that by sparing the life of him who has deserved death they have shown him mercy, no matter how horrible a punishment they mete out to him instead. In my opinion it can only be mercy if it seems so to the criminal; but they do it without consulting him. It becomes injustice.

These nineteen underground prisons have every resemblance to tombs but they are called "wells"[1] because they are always flooded by two feet of sea water, which comes in through the same grated hole by which they receive a little light; these holes are only a square foot in size. The prisoner, unless he enjoys being in a salt bath up to his knees all day, has to sit on a platform where he also has his pallet and on which at dawn a jailer puts his water, his soup, and his ration biscuit, which he has to eat at once, for if he delays enormous sea rats would tear it from his hands. In this horrible prison, to which the prisoners are usually condemned for the remainder of their days, and with such food, a number of them live to extreme old age. A criminal who died about that time had been sent there at the age of forty-four. Convinced that he had deserved death, he may have thought his prison a merciful reprieve. There are those who fear nothing but death. The man's name was Beguelin;[2] he was French. He had served with the rank of captain in the troops of the Republic during her last war with the Turks in the year 1716, and in Corfu under Field Marshal Count Schulenburg,[3] who forced the Grand Vizier to raise the siege. Beguelin served the Marshal as a spy, disguising himself as a Turk and boldly entering the enemy army; but at the same time he was spying for the Grand Vizier. Found guilty of his double espionage, he deserved death, and it was certain that the judges who sent him to die in "the Wells" showed him mercy; and the fact is that he lived for thirty-seven years. He can only have been bored and always hungry. He may have said: *Dum vita superest bene est* ("So long as life remains, it is well").[4] But the prisons I saw at Spielberg[5] in Moravia, to which clemency consigned prisoners sentenced to death and which the criminal never managed to survive for a year, are such that the death they bring *siculi non invenere tyranni* ("even Sicilian tyrants did not invent").[6]

During the two hours I waited I did not fail to imagine that I was perhaps to be taken to "the Wells." In a place where the poor wretch who is condemned to it feeds on chimerical hopes he must also feel unreasonable panic terrors. The tribunal, master of the garrets and the cellars of the great palace, might well have decreed Hell for anyone who had tried to run away from Purgatory.

I finally heard furious steps approaching. I saw Lorenzo, his face distorted by anger. Frothing with rage, blaspheming God and all the saints, he began by ordering me to give him the ax and the tools I had used to make a hole in the floor and to tell him which of his *sbirri* had brought them to me. Not stirring even a finger, I replied that I did not know what he was talking about. He orders me searched. But at that I quickly get up, I threaten the scoundrels, and, stripping naked, I told them to do their duty. He had my mattresses searched and my pallet emptied, he even made his men search the stinking chamber pot. He picked up the cushion of my armchair, and finding nothing hard in it, he threw it angrily on the floor.

"You refuse," he said, "to tell me where the tools with which you made the hole are, but someone will make you talk."

"If it is true that I made a hole in the floor, I will say that I received the tools from you and have given them back to you."

At this answer, which his men, whom he seemed to have angered, received with approbation, he shouted, he banged his head against the wall, he stamped his feet; I thought he was going mad. He went out, and his men brought my clothes, my books, my bottles, and everything except my lamp and my stone. That done, before leaving the corridor he closed the two windows through which I got a little air. I was now shut up in a small space with no opening by which the air could enter. I confess that after he left I thought I had got off cheaply. Despite his training in his trade he did not think of turning my armchair upside down. Finding that I was still in possession of my bolt, I adored Providence and I saw that I could still count on making it the means of my escape.

The intense heat and the shock of the day's events kept me from sleeping. Early the next morning he brought me wine which had turned to vinegar, stinking water, rotting salad, spoiled meat, and very hard bread; he did not have the place swept, and when I asked him to open the windows he did not even answer. An extraordinary ceremony which was begun that day consisted in a constable making the round of my cell carrying an iron bar with which he pounded the entire floor and the walls and especially under the bed. I noticed that the constable who was doing the pounding never struck the ceiling. This observation gave me the idea that I could get out by way of the roof; but to succeed in such a project demanded a combination of circumstances which did not depend upon me; for I could do nothing which was not visible. The cell was brand-new; the least scratch would have been instantly seen by all the constables when they came in.

I spent a terrible day. The intense heat began toward noon. I really believed I should be stifled. I was in nothing short of a sweating room. I could neither eat nor drink, for everything was spoiled. The weakness caused by the heat and by the sweat which came out in great drops all over my body made it impossible for me either to walk or to read. My dinner the next day was the same; the stench of the veal he brought me reached my nose at once. I asked him if he had been ordered to kill me off by hunger and heat, and he went away without answering. He did the same thing the next day. I told him to give me a pencil because I wanted to write something to the Secretary, and again he did not answer and left. I ate the soup out of spite and dipped some bread in Cyprus wine to preserve my strength and kill him the next day by plunging my pike into his throat; things had become so bad that I thought I had no other course; but the next day instead of carrying out my plan I satisfied myself with swearing to him that I would kill him when I was set free; he laughed, and left without answering. I began to believe he was acting as he did by order of the Secretary, to whom he had perhaps reported the hole. I did not know what to do; my patience struggled against despair; I felt that I was dying of inanition.

It was on the eighth day that, in the presence of his constables, I demanded in a voice of thunder that he give me an accounting of my money, calling him an infamous hangman. He answered that I should have it the next day; but before he locked my cell I grabbed up the bucket of filth and showed him by my posture that I meant to throw it into the corridor; at that he told a constable to take it and, the air having become foul, he opened a window; but after the constable gave me a clean bucket he shut the window again and left, paying no attention to my outcries. Such was my situation; but seeing that what I had obtained had been the result of the insults to which I had treated him, I prepared to talk to him even more roughly the next day.

The next day my rage cooled. Before giving me my account he presented me with a basket of lemons which Signor Bragadin had sent me and I saw a large bottle of water which I thought was fit to drink and in my dinner a chicken which looked promising; moreover, a constable opened the two windows. When he handed me my account I merely glanced at the total and told him to give the balance to his wife, except for a zecchino which I ordered him to distribute among his men, who were there and who thanked me. Left alone with me, he proceeded to deliver the following discourse calmly enough:

"You have already told me, Signore, that it was from me you obtained what you needed to make the enormous hole you made in the other cell, so I am no longer in doubt about it. But would you be so good as to tell me who gave you what you needed to make the lamp?"

"You did."

"What, again? I did not believe that intelligence consisted in audacity."

"I am not lying. It is you, and with your own hands, who gave me everything I needed: oil, gun flint, and matches—all the rest I had."

"You are right. Can you as easily convince me that I also gave you what you needed to make the hole?"

"Yes, just as easily. I received nothing except from you."

"God have mercy on me! What are you saying? Please tell me how I gave you an ax?"

"I will tell you everything if you like, but in the Secretary's presence."

"I do not wish to hear more, and I believe you. Say nothing, and remember that I am a poor man and have children."

He went away, holding his head in his hands.

I was very glad I had found the way to instill fear into the rascal, for whom it was decreed that I should cost him his life. I now realized that his own interest forbade his telling the minister anything that I had done.

I had ordered Lorenzo to buy me the complete works of the Marchese Maffei;[7] he did not want to spend the money, and he did not dare tell me so. He asked me what I could need with books when I had so many.

"I have read them all and I need new ones."

"I will arrange to have someone who is here lend you books if you will lend him yours, and so you will save your money."

"They are novels, which I do not like."

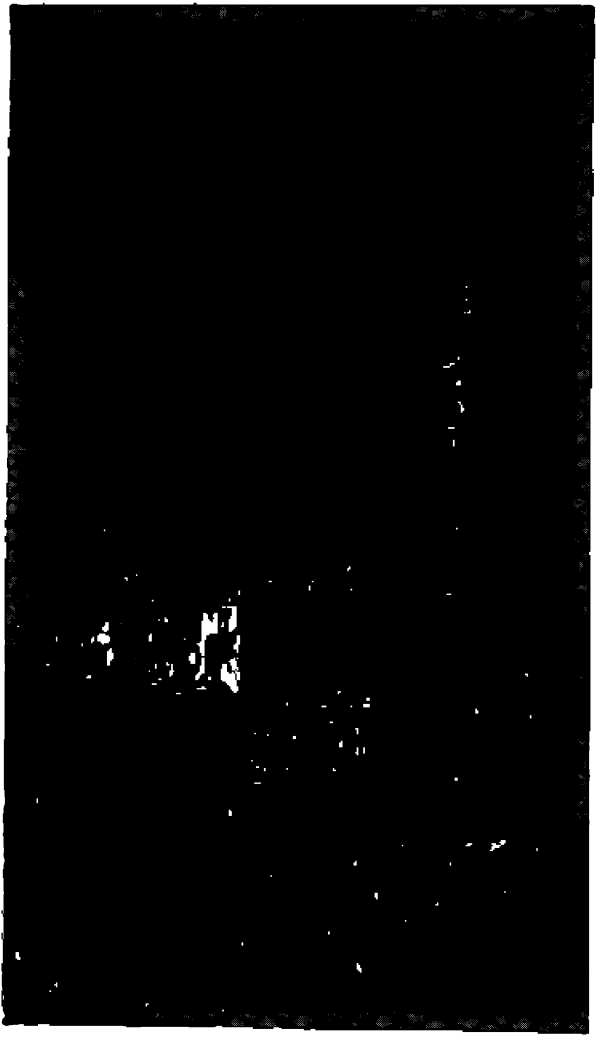
"They are learned books; and if you think you are the only one with brains here, you are wrong."

"Very well. We shall see. Here is a book I will lend to the man with brains. Bring me one too."

I gave him Pétau's *Rationarium*[8] and four minutes later he brought me the first volume of Wolff.[9] Pleased, I canceled my order to buy me Maffei; and even more pleased that he had made me listen to reason on such an important subject, he left.

Less tempted by the prospect of reading the learned work than by seizing the opportunity to begin a correspondence with someone who could perhaps help me in the plan for escaping which I had already sketched out in my mind, upon opening the book I found a piece of paper on which I read, in six well-turned verses, a paraphrase of Seneca's saying: *Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius* ("It is misery for the mind to be anxious about the future").[10] I immediately made six more verses. I had let the nail of the little finger of my right hand grow in order to clean my ears with it, I cut it to a point and made a pen of it, in place of ink I used the juice of black mulberries, and I wrote my six verses on the same piece of paper. In addition I wrote a list of the books I had, and I put it behind the spine of the same book. All books bound in boards in Italy have a sort of pocket under the binding at the back. On the spine of the same book, where the title is put, I wrote *latet*[11] ("something is hidden"). Impatient to receive an answer, the next morning I at once told Lorenzo that I had read the book through and that the person would do me a favor if he would send me another. He immediately brought me the second volume.

A loose note between the pages of the book ran as follows: "We who are together in this prison are both greatly pleased that the ignorance of a miser procures us an unparalleled privilege. I who write am Marin Balbi,[12] a Venetian nobleman and a monk of the Somaschian Order. My companion is Count Andrea Asquin,[13] of Udine, the capital of Friuli. He commands



The Rio Side of the Doge's Palace, Venice me to tell you that you are at liberty to make use of all his books, a catalogue of which you will find in the hollow of the binding. We must, Signore, employ every precaution to keep our little correspondence from Lorenzo."

That we had both hit upon the idea of sending each other catalogues and the idea of concealing a written message in the aperture at the back of the book did not surprise me, for it seemed to me to require nothing but common sense; but I thought his warning to exercise caution very strange when the letter which told all was a loose sheet. Lorenzo not only might open the book, it was his duty to do so, and, seeing the letter and unable to read, he would have put it in his pocket to get it read to him in Italian by the first priest he came upon in the street, and everything would have been discovered at its very beginning. I at once decided that this Father Balbi must be a blockhead.

I read the catalogue and on the other half of the sheet I wrote them who I was, how I had been arrested, my ignorance of my crime, and my hope that I would soon be sent home. On receiving another book, Father Balbi wrote me a letter which covered sixteen pages. Count Asquin never wrote to me. The monk entertained himself by writing me the whole story of his misfortunes. He had been under the Leads for four years[14] because, having had three bastards by three indigent girls, all of them virgins, he had had them baptized under his own name. His Father Superior[15] had admonished him the first time, threatened him the second, and the third time had lodged a complaint with the tribunal, which had imprisoned him; and the Father Superior sent him his dinner every day. His defense took up half of his letter, in which he amply displayed the poverty of his intelligence. Both his Superior, he said, and the tribunal were nothing short of tyrants, for they had no jurisdiction over his conscience. He said that, since he was sure that the bastards were his, he could not deprive them of the advantages they could derive from his name; and that their mothers were respectable though poor, for before him they had had commerce with no man. He ended by saying that his conscience obliged him to recognize publicly that the children these honest young women had given him were his, thus forestalling the slander that they were the children of others, and that in any case he could not deny nature or the fatherly love which he felt for the poor innocents. "There is no danger," he said, "that my Superior will fall into the same fault, since his pious affection is shown only to his boy pupils."

I needed no more to know my man: eccentric, sensual, a poor reasoner, malicious, imprudent, and ungrateful. After saying in his letter that he would be very unfortunate without the company of Count Asquin, who was seventy years of age and had books and money, he used up two pages abusing him to me and describing his faults and absurdities. Out of prison I would not have answered a man of his character; but up there I had to make use of everything. In the back of the book I found pencil, pens, and paper, which made it possible for me to write at my ease.

All the rest of his long letter contained the histories of all the prisoners who were under the Leads and who had been there during the four years he had spent there himself. He told me that Niccolò was the constable who secretly bought him whatever he wanted and who told him the names of all the prisoners and everything that went on in the other cells, and to convince me of it he told me all he knew about the hole I had made. "You were taken from there," he said, "to make room for the patrician Priuli Gran Can,[16] and Lorenzo spent two hours having the hole you made stopped up by a carpenter and an ironsmith, on whom he enjoined silence upon pain of their lives, as he did on all his constables. Niccolò assured me that only one day later you would have left by a method which would have caused a great scandal, and that Lorenzo could have been strangled because it was perfectly clear that, though he tried to show surprise when he saw the hole and pretended to be furious with you, it could only be he who had given you the tools to break open the floor, which you must have given back to him. Niccolò also told me that Signor Bragadin promised him a thousand zecchini if he can make it possible for you to leave and that Lorenzo is confident that he can earn them without losing his post through the protection of Signor Diedo, who is his wife's lover. He also said that none of the constables dared tell the Secretary what had happened for fear that Lorenzo would get out of it with clean hands and would then avenge himself on the informer by having him discharged. I beg you to have confidence in me and to tell me all the particulars of this business and especially how you managed to procure the necessary tools. I promise you that my discretion will be equal to my curiosity."

I had no doubt of his curiosity but much doubt of his discretion, since his very question proved him to be the most indiscreet of men. However, I saw that I had to humor him, for I thought that a creature of his sort would be just the one to do everything I told him to do and to help me regain my freedom. I spent the whole day answering him; but a strong feeling of suspicion made me put off sending him my answer; I saw that our exchange of letters might be a trick of Lorenzo's to find out who had given me the tools to break the floor and where I was keeping them. I wrote him in a few words that a big knife with which I had made the hole was under the sill of the window in the corridor leading to the cell where I now was, I having myself put it there when I came in. This spurious confidence set my mind at rest in less than three days, for Lorenzo did not search the sill and he would have searched it if he had intercepted my letter.

Father Balbi wrote me that he knew I could have the big knife, for Niccolò had told him I had not been searched before I was locked in; Lorenzo had known this, and the circumstance might have saved him if I had succeeded in escaping, for he claimed that when he received a man from the hands of Messer Grande he could not but suppose that he had already been searched. Messer Grande would have said that, having seen me get out of my bed, he was sure that I had no weapons about me. He ended his letter by asking me to send him my knife by Niccolò, whom I could trust.

The monk's rashness surprised me. When I felt sure that my letters were not being intercepted I wrote him that I was not able to repose any confidence in his Niccolò and that I could not even entrust my secret to paper. Meanwhile his letters amused me. In one of them he told me the reason why Count Asquin was confined under the Leads even though he could not move, since, in addition to his being seventy years of age, he was hampered by a big belly and by a leg he had broken long ago and which had been badly set. He said that, not being rich, the Count practiced law as an advocate at Udine and that in the city council he defended the peasantry against the nobility, who were seeking to deprive them of the right to vote in the provincial assemblies. Because the demands of the peasants disturbed the public peace the nobles had recourse to the tribunal of the State Inquisitors, which ordered Count Asquin to abandon his clients. Count Asquin replied that the municipal code authorized him to defend the constitution, and he disobeyed; but the Inquisitors had him carried off, despite the code, and confined him under the Leads, where he had been for five years.[17] Like me, he had fifty soldi a day, but he had the privilege of handling his money himself. In this connection the monk, who never had a soldo, freely denigrated his companion to me, especially on the score of avarice. He said that in the cell on the other side of the hall there were two gentlemen[18] from the Sette Comuni, also in prison for disobedience, the elder of whom had gone mad and was kept tied up. In another cell there were two notaries.[19]

About this time a Veronese Marchese,[20] of the Pindemonte family, had been imprisoned for disobeying a summons to appear. This nobleman had enjoyed great privileges, perhaps the most important of them being that his servants were allowed to deliver his letters into his own hands. He was there only a week.

When my suspicions were set at rest, my state of mind led me to reason as follows. I wanted my freedom. The pike I had was excellent; but I could not use it because each morning every corner of my cell was sounded with an iron bar, except the ceiling. So I could only hope to escape through the ceiling by having it broken from outside. Whoever was to break it could escape with me by helping me to make a hole in the great roof of the palace the same night. Once on the roof I would see what needed to be done; so the thing was to resolve and begin. I could see no resource except the monk, who, at the age of thirty-eight, though he was lacking in judgment, could carry out my instructions. So I must make up my mind to confide everything to him and think of some way to send him my bolt. I began by asking him if he wanted his freedom and if he was prepared to do everything to gain it by escaping with me. He replied that both he and his companion would be ready to do everything to break their chains; but that there was no use thinking about what was impossible; here he made me a long list of the difficulties, with which he filled four pages and which would have kept me occupied for the rest of my life if I had tried to circumvent them. I answered that I was not concerned about the general difficulties and that, having made my plan, I had thought only of solving the particular ones, which I could not entrust to paper. I promised him freedom if he would give me his word of honor to carry out my orders blindly. He promised me he would do everything.

I then wrote him that I had a pointed iron bar twenty inches long, which he was to use to break open the ceiling of his cell so that he could get out of it; and that once out, he was to break through the wall which separated us, pass through the opening he had made to a point above my cell, break it open above, and pull me out. "Once you have done all this," I said, "you will have nothing more to do, for I will do all the rest. I will get you both out, you and Count Asquin."

He answered that when he had got me out of my cell I would at best be in a prison which would differ from the first only in size. "We shall be in the garrets," he wrote, "still confined behind three locked doors." "I know that, Reverend Father," I replied, "and it is not by way of the doors that I intend we shall escape. My plan is made and I am sure of it, and all that I ask from you is carrying it out to the letter, and no objections. Think only of some way by which my twenty-inch bar can reach your hands without whoever is to bring it to you knowing that he is bringing it; and send me your ideas on the subject. In the meanwhile have Lorenzo buy you forty or fifty images of saints big enough to paper the whole inside of your cell. All these prints of religious subjects will give Lorenzo no occasion for suspecting that their only use will be to cover the hole which you will make in the ceiling and by which you will get out. It will take you several days to make the hole; and in the morning Lorenzo will see nothing of what you have accomplished the day before, for you will put the print back where it was and your work will pass unnoticed. I cannot do this, for I am under suspicion and no one would believe that I have any great reverence for prints. Do this, and think of some way to get my bar."

Thinking about it too, I ordered Lorenzo to buy me a folio Bible which had recently been printed and which contained the Vulgate[21] and the Septuagint.[22] I thought of this book, the size of which led me to hope that I could put my pike in the back of the binding and so send it to the monk; but when I received it I found that the bolt was two inches longer than the Bible, which measured exactly a foot and a half. The monk had written me that his cell was already papered with prints; and I had written him my idea about the Bible and the great difficulty due to the length of my bar, which I could not shorten except with a forge. He answered, deriding the poverty of my imagination, that I had only to send him the bolt in my fox-skin cloak. He said Lorenzo had told him that I had this fine cloak, and it would give no cause for suspicion if Count Asquin asked to see it in order to have one like it bought for him. I had only, he said, to send it to them folded up; but I was sure that Lorenzo would unfold it on the way, for a folded cloak was more awkward to carry than if it were unfolded; but in order not to discourage him and at the same time to convince him that I was less stupid than himself, I wrote him that he need only send for the cloak. The next morning Lorenzo asked me for it, and I gave it to him folded up but without the bolt. A quarter of an hour later he brought it back to me, saying that they had admired it.

The next day the monk wrote me a letter in which he admitted that he had been guilty of giving me bad advice; but he added that I had been wrong to take it. According to him, the pike was lost, for Lorenzo had brought the cloak unfolded and he must have put the bar in his pocket. So all hope was lost. I consoled him by telling him the truth, at the same time asking him to give his advice less rashly in the future. I then decided to send the monk my bolt in the Bible, but taking a precaution which would infallibly prevent Lorenzo from looking at the ends of the big volume. So I told him that I wanted to celebrate St. Michael's Day[23] with two big dishes of macaroni[24] with butter and Parmesan cheese; I wanted two dishes of it because I wanted to make a present of one to the worthy personage who lent me books. Lorenzo said that the same worthy personage wished to read the big book which had cost three zecchini. I answered that I would send it to him with a dish of macaroni; but I said that I needed the largest dish he had in his house and that I wanted to season it myself; he promised to do everything to the letter. In the meanwhile I wrapped the bolt in paper and I put it in the back of the binding of the Bible. I divided the two inches; each end of the bolt protruded from the Bible by one inch. By placing a big dish of macaroni filled with butter on the Bible, I was sure that Lorenzo's eyes would remain fixed on the butter for fear of spilling it on the Bible, and that thus he would not have time to look at the two ends of the back of the volume. I informed Father Balbi of all this beforehand, urging him to be deft when he received the macaroni from Lorenzo and to be careful not to take first the dish and then the Bible but both together, for taking the dish would expose the Bible and then Lorenzo could easily see the two protruding ends.

On St. Michael's Day Lorenzo appeared very early in the morning with a great kettle in which the macaroni were boiling; I at once put the butter on a portable stove to melt it and I got my two dishes ready, sprinkling them with Parmesan cheese, which he had brought me all grated. I took the pierced spoon and I began to fill them, adding butter and cheese with each spoonful and not stopping until the big dish meant for the monk could hold no more. The macaroni were swimming in butter, which came up to the very edge of the dish. Its diameter was almost twice the width of the Bible.[25] I picked it up and set it on the big book, which I had put beside the door of my cell, and holding it on the palms of my hands with the spine toward Lorenzo I told him to put out his arms and spread his fingers, and I admonished him to carry it with the greatest care and slowly so that the butter would not spill out of the dish and run over the Bible. As I admonished him to be careful of this most important burden, I kept my eyes fixed on his, which I was most happy to see never moved from the butter, which he was afraid of spilling. He wanted to take the macaroni and come back for the Bible afterward; but I laughed and said that if he did that, my present would lose all its beauty. He finally took it, complaining that I had put in too much butter and protesting that if it spilled on my Bible it would not be his fault. I knew that I was certain of victory as soon as I saw the Bible on his arms, for the two ends of the pike, which were now at a distance from my eyes equal to the width of the book, had become invisible for him now that he was holding it; they were next to his shoulders and there was no reason for him to raise his eyes to look at either of the ends, which had not the slightest interest for him. He could only be concerned to keep his dish horizontal. I followed him with my eyes until I saw him go down three steps to enter the corridor in front of the monk's cell, who, by blowing his nose three times, gave me the prearranged signal that everything had reached his hands in good order. Lorenzo came back and said that everything had been delivered according to my instructions. Father Balbi took a week to make a big enough opening in his ceiling, easily hiding it each day with a print which he removed and pasted up again with bread.

On October 8th he wrote me that he had spent the whole night working at the wall which separated us and that he had only managed to remove one brick; he exaggerated the difficulty of breaking out bricks held together by mortar which was too solid; he promised to continue, and in all his letters he repeated that we should make our situation worse, for we could not succeed. I answered that I was certain of the contrary.

Alas! I was certain of nothing; but I had to do as I was doing or give up my whole plan. How could I have told him that I did not know? I wanted to be out of there—that was all I knew; and the only thing in my mind was to take what steps I could to forward my escape, and not to stop until I was confronted with something insurmountable. I had read the great book of experience and I had learned from it that great enterprises were not to be talked about but executed, though with due regard for the power which Fortune exercises over all the undertakings of men. If I had imparted these lofty mysteries of moral philosophy to Father Balbi he would have said that I was mad.

His work proved to be difficult only on the first night; during those which followed, the more bricks he took out the easier it was to get out more. At the end of his work he found that he had removed thirty-six bricks from the wall.

On October 16th at eighteen o'clock,[26] just as I was amusing myself translating one of Horace's odes, I heard footsteps above my cell and then three knocks; I at once replied with another three; it was the signal we had arranged to inform each other that we had not been mistaken. He worked until evening, and the next day he wrote me that if my ceiling was only two boards thick his work would be completed that day, for each board was only an inch thick. He assured me that he would make the small circular entrance-way as I had told him to do, and that he would take great care never to go completely through the last board; this I had strongly urged on him because the least sign of a break in my cell would have raised the suspicion that it originated outside of it. He assured me that he would carry his excavation to the point at which it could be completed in a quarter of an hour. I had already settled on the next day but one as the time when I would leave my cell by night and not return to it, for with a companion I felt sure that in three or four hours I could make an opening in the great roof of the Doge's Palace and get up onto it, and then take the best means which chance offered me of getting down.

Two hours after noon on that day, which was a Monday,[27] while Father Balbi was still at work, I heard the sound of the door to the room next to my cell being opened; my blood froze; but I had strength enough left to knock twice, the alarm signal we had agreed to use, on hearing which Father Balbi was to hurry back through the hole in the wall and regain his cell. A moment later I saw Lorenzo, who asked my pardon for giving me the company of a "beggarly scoundrel." I saw a man between forty and fifty years of age, short, thin, badly dressed, with a round black wig, whom two constables proceeded to unbind. I had no doubt that he was a rogue, since Lorenzo had so characterized him in my presence and he had taken no offense at the title. I answered Lorenzo that the tribunal was lord and master; after having a pallet brought for him, he left, telling him that the tribunal allowed him ten soldi a day. My new cellmate replied:

"May God repay them!"

Overwhelmed by this fatal obstacle, I looked at the scoundrel, whose face betrayed him. I was thinking of getting him to talk, when he began himself by thanking me for the pallet which I had had brought for him. I told him that he would eat with me, and he kissed my hand, asking me if even so he could have the ten soldi the tribunal allowed him, and I said that he could. He then went down on his knees, took a rosary from his pocket, and began peering all around the cell.

"What are you looking for, my friend?"

"I am looking, if you will forgive me, for some image *dell'immacolata Vergine Maria,* since I am a Christian, or at least for some poor crucifix, for I was never in such need of commending myself to St. Francis of Assisi, whose name I unworthily bear, as I am at this moment."

I could hardly keep from bursting into laughter, not at his Christian piety, which I revered, but at the way in which he had defended himself; his asking my pardon made me think he took me for a Jew; I hastened to give him the Office of the Holy Virgin,[28] whose image he kissed, then handed it back to me, modestly saying that his father, warden of a galley, had failed to have him taught to read. He said that he was a devotee of the most holy Rosary and told me a quantity of its miracles, to which I listened with the patience of an angel, and he asked my permission to recite it looking at the holy image which was the frontispiece to my Book of Hours. After the Rosary, which I recited with him, I asked him if he had dined and he said he was dying of hunger. I gave him everything I had; he devoured it all ravenously, drank all the wine I had, and when he was tipsy he began first crying and then babbling without rhyme or reason. I asked him the cause of his misfortune, and here is his story:

"My one and only passion in this world, dear master, has always been the glory of this sacred Republic and strict obedience to its laws; always attentive to the evil practices of the wicked, whose sole occupation is to deceive their prince and cheat him out of his dues and to keep their own activities concealed, and I have tried to discover their secrets and I have always faithfully reported to Messer Grande whatever I have been able to discover; it is true that I have always been paid; but the money I have received has never given me as much pleasure as the satisfaction I have felt in seeing that I was useful to the glorious Evangelist St. Mark. I have always scorned the prejudice of those who attach an evil meaning to the designation 'spy'; that name is ill-sounding only in the ears of those who do not love the government, for a spy is nothing but one who fosters the good of the State, the scourge of criminals, and the loyal subject of his prince. When I have been called upon to put my zeal into action, the feeling of friendship, which may have some weight with others, has never had any with me, still less what is called gratitude, and I have often vowed silence to wrest from someone an important secret which, as soon as I learned it, I punctually reported, assured by my confessor that I could reveal it not only because I had had no intention of keeping my oath of silence when I took it but because, where the public welfare is concerned, no oath is binding. I feel that, the slave of my zeal, I would have betrayed my father and I would have stilled the promptings of nature.

"Three weeks ago, then, I observed at Isola,[29] a small island where I was living, a great intimacy among four or five notable personages of the city whom I knew to be dissatisfied with the government because of the discovery and confiscation of a certain contraband shipment, which the principals had been obliged to expiate by imprisonment. The First Chaplain[30] of the parish, born a subject of the Empress-Queen, was in the plot, whose secret I determined to unravel. The plotters met in the evening at an inn, in a room where there was a bed; and after drinking and talking together they left. I boldly determined to hide under the bed one day when, sure that I was unobserved, I found the room open and empty. Toward evening my plotters arrived and talked about the city of Isola which they said was not under the jurisdiction of St. Mark but under that of the principality of Trieste, for it could not be regarded as a part of Venetian Istria. The Chaplain said to the leader of the plot, whose name was Pietro Paolo, that if he would sign a document and the others would do the same, he would himself wait on the Imperial Ambassador[31] and that the Empress would not only seize the city but would reward them. They all told the Chaplain they were ready, and he promised to bring the document the next day and leave at once and come here to bring it to the Ambassador. I decided to make their infamous project miscarry, despite the fact that one of the conspirators was my godfather, a spiritual relationship which gave him a claim on me more sacred and inviolable than if he had been my brother.

"After they left I had plenty of time to get away, thinking it useless to run a second risk by hiding myself the next day under the same bed. I had discovered enough. I left at midnight in a boat, and the next day before noon I was here, where I had someone write down the names of the six rebels for me, then took them to the Secretary to the State Inquisitors, telling him the facts. He ordered me to go early the next morning to Messer, who would give me a man with whom I should go to Isola to point out the Chaplain to him, for it seemed that the Chaplain would not have left by then, and after that I was to let the matter alone. I carried out his order. Messer gave me the man, I took him to Isola, I showed him the Chaplain, and I went about my business.

"After dinner my godfather sent for me to come and shave him, for I am a barber. After I had shaved him he gave me an excellent glass of refosco[32] and some slices of garlic sausage and he ate with me in good fellowship. My love for him as my godfather then filled my soul, I took his hand and, with heartfelt tears, advised him to end his acquaintance with the Chaplain and above all not to sign the document of which he knew; upon this he said to me that he was no more friendly with the Chaplain than with anyone else and he swore he had no idea what document I was referring to. I then began to laugh, I said I had been joking, and I left him, repenting that I had listened to the voice of my heart.

"The next day I saw neither the man nor the Chaplain, and a week later I left Isola and came here. I went to see Messer Grande, who instantly had me locked up; and here I am with you, dear master. I thank St. Francis that I am in the company of a good Christian who is here for reasons which I do not seek to know, for I am not curious. My name is Soradaci,[33] and my wife is a Legrenzi, daughter of a Secretary to the Council of Ten, who trampled on prejudice in order to marry me. She will be in despair not to know what has become of me; but I hope I shall stay here only a few days; I can be here only for the convenience of the Secretary, who presumably will need to question me."

After this brazen narrative, which showed me what kind of monster he was, I pretended to condole with him and, lauding his patriotism, predicted that he would be free in a few days. A half hour later he went to sleep, and I wrote the whole story to Father Balbi, urging upon him the necessity of suspending our work to await a favorable opportunity. The next day I ordered Lorenzo to buy me a wooden crucifix and a print of the Holy Virgin, and to bring me a flask of holy water. Soradaci asked him for his ten soldi, and Lorenzo scornfully gave him twenty. I ordered him to bring me four times as much wine and some garlic, for my cell-mate delighted in it. After he left I deftly took Father Balbi's letter from the book; he described his fright to me. He had returned to his cell more dead than alive and had quickly put the print back over the hole. He reflected that all would have been lost if Lorenzo had taken it into his head to put Soradaci in his garret instead of putting him with me. Lorenzo would not have seen him in the cell and he would have seen the hole.

The account Soradaci gave me of his activities led me to conclude that he would certainly have to undergo questioning, for the Secretary could not have had him locked up except on suspicion of slander or because his report was not clear. I therefore decided to entrust him with two letters which, if he had taken them to those to whom they were addressed, would have done me neither good nor harm, and which would have done me good if the traitor gave them to the Secretary in proof of his fidelity. I spent two hours writing the letters in pencil. The next morning Lorenzo brought me the image of the Virgin, the bottle of holy water, and all that I had ordered.

After feeding the scoundrel well I told him that I was under the necessity of asking him to do me a favor upon which my happiness depended.

"I count, my dear Soradaci, on your friendship and your courage. Here are two letters which I beg you to take to their addresses as soon as you regain your freedom. My happiness depends on your fidelity; but you must hide them, for if they are found on you when you leave here we are both lost. You must swear to me by this crucifix and by this Holy Virgin that you will not betray me."

"I am ready, master, to swear whatever you ask; I am under too great an obligation to you to betray you."

He began crying and protesting that he was wretched enough without my supposing him capable of treachery. After giving him a shirt and a nightcap, I took my nightcap off, I sprinkled the cell with holy water, and in the presence of the two sacred images I intoned an oath accompanied by imprecations which had no sense but were horrifying, and after several signs of the cross I made him get down on his knees and swear with imprecations which set him trembling that he would deliver the letters. After that I gave them to him, and it was he who insisted on sewing them into the back of his vest between the cloth and the lining.

I was morally certain that he would give them to the Secretary; so I used every art to write in such a style that no one would ever discover my ruse. My letters were of a nature to gain me the indulgence of the tribunal and even its esteem. I wrote to Signor Bragadin and to the Abate Grimani and I told them to set their minds at rest and not to repine over my fate, for I had reason to hope that I would soon be released. I told them that when I came out they would find that my punishment had done me more good than harm, because no one in Venice had stood in greater need of reformation than I. I asked Signor Bragadin to send me a pair of lined boots for the winter, since my cell was high enough for me to stand upright and walk about in. I did not want Soradaci to know that my letters were so innocent, for he might have taken it into his head to act like an honest man and deliver them.

CHAPTER XV

Soradaci turns traitor. How I overawe him. Father Balbi successfully completes his work. I leave my cell. Count Asquin's untimely observations. The moment of departure.

TWO OR three days later Lorenzo came up at the Terza and took Soradaci down with him. Not seeing him return, I thought I should see no more of him; but he was brought back toward the end of the day, which rather surprised me. After Lorenzo left he told me that the Secretary suspected him of having warned the Chaplain, since the priest had never gone to see the Ambassador and no document had been found on him. He said that after a long interrogation he had been put all alone in a very small cell where he had been left for seven hours and that afterward he had been fettered again and taken to the Secretary, who tried to make him confess that he had told someone in Isola that the priest would not return there; this he could not confess, for he had never said it to anyone. The Secretary had finally rung and he had been brought back to my cell.[1]

In bitterness of soul I realized that he might well be left with me for a long time. During the night I wrote all this to Father Balbi. It was under the Leads that I learned to write in the dark.

The next morning after swallowing my broth, I wanted to make sure of what I already suspected.

"I wish," I said to the spy, "to add something to the letter I wrote Signor Bragadin; give it to me; you can sew it back in afterward."

"It is dangerous," he answered, "for someone might come in just at that moment and catch us at it."

"Let them come. Give me back my letters."

The monster then fell on his knees before me and swore that when he appeared before the terrible Secretary for the second time he was seized with a violent shaking and felt an intolerable pressure on his back just where the letters were, and the Secretary asking him what it was, he could not keep from telling him the truth, and Lorenzo having taken off his fetters and then his vest, he had unsewn the letters, which the Secretary had put in a drawer after reading them. He added that the Secretary had said that if he had delivered the letters it would have been known and his crime would have cost him his life.

I then pretended to feel ill. I covered my face with my hands and flung myself on the bed on my knees before the crucifix and the Virgin demanding vengeance upon the monster who had betrayed me by violating the most solemn of all oaths. After that I lay down on my side with my face to the wall, and I had the firmness to remain there all that day without uttering a word, pretending not to hear the villain's tears and cries and protestations of repentance. I played my role wonderfully well in a comedy of which I already had the whole plot sketched out in my head. During the night I wrote Father Balbi to come at exactly nineteen o'clock,[2] and not one minute earlier or later, to finish his work, and to work for only four hours, so that he should leave without fail exactly when he heard twenty-three o'clock strike. I told him that our freedom depended on this absolute precision on his part and that he had nothing to fear.

It was the 25th of October, and the days were nearing when I must either carry out my project or abandon it forever. The State Inquisitors and even the Secretary went every year to spend the first three days of November[3] in some village on the mainland. During these three days when his masters were on vacation Lorenzo got drunk in the evening, slept until the Terza, and did not appear under the Leads until very late. It was a year earlier that I had learned all this. Prudence demanded that, if I was to escape, I must choose one of these three nights, in order to be certain that my flight would not be discovered until fairly late in the morning. Another reason for my eagerness, and one which led me to take the resolve at a time when I could no longer doubt that my companion was a scoundrel, was extremely powerful, and I think it deserves to be recorded.

The greatest relief a man in misfortune can have is the hope of soon escaping from it; he thinks of the happy moment when he will see the end of his misery, he persuades himself that it will not be long in coming, and he would do anything on earth to know exactly when it will come; but no one can know at what time something which depends on the will of another will happen, unless that other has announced it. However, in his impatience and weakness, the man comes to believe that by some occult means he can discover the time. "God," he says, "must know it, and God may permit it to be revealed to me by some omen." As soon as his curiosity has led him to this reasoning he does not hesitate to consult the omens, whether he is ready or not to believe all that they may tell him. Such was the state of mind of those who in past ages consulted oracles; such is the state of mind of those who today still question cabalas and who seek revelations in a verse of the Bible or a verse of

Vergil, which has brought such fame to the *sortes virgilianae*[4] of which so many writers tell us.

Not knowing what method to use to make Destiny reveal to me through the Bible the moment at which I was to regain my freedom, I decided to consult the divine poem of *Orlando furioso* by Messer Lodovico Ariosto, which I had read countless times and which was still my delight up there. I worshiped his genius and I thought him far better suited than Vergil to foretell my good fortune.

With this idea in mind, I composed a short question in which I asked the supposed Intelligence which canto of Ariosto contained the prediction of my day of deliverance. After that I constructed an inverted pyramid made up of the numbers which resulted from the words of my question, and by subtracting nine from each pair of digits I finally came out with the number *nine.* I therefore concluded that the prediction I sought was in the ninth canto. I used the same method to discover in which stanza the prediction occurred and the resulting number was *seven.* Now eager to learn which verse of the stanza contained the oracle, the same method gave me the number *one.* So having the numbers 9, 7, 1 I took up the poem and, with my heart palpitating, found canto *nine,* stanza *seven,* first verse:

> *Tra il fin d'Ottobre, e il capo di Novembre*
>
> ("Between the end of October and the beginning of November").[5]

The clarity of the verse and its appropriateness struck me as so amazing that I will not say I had complete faith in it, but my reader will forgive me if, for my part, I prepared to do all that I could to help verify the oracle. The strange thing is that "between the end of October and the beginning of November" there is only midnight, and it was in fact at the stroke of midnight on October 31st that I left there, as the reader will see. I beg him, after this faithful account, not to dismiss me as more superstitious than anyone else, for he would be wrong. I recount the thing because it is true and extraordinary, and because if I had disregarded it I should perhaps not have escaped. The incident will teach all those who have not yet attained wisdom that but for predictions many things that have happened would never have happened. The event does the prediction the service of verifying it. If the event does not occur the prediction becomes nul and void; but I refer my kind reader to universal history, where he will find many events which would never have occurred if they had not been predicted. Forgive the digression.

And now for the way I spent the day until nineteen o'clock, meaning to strike awe into the soul of the stupid, vicious brute who was my companion, to confuse his feeble mind by astonishing images, and so make him powerless to harm me. When Lorenzo left us that morning I told Soradaci to come and eat his soup. The villain was in bed and he had told Lorenzo that he was ill. He would not have dared to come to me if I had not summoned him. He got up and, groveling on his belly at my feet, kissed them and, bursting into tears, said that unless I forgave him he would be a dead man that same day and that he already felt the beginning of the curse laid on him by the vengeance of the Holy Virgin, whom I had invoked against him; he felt griping pains tormenting his entrails and his tongue was covered with ulcers; he showed it to me and I saw that it was really covered with aphtha; I do not know if he had them the day before. I was not interested in examining him to see if he was telling me the truth; my interest was to pretend that I believed him and even to make him hope for forgiveness. I had next to make him eat and drink. The traitor might be intending to deceive me; but determined as I was to deceive him, it was a matter of finding out which of us was the cleverer. I had prepared an attack against which I was certain he could not defend himself.

I instantly assumed the countenance of a man inspired and I ordered him to sit down.

"Let us eat this soup," I said, *"and afterward I will declare your good fortune to you. Know that the Holy Virgin of the Rosary appeared to me at daybreak and commanded me to forgive you. You will not die and you will leave this place with me."*

Lost in wonder, he ate the soup with me, kneeling on the floor because there were no stools, then he sat on his pallet to hear me out. This is what I said:

"The grief which your treachery caused me kept me awake all night, because my letters, which you gave to the Secretary, would have been read by the State Inquisitors and have led to my being sentenced to stay here the rest of my life. My only consolation, I confess to you, was my certainty that you would die before my eyes within three days. With my mind full of this thought unworthy of a Christian, for God commands us to forgive, a slumber at daybreak brought me a vision. I saw this Holy Virgin, whose image you see, come to life, move, stand before me, open her mouth, and speak to me in these words: *'Soradaci is a devotee of my holy Rosary, I protect him, it is my will that you forgive him; and the curse he drew upon himself will now cease to operate. As the reward of your generous act I will command one of my angels to put on human form and at once come down from Heaven to break open the roof of this cell and take you from it in five or six days. The angel will set to work today at nineteen o'clock and he will work until half an hour before sunset, for he must return to Heaven by daylight. When you leave here with my angel you will take Soradaci with you, and you will look after him on condition that he gives up his trade of* *spy. You will tell him all this.'* After saying these words the Holy Virgin vanished, and I found that I was awake."

Maintaining all the gravity I could muster, I studied the countenance of the traitor, who appeared to be petrified. I then took my Book of Hours, I sprinkled the cell with holy water, and I began pretending to pray to God, from time to time kissing the image of the Virgin. An hour later the beast, who had never said a word, asked me point-blank at what hour the angel was to come down from Heaven and if he would hear him breaking open the cell.

"I am certain that he will come at nineteen o'clock, that we will hear him working, and that he will leave at twenty-three; and it seems to me that four hours of work is enough for an angel."

"You may have been dreaming."

"I am sure I was not. Are you prepared to swear to me that you will renounce being a spy?"

Instead of answering he went to sleep and did not wake until two hours later, when he asked me if he could put off giving me his oath that he would renounce his trade.

"You can put it off," I said, "until the moment the angel enters this cell to take me away with him; but I warn you that if you do not swear to give up your evil trade I will leave you here, for such is the order I received from the Holy Virgin."

I then saw his relief, for he felt sure that the angel would not come. He seemed to pity me. I could not wait to hear the nineteenth hour strike, and the comedy entertained me vastly, for I was sure that the arrival of the angel would set the brute's miserable reason tottering. The thing was infallible unless, to my great regret, Lorenzo had forgotten to deliver the book.

At eighteen o'clock I began eating dinner, and I drank water. Soradaci drank all the wine and for dessert ate all the garlic I had; it was his sweetmeat. When I heard nineteen o'clock I fell on my knees, ordering him to do likewise in a voice which made him tremble. He obeyed, looking at me like an idiot with unseeing eyes. When I heard the little noise which told me that my accomplice was passing through the wall,

"The angel is coming," I said.

I then lay down on my stomach, at the same time giving him a push between the shoulders which made him fall into the same position. The noise from the breaking was loud, and I remained there prostrate for a good quarter of an hour. Did I not have reason enough to laugh when I saw that the scoundrel had remained motionless in the same position? But I did not laugh. I was engaged in the noble work of driving him mad or at least frantic. His accursed soul could not become human except by being steeped in terror. I spent three and a half hours reading while he told the Rosary, falling asleep from time to time and never daring to open his mouth, only looking up at the ceiling when he heard the noise of the monk splitting a board. In his stupor he kept bowing to the image of the Virgin in the most comical way imaginable. At the stroke of twenty-three o'clock I told him to do as I would do, since it was time for the angel to leave; we prostrated ourselves, Father Balbi left, and we heard not another sound. When I rose the expression I saw on the villain's face betokened dread and terror rather than rational surprise.

I amused myself for a while talking with him to hear how he would reason. He said things, always weeping, the connection between which was little short of absurdity; it was a hodgepodge of ideas none of which was pursued. He talked of his sins, of his special devotions, of his zeal for St. Mark, of his duties to his prince, and it was to this merit in him that he attributed the grace which the Holy Virgin was granting him, and I had to put up with a long tale of the miracles of the

Rosary which his wife, whose confessor was a Dominican, had told him. He said that he could not guess what I would do with him, ignorant as he was.

"You will be in my service and you will have everything you need, without pursuing your vile and dangerous trade of spying."

"But we cannot stay in Venice."

"Of course not. The angel will lead us to a state which does not belong to St. Mark. Are you ready to swear to me that you will renounce your trade? And if you swear, will you perjure yourself again?"

"If I swear, I will not break my oath, that is sure; but admit that if I had not perjured myself you would not have obtained the grace which the Holy Virgin has granted you. So you must be grateful to me and love me for betraying you."

"Do you love Judas, who betrayed Jesus Christ?"

"No."

"Then you see that one must loathe the traitor and at the same time adore Providence, which makes good come out of evil. You have been a scoundrel, my dear man, until now. You have offended God and the Holy Virgin, and at present I will no longer accept your oath unless you expiate your sin."

"What sin have I committed?"

"Your sin of pride in supposing that I should feel obliged to you for giving my letters to the Secretary."

"Then what must I do to expiate my sin?"

"You must do this. Tomorrow when Lorenzo comes you must remain motionless on your pallet with your face to the wall and never look at Lorenzo. If he speaks to you you must answer him, without looking at him, that you could not sleep. Do you promise to obey me?"

"I promise you that I will do all that you say."

"Promise it to this holy image. Quick!"

"I promise you, most holy Virgin, that when Lorenzo comes I will not look at him and that I will not stir from my pallet."

"And I, most holy Virgin, swear to you by the bowels of Jesus Christ your God and son, that as soon as I see Soradaci turn to Lorenzo I will run and strangle him to your honor and glory."

I asked him if he had anything to object to my oath, and he said he was satisfied with it. I then gave him something to eat and told him to go to bed because I needed sleep. I spent two hours writing an account of all this to the monk and I said that if the work was almost completed he need come to the roof of my cell again only to break through the board and enter. I told him that we would leave on the night of October 31st, and that we would be four, counting his companion and mine. It was the 28th. Early the next day the monk informed me that the small entrance-way was finished and that he needed to get on the roof of my cell again only to open it, which he was sure he could do in four minutes. Soradaci obeyed his orders perfectly. He pretended to be asleep, and Lorenzo did not even speak to him. I kept my eyes on him and I believe I should really have strangled him if I had seen him turn his head toward Lorenzo, for to betray me he would have had to do no more than give him a wink.

I spent the day treating him to sublime discourses calculated to inspire fanaticism, leaving him in peace only when I saw that he was drunk and ready to fall asleep or on the point of going into convulsions under the impact of a metaphysics equally foreign and new to his mind, which had never applied its faculties to anything but inventing some trick of his spying trade.

He gave me pause for a moment by saying that he could not understand how an angel would need to work so long to open my cell; but I at once regained the upper hand by saying that he was not working as an angel but as a man, and I added that his evil thought must have instantly offended the Holy Virgin.

"And you will see," I said, "that because of your sin the angel will not come today. You always think not like an honest, pious, devout man but like a wicked sinner who supposes he is dealing with Messer Grande and the *sbirri.*"

He then began weeping, and I was delighted to see that he was in despair when nineteen o'clock struck and there was no sound of the angel arriving. I then broke into lamentations which distressed him, and I left him to suffer all day. The next day he did not fail to obey, and when Lorenzo asked after his health he answered without looking at him. He maintained the same behavior on the following day, until I finally saw Lorenzo for the last time on the morning of the 31st, having given him the book in which I told the monk to come and make the opening. This time I feared no more obstacles, having learned from Lorenzo himself that not only the Inquisitors but the Secretary too had gone to the country. I had no reason to fear the arrival of any other guest; and I no longer needed to humor my infamous companion.

But now for an apology which I should perhaps make to some reader who might think unfavorably of my religion and morals because of the way I abused our holy mysteries and the oath which I made the idiot swear and the lies I told him about the appearance of the Holy Virgin.

Since my purpose was to tell the story of my escape with all its circumstances as they really happened, I considered it my duty to conceal nothing. I cannot say that I am confessing, for I feel no sting of repentance; nor can I say that I am proud of what I did, for it was with the utmost reluctance that I made use of the imposture. If I had disposed of any better means I would certainly have given them the preference. To regain my freedom I feel that I would still do the same thing today, and perhaps a great deal more.

Nature commanded me to escape, and religion could not forbid me to do it; I had no time to lose; having a spy with me who had given me an indubitable example of his perfidy, I must make it morally impossible for him to inform Lorenzo that the roof of the cell was being broken in. What was I to do? I had only two possibilities, and I must choose. Either I must bind the villain's soul by terror, or silence him by strangling him, as any other reasonable man more cruel than I would have done. It would have been much easier for me, and I should even have had nothing to fear, for I would have said that he died a natural death and no one would have taken much trouble to discover if it was true or not. Now where is the reader who can think that I would have done better to strangle him? If there is one such, may God enlighten him; his religion will never be mine. I believe that I did my duty; and the victory which crowned my exploit may be proof that eternal Providence did not disapprove of the means I employed. As for the oath I made him that I would always look after him, thank God he himself freed me from it, for he did not have the courage to escape with me; but even if he had found the courage I confess to my reader that I should not have thought I was perjuring myself if I had not kept it. I would have got rid of the monster at the first opportunity, even if I had had to hang him from a tree. When I swore that I would always help him, I knew that his loyalty would last only as long as the frenzy of his fanaticism, which was bound to disappear as soon as he saw that the angel was a monk. *Non merta fè chi non la serba altrui* ("He does not deserve loyalty who does not observe it").[6] A man has far more right to sacrifice everything to his own self-preservation than sovereigns have to do the same to preserve the State.

After Lorenzo left I told Soradaci that the angel would come to make an opening in the roof of my cell at seventeen o'clock; "he will bring a pair of scissors," I said, "and you shall cut my beard and the angel's."

"Does the angel wear a beard?"

"Yes, you will see it. After that we will leave and go to break open the roof of the palace; and at night we will get down into the Piazza San Marco and go to Germany."

He did not answer; he ate by himself, for my heart and mind were too much occupied with my escape to leave me capable of eating. I had not even been able to sleep.

Seventeen o'clock strikes, and the angel is there! Soradaci made to prostrate himself, but I said it was no longer necessary. In less than three minutes he broke through, the perfectly round piece of board dropped at my feet, Father Balbi slid into my arms.

"Your work," I said as I embraced him, *"is done; mine begins."*

He delivered the pike to me and gave me a pair of scissors, which I handed to Soradaci so that he could cut off our beards at once. This time I could not keep from laughing when I saw the utter astonishment with which the brute was staring at the angel, who looked like a devil. Beside himself, he cut our beards perfectly with the points of the scissors.

Impatient to see the topography of the place, I told the monk to stay there with Soradaci, for I did not want to leave him alone; I climbed out and found that the hole in the wall was narrow, but I got through it; I came to the roof of the Count's cell, I entered it and cordially embraced the unfortunate old man. I saw a figure not fitted to encounter the difficulties and dangers which such a flight was sure to bring us on an immense sloping roof covered with lead plates. He at once asked me what my plan was, saying that he thought the steps I had taken were not sufficiently considered.

"All I ask," I replied, "is to go forward until I find freedom or death."

He said, grasping my hand, that if my idea was to make a hole in the roof and try to find a way down over the lead plates, he did not see how I could do it unless I had wings.

"I have not," he added, "the courage to go with you; I will stay here and pray to God for you."

I then went out to investigate the great roof, getting as close as I could to the sides of the loft. Managing to touch the under side of the roof at the narrowest point of the angle, I sat down among the roof timbering, with which the lofts of all great palaces are filled. I sounded the boards with the point of my bolt and I found that they were as if rotting away. At each blow I made with my pike everything it entered fell to pieces. Seeing that I could certainly make a big enough opening in less than an hour, I went back to my cell, where I spent four hours cutting up sheets, napkins, mattresses, and everything I had which would make a rope. I insisted on knotting the pieces together myself with weaver's knots, for a badly made knot could have come undone and whoever was hanging from the rope at that moment would have fallen to the ground. I saw myself in possession of a hundred *braccia*[7] of rope. In great enterprises there are certain points which decide the issue and in regard to which the leader who deserves to succeed is he who trusts no one.

After finishing the rope I made a bundle of my coat, my floss-silk cloak, some shirts, stockings, and handkerchiefs, and the three of us went to the Count's cell carrying all this with us. The Count first congratulated Soradaci on having had the luck to be put with me and to be about to follow me. His look of confusion gave me an almost irresistible desire to laugh. I no longer restrained myself; I had cast off the mask of Tartufe[8] which I had worn all day for the past week to prevent the two-faced scoundrel from betraying me. I saw that he was sure I had deceived him, but otherwise he was completely bewildered; for he could not guess how I could have corresponded with the supposed angel to make him come and go at the hour I pleased. He heard the Count saying that we were braving the most obvious danger of perishing, and coward as he could not but be, he was already turning over a plan to excuse himself from the perilous journey. I told the monk to bundle up his things while I went to make the hole at the edge of the loft.

I needed no help to complete my opening by two o'clock[9] that night. I pulverized the boards. My aperture was twice as big as necessary, and I was able to touch the entire plate of lead. The monk helped me get it out of the way, for it either curved around the edge of the marble gutter or was riveted to it; but by pushing my pike between the gutter and the plate I got it loose, and then with our shoulders we bent it back until the opening through which we would have to pass was large enough. Putting my head out of the hole, I was distressed to see the bright light of the crescent moon, which would reach its first quarter the following day. It was an obstacle which we had to bear with patience, putting off our departure until midnight, when the moon would have gone to light the antipodes. On a splendid night, when everyone of any account would be strolling in the Piazza San Marco, I could not risk being seen walking about up there. Our shadows, stretching far over the pavement of the square, would have been seen by the strollers, they would have looked up, and our persons would have provided a most unusual spectacle which would have aroused curiosity, especially on the part of Messer Grande, whose *sbirri,* the only guardians of the great city of Venice, keep watch all night. He would in-

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stantly have found a way to send a troop of them up there, which would have ruined all my fine plans. I therefore imperiously decreed that we were not to go out until after the moon had set. I called on God for help, and I did not ask for miracles. Exposed to the whims of Fortune, I must give her as little scope as I could. If my enterprise failed, I must not have the slightest miscalculation to reproach myself with. The moon was certain to set at five, and the sun would rise at half past thirteen; we would have seven hours of total darkness in which to act.

I told Father Balbi that we would spend three hours conversing with Count Asquin; and to go to him by himself at once and let him know that I was in need of his lending me thirty zecchini which might be as indispensable to me as my pike had been in accomplishing all I had done. He did my errand and four minutes later came back and told me to go alone because the Count wanted to speak to me without witnesses. The poor old man began by gently telling me that I did not need money to make good my escape, that he had none, that he had a large family, that if I died the money he gave me would be lost, adding a great many other reasons, all calculated to hide his avarice. My answer took half an hour. I used excellent arguments but ones which have never had any power since the world began, for no orator can extirpate a passion. It was a case of *nolenti baculus* ("for him who is unwilling, the rod"), but I was not hardhearted enough to use force on the unfortunate old man. I ended by saying that if he wanted to flee with me I would carry him on my shoulders as Aeneas did Anchises;[10] but that if he wanted to remain and pray to God for us his prayer would achieve nothing, for he would be asking God to bring success to an undertaking to which he had not contributed by ordinary means. The sound of his voice called my attention to his tears, which tried my temper; he asked me if two *zecchini* would satisfy me, and I answered that I had to be satisfied with anything. He gave them to me, begging me to return them if after making a round of the great roof of the palace I took the sensible course of going back to my cell. I promised him I would do so, a little surprised that he supposed I could decide to return. I was certain that I would never go back there.

I called my companions, and we put all our equipment near the hole. I divided the hundred *braccia* of rope into two coils and we spent two hours talking and not unpleasurably recalling all our vicissitudes. The first sample Father Balbi gave me of his excellent character was to tell me ten times over that I had broken my word to him, since I had assured him in my letters that my plan was all laid and infallible, whereas it was nothing of the kind; and he brazenly told me that if he had known this beforehand he would not have got me out of my cell. The Count, with all the gravity of his seventy years, told me that my wisest course was not to go on, for the impossibility of getting down from the roof was as obvious as the danger, which might cost me my life. I said mildly that the two things which were obvious to him were far from obvious to me; but since he was an advocate by profession, here is the harangue with which he tried to convince me. What spurred him on was the two zecchini which I should have had to return to him if he had persuaded me to stay.

"The slope of the roof, covered as it is with lead plates, will not allow you to walk over it for you can scarcely stand upright on it. The roof has seven or eight dormers, but they are all barred with iron and there is no way of reaching them to stand in front of them for they are all distant from the edges. The ropes you have will be of no use to you, because you will find no place to which you could fasten one end securely, and even if you found it, a man descending from such a height cannot remain suspended by his arms or manage his own descent. So one of you three would have to put a rope around the other two, one at a time, and let them down as you let a bucket down into a well; and whoever did this would have to stay behind and go back to his cell. Which of the three of you feels inclined to perform this act of charity? And supposing that one of you is hero enough to be willing to remain behind, pray tell me on which side you will go down. Not on the side toward the square and the pillars, for you would be seen. Not on the side toward the church, for you would still be shut in. Not on the side toward the courtyard of the palace, for the Arsenalotti[11] make constant rounds there. You can only go down on the side toward the canal. You have no gondola and no boat waiting for you; so you would have to throw yourselves into the water and swim as far as Sant'Apollonia,[12] which you would reach in a deplorable state, not knowing where to go at night to put yourselves in fit condition to continue your flight. Consider that it is slippery on the leads, and if you fall into the canal you cannot hope to escape death even if you can swim, for the height is so great and the canal so shallow that the fall would crush you to death before you could drown. Three or four feet of water are not a volume of fluid sufficient to lessen the violence of the descent of a solid body falling into it. The least that could happen to you would be to find you had broken your legs or arms."

I listened to this harangue, inappropriate as it was to the exigencies of the situation, with a patience which was not like me. The monk's reproaches, hurled at me with no consideration, made me indignant and provoked me to refute them harshly; but I would have ruined what I had built up, for I was dealing with a coward quite capable of answering that he was not desperate enough to brave death and so I had only to set off by myself; and by myself I could not hope to succeed. I humored these grudging spirits by mildness. I said that I was sure I would save us though I was not in a position to tell them my plans in detail. I told Count Asquin that his sensible considerations would make me act with prudence and that my trust in God was so great that it stood me in stead of all else.

I frequently put out my hands to discover if Soradaci was still there, for he never said a word; I laughed as I thought of what he might be turning over in his malicious mind, which must know that I had deceived him. At half past four I told him to go and see where the crescent moon was in the sky. He came back and said that in a half hour it would no longer be visible, and that an unusually thick fog must be making the leads very dangerous.

"It is enough for me, my man, if the fog is not oil. Make a bundle of your cloak and some of our ropes, which we must divide equally between us."

I was then surprised to find the man at my knees, taking my hands and kissing them, and saying with tears that he begged me not to ask his death.

"I am certain," he said, "to fall into the canal; I can be of no use to you. Alas! Leave me here and I will spend the whole night praying to St. Francis for you. It is in your power to kill me; but I will never make up my mind to come with you."

The fool did not know that I thought his company would bring me misfortune.

"You are right," I said, "stay; but on condition that you will pray to St. Francis and go at once and bring all my books, which I wish to leave to the Count."

He obeyed me instantly. My books were worth a hundred scudi[13] at least. The Count said he would return them to me when I came back.

"Be sure," I answered, "that you will not see me here again, and that I am very glad this base coward has not courage enough to follow me. He would be in my way, and in any case such a coward is unworthy to share the honor of so signal an escape with Father Balbi and me. Is not that so, my brave companion?" I said to the monk, another coward in whom I hoped to arouse some sense of honor.

"Very true," he said, "always provided that he does not have cause to congratulate himself tomorrow."

I then asked the Count for pens, ink, and paper, all of which he had despite the prohibition, for prohibitions were nothing to Lorenzo, who would have sold St. Mark himself for a scudo. I then wrote the following letter, which I left in the care of Soradaci without being able to read it over, for I wrote it in the dark. I began it with a visionary motto, which under the circumstances I thought very appropriate.

> *Non moriar sed vivam, et narrabo opera Domini.*
>
> ("I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.")[14]

"Our Lords the State Inquisitors are bound to do everything to keep a culprit in prison by force; but the culprit fortunate enough not to be on parole must also do everything he can to gain his freedom. Their right is founded upon justice; the culprit's upon nature. Just as they did not need his consent to lock him up, so he cannot need theirs to flee.

"Giacomo Casanova who writes this in the bitterness of his heart knows that he is liable to the misfortune of being caught before he leaves the State and returned to the hands of those whose sword he seeks to flee, and in that case he appeals on his knees to the humanity of his generous judges, begging them not to make his fate still more cruel by punishing him for what he has done only at the prompting of reason and nature. He begs them, if he is taken, to return to him all his belongings which he leaves in the cell he has vacated. But if he has the good fortune to escape, he gives all that he leaves here to Francesco Soradaci, who remains a prisoner because he fears the danger to which I am about to expose myself and does not, as I do, love his freedom more than his life. Casanova begs the magnanimous virtue of Their Excellencies not to deny the wretch the gift he has made him. Written an hour before midnight without light in the cell of Count Asquin this 31st day of October 1756."

> *Castigans castigavit me Deus, et morti non tradidit me.*
>
> ("The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.")[15]

I gave him the letter, warning him not to give it to Lorenzo but only to the Secretary himself, who certainly would not fail to come up. The Count told him that my letter would infallibly produce the intended effect, but that he must give everything back to me if I reappeared. The idiot answered that he hoped to see me again and return everything to me.

But it was time to leave. The moon was no longer visible. I tied half the ropes to Father Balbi's neck on one side and the bundle of his wretched clothing on his other shoulder. I did the same to myself. Both of us in our vests, with our hats on our heads, we set forth to what we might find.

> *E quindi uscimmo a rimirar le stelle* (Dante).
>
> ("And from there we went out to see the stars again.")[16]

CHAPTER XVI

I leave the prison. I am in danger of losing my life on the roof. I leave the Doge's Palace, I embark, and I reach the mainland. Danger to which Father Balbi exposes me. Stratagem I am obliged to use to get rid of him for a time.

I WENT out first; Father Balbi followed me. I told Soradaci to put the lead plate back where it had been and dismissed him to pray to his St. Francis. Down on my hands and knees, I got a good grip on my pike and, extending my arm, I pushed it slantwise into the joints between the plates, with the result that by using my four fingers to grasp the edge of the plate I had raised, I was able to help myself along to the top of the roof. To follow me the monk had put the four fingers of his right hand into the belt of my breeches near the buckle, so that I was in the unhappy position of a beast of burden at once carrying and drawing, and what is more while climbing a slope wet from the fog.

Halfway up this rather dangerous ascent the monk told me to stop because one of his bundles had come loose from his neck and rolled down, perhaps no farther than the gutter. My first response was the temptation to give him a good kick; it would have been more than enough to send him hurrying after his bundle; but God granted me the strength to resist it; the punishment would have been too great both for him and for me, since all by myself I simply could not have got away. I asked him if it was the bundle of ropes; but when he said that it was the one in which he had put his black redingote, two shirts, and a precious manuscript he had found under the Leads and which, he insisted, would make his fortune, I calmly told him that he must bear it patiently and go on. He sighed, and, still clinging to my behind, he followed me.

After passing over fifteen or sixteen plates, I found that I had reached the ridge of the roof, on which, spreading my legs, I sat comfortably astride. The monk did likewise behind me. We had our backs turned to the small island of San Giorgio Maggiore,[1] and two hundred paces ahead of us were the numerous domes of the Church of San Marco, which forms part of the Doge's Palace; it is the Doge's chapel; no monarch on earth can boast of having one equal to it. I at once got rid of my burdens and told my accomplice that he might do likewise. He managed well enough to put his bundle of ropes between his thighs, but his hat, which he tried to put there too, lost its balance and, after turning all the somersaults necessary to bring it to the gutter, dropped into the canal. My companion instantly succumbed to despair.

"A bad omen," he said. "Here I am, at the beginning of our enterprise, without a shirt, without a hat, and without a manuscript which contained the precious and completely unknown history of all the festivals celebrated in the palace of the Republic."

Less savage than I had been when I was climbing, I told him that the two accidents he had just experienced were far too natural for even a superstitious person to call them auguries, that I did not consider them such, and that they did not discourage me; but that they should serve him as a last warning to be prudent and obedient and to reflect that if his hat had fallen off to his right instead of to his left we should have been lost, for it would have dropped into the palace courtyard, where the Arsenalotti would have picked it up, and, concluding that there must be someone on the roof of the Doge's Palace, they would certainly have done their duty and found some way to pay us a visit.

After spending several minutes looking to right and left, I told the monk to stay there with the bundles and not to move until I returned. I set out carrying only my pike, moving along on my behind, still straddling the angle without any difficulty. I spent nearly an hour going everywhere, stopping, observing, examining; but, seeing nothing in any direction to which I could fasten one end of my rope to let myself down into a place where I should be safe, I was in the greatest perplexity. There was no use giving further thought either to the canal or to the palace courtyard. On the top of the church I could see only precipitous slopes between the domes, none of them leading anywhere which was not locked. To get beyond the church in the direction of La Canonica[2] I should have had to climb over steep curved surfaces; it was natural that I dismissed as impossible what I saw no way of doing. I had to be *bold but not foolhardy.* The exact point between them is, I believe, one of the most imperceptible middle points in philosophy.

My eyes and my thought began to dwell on a dormer which was on the side toward the Rio del Palazzo,[3] about two thirds of the way down the slope. It was far enough from the place at which I had made my exit to assure me that the loft which it lighted did not belong to the guarded precincts of the cells I had broken open. It could only furnish light to some garret, inhabited or not, above one of the palace apartments, in which when day began I should naturally find the doors open. As for the palace servants, or those of the Doge's family,[4] I was morally certain that they would have hastened to get us away and done anything except put us back in the hands of inquisitorial justice, even if they had known us to be the greatest criminals in the State. With this idea in mind, I felt impelled to inspect the front of the dormer, and I proceeded there at once by raising one leg and letting myself slide until I was more or less sitting on its small horizontal roof, which was three feet long and a foot and a half wide. I then bent well over, holding firmly to its sides, and bringing my head as close to it as I could. I saw, or rather, managed to feel, a light iron grating and behind it a window with round panes joined together by narrow slotted strips of lead. I thought nothing of the window, though it was shut; but the grating, light as it was, demanded a file, and the only tool I had was my pike.

Thoughtful, gloomy, and baffled, I did not know what to do when a very natural occurrence had the effect of an extraordinary prodigy on my astonished soul. I hope that my sincere avowal will not lower me in the eyes of my philosophical reader, if he considers that a man in a state of anxiety and distress is only half of what he can be in a state of tranquillity. The midnight bell sounding from San Marco just at that moment was the phenomenon which seized upon my mind and which, by a violent shock, delivered it from the dangerous doubt under which it was laboring. The bell reminded me that the day which was just then to begin was All Saints' Day; if I had a patron saint, he must be among them. But what raised my courage still more and actually increased my physical powers was the profane oracle I had received from my dear Ariosto: *Tra il fin d'Ottobre, e il capo di Novembre.* If a great misfortune makes a freethinker pious, it is almost impossible for him not also to become in some degree superstitious. The sound of the bell spoke to me, told me to act, and promised me victory. Lying prone up to my neck and bending my head down toward the small grating, I pushed my bolt into the frame which held it and I determined to break it and remove the grating in one piece. It took me only a quarter of an hour to smash all the wood which made up the four sides of the frame. The grating being now in my hands in one piece, I put it beside the dormer. I found it no more difficult to break away the glazed window, paying no attention to the blood flowing from my left hand, which was slightly cut by a pane I pulled out.

With the help of my bolt I used my original method to return to my position astride the pyramidal summit[5] of the roof, and I made my way to the place where I had left my companion. I found him desperate, furious, and in an atrocious humor; he reviled me because I had left him all alone for two long hours. He assured me that he was only waiting for seven o'clock to go back to his cell.

"What did you think I was doing?"

"I thought you had fallen into some chasm."

"And aren't you glad to see that I didn't?"

"What were you up to all this time?"

"You'll see. Follow me."

I tied my belongings and my rope to my neck and proceeded toward the dormer. When we came to the place where it was to our right I gave him a detailed account of all that I had done, consulting him as to how we could both get into the loft. I saw that it would be easy for one of us, because the other could let him down by means of the rope; but I did not know what means the other could employ to get down too, for I did not see how I could make the cord fast so that I could tie myself to it. If I got in and let myself go, I might break a leg, for I did not know if the jump down was too long to risk. To these sound considerations, delivered in friendly tones, the monk replied that I had only to let him down, and that then I would have all the time I needed to think out how I could rejoin him in the place to which I had lowered him. I controlled myself enough not to reproach him with all the cowardice of his answer but not enough to defer setting his mind at rest. I instantly undid my bundle of ropes; I put a loop around his chest under the armpits, I made him lie down on his belly, and I let him down feet first to the small roof of the dormer, where, still controlling the rope from my position astride the summit, I told him to get his legs inside up to the hips, supporting himself with his elbows on the roof. I then slid down the slope as I had done the first time and, lying down on my belly, I told him to let his body go without any fear for I had a firm hold of the rope. When he reached the floor of the loft he untied himself, and pulling the rope back I found that the distance from the dormer to the floor was ten times the length of my arm. It was too long a jump to risk. He said that I could throw the ropes inside; but I took good care not to follow his stupid advice. I went back to the summit, and not knowing what to do, I made my way to a place near a cupola which I had not inspected. I saw a flat terrace, paved with lead plates, next to a large dormer window closed by a pair of blinds, and in a vat I saw a heap of quicklime and beside it a trowel and a ladder long enough for me to use it to climb down to where my companion was; only the ladder interested me. I passed my rope under the top rung and, resuming my position astride the roof, I dragged the ladder to the dormer. It was now a matter of getting it in. The ladder was twelve times the length of my arm.

The difficulties I had to overcome in the process of getting the ladder in were so great that I heartily repented of having deprived myself of the monk's help. I had pushed the ladder in the direction of the gutter so that one end of it touched the opening in the dormer and the other end protruded beyond the gutter by a third of the length of the ladder. I then slid down to the roof of the dormer, I dragged the ladder sidewise and, pulling it to me, I fastened the rope to the eighth rung. I then pushed it down again and got it back in line with the dormer; then I pulled the rope toward me; but the ladder could only go in as far as the fifth rung, its top struck against the roof of the dormer and no amount of force could have made it go in any farther. It was absolutely necessary to raise the other end; raising it would lower the opposite end, and the whole ladder could be put in. I could have set the ladder across the opening, tied my rope to it, and let myself down without any risk; but the ladder would have remained where it was, and in the morning it would have shown the *sbirri* and Lorenzo the place where I might well still be.

Somehow, then, the entire ladder had to be brought into the dormer, and having no one with me I was left with no choice except making up my mind to go down to the gutter myself and raise the end of it. This is what I did, exposing myself to a danger which, but for an extraordinary intervention of Providence, would have cost me my life. I had no hesitation about letting the ladder go by slackening the rope, for there was no fear that it would drop into the canal since it was hooked to the gutter by its third rung. Holding my pike, I slid slowly to a point in the gutter beside the ladder; I put down the pike and nimbly turned so that I was directly facing the dormer and had my right hand on the ladder. The gutter sustained the tips of my toes, for I was not standing but lying on my belly. In this position I mustered strength enough to raise the ladder half a foot, at the same time pushing it forward. I had the satisfaction of seeing it go in a good foot. The reader will understand that its weight must have diminished considerably. It was now necessary to raise it two more feet to make it go in that much farther; with that done, I was sure I could get it all the way in by at once returning to the roof of the dormer and pulling on the cord which I had tied to the rung. To elevate it two feet, I rose to my knees, but the force I tried to use to push it up made the toes of my two feet slip, so that my body dropped off into space as far as my chest, till it hung from my two elbows. It was in the same terrible instant that I used all my strength and all the aid of my elbows to press my body forward and check my further descent by my ribs; and I succeeded. Taking care not to slip, I managed with the help of the rest of my arms as far as the wrists to hold myself against the gutter with my whole belly. I had no fear for the ladder, since, my two efforts having pushed it in three feet, it could not move from where it was. So, finding that I now had my wrists and my groins from my lower belly to the top of my thighs actually on the gutter, I saw that by raising my right thigh so that I could put first one knee and then the other on the gutter, I should be out of my great danger. The effort I made to carry out my plan brought on a nervous spasm, the pain from which is enough to fell the strongest of men. It seized me just as my right knee was already touching the gutter; but the painful spasm, which is called a "cramp," not only practically paralyzed me in every limb, it necessitated my remaining motionless to wait for it to go away of itself, as previous experience had taught me it would do. Terrible moment! Two minutes later I made the attempt and—thank God!—I brought one knee to the gutter, then the other, and as soon as I thought I had sufficiently recovered my breath I straightened up, though still on my knees, and raised the ladder as far as I could, and I managed to get it high enough to be on a level with the opening in the dormer. Sufficiently well acquainted with the laws of the lever and of equilibrium, I then took my bolt and, following my usual method, climbed to the dormer, where I had no difficulty getting the ladder in, my companion receiving the end of it in his arms. I threw the ropes, my clothes, and all the debris from breaking the window down into the loft and then entered it, warmly greeted by the monk, who saw to pulling in the ladder. Arm in arm, we made the round of the dark place we were in, which might have been thirty feet long and ten wide.

At one end of it we found a double door made of iron bars; turning the latch at the center, I opened it. We groped our way around the walls, and, starting to cross the place, we found a large table surrounded by stools and armchairs. We went back to where we had touched windows; I opened one, then the blinds, and by the starlight we saw chasms between domes. I did not for a moment think of climbing down; I wanted to know where I was going, and I knew nothing of this part of the palace. I closed the blinds, we left the room, and returned to the place where we had left our baggage. At the end of my strength, I dropped onto the floor, stretched out with a bundle of ropes under my head, and in my utter exhaustion of body and mind a very sweet slumber took complete possession of me; I fell so irresistibly asleep that I thought I was yielding to death, and even had I been sure that it was so, I would have made no resistance, for the pleasure I felt in falling asleep was unbelievable.

My sleep lasted three hours and a half. The piercing cries and rough shaking of the monk were what waked me. He said that twelve o'clock[6] had just struck and that it was inconceivable I should sleep in our situation. It was inconceivable to him; but my sleep had not been voluntary; it was my constitution at bay which had brought it on, and the inanition due to my having neither eaten nor slept for two days. But the sleep had restored all my vigor, and I was delighted to see that the darkness of the loft had lessened a little.

I rose, saying:

"This place is not a prison; there must be a perfectly simple way of getting out of it, which will be easy to find."

We then made our way to the end opposite the door made of iron bars and in a very narrow corner I thought

I felt a door, I feel a keyhole, I thrust my bolt into it, hoping that it is not a closet. After three or four pushes I open it, I see a small room, and I find a key on a table. I try the key in the door, and I see that I have locked it. I open it and I tell the monk to go quickly for our bundles, and as soon as he brings them I lock the small door again and put the key back where it was. I leave the small room and find that I am in a gallery lined with niches full of notebooks. They were archives. I find a short, narrow stone stairway and I go down it; I find another with a glazed door at the end; I open it and I see that I am at last in a room I knew; we were in the ducal chancellery.[7] I open a window, and I see that I could easily get down, but I would be in the labyrinth of little courtyards which surround the Church of San Marco. God forfend! On a desk I see an iron instrument with a wooden handle and a round point, which the chancellery secretaries use to make holes in parchments, to which they then attach the lead seals[8] with thread; I take it. I open the desk and find a copy of a letter informing the Proveditor-General[9] in Corfu of the dispatch of three thousand zecchini for restoring the old fortress. I look to see if I can find the money, but it is not there. God knows with what pleasure I would have appropriated it, and how I would have laughed at the monk if he had dared to tell me that it was robbery. I would have considered it a gift from Providence, to say nothing of appropriating it by right of conquest.

I go to the door of the chancellery, I put my bolt into the lock, but convinced in less than a minute that my pike could not force it, I quickly decide to make a hole in one of the two leaves of the door. I choose the place where there are the fewest knots in the wood. I go to work on the board at the point where its junction with the other leaf affords me a crack, and all goes well. I made the monk force the wooden-handled instrument into the cracks I opened with the pike; then, pushing the latter as hard as I could to left and right, I broke and split and shattered the wood, heedless of the tremendous noise which my method of attack produced; the monk was trembling, for someone must be hearing it far away. I knew the danger, but I had to risk it.

In half an hour the hole was large enough, and so much the better for us that it was, for I should have had great difficulty making it any bigger. Knots to left, right, above, and below would have made it necessary for me to use a saw. The circumference of the hole was frightening, for it bristled all round with points jagged enough to tear our clothes and lacerate our skins. It was five feet up; under it I set a stool, onto which the monk climbed. He put his joined arms and his head into the hole, and I, standing behind him on another stool and taking him first by the thighs and then by the legs, managed to push him out into a dense darkness; but I did not care how dark it was, for I knew the place. When my companion was out, I threw him all my belongings, leaving nothing but the ropes in the chancellery.

I then set two stools side by side below the hole, and adding a third on top of them I climbed up on it; in this way the hole was opposite my thighs. I pushed myself into it up to the lower part of my abdomen with considerable difficulty and lacerating myself, for it was narrow; then, having no one behind to help me get farther, I told the monk to take me around the chest and pull me through without mercy and even in pieces if necessary. He obeyed my order, and I silently bore all the pain which my badly scratched flanks and thighs caused me.

As soon as I was out I quickly gathered up my clothes, went down two stairways, and had no difficulty in opening the door onto the passage in which is the great door to the Royal Stairs[10] and, beside it, the office of the Savio alla Scrittura.[11] The great door was locked, as was the one to the Hall of the Four Doors.[12] The door to the stairs was as big as a city gate; it took only a glance to show me that without a ram or a petard it was inviolable; at that moment my bolt seemed to be saying to me: "*Hic fines posuit* ['Here he has set the bounds'];[13] you have no more use for me." Precious instrument of my freedom, worthy to be hung *ex voto* on the altar of my tutelary divinity! Serene and calm, I sat down, saying to the monk that my work was ended and it was now for God or Fortune to do the rest:

> *Abbia chi regge il ciel cura del resto*
> *O la Fortuna se non tocca a lui.*
>
> ("Let him who rules the heavens see to the rest, or Fortune if it is not his concern.")[14]

"I do not know," I said, "if the palace sweepers will come here today, which is All Saints' Day, or tomorrow, All Souls' Day. If anyone comes I will run out as soon as I see the door opened, and do you follow in my tracks; but if no one comes I will not stir from here; and if I die of hunger I don't know what I can do about it."

At these words the poor man became furious. He called me a madman, desperate, a deceiver, a liar, and I know not what else. My patience was heroic. Thirteen o'clock[15] struck. From the moment I awoke in the loft under the dormer until that moment, only an hour had passed. The important thing which now occupied me was changing all my clothes. Father Balbi looked like a peasant, but he was unscathed: he was neither in rags nor bleeding; his red flannel vest and his violet leather breeches were not torn. But my figure inspired pity and horror. I was torn and scratched from head to foot and covered with blood. When I pulled my silk stockings off of two wounds I had, one on each knee, they both bled. The gutter and the lead plates had put me in this state. The hole in the chancellery door had torn my vest, my shirt, my breeches, my hips, and my thighs; I had terrible scratches everywhere. I ripped up some handkerchiefs and made such bandages as I could, tying them on with string, of which I had a ball in my pocket. I put on my fine coat, which on that cold day became laughable; I dressed my hair as well as I could and tied it up in the net; and, having no others, I put on white stockings, a shirt trimmed with lace, and put two more shirts, handkerchiefs, and stockings in my pocket, and I threw my breeches, my torn shirt, and everything else behind an armchair. I put my fine cloak on the monk's shoulders, which made him appear to have stolen it. I had the look of a man who, after attending a ball, has gone to some place of ill fame and there been roughed up. The bandages visible on my knees were the only thing which marred the elegance of my attire.

Thus decked out and wearing my fine hat trimmed with gold Spanish lace and a plume, I opened a window. My presence was at once noticed by some idlers in the palace courtyard, who, not understanding how a person of my appearance could be at that window at such an early hour, went and told the man who had the key to the place. Thinking he might have locked someone in the evening before without noticing it, he fetched his keys and came. I did not learn this until I was in Paris five or six months later.

Sorry that I had shown myself at the window, I sat down beside the monk, who was proceeding to treat me to some untimely remarks when I heard the sound of keys and of someone coming up the Royal Stairs. In the greatest perturbation I get up, I look through a crack in the great door, and I see a man alone,[16] wearing a black wig and no hat, calmly coming up carrying a bunch of keys in both hands. I told the monk in the most impressive tone not to open his mouth, to stand behind me, and follow me. I took hold of my pike, keeping it concealed under my coat, and I stationed myself by the door in such a position that, as soon as it was opened, I could start down the stairs. I prayed to God that the man would offer no resistance, for, otherwise, I should have to cut his throat. I was resolved to do it.

As soon as the door opened I saw that he was as if turned to stone by my appearance. Never pausing or saying a word to him, I went down as fast as I could, followed by the monk. Neither dawdling nor running, I took the magnificent "Stairway of the Giants," as it is called, disregarding the voice of Father Balbi who followed me repeating over and over:

"Let us go to the church!"

The door to the church was on the right, twenty paces beyond the stairs.

The churches of Venice do not enjoy the slightest immunity as asylums for any wrongdoer, be his offense criminal or civil; so no one goes there any more to stave off the constables who have a warrant to capture him. The monk knew this; but his knowledge was not enough to overcome the temptation. He told me afterward that what prompted him to take refuge at the altar was a religious feeling which I ought to respect.

"Why didn't you go by yourself?"

"Because I did not have the heart to abandon you."

The immunity I sought was beyond the boundaries of the Most Serene Republic;[17] I was already beginning even then to make my way to it; I was there in spirit, and I had to get my body there. I went straight to the Porta della Carta,[18] which is the royal entrance to the Doge's Palace; and looking at no one (a way to avoid being looked at), I crossed the Piazzetta, reached the quay, and got into the first gondola I found there, saying loudly to the gondolier on the poop:

"I want to go to *Fusina,* call another man quickly."

The other man came on board at once; I drop nonchalantly onto the cushion in the middle, the monk sits down on the bench, and the gondola at once leaves the quay. The person of the hatless monk wrapped in my cloak contributed not a little to my being taken for a charlatan or an astrologer.

No sooner had we rounded the Customs House[19] than my gondoliers began vigorously cutting through the waters of the great Giudecca Canal, which has to be traversed to reach either Fusina or Mestre, the place to which I really wanted to go. When I saw that we were halfway down the canal, I said to the gondolier on the poop:

"Do you think we shall be at Mestre before fourteen o'clock?"

"You told me to go to *Fusina.*"

"You are mad; I said *Mestre.*"

The other gondolier said I was wrong; and Father Balbi, as a good Christian zealous for the truth, told me I was wrong too. I then laughed, admitting that I might have made a mistake but that I had intended to say "to Mestre." No one answered. My gondolier said that he was ready to take me to England.

"We shall be at Mestre," he said, "in three quarters of an hour, for *we have the current and the wind in our favor.*"

I then turned and looked down the splendid canal; and seeing not a single boat and admiring the most beautiful day one could hope for, the first rays of a magnificent sun just rising above the horizon, the two young gondoliers rowing at top speed, and thinking at the same time of the cruel night I had spent, of the place where I had been the day before, and of all the coincidences which had been favorable to me, feeling took possession of my soul, which rose up to a merciful God, setting the springs of my gratitude in motion, touching me with extraordinary power and so profoundly that my tears suddenly found fullest vent to relieve my heart, which was choking from excess of joy; I sobbed, I cried like a child forced to go to school.

My charming companion, who until then had not spoken except to side with the gondoliers, thought it his duty to calm my tears, of whose noble source he was unaware; and the way he went about it did indeed make me pass in an instant from tears to a laugh so strange that, baffled by it, he confessed to me some days later that he thought I had gone mad. The monk was stupid, and his malice came from his stupidity. I saw that I was in the difficult position of having to turn it to advantage; but he came very near to being my ruin, though unintentionally, because he was stupid. He would never believe that I had ordered the gondoliers to go to Fusina when I intended to go to Mestre; he said that the idea could not have come to me until I was on the Grand Canal.

We reached Mestre. I found no horses at the posthouse; but at the Osteria della Campana[20] there were plenty of *vetturini,* who serve as well as the post. I went into the stable, and seeing that the horses were good I agreed to give the *vetturino* what he asked to be at Treviso in an hour and a quarter. Within three minutes the horses were put in, and supposing that Father Balbi was behind me, I turned to say "Get in—"

But I did not see him. I look about, I ask where he is, nobody knows. I tell the stableboy to go and look for him, determined to reprimand him even if he had gone to attend to his natural needs; for we were under the necessity of putting that off too. I am told that he is not to be found. I was like a soul in torment. I think of leaving by myself, it was the thing to do; but I listen to a weak feeling instead of to my strong reason, and I run out. I ask for him, everyone says he has been seen but no one can tell me where he may have gone; I search the arcades of the principal street, it occurs to me to stick my head into a coffeehouse, and there I see him, standing at the counter drinking chocolate and talking with the waitress. He sees me, he says she is charming and urges me to drink a cup of chocolate too; he says I must pay, for he has no money. I control myself and answer that I do not want any, telling him to hurry and gripping his arm so hard he thought I had broken it. I paid, he followed me. I was shaking with anger. I start off toward the carriage, which is waiting for me at the door of the inn; but I have scarcely taken ten steps before I meet a citizen of Mestre named Balbo Tomasi, a good man but who had the reputation of being a spy for the tribunal of the Inquisitors. He sees me, he comes up, and he exclaims:

"You here, Signore! I am delighted to see you. So you have just escaped. How did you manage it?"

"I did not escape, Signore, I was set free."

"That is impossible, for I was at the Grimani palace in San Polo last evening and I should have heard of it."

The reader can imagine the state of my soul at that moment: here I was, discovered by a man who I believed had been hired to have me arrested, which he could do by merely winking at the first *sbirro,* of which Mestre was full. I told him to speak in a whisper and to follow me behind the inn. He came, and when I saw that we were out of anyone's sight and that I was close to a little ditch beyond which there was nothing but open country, I put my right hand on my pike and my left on his collar; but he nimbly escaped me, jumped the ditch, and began running as fast as he could away from the city of Mestre, turning every now and again to kiss his hand to me by way of saying: "A good journey to you, have no fear!" I lost sight of him; and I thanked God that the man's being able to escape from my hands had prevented me from committing a crime, for I was on the verge of cutting his throat and he had no evil intentions. My situation was dreadful. I was alone, and at open war with all the forces of the Republic. I had to sacrifice everything to foresight and caution. I put my pike back in my pocket.

In all the dejection of a man who has just escaped from a great danger, I cast a look of scorn on the base coward who had seen to what a pass he had brought me, and I got into the carriage. He sat down beside me and never dared to say a word. I thought of how I could rid myself of the wretch. We reached Treviso, where I ordered the post master to have two horses ready to leave at seventeen o'clock;[21] but I did not intend to continue my journey by the post—first because I had no money, and second because I feared I should be followed. The innkeeper asked me if I wanted breakfast, and I needed it to stay alive, for I was dying of inanition; but I did not have the courage to say yes. A quarter of an hour lost could be fatal to me. I dreaded being caught and feeling ashamed of it all the rest of my life, for a man with his wits about him and a clear field should be able to defy four hundred thousand men to find him. If he does not know how to hide, he is a fool.

I went out by the San Tomasso[22] gate like a man who is going for a stroll, and after walking a mile along the highroad I made off into the fields, not intending to leave them until I was out of the Venetian State. The shortest road out of it was by way of Bassano, but I took the longest because there might be men waiting for me at the nearest point of exit and I was sure that no one would suppose that, to leave the State, I would take the road to Feltre, which was the longest way round to reach the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Trento.

After walking for three hours I sank onto the hard ground, absolutely at the end of my strength. I either had to take some nourishment or prepare to die there. I told the monk to put the cloak beside me and to go to a farmhouse which I saw and buy something to eat and bring it all to me where I was. I gave him money enough. After saying he thought I had more courage, he went off on my errand. The wretch was stronger than I was. He had not slept; but he had eaten well the day before, he had drunk a cup of chocolate, he was thin, caution and honor were not harrowing his soul, and he was a monk.

Though the house was not an inn the farmer's kindly wife sent me a peasant girl with an adequate dinner, which cost me only thirty soldi. When I felt sleep about to overtake me I started off again, with a good sense of my direction. Four hours later I stopped behind a village and learned that I was twenty-four miles[23] from Treviso. I was done in; my ankles were swollen and my shoes broken. Daylight would end in an hour. I lay down in the middle of a clump of trees and made the monk sit down beside me.

"We must go," I said, "to Borgo di Valsugana,[24] the first town beyond the borders of the Venetian State. We shall be as safe there as in London, and we will rest, but to reach the town, which belongs to the Prince-Bishop of Trento, we must take some unavoidable precautions, the first of which is that we must separate. You will go by way of the forest of Mantello,[25] I through the mountains, you by the easiest and shortest way, I by the hardest and longest, you with money, I without a soldo. I make you a present of my cloak, which you will exchange for a cape and a hat, and then everyone will take you for a peasant, for fortunately you have the look of one. Here is all the money I have left from the two zecchini I got from Count Asquin, it comes to seventeen lire, take them; you will be at Borgo tomorrow evening, and I twenty-four hours later. You will wait for me at the first inn on the left. I need to sleep in a good bed tonight, and Providence will show me the way to one, but I need to be in it peacefully, and with you I cannot be at peace. I am sure that we are now being searched for everywhere and that our descriptions have been circulated so accurately that we should be arrested at any inn which we dared to enter together. You see my deplorable condition and my absolute need to rest for ten hours. So farewell. Go, and leave me to set about finding myself a refuge somewhere nearby.''

''I was already expecting,'' he replied, ''all that you have just said to me; but my only answer is to remind you of what you promised me when I let you persuade me to break open your cell. You promised that we would never separate; so do not hope that I will leave you, your fate shall be mine and mine shall be yours. We will find a good refuge for our money and we will not go to inns; we will not be arrested.''

''So you are determined not to follow the good advice I have given you.''

''Absolutely determined.''

''We shall see.''

So saying I got up, not without effort; I took his measure and marked it out on the ground, then I drew the pike from my pocket, lay down on my left side, and began to make a small excavation, maintaining the utmost calm and answering not a word to all the questions he asked me. After working for a quarter of an hour I looked at him sadly and said that, as a Christian, I considered it my duty to warn him that he should commend his soul to God.

''For,'' I said, ''I am going to bury you alive in this hole, and if you are stronger than I am, you shall bury me in it. This is the only course which your brute stubbornness leaves open to me. However, you can run away if you choose, for I will not run after you.''

Seeing that he did not answer I went on working. I began to fear that the sorry beast, of whom I was determined to rid myself, would drive me to extremes.

Finally, whether deliberately or in terror, he came hurtling toward me. Not knowing his intention, I advanced the point of the pike; but there was nothing to fear. He said that he would do everything I wished. I then embraced him; I gave him all the money I had, and I repeated my promise to join him at Borgo. Though left without a soldo, and having two rivers to cross, I heartily congratulated myself on having been able to shake off the burden of such a man's company. With that done, I was certain that I should succeed in getting out of the State.

Volume Five

CHAPTER I

I go to lodge in the house of the chief of the sbirri. *I spend a delicious night there and completely recover my strength and health. I go to mass; untoward meeting. Violent means I am forced to employ to obtain six zecchini. I am out of danger. My arrival in Munich. What happens to Balbi. I leave for Paris. My arrival in that city; attempt on the life of Louis XV.*

ON A hill some fifty paces away I noticed a shepherd driving a flock of ten or twelve sheep, and I went to him for the information I needed. I asked him what the village was called, and he answered that I was in Valdobbiâdene,[1] which surprised me because of the distance I had covered. I asked him the names of the owners of five or six houses I saw in the distance and nearby, and I found that all those whom he named were known to me but were people to whom I must not bring trouble by appearing at their houses. I saw a palace belonging to the Grimanis, in which the head of the family, then a State Inquisitor,[2] was no doubt residing, so I must not show my face there.

I asked the shepherd who was the owner of a red house I saw at some distance, and I was very much surprised when I learned that it belonged to the so-called Capitano della Campagna, who is the chief of the *sbirri.* I said good-by to the peasant and mechanically walked down the hill. It is inconceivable that I went to that terrible house, which both reason and nature told me to shun. I went straight to it, and I know for a fact that I did not go to it on purpose. If it is true that we all have a beneficent invisible being who guides us aright,* as happened, though rarely, to Socrates, I must believe that what made me go there was such a being. I admit that in all my life I never took so daring a step.

I enter the house with no hesitation and even with no sign of embarrassment. In the courtyard I see a little boy playing with a top; I ask him where his father is; and instead of answering he goes for his mother. In a moment I see a very pretty pregnant woman, who asks me most politely what I want with her husband, who is not there.

"I am as sorry that *my fellow sponsor* is not at home as I am glad to make the acquaintance of his beautiful wife."

"*Your fellow sponsor?* Then am I not speaking to His Excellency Vitturi?[4] He told me that you have been so good as to promise him you would stand sponsor to the child which you see I am carrying. I am most happy to make your acquaintance, and my husband will be very much disappointed that he was not at home."

"I hope he will not be long in coming, since I want to ask him to favor me with a bed for tonight. I dare not go anywhere in the condition you see me in."

"You shall have a bed even so, and a decent supper, and my husband will call on you when he gets back, to thank you for the honor you have done us. He left an hour ago on horseback with all his men, I do not expect him home again for three or four days."

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* *Saepe revocans raro impellens.* (C.'s note in the margin.)[3]

"Why will he stay away so long?"

"Haven't you heard that two prisoners have escaped from the Leads? One is a patrician and the other a person named Casanova. He received a letter from Messer Grande ordering him to search for them; if he finds them he will take them to Venice, and if he doesn't he will come home; but he will look for them for at least three days."

"I am very sorry to hear it, *my dear fellow sponsor;* but I would not wish to put you to any trouble, and the more so since I want to go to bed at once."

"You shall do so, and my mother will wait on you. What is the matter with your knees?"

"I had a fall hunting on the mountain; they are bad scrapes, and I have lost blood."

"Poor gentleman! But my mother will look after you."

She called her, and after telling her everything I needed she left. The pretty constable's wife had not learned much of the trade, for nothing could seem more like a fairy tale than the story I told her. Hunting in a taffeta coat! On horseback in white stockings! Without a cloak or a servant! When her husband came back he would laugh at her. Her mother looked after me with all the courtesy I could have expected among people of the greatest distinction. She treated me like a mother and always addressed me as "son" while she was dressing my wounds. If my soul had been at peace I should have given her unmistakable proof of my own courtesy and my gratitude; but the place where I was and the dangerous role I was playing preoccupied me too gravely.

After examining my knees and my thighs she said I would have to bear a little pain but that in the morning I would be cured; I had only to see that the wet napkins she put on my wounds stayed there all night and to sleep without moving. I ate a good supper and then surrendered to her ministrations; I fell asleep while she was working on me, for I do not remember having seen her leave; she must have undressed me as if I were a child; I said nothing and thought nothing. I ate to supply my want of food, and I fell asleep yielding to a need which I could not resist. I had no consciousness of anything which required the exercise of reason. It was the first hour of night when I fell asleep, and when I woke in the morning to hear the clock striking thirteen[5] I thought I was under a spell, for I felt as if I had only just fallen asleep. It took me more than five minutes to return to my senses, to summon my mind back to its proper functions, to convince myself that my situation was real, and, in a word, to pass from sleep to real waking; but as soon as I came to myself I quickly got rid of the napkins, amazed to see that my wounds were perfectly dry. I dressed in less than four minutes, I put my hair in a bag without help, and I left my room, which was wide open; I went down the stairs, crossed the courtyard, and walked away from the house, paying no attention to two men who were standing there and who could be nothing but *sbirri*. I left a place where I had found courtesy, good food, health, and the complete recovery of my strength, with a feeling of horror which made me tremble, for I saw that I had most imprudently exposed myself to the most obvious of dangers. I was amazed that I had entered the house and even more amazed that I had been able to leave it, and I thought it impossible that I was not being followed. I walked for five hours on end through woods and over mountains, meeting no one but a few peasants and never looking back.

It was not yet noon when, still walking on, I heard a bell ringing. Looking down from the height on which I was, I saw the little church from which the sound came, and, seeing people going in, I thought it must be a mass; and I suddenly wanted to hear it. When a man is in distress, whatever comes into his mind seems an inspiration. It was All Souls' Day. I go down, I enter the church, and I am surprised to see Signor Marcantonio Grimani,[6] the nephew of the State Inquisitor, with his wife Signora Maria Pisani. I saw that they were astonished. I bowed to them and I heard the mass. When I left the church the Signore followed me, the Signora remained inside. He approaches me and says:

"What are you doing here? Where is your companion?"

"I gave him seventeen lire[7] I had so that he could get away in another direction which is easier, while I am making for the border this way, which is more difficult, and I haven't a soldo. If Your Excellency would be so good as to give me some assistance, I could manage better."

"I cannot give you anything; but you will find some monks who will not let you die of hunger. But tell me how you succeeded in breaking through the Leads."

"It is an interesting story, but a very long one; and *meanwhile the hermits may have eaten everything up.*"

So saying, I bowed to him. Despite my extreme need his refusal to give me anything pleased me. I felt I was much more of a gentleman than the Signore. I learned in Paris that when his wife heard of it she reproached him in strong terms. There is no doubt that right feelings are found in women more often than in men.

I walked until sunset, when, tired and starving, I stopped at a solitary house which looked promising. I asked to speak to the owner, and the caretaker's wife told me he had gone to a wedding on the other side of the river[8] and would spend the night there, but that she had orders to welcome his friends. So she gave me an excellent supper and a very good bed. I discovered from the addresses on a number of letters that I was in the house of Signor Rombenchi,[9] consul of I forget what country. I wrote to him, and I left my sealed letter there. After a good sleep I dressed quickly, I crossed the river by promising to pay on my return, and after walking for five hours I dined at a Capuchin[10] monastery. After dinner I walked on until twenty-two o'clock[11] to reach a house the owner of which was a friend of mine. I had learned this from a peasant. I go in, I ask if the master is at home, and I am shown to the door of a room in which he was sitting alone, busily writing. I run to embrace him; but as soon as he sees me he draws back and tells me to leave instantly, giving all sorts of shallow and insulting reasons. I explain my situation to him and my need, and I ask him for sixty zecchini[12] against my note, assuring him that Signor Bragadin will send them to him, and he answers that he cannot help me or even offer me a glass of water, since the sight of me in his house set him shaking with fear that he would incur the displeasure of the Tribunal. He was a man of sixty, a broker on the Exchange, and under obligations to me. His heartless refusal had a different effect on me from Signor Grimani's. Whether from anger or indignation or prompted by the claims of reason or the law of nature, I took him by the collar, advancing my pike toward him and threatening him with death if he raised his voice. Shaking all over, he took a key from his pocket and, pointing to a desk, said that there was money in it and that I had only to take what I wanted, but I told him to open it himself. He did so and opened a drawer in which were gold pieces; I told him to count me out six zecchini.

"You asked for sixty."

"Yes, when I asked them from friendship; but from violence I accept only six, and I will not write you a note. They will be returned to you in Venice, to which I will send an account tomorrow of what you have forced me to do, you coward too base to live."

"Forgive me, I implore you; take it all."

"No. I am going, and I advise you to let me go quietly, or expect that I will come back and set your house on fire."

I walked for two hours and, seeing night falling, I stopped at a peasant's house, where, after eating a wretched supper, I slept on straw. In the morning I bought an old redingote, and I mounted a donkey after buying a pair of boots near Feltre. It was in this style that I passed the shanty known as "La Scala."[13] A guard who was there did not even ask my name. I took a two-horse cart and arrived early at Borgo di Valsugana,[14] where I found the inn for which I had given Father Balbi directions. If he had not come up to me I should not have recognized him. A green redingote and a hat worn with the brim turned down over a cotton cap disguised him completely. He told me that a farmer had given them to him in exchange for his cloak, with a zecchino to boot, and that he had arrived there that morning and had been well treated. He ended his story most generously by saying that he was not expecting me *because he had not supposed I had intended to keep my promise to him.* I spent the whole of the following day at the inn, never leaving my bed and writing more than twenty letters to Venice, ten or twelve of them circular letters in which I told what I had had to do to obtain six zecchini. The monk wrote impertinent letters to Father Barbarigo, his Superior, and to his patrician brothers, and love letters to the servant girls who had caused his ruin. I took the lace off my coat and sold my hat, for their richness made me too conspicuous.

The next day I slept at Pergine,[15] where a young Count d'Alberg[16] came to see me, having learned—though I never found out how—that we were escaping from the State of Venice. I went on to Trento and from there to Bolzano, where, needing money for a change of clothes and some shirts, I called on an old banker named

Mench,[17] who gave me a reliable man whom I sent to Venice with a letter to Signor Bragadin, who accredited it. The banker Mench put me up at an inn where I spent all the six days which the man took to go and come back. He came back with a bill of exchange for a hundred zecchini, drawn on Mench. With the money I bought a change of clothes; but first I did the same for my accomplice, who every day gave me some new reason to find his company intolerable. He said that without him I would never have escaped and that by virtue of my promise I owed him half of whatever wealth I might come to possess. He was in love with all the servant girls, and since he had neither the figure nor the face to make them kind and submissive, they received his approaches by giving him hearty slaps, which he received with exemplary patience. It was my only amusement.

We had taken the post, and on the third day we arrived in Munich.[18] I went to lodge at the "Stag,"[19] where I immediately learned that two young Venetian friars, of the Contarini family, had been there for some time with Count Pompei of Verona; but not having the honor of their acquaintance and no longer needing to find monks in order to live, I did not trouble to make my bow to them. I went and made it to Countess Coronini,[20] whom I had met in Venice at the Convent of Santa Giustina[21] and who was highly regarded at Court.

The illustrious lady, who was then seventy, received me very well and promised that she would immediately apply to the Elector[22] to have me granted asylum. The next morning, after keeping her promise, she told me that the sovereign had no reservations about me and that I could consider myself safe in Munich and anywhere in Bavaria, but that there was no safety for Father Balbi, who, as a Somaschian and a fugitive, could be claimed by the Somaschians[23] of Munich, and that the Elector did not want to have any difficulties with monks. So the

Countess advised me to get him out of the city as soon as possible to rehabilitate himself elsewhere and thus avoid any trouble which his fellow monks might be preparing for him.

Feeling that both conscience and honor obliged me to look after the wretch, I went to the Elector's confessor[24] and asked him for a letter of recommendation for the monk to some town in Swabia. The confessor, who was a Jesuit, received me as badly as possible. He said in passing that my reputation was well known in Munich. I asked him firmly if he was telling me this as good news or bad, and he did not answer. He simply walked away, and a priest told me that he had gone to verify a miracle of which all Munich was talking.

"The Empress,"[25] he said, "the widow of Charles VII, whose body is still exposed to public view, has warm feet though she is dead."

He said that I could go and see the wonder for myself. Most eager to be able to boast at last that I had witnessed a miracle, and one which was of the greatest interest to me since my feet were always icy, I go to see the illustrious corpse, which did indeed have warm feet, but it was because of a hot stove[26] which stood very near her defunct Imperial Majesty. A dancer who was there and who knew me quite well came up and congratulated me on my good fortune, which was already being talked of throughout the city. The dancer invited me to dinner and I accepted; his name was Michele dall'Agata,[27] and his wife was the same Gardela[28] whom, sixteen years earlier, I had known in the house of old Malipiero[29] who had hit me with his cane because I was fooling with Teresa.[30] La Gardela, who had become a celebrated dancer and was still very pretty, was delighted to see me and to hear the whole story of my escape from my own lips. She wanted to do something for the monk, and she offered me a letter of recommendation for

Augsburg addressed to Canon Bassi, of Bologna, her friend and Dean of the Chapter of St. Moritz.[31] She wrote the letter then and there and, as she handed it to me, assured me I need no longer be concerned for the monk, for she was certain that the Dean would take care of him and even patch things up for him in Venice.

Delighted to get rid of him in such an honorable way, I run to the inn, I tell him the story, and I hand him the letter, and I promise not to abandon him if the Dean does not give him a good reception. I sent him off at daybreak the next morning in a good carriage.

He wrote me four days later that the Dean could not have received him more cordially, had put him up in his own house, had outfitted him as an abbé, had presented him to the Prince-Bishop, who was a Darmstadt,[32] and had persuaded the city to grant him asylum. In addition the Dean had promised to keep him in his house until he had obtained his secularization into the priesthood from Rome, together with freedom to return to Venice, for as soon as he was no longer a monk he ceased to be guilty before the Tribunal of the State Inquisitors. Father Balbi ended his letter by asking me to send him a few zecchini for pocket money, for he was too much of a gentleman, he said, to ask money from the Dean, who was not gentleman enough to offer him any. I did not answer him.

Left alone and in peace, I turned to recovering my health, for the fatigue and the sufferings I had undergone had given me nervous spasms, which might become very serious. In less than three weeks a good diet restored me to perfect health. During these days Madame Rivière[33] came from Dresden with her son and her two daughters, the elder[34] of whom she was taking to Paris to be married. Her son had finished his studies and was highly accomplished in every way, and her elder daughter, whom she was going to marry to an actor, combined the prettiest figure possible with a talent for dancing; she played the harpsichord perfectly and she possessed the social graces together with all the charms of youth. The whole family was delighted to see me, and I thought myself most fortunate when, anticipating my wish, Madame Rivière gave me to understand that she would welcome my company as far as Paris. There was no question of asking me to pay my share, and I had to accept the gift as it was given. Since my plan was to establish myself in Paris, I took this intervention of Fortune as a prophecy that success awaited me in the career of adventurer on which I was about to embark in the only city in the universe in which the Blind Goddess dispensed her favors to those who trusted in her completely. I was not mistaken, as the reader will see at the proper time and place; but Fortune's bounty was of no use to me, I spoiled everything by my thoughtless behavior. Fifteen months of the Leads gave me time to learn all the defects of my character; but I should have had to stay there longer to adopt principles which would remedy them.

Madame Rivière very much wanted me to go with her, but she could not put off her departure, and I had to wait for an answer from Venice and for money, which, however, could not be long in coming. Having made sure that she would spend a week in Strassburg, I felt confident that I would catch up with her, and I saw her leave Munich on December 18th.

I received the bill of exchange I was expecting from Venice two days after her departure, I paid my small debts, and I at once set out for Augsburg, not so much to see Father Balbi as to meet the worthy Dean Bassi, whose treatment of him had been princely. Reaching Augsburg seven hours from the time I left Munich, I went at once to call on the Dean. He was not at home; I found Father Balbi, dressed as an abbé, bareheaded, and with hair powdered, which made his skin look even darker. Not yet forty, the man was not only ugly but had a cast of countenance which indicated baseness, cowardice, insolence, and stupid malice. I saw that he was well lodged and well served and had books and all the requisites for writing; I congratulated him, I told him he was fortunate and I no less fortunate in having been able to procure him all these advantages together with the expectation of soon becoming a secular priest. Far from thanking me, he said I had got rid of him, and when he learned that I was going to Paris he said he would much rather go with me, since in Augsburg he was bored to death.

"What do you expect to do in Paris?"

"What will you do there yourself?"

"I will turn my talents to account."

"So will I mine."

"Then you have no need of me. Go there yourself. The people who are taking me there might not want my company if I had you with me."

"You promised not to abandon me."

"Do you call it abandoning someone to leave him with everything he needs?"

"Everything? I haven't a soldo."

"You don't need money. And if you think you need some for your pleasures, ask your brothers[35] for it."

"They haven't any."

"Your friends, then."

"I have no friends."

"So much the worse for you; it is proof that you have never been a friend to anyone."

"You will let me have a few zecchini."

"I have none left."

"Wait for the Dean; he will be back tomorrow. Talk to him, persuade him to lend me money. Tell him I will return it to him."

"I will not wait, for I am leaving at once and I should never be so imprudent as to tell him to give you money."

After this acid dialogue I left him; I went to the post, and I set out, very ill pleased to have brought such good luck to a man who did not deserve it. At the end of March in Paris I received a letter from the generous and honorable Dean Bassi in which he told me that Father Balbi had absconded from his house with one of his maidservants, taking a sum of money, a gold watch, and twelve silver table services; he did not know where he had gone.

Toward the end of the year I learned that he had gone with the Dean's maid to Coire, the capital of Grisons, where he asked to be accepted into the Calvinist church and to be recognized as the legal husband of the lady who accompanied him, but when it was discovered that he was incapable of earning his living he was turned away. When he came to the end of his money the maid whom he had deceived left him after giving him several beatings. Not knowing where to turn or how to earn money, Father Balbi then decided to go to Brescia, a city belonging to the Republic,[36] where he went to the Governor, informed him of his name, his escape, and his repentance, and asked him to take him under his protection and secure his pardon. The Governor's protection began by clapping the stupid petitioner into jail, then he wrote to the Tribunal, asking what to do with him; pursuant to the orders he received he sent him in chains to Messer Grande,[37] who delivered him to the Tribunal, who sent him back to the Leads, where he did not find Count Asquin, who, in pity for his age, had been sent to "the Four"[38] three months after my escape. I learned five or six years later that the Tribunal, after keeping Father Balbi under the Leads for two years, had sent him to his monastery, where his Superior had packed him off to the monastery of the Order near Feltre, which was built on a hill; but Father Balbi remained there only six months. He escaped, went to Rome, and threw himself at the feet of the Rezzonico[39] who was then Pope, who absolved him from his monastic vows, and he then went back to his native country as a priest, where he led a miserable life because he could never behave himself. He died in poverty in the year 1785.

At the "Spirit"[40] in Strassburg I rejoined Madame Rivière and her charming family; she received me with tokens of unfeigned pleasure. We spent several days there and left for Paris in a good berlin, in which I thought I should do my share by keeping the company in perpetual high spirits. Mademoiselle Rivière's charms ravished my soul, but I was in a humiliating position and I should have considered that I was failing in respect to her mother and in what I owed to my situation if I had shown the least sign of any amorous inclination. Although too young for it, I enjoyed playing the role of father and attending to all the things which must be done if a party is to travel comfortably and spend its nights in good beds.

So we reached Paris on the morning of January 5, 1757, which was a Wednesday, and I got out at the house of my friend Balletti,[41] who welcomed me with open arms, assuring me that though I had not written to him he was expecting me, for since my escape necessarily entailed my leaving Venice and even being exiled, he could not imagine that I would choose any other place to stay in than a city in which I had spent two years enjoying all the pleasures of life. Joy reigned in the house as soon as my arrival was known; and I embraced his father and mother, whom I found treating me just as they had done when I left in 1752. But what struck me was Mademoiselle Balletti, my friend's sister. She was fifteen years old[42] and had become very pretty; her mother's teaching had given her everything that a fond and highly intelligent mother can give her daughter in the way of talents, graces, good behavior, and knowledge of society. After renting a room in the same street,[43] I set off for the Hôtel de Bourbon[44] to call on the Abbé de Bernis, who was the head[45] of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I had good reason to hope that he would put me on the road to fortune. I go there, I am told that he is at Versailles; impatient to see him, I go to the Pont Royal,[46] I take the kind of carriage called a "chamber pot,"[47] and I reach Versailles at half past six. Learning that he had gone back to Paris with the Count of Cantillana,[48] the Neapolitan Ambassador, I had no choice but to do likewise. So I go back in the same carriage; but scarcely have I reached the gate before I see a great crowd running in all directions in the utmost confusion, and I hear people crying to right and left:

"The King has been assassinated, His Majesty has just been killed."

My terrified coachman thinks only of going on; but my carriage is stopped, I am ordered out of it and put in the guardhouse, where in three or four minutes I see more than a score of people arrested, all just as astonished and just as guilty as I am. I did not know what to think, and since I do not believe in witchcraft I believed I was dreaming. There we were, looking at each other and not daring to speak; surprise overpowered us, and every one of us, though innocent, was afraid.

But four or five minutes later an officer came in and, after begging our pardons most politely, said that we could leave.

"The King," he said, "is wounded and has been carried to his apartment. The assassin,[49] whom no one knows, has been arrested. Monsieur de la Martinière[50] is being looked for everywhere."

No sooner was I back in my carriage, and very glad to be there, than a well-dressed young man with a face which speaks eloquently in his favor asks me to take him with me, on condition that he pay his half; but despite the laws of politeness I refuse to do him the service. There are moments when one must not be polite.

During the three hours it took me to get back to Paris, for ‘‘chamber pots’’ travel very slowly, at least two hundred couriers passed me at full gallop. I saw another every minute, and each courier was shouting the news he carried to the four winds. The first few said what I knew; a quarter of an hour later I learned that the King had been bled, then I learned that the wound was not mortal, and an hour later that the wound was so slight that His Majesty could even go to Trianon if he wished.

Bearing this interesting news I went to Silvia's, where I found the whole family at table, for it was not yet eleven o'clock. I enter, and I find everyone in consternation.

‘‘I have just this moment come,’’ I said, ‘‘from Versailles.’’

‘‘The King has been assassinated.’’

‘‘Not at all; he could go to Trianon if he wished. Monsieur de la Martinière has bled him, the assassin has been arrested, and he will be burned after being drawn and quartered alive.’’

At the news, which Silvia's servants immediately spread, all the neighbors came in to hear me tell the story, and it was to me that the whole neighborhood owed sleeping well that night. In those days the French imagined that they loved their King, and they went through all the motions of it; today we have come to know them somewhat better. But at bottom the French are always the same. By its very nature their nation is always in a state of eruption; there is no reality among them, everything is mere appearance. It is a vessel which only asks to move and which demands wind, and whatever wind may be blowing is good. And in fact the arms of Paris display a ship.

CHAPTER II

The Minister of Foreign Affairs. Monsieur de Boulogne, the Comptroller-General. The Duke of Choiseul. The Abbé de Laville. Monsieur Pâris-Duverney. Establishment of the lottery. My brother comes to Paris from Dresden; he is received into the Academy of Painting.

ONCE MORE I am in the great city of Paris and, since I can no longer count on my own country, obliged to make my fortune there. I had spent two years in Paris; but since at that time my only object was to enjoy life I had not studied the city. This second time I had to pay my court to those with whom the Blind Goddess made her abode. I saw that to accomplish anything I must bring all my physical and moral faculties into play, make the acquaintance of the great and the powerful, exercise strict self-control, and play the chameleon to all those whom I should see it was my interest to please. To follow these principles I saw that I must scrupulously avoid what is known in Paris as ''dubious company'' and renounce all my old ways and any pretensions which could make me enemies who could easily give me the reputation of being a man not fit to be trusted with important business. As the result of these meditations I decided to practice a systematic reserve in both act and word which would lead to my being considered even more fit for affairs of consequence than I had any reason to suppose I was. As for living expenses, I could count on the hundred écus[1] a month which Signor Bragadin would never have failed to send me. It was enough. I had only to see that I was well dressed and decently lodged; but to begin with I needed a sum of money, for I had neither suits nor shirts.

So the next day I went back to the Palais Bourbon. Being sure that the porter would tell me the Minister was engaged, I went there with a note which I left for him. I announced my arrival and told him where I was lodging. To say more would have been to say too much. Meanwhile I found that wherever I went I had to tell the story of my escape; it was a task, for it took two hours; but I felt I must oblige those who were eager to hear it, for their eagerness could arise only from their lively interest in myself.

At supper at Silvia's I found all the evidence of friendship I could wish for, but in a calmer atmosphere than on the previous evening; and I was greatly impressed by the merits of her daughter. At the age of fifteen she had all the qualities which captivate. I congratulated her mother who had fostered them in her, and at the time I did not think of defending myself from her charms: I was not yet at ease enough to suppose that they could assail me. I left early, impatient to see what the Minister would say in reply to my note.

I received his answer at eight o'clock. He said that I would find him alone at two o'clock in the afternoon. He received me as I expected he would. He conveyed to me not only his pleasure over my triumph but all the joy which he felt in having an opportunity to be of use to me. He at once told me that as soon as he had learned of my escape by a letter from M. M. he had felt certain I would go nowhere but to Paris and that my first visit would be to him. He showed me the letter in which she[2] informed him of my arrest, and her last letter, in which she told him the story of my escape as she had heard it. She said that since she could no longer hope to see either of the two men on whom alone she could count, her life had become a burden to her. She lamented that she did not have the resource of devotion. She said that C. C. often came to see her and that she was not happy with the man who had married her.

Having looked through what M. M. wrote him about my escape and finding that all the details were wrong, I promised to send him the true story of it. He took me at my word, promising that he would send it on to our unfortunate friend and giving me a roll of a hundred louis[3] with the most perfect tact. He promised to keep me in mind and to let me know when he would need to speak to me. With the money I outfitted myself; and a week later I sent him the story of my escape, giving him permission to have it copied and to use it as he thought best to interest anyone who could be helpful to me. Three weeks later he sent for me and told me that he had spoken about me to Signor Erizzo,[4] the Venetian Ambassador, who had found nothing to say against me; but that, not wanting to compromise himself with the State Inquisitors, he would not receive me. I did not need him. He said that he had given my story to Madame la Marquise,[5] who knew me and with whom he would try to obtain me an interview, and in closing he said that when I went to see Monsieur de Choiseul,[6] I would be well received, as I would be by the Comptroller-General Monsieur de Boulogne,[7] with whom, if I used my head, I should be able to work out something substantial.

"He will himself," he said, "give you hints, and you will see that 'the man who is listened to is the man who obtains.' Try to think up some project profitable to the royal exchequer, avoiding anything complicated or chimerical, and if what you write is not too long I will give you my opinion on it.''

I left him full of gratitude, but at a loss to find a way to increase the King's revenues. Having not the faintest notion of finances, no matter how I racked my brains all the ideas which came to me were only for new taxes, and since they all struck me as odious or absurd I rejected them all.

My first visit[8] was to Monsieur de Choiseul, as soon as I learned that he was in Paris. He received me at his toilet table, where he was writing while his hair was being dressed. The courtesy he showed me was to interrupt his letter at short intervals, asking me questions, which I answered, but to no purpose, for instead of listening he went on writing. Now and again he looked at me; but that meant nothing, for the eyes see, they do not hear. Nevertheless the Duke was a man of great intelligence.

After finishing his letter he said to me in Italian that the Abbé de Bernis had told him part of the story of my escape.

''Tell me how you managed to bring it off.''

''The story, Monseigneur, takes two hours, and I have the impression that Your Excellency is in a hurry.''

''Tell it to me briefly.''

''It is the very shortest version of it which takes two hours.''

''You can tell me the details another time.''

''Without the details the story is not interesting.''

''Of course. But one can abbreviate anything as much as one wishes.''

''Very well. I will tell Your Excellency that the State Inquisitors had me imprisoned under the Leads.[9] At the end of fifteen months and five days I made a hole in the roof; I entered the Chancellery[10] through a dormer and broke open the door to it; I went down to the Piazza; I took a gondola which carried me to the mainland, whence I went to Munich. From there I came to Paris, where I have the honor to pay you my respects."

"But—what are the Leads?"

"That, Monseigneur, takes a quarter of an hour."

"How did you manage to make a hole in the roof?"

"That takes half an hour."

"Why were you imprisoned up there?"

"Another half hour."

"I think you are right. The interest of the thing is in the details. I have to go to Versailles. I should be glad to have you call on me from time to time. Meanwhile, think of how I can be of use to you."

On leaving him I went to call on Monsieur de Boulogne. I saw a man entirely different from the Duke in appearance, dress, and manner. He at once congratulated me on the interest which the Abbé de Bernis showed in me and on my financial abilities. I very nearly burst out laughing. He was with an octogenarian whose face bore the stamp of genius.

"Let me have your ideas, either by word of mouth or in writing; you will find me a good pupil and ready to grasp them. This is Monsieur Pâris-Duverney,[11] who needs twenty millions for his Military School.[12] The thing is to find them without burdening the State or embarrassing the royal treasury."

"There is only one God, Monsieur, who has the power of creation."

"I am not God," Monsieur Duverney replied, "yet I have sometimes created, but everything has changed."

"Everything," I answered, "has become more difficult, I know; nevertheless, I have a plan in mind which would yield the King the return on a hundred millions."

"And how much would such a yield cost the King?"

"Only the expense of collecting it."

"Then it is the nation which would supply the revenue?"

"Yes, but voluntarily."

"I know what you have in mind."

"I should be surprised, Monsieur, for I have imparted my idea to no one."

"If you are not otherwise engaged, come to dinner with me tomorrow, and I will show you your project, which is admirable but which is beset with almost insurmountable difficulties. Nevertheless, we will discuss it. Will you come?"

"I will do myself the honor."

"Then I will expect you. I am at Plaisance."[13]

After he left, the Comptroller-General praised his talent and his probity. He was the brother of Pâris de Montmartel,[14] whom secret history made the father of Madame de Pompadour, for he was Madame Poisson's lover at the same time as Monsieur Le Normand.[15]

I went to walk in the Tuileries, reflecting on the fantastic piece of luck which Fortune seemed to be offering me. I am told that twenty millions are needed, I boast that I can furnish a hundred millions without having any idea how to do it, and a famous man, thoroughly experienced in business, invites me to dinner to convince me that he already knows my plan. If he thinks he can worm it out of me I defy him to do it; when he has imparted his own plan to me I shall be at liberty to tell him whether he has guessed mine or not, and if the thing is within my comprehension I will perhaps say something new; if I don't understand a word of it, I will maintain a mysterious silence.

The Abbé de Bernis had described me as a financier only to get me a hearing. Otherwise, I should not have been admitted. I was sorry I did not at least know the jargon of the department. The next morning I took a hackney coach and, in low spirits, told the driver to take me to Monsieur Duverney's at Plaisance. It was a little way beyond Vincennes.

So here I am at the door of the famous man who had saved France after the crashes brought on by Law's[16] system forty years earlier. I find him with seven or eight gentlemen before a great fire. He announces me by my name, adding that I am a friend of the Minister of Foreign Affairs[17] and of the Comptroller-General. He then introduces me to his guests, giving three or four of them the title of Intendant of Finances.[18] I bow, and instantly fall to worshiping Harpocrates.[19]

After touching on the Seine, which was frozen more than a foot deep, on Monsieur de Fontenelle,[20] who had just died, on Damiens, who refused to confess anything, and on the five millions which his trial would cost the King, the conversation turned to the war and then to praise of Monsieur de Soubise,[21] whom the King had chosen as commander. This subject led to the cost of the war and to the resources for maintaining it and the country. I spent an hour and a half in boredom, for all their discussions were so stuffed with the technical terms of their profession that I understood nothing. After an hour and a half at table, where I opened my mouth only to eat, we went into a drawing room, where Monsieur Duverney left the company and took me to his study with a good-looking man of about fifty years of age whom he had presented to me by the name of Calzabigi.[22] A moment later two Intendants of Finances came in too. Smiling, Monsieur Duverney put in my hands a folio notebook, saying:

"There is your plan."

I see on the title page: "Lottery[23] of ninety lots, of which the winning lots, drawn each month at random, can only fall on five numbers," etc., etc. I hand it back to him and I do not hesitate an instant before telling him that it is my plan.

"Monsieur," he said, "you have been forestalled; the scheme is Monsieur de Calzabigi's."

"I am delighted to find that Monsieur and I think alike: but if you have not adopted it, may I ask you the reason?"

"Several very plausible arguments have been raised against the plan, and the answers to them have been indecisive."

"I know only one argument in the whole of nature," I answered coldly, "against which I could say nothing. That would be if the King would not allow his subjects to gamble."

"That argument has no bearing, the King will permit his subjects to gamble. But will they gamble?"

"I am astonished that there should be any doubt of it, if people are sure that they will be paid if they win."

"Then let us suppose that they will gamble if they are certain that there is money with which to pay. How is the money to be raised?"

"The royal treasury. A decree of the Council. It is enough if the King is believed able to pay a hundred millions."

"A hundred millions?"

"Yes, Monsieur. The thing is to dazzle."

"Then you think the King could lose them?"

"I suppose it possible; but after taking in a hundred and fifty millions. If you know the value of a political calculation, you can only start from there."

"Monsieur, I am not the only one. Will you not admit that at the very first drawing the King can lose an immense sum?"

"Between possibility and reality there is infinity; but I admit it. If the King loses a great sum at the first drawing, the success of the lottery is assured. It is a misfortune to be desired. Moral forces are calculated like probabilities. You know that all insurance companies[24] are rich. I will prove to you before all the mathematicians in Europe that, granted God is neutral, it is impossible that the King will not make a profit of one in five by this lottery. That is the secret. Will you admit that reason must yield to a mathematical proof?"

"I admit it. But tell me: why cannot the *castelletto*[25] guarantee the King an unfailing profit?"

"There is no *castelletto* in the world which can make it patently and absolutely certain that the King will always profit. The *castelletto* serves only to maintain a temporary balance on one number or two or three, which, being unusually overloaded, could if they came out cause the backer of the lottery a great loss. In such a case the *castelletto* declares the number closed. The *castelletto* could only make you sure of profiting by putting off the drawing until all the chances carried an equal load, and then there would be no lottery, for the drawing might not take place for ten years; and, besides that, I will tell you that under those circumstances the lottery would become a sheer fraud. What saves it from that dishonorable name is the scheduled drawing every month, for then the public is sure that the backer can lose."

"Will you be good enough to speak before the full Council?"[26]

"With pleasure."

"Will you answer all objections?"

"Every one."

"Will you bring me your scheme?"

"I will not communicate my scheme, Monsieur, until its theory is accepted and I am certain that it will be adopted and that I will receive the benefits for which I shall ask."

"But your plan can only be the same as this one."

"I doubt it. In my plan I set forth approximately how much the King will profit each year, and I prove it."

"Then it could be sold to a company which would pay the King a fixed sum."

"I beg your pardon. The lottery can prosper only under a precondition whose effect is absolutely necessary.

I would not go into it to serve a committee which, to augment the profit, would set about increasing the operations, and thereby diminish the eagerness to participate. I am sure of that. The lottery, if I am to have anything to do with it, must be royal or nothing.''

''Monsieur de Calzabigi is of the same opinion.''

''Nothing could please me better.''

''Have you capable people for the *castelletto*?''

''All I need is intelligent machines, of which there must be plenty in France.''

''What do you estimate the profit will be?''

''Twenty per cent at each drawing. Whoever brings the King six francs will receive five, and the crush will be so great that, *caeteris paribus* ['other things being equal'], the whole nation will pay the monarch at least five hundred thousand francs a month. I will prove it to the Council on condition that its members are men who, once they have recognized a truth which follows from either a scientific or a political calculation, will no longer hesitate.''

Delighted that I could keep my word in everything I had undertaken to do, I got up to go somewhere. When I came back I found them still standing discussing the matter among themselves. Calzabigi came to me and asked in a friendly tone if I included the *quaterna* in my plan. I answered that the public should be free to play the *cinquina*[27] too, but that in my plan I made the stake higher, because the player could not stake on the *quaterna* or the *cinquina* without also playing them as a *terno*.[28] He answered that in his plan he admitted the simple *quaterna* with a profit of fifty thousand for one. I mildly replied that there were very good mathematicians in France, who, when they found that all the chances did not yield equal gains, would profit from collusion. He then clasped my hand, saying that he hoped we could speak further. After giving my address to Monsieur Duverney I left at nightfall satisfied, and certain that I had left a good impression on the old man's mind.

Three or four days later Calzabigi appeared at my lodging, and I received him with the assurance that if I had not presented myself at his door it was because I had not dared. He said straightforwardly that the way I had spoken to the gentlemen had impressed them and that he felt certain that if I would apply to the Comptroller-General we would establish the lottery, which would be most profitable to us.

"I believe it," I answered; "but the profit they would draw from it themselves would be even greater; despite that, they are in no hurry; they have not sent for me, and in any case it is no longer my chief interest."

"You will hear something today. I know that Monsieur de Boulogne has spoken of you to Monsieur de Courteuil." [29]

"I assure you that I made no application to him."

He asked me most cordially to come and dine with him, and I accepted. Just as we were leaving I received a note from the Abbé de Bernis, who wrote me that if I could be at Versailles the next day he would arrange for me to speak with Madame la Marquise, and that I would find Monsieur de Boulogne there at the same time.

It was not vanity but policy which prompted me to give the note to Calzabigi to read. He said that I was in possession of everything I needed to force Duverney himself to start the lottery.

"And your fortune," he said, "is made, if you are not rich enough not to care. We have been moving heaven and earth for two years to get this project accepted, and we have never had anything for our pains but stupid objections, which you demolished last week. Your project must be very much the same as mine. We should join forces, believe me. Remember that, by yourself, you will encounter insurmountable difficulties, and that the 'intelligent machines' you need are not to be found in Paris. My brother[30] will take all the work on himself; use your powers of persuasion, and then be content to enjoy half the emoluments of the directorship while you amuse yourself."

"Then it is your brother who originated the plan."

"It is my brother. He is ill, but his mind is perfectly active. We will call on him."

I saw a man in bed covered with scab; but that did not keep him from eating with appetite, writing, conversing, and performing all the functions of a man in health. He did not appear in public because, in addition to the disfiguring scab, he had constantly to scratch some part of his body, which in Paris is an abomination which is never forgiven, whether the scratching is due to a disease or is simply a bad habit. So Calzabigi told me that he stayed where he was and saw no one because he itched all over and his only relief was to scratch.

"God," he said, "can have given me fingernails for no other purpose."

"Then you believe in final causes, and I congratulate you. Nevertheless I believe you would scratch even if God had forgotten to give you fingernails."

I saw him smile, and we discussed our business. In less than an hour I found that he was very intelligent. He was the elder brother and a bachelor. A great arithmetician, thoroughly acquainted with theoretical and practical finance, familiar with the commerce of all nations, versed in history, a wit, a worshiper of the fair sex, and a poet. He was a native of Leghorn; he had worked at Naples in the Ministry, and had come to Paris with Monsieur de l'Hôpital.[31] His brother was also very clever, but inferior to him in every respect.

He showed me a great pile of papers in which he had worked out all the details of the lottery.

"If you think," he said, "that you can do it all without needing me, I congratulate you; but you would be deluding yourself; for if you have had no practical experience and if you are without trained assistants who know what they are doing, your theory will get you nowhere. What will you do when you have obtained the decree? When you speak to the Council you would do well to set a date after which you will wash your hands of the matter. Otherwise they will keep putting you off till the Greek Kalends.[32] I can assure you that Monsieur Duverney will be very glad to see us join forces. As for the analytical relations between equal winnings from all chances, I will convince you that they should not be taken into account for the *quaterna.*"

Thoroughly persuaded that I should join forces with them but without letting them know that I considered I should need their help, I went downstairs with his brother, who was to introduce me to his wife before dinner. I saw an old woman well known in Paris as La Générale La Mothe[33] and famous for her former beauty and her drops, another superannuated lady, known in Paris as Baroness Blanche,[34] who was still Monsieur de Vaux's[35] mistress, another who was called La Présidente,[36] and still another, pretty as an angel, who was called Madame Razzetti,[37] from Piedmont, the wife of a violinist at the Opéra and then on the best of terms not only with Monsieur de Fondpertuis,[38] Master of the Revels,[39] but also with several other gentlemen. I did not shine at dinner. It was the first I had attended with serious business on my mind. I never once spoke. That evening at Silvia's the company also thought me preoccupied, despite the love which the young daughter of the house increasingly inspired in me.

Two hours before dawn the next day I set off for Versailles, where Minister de Bernis received me banteringly, saying he would wager that, but for him, I should never have discovered that I was an expert in finance.

"Monsieur de Boulogne told me that you amazed Monsieur Duverney, who is one of the greatest men in France. Go to him at once, and pay court to him in Paris. The lottery will be established, and it is for you to profit by it. As soon as the King has gone hunting, be in the private apartments,[40] and when I see the opportunity I will 'show you off' to Madame la Marquise. After that you will go to the Foreign Affairs office and introduce yourself to the Abbé de Laville;[41] he is first secretary, he will give you a good reception."

Monsieur de Boulogne promised me that as soon as Monsieur Duverney informed him that the Council of the Military School had agreed, he would have the decree establishing the lottery issued, and he encouraged me to inform him of any other ideas which I might have.

At noon Madame de Pompadour came to the private apartments with the Prince of Soubise and my patron, who immediately pointed me out to the great lady. After curtsying to me, as was the custom, she said that she had read the story of my escape and had found it most interesting.

"Those gentlemen *up there,*"[42] she said with a smile, "are greatly to be feared. Do you visit the Ambassador?"

"I cannot better show him my respect than by not going there."

"I hope that you are now thinking of settling among us."

"Nothing could make me happier; but I need patronage, and I have learned that in this country it is accorded only to talent. That discourages me."

"I think that you need set no limit to your hopes, for you have good friends. I shall be glad to do what I can for you if I have an opportunity."

The Abbé de Laville received me very well and did not leave until he had assured me that he would have me in mind as soon as an opportunity arose. I went to dine at an inn, where a good-looking abbé came up and asked me if we might dine together. Politeness did not permit me to refuse. As we sat down at table, he congratulated me on the excellent reception which the Abbé de Laville had accorded me.

"I was there," he said, "writing a letter; but I heard almost all the kind things he said to you. May I ask you to whom you owe your introduction to the worthy Abbé?"

"If you are extremely curious to know, Monsieur l'Abbé, I will be glad to tell you."

"Oh, no, no! Pray excuse me."

After this indiscretion he spoke only of indifferent and amusing things. We left together in a "chamber pot" and reached Paris at eight o'clock, where, after promising to exchange visits and telling each other our names, we parted. He got out in the Rue des Bons Enfants and I went to supper at Silvia's in the Rue du Petit Lion. That woman among women congratulated me on my new acquaintances and advised me to cultivate them.

At home I found a note from Monsieur Duverney asking me to be at the Military School the next morning at eleven o'clock. At nine o'clock in came Calzabigi, whom his brother had sent to me with a large sheet of paper containing the arithmetical table of the entire lottery, which I could explain to the Council. It was a calculation of the probabilities which, set over against the certainties, proved what I had only stated. In substance it showed that the lottery would have come out exactly even so far as paying the winning tickets was concerned if instead of five numbers six should be drawn. Only five were to be drawn, and this made it scientifically certain that the advantage would always be one in five, which came to eighteen in ninety, which was the total number of lots in the lottery. This demonstration had the corollary that the lottery could not be maintained with drawings of six numbers, since the operating expenses amounted to a hundred thousand écus.

Thus instructed, and thoroughly persuaded that I ought to follow this plan, I proceeded to the Military School, where we at once went into conference. Monsieur d'Alembert[43] had been asked to be present as the great master of universal arithmetic. His presence would not have been considered necessary if Monsieur Duverney had been by himself; but there were some who, in order to avoid accepting the result of a political calculation, stubbornly denied its validity. The conference lasted three hours.

After my argument, which took only half an hour, Monsieur de Courteuil summarized all that I had said, and an hour was spent in nugatory objections which I easily refuted. I said that if the art of calculation in general was properly the art of finding the expression of a single relation arising from the combination of several relations, the same definition applied to moral calculation, which was as certain as mathematical calculation. I convinced them that without that certainty the world would never have had insurance companies, which, all of them rich and flourishing, laugh at Fortune and at the weak minds which fear her. I ended by saying that there was not a man at once learned and honorable in the world who could offer to be at the head of this lottery on the understanding that it would win at every drawing, and that if a man should appear with the temerity to give them that assurance they should turn him out, because either he would not keep his promise or, if he kept it, he would be a scoundrel.

Monsieur Duverney rose and said that in any case they could always abolish the lottery. After signing a paper which Monsieur Duverney presented to them, all the gentlemen left. Calzabigi came the next morning to tell me that the thing was settled and that it was now only a matter of waiting for the decree to be issued. I promised him I would call on Monsieur de Boulogne every day and that I would have him made a director as soon as I learned from Monsieur Duverney what my emoluments were to be.

The proposal made to me, which I accepted at once, was six collector's offices and an income of four thousand francs[44] a year secured by the lottery itself. It was the return on a capital of a hundred thousand francs, which I was at liberty to withdraw if I relinquished the offices, since the capital represented my guarantee.

The decree of the Council was issued a week later. The direction was given to Calzabigi, with emoluments of three thousand francs per drawing and a yearly income of four thousand francs—the same as mine—and the main office of the enterprise in the Hôtel de la Loterie in the Rue Montmartre. Of my six offices I at once sold five for two thousand francs each, and I opened the sixth[45] in luxurious quarters in the Rue Saint-Denis, putting my valet there as chief clerk. He was a young and highly intelligent Italian who had formerly served as valet to the Prince of La Cattolica,[46] the Neapolitan Ambassador. The day for the first drawing was set, and it was announced that all winning tickets would be paid a week after the drawing at the main office of the lottery.

Within twenty-four hours I had bills out to the effect that all winning tickets signed by me would be paid at my office in the Rue Saint-Denis twenty-four hours after the drawing. The result was that everyone came to my office for tickets. My profit consisted in the six percent on receipts. Fifty or sixty clerks from the other offices were stupid enough to complain of my move to Calzabigi. He could only answer them that they were free to catch up with me by doing the same thing, but that they had to have the money.

My receipts at the first drawing[47] were forty thousand livres. An hour after the drawing my clerk brought me the register and showed me that we had to pay out seventeen or eighteen thousand livres, all on *ambi*,[48] and I gave him the money. It was very profitable for my clerk, who though he asked for nothing always accepted the tips he was given, and from whom I did not demand any accounting. The lottery made a profit of six hundred thousand francs on the total receipts, which amounted to two millions. Paris alone contributed four hundred thousand francs. I dined at Monsieur Duverney's the next day with Calzabigi. We had the pleasure of hearing him complain that he had made too much. In Paris only eighteen or twenty *terne* won; though they were small, they gave the lottery a brilliant reputation. The rage being on, we expected that the receipts at the next drawing would be twice as large. The good-natured banter to which I was subjected at table over my scheme delighted me. Calzabigi demonstrated that my inspiration had assured me of an income of one hundred and twenty thousand francs a year, which ruined all the other collectors. Monsieur Duverney replied that he had often acted on similar inspirations and that, in any case, the collectors were all free to do the same thing, for it could only make the lottery more highly thought of. The second time, a *terna* of forty thousand francs forced me to borrow money. My receipts had been sixty thousand, but I had to turn them over to the financial agent the day before the drawing. In all the great houses to which I went and in theater lobbies, as soon as people saw me they gave me money, asking me to stake for them as I chose and to give them the tickets, for they knew nothing about it. I carried tickets for large and small amounts in my pockets, from which I let people choose, and I returned home with my pockets full of money. The other collectors did not have this privilege. They were not of a sort to be accepted in society. Only I went about in a carriage of my own; it gave me a reputation and unlimited credit. Paris was, and still is, a city where people judge everything by appearances; there is not a country in the world where it is easier to make an impression. But now that I have given my reader a full account of the lottery I will mention it only as it comes up.

A month after my arrival in Paris my brother Francesco, the painter, with whom I had left Paris in 1752, arrived from Dresden with Madame Silvestre.[49] He had spent four years there copying all the finest battle paintings in the celebrated gallery.[50] We were very glad to see each other again; but when I offered him the support of all my highly placed acquaintances to get him into the Academy, he answered that he did not need influence. He painted a picture representing a battle, he exhibited it at the Louvre, and he was received [51] by acclamation. The Academy paid him twelve thousand francs for his picture. After his reception my brother became famous, and in twenty-six years he earned nearly a million; however, extravagance and two bad marriages ruined him.

CHAPTER III

Count Tiretta, of Treviso. The Abbé de Lacoste. La Lambertini, pretended niece of the Pope. The name she gives Tiretta. Aunt and niece. Conversation at the fireside. Execution of Damiens. Tiretta's mistake. Anger of Madame XXX; reconciliation. I am happy with Mademoiselle de la M—re. Silvia's daughter. Mademoiselle de la M—re marries; my jealousy and desperate resolve. Change for the better.

AT THE beginning of March a handsome young man with an easy manner betokening high birth appeared before me wearing a redingote and carrying a letter. Yet something in the way he hands it to me makes me decide that he is a Venetian. I open it and am delighted. It was from my dear and worthy friend Signora Manzoni.[1] She asked my good offices for the bearer, Count Tiretta,[2] of Treviso, adding that he would tell me his sad story himself. She was sending me a small chest in which she said I would find all my manuscripts, for she was sure she would never see me again.

I at once rose and told him that if he wanted me to serve him in any way he could not have a stronger recommendation.

"So tell me, Count, how I can be of use to you."

"I need your friendship. A year ago the Council of my country chose me to fill a dangerous post. I was made a director of the pawn office[3] with two other noblemen of my age. The pleasures of the Carnival having left us in want of money, we used some of what we had in the till, hoping to return it before we should have to account for it. Our hope proved vain. The fathers of my two colleagues, who were richer than mine,[4] saved them by paying at once, and I, having no means of paying, decided to flee. Signora Manzoni advised me to entrust myself to you, at the same time asking me to bring you a small chest, which you shall have today. I arrived yesterday by the diligence from Lyons; I have only two louis left; I have shirts, but no suit except the one I am wearing. I am twenty-five years old, with an iron constitution and an absolute determination to do anything to earn an honest living; but I have no training and no talents; I only play the flute to amuse myself; I neither speak nor write any language but my own, and I am not a man of letters. What do you think you can do with me? I must also tell you that I have no hope of receiving the slightest help from anybody, least of all from my father, who to save the honor of the family will dispose of my inheritance, which I shall have to renounce for the rest of my life."

His brief account surprised me, but his sincerity pleased me. I told him to go at once and bring his baggage to a room next to mine which was for rent and to order something to eat in his room.

"All that, my dear Count, will cost you nothing, and in the meanwhile I will consider your situation. We will talk tomorrow. I never eat at home. Leave me now, for I have work to do; and if you go out for a walk beware of bad company and above all tell no one your business. You are fond of gambling, I suppose?"

"I loathe it, for it is the cause of half my ruin."

"And the other half?"

"Women."

"Women? They are more likely to pay you."

"God grant that I find some who will. At home we have nothing but trollops."

"If you are not too scrupulous in the matter of women you will do very well in Paris."

"What do you mean by scrupulous? I could never be a pimp."

"You are right. By scrupulous I mean a man who can only be loving if he is in love, who cannot bear holding some old harridan in his arms."

"If you mean no more than that, I am not scrupulous. I suspect that a rich woman would find me loving enough even if she were an utter horror."

"Bravo! You will do. Shall you call on the Ambassador?"

"God forbid!"

"At the moment all Paris is in mourning.[5] Go up to the third floor; you will find a tailor. Have him make you a black suit, and tell him from me that you must have it tomorrow morning. Good-by."

When I came back at midnight I found in my room the chest containing all my correspondence and the miniature portraits which were of concern to me. I have never in my life pawned a snuffbox without removing the portrait it contained. In the morning I saw Tiretta dressed in solid black.

"You see," I said, "how quickly things get done in Paris."

Just then the Abbé de Lacoste[6] is announced. I did not remember the name, but I have him shown in. I see the same Abbé who had seen me with the Abbé de Laville. I ask him to excuse me for not having had time to call on him. He congratulates me on my lottery. He says he has heard that I distributed over two thousand écus' worth of tickets at the Hôtel de Koelen.[7]

"Yes, I always carry eight or ten thousand francs' worth in my pocket."

"I will take a thousand écus' worth too."

"Whenever you please. At my office you can choose the numbers."

"I don't care about that. Just give me what you have."

"Gladly. Here they are. Choose."

After choosing he asks for paper and pen to write me a receipt.

"There is no need of that," I said, smiling and taking back my tickets; "I only give them out for cash."

"I will bring it to you tomorrow."

"And you shall have the tickets tomorrow; they are recorded at the office, and I cannot do otherwise."

"Give me some which are not recorded."

"I do not issue any such, for if they won I should have to pay them out of my own pocket."

"I think you could take that risk."

"And I think not."

He then speaks to Tiretta in Italian and offers to introduce him to Madame Lambertini,[8] the widow of a nephew of the Pope's. I say that I will go too, and we are driven there.

We get out at her door in the Rue Christine. I see a woman whose age, despite her youthful appearance, I put at forty years—thin, with black eyes, lively, scatter-brained, given to laughter, and in short a woman capable of inspiring a passing fancy. I set her talking and I find that she is neither a widow nor a niece of the Pope's; she was from Modena and an out-and-out adventuress. I see Tiretta becoming interested in her. She tries to keep us for dinner, but we excuse ourselves. Only Tiretta remains. I let the Abbé out at the Quai de la Ferraille and go to dine at Calzabigi's.

After dinner he takes me aside and says that Monsieur Duverney had told him to warn me that I was not allowed to distribute tickets on my own account.

"Then he considers me either a fool or a rogue. I shall complain to Monsieur de Boulogne."

"You will be making a mistake, for a warning is not an insult."

"You insult me yourself by giving me the warning. But no one shall give me another of the kind."

He calms me and persuades me to go with him to talk with Monsieur Duverney. The worthy old man, seeing that I am angry, begs my pardon and says that a self-styled Abbé de Lacoste had told him I was making so free. I did not see the Abbé anywhere again; he was the same man who three years later was sentenced to the galleys, where he ended his days, for having gone about Paris selling tickets for a lottery in Trévoux[9] which did not exist.

The day after the Abbé's visit I saw Tiretta in my room, just getting back. He said he had spent the night with the Pope's niece and that he thought she had found him satisfactory, since she proposed to put him up and keep him in funds if he would tell Monsieur Lenoir,[10] her lover, that he was her cousin.

"She claims," he said, "that Monsieur Lenoir will give me a post in the tax farming administration.[11] I replied that, since you were my intimate friend, I could not decide anything without first consulting you. She begged me to persuade you to dine with her on Sunday."

"I will do so with pleasure."

I found the woman madly in love with my friend, whom she dubbed "Count of Six Times," a name by which he was known in Paris as long as he remained there. She had recognized him as lord of that fief, which is thought to be fabulous in France, and she wanted to become its lady. After telling me of his nocturnal exploits as if I had been her oldest friend, she said that she wanted to give him room and board, that she had already obtained the consent of Monsieur Lenoir, who in fact was delighted to have her cousin stay with her.

She expected him after dinner, and she could not wait to introduce them to each other.

Reverting after dinner to the subject of my fellow countryman's powers, she excited him to the point where, wanting to convince me of his stamina, he confirmed her testimony in my presence. The sight had not the slightest effect on me; but observing my friend's extraordinary build I admitted that he could expect to make a fortune wherever he could find women with money.

At three o'clock two old women arrived. They were gamblers. La Lambertini introduced the "Count of Six Times," her cousin. By that imposing name he became an object of intense scrutiny, and the more so when his gibberish proved to be unintelligible. The heroine did not fail to whisper the explanation of his grandiose name into her friends' ears and to boast of the incredible wealth of the lord of the fief. "It is unbelievable," said the matrons, looking him up and down; and Tiretta seemed to answer: "Mesdames, have no doubt of it."

A hackney coach arrives. I see a stout woman,[12] well beyond middle age, a niece[13] pretty enough to eat, and a pale man wearing black and a round wig. After the embraces La Lambertini introduces her cousin Six Times; the name arouses surprise, but the explanation passes without comment; the only point dwelt upon was the strangeness of a man who dared to be in Paris without knowing a word of French and nevertheless jabbered away to the entire company, who, understanding not a word, did nothing but laugh. La Lambertini got up a game of brelan[14] and did not make me play; but she insisted that her dear cousin play beside her and on half shares. He did not know one card from another, but that didn't matter, he would learn; she would teach him. Since the charming young lady knows no card games I offer to keep her company in front of the fire. Her aunt says with a laugh that I shall be hard put to it to find subjects interesting enough to persuade her to talk; but that I must excuse her, for she had only been out of the convent for a month.

So as soon as I see the game started I go and sit down with her in front of the fire. It was she who broke the silence by asking me who the handsome man who could not talk was.

"He is a nobleman from my country who has left it because of an affair of honor. He will speak French when he has learned it, and then no one will laugh at him. I am sorry I brought him here, for in less than twenty-four hours he has been spoiled."

"How?"

"I do not dare tell you, for your aunt might not like it."

"I have no intention of making a report; but perhaps my curiosity deserves a rebuke."

"Mademoiselle, it is I who am in the wrong; but I will make amends by telling you everything. Madame Lambertini made him sleep with her and has given him the absurd name of 'Six Times.' That is all. I am sorry, because he was not a libertine before this happened."

Could I have supposed that I was talking to a well-born girl, a decent girl and a novice, in La Lambertini's house? I was surprised to see her face fiery red from shame. I refused to believe it. Two minutes later she astonishes me with a question I should never have expected.

"What is there in common," she asked, "between 'Six Times' and having slept with Madame Lambertini?"

"He did to her six times running what a decent husband does to his wife only once a week."

"And you think I am fool enough to tell my aunt what you have just told me?"

"But I am sorry for another thing too."

"I will come back in a moment."

After taking the little excursion which my charming story apparently made her feel she needed, she re-entered the room and stood behind her aunt's chair examining the hero's face; then she came back to her seat, blushing furiously.

"What is the other thing you said you were sorry for?"

"Dare I tell you all?"

"You have told me so much that I think you can have no scruples left."

"Then I will tell you that after dinner today she made him do it to her in my presence."

"If that offended you, obviously you were jealous."

"No. I felt humiliated because of something which I don't dare mention to you."

"I think you are mocking me with your 'don't dare.'"

"God forfend, Mademoiselle! She showed me that my friend outmeasured me by two inches."

"On the contrary, I think you are two inches taller than he is."

"It is not a question of height, but of another dimension, which you can imagine and in which my friend is a monster."

"A monster! But why should you mind that? Isn't it better not to be a monster?"

"That is very true; but in this respect certain women, who are not like you, prefer monstrosity."

"I haven't a clear enough idea of the matter to imagine what dimension can be called monstrous. I still consider it strange that you should have felt humiliated."

"Would you have thought it of me when you saw me?"

"When I came into the room and saw you I did not think about it. You appear to be a well-proportioned man, but if you know you are not I feel sorry for you."

"Please look."

"I think it is you who are the monster, for you frighten me."

She went and stood behind her aunt's chair; but I had no doubt that she would come back, for I was far from thinking her either stupid or innocent. I thought she wanted to pretend that she was; and not caring whether she had played the role well or badly I was delighted to have turned it to profit. I had punished her for wanting to impose on me, and as I thought her charming I was delighted that my punishment could certainly not have displeased her. Could I doubt her intelligence? It was she who had kept our entire dialogue from breaking off, and all that I had said and done had only been in consequence of her specious objections.

Four or five minutes later her stout aunt, having lost a game, told her niece she was bringing her bad luck and that it was bad manners to leave me alone. She did not answer her, and she came back to me smiling.

"If my aunt," she said, "knew what you have done she would not have accused me of being impolite."

"If you knew how mortified I am by it now! The only proof of my repentance I can give you is to leave. But will you not be offended if I do?"

"If you go my aunt will say that I am stupid and have bored you."

"In that case I will stay. So until now you had no idea of what I thought you would not mind my showing you?"

"Only a vague idea. It is no more than a month since my aunt had me come here from Melun[15] where I had been in a convent since I was eight years old, and now I am seventeen. They tried to make me take the veil, but I did not let them talk me into it."

"Are you angry at what I did? If I acted wrongly, I meant well."

"I have no right to be angry with you, for it was my fault. I only beg you to be discreet."

"Have no doubt that I will be; for I shall be the first to suffer if I am not."

"You have given me a lesson which will be useful to me in future. But you are going on with it. Stop, or I will leave you and not come back."

"Stay, it is finished. On this handkerchief you see the proof of my pleasure."

"What is that?"

"It is the substance which, placed in the proper retort, emerges nine months later male or female."

"I understand. You are an excellent tutor. You deliver yourself like a professor. Should I thank you for your zeal?"

"No. You should forgive me, for I would never have done what I did if I had not fallen in love with you the first moment I saw you."

"Then am I to take it as a declaration of love?"

"Yes, my angel. It is a daring one, but it is not to be doubted. If it did not come from a very strong love I should be a scoundrel who deserved death. May I hope that you will love me?"

"I have no idea. All I know is that I ought to loathe you. In less than an hour you have taken me on a journey which I thought I could not finish until after I married. You have left me with nothing to learn of a subject on which I never dared allow my mind to linger, and I feel guilty because I have let you seduce me. But how is it that you have now become calm and decent?"

"Because we are talking rationally. Because after the height of pleasure, love rests. Look!"

"What, again! Is this the end of the lesson? As I see you now, you do not frighten me any more. The fire is going out."

She puts on a log and, to poke up the fire, goes down on her knees. As she bends forward in this posture I put a determined hand under her dress, and I instantly find a completely closed door which could only lead me to happiness by being broken open. But at the same moment she rises, sits down, and says gently but with feeling that she is a well-born girl and believes she has the right to demand respect. At that I ask her pardon profusely, and the end of my speech calms her. I said that my daring hand had made me certain she had not yet enjoyed happiness with any man. She replied that the man who would make her happy could only be the man who would marry her, and she showed her forgiveness by letting me cover her hand with kisses. I would have gone further if someone had not arrived. It was Monsieur Lenoir, who had come in response to Madame Lambertini's note to hear what she had to tell him.

I see a man of mature years, simple and modest, who very politely asks everyone not to get up and not to interrupt the game. La Lambertini introduced me, and on hearing my name he asked if I was the artist. When he learned that I was his elder brother he congratulated me on the lottery and on Monsieur Duverney's high opinion of me; but what interested him more was the "cousin," whom she at once introduced to him as Count Tiretta. It was I who said that he had been recommended to me and had been forced to leave his country because of an affair of honor. La Lambertini then added that she wanted to put him up, but had not wished to do so until she learned if he would approve. He answered that she was sole mistress in her own house, and that he would be delighted to have him one of her circle. As he spoke Italian very well, Tiretta breathed again. He left the game and the four of us sat by the fire, where, when her turn came, the pretty young lady conversed very sensibly with Monsieur Lenoir. He led her to talk of her convent, and when she told him her name he spoke of her father, whom he had known. He was a Councilor in the Parlement of Rouen.[16] The charming girl was tall, a natural blonde, with regular features and a countenance marked by candor and modesty. Large and prominent blue eyes whose expression was of the tenderest bore witness to the ardent desires of her soul. Her close-fitting buttoned dress displayed the elegance of her waist, leaving the beauty of her bosom to be divined. I saw that Monsieur Lenoir, though he did not tell her so, was as sensible of her merits as I had been. But he was not in a position to show it as I had done. At eight o'clock he left. A half hour later Madame XXX also left, accompanied by her niece, whom she called De la M—re, and by the pale man who had come with them. I then left with Tiretta, who promised he would come to stay with her the next day; he kept his word.

Three or four days after this arrangement was made, my clerk sent me a letter which had been addressed to me at my office. The letter was from Mademoiselle de la M—re. Here is a copy of it:

"My aunt Madame XXX, sister of my late mother, is sanctimonious, fond of gambling, rich, stingy, and unjust. She does not love me and, not having succeeded in making me take the veil, she wants to marry me to a merchant of Dunkirk whom I do not know. Note that she does not know him either. The marriage broker speaks highly of him. He asks only that she guarantee him twelve thousand francs a year as long as she lives, since he is certain that on her death I will inherit fifty thousand écus. But note that, in accordance with the terms of my mother's will, she ought to give me twenty-five thousand when I marry. If what has happened between you and me has not made me contemptible in your eyes, I offer you my hand with twenty-five thousand écus and another twenty-five thousand on the death of my aunt. Do not answer me, for I do not know how or through whom or where to receive a letter from you. You shall answer me by word of mouth Sunday at Madame Lambertini's. Thus you have four days before you in which to think it over. I do not know if I love you; but I know that I must prefer you to any other man if I am to love myself. It is for me to win your esteem, and to give you the opportunity to win mine. Then, too, I feel sure that you will make life pleasant for me. If you consider that the happiness to which I aspire can contribute to yours, I warn you that you will need an attorney, for my aunt is stingy and may well go to law. As soon as you have made up your mind, you will have to find a convent for me, to which I can go before I take the slightest step, otherwise I should be terribly ill-treated and I cannot bear the thought of that. If the proposal I make to you does not suit you, I ask you for one favor which I hope you will grant me and for which I will be grateful to you. You will make an effort not to see me again, taking care to avoid any places where you think I might be. You will thus help me to forget you. Do you not understand that I cannot be happy unless I marry you or forget you? Good-by. I am sure I shall see you on Sunday."

Her letter touched me. I saw that it was dictated by virtue, honor, and good sense. I found that Mademoiselle de la M.'s mind deserved even more praise than her body. I felt ashamed that I had seduced her and worthy of the worst punishment if I refused the hand which she offered me with such dignity, and at the same time I saw that she offered me a fortune far larger than any for which I could reasonably hope; but the idea of marriage made me shudder; I knew myself too well not to foresee that in a settled way of life I should become unhappy and hence my wife would be unhappy too. My vacillation in coming to a decision during the four days she gave me to think it over convinced me that I was not in love with her; nevertheless, I could never make up my mind to reject her proposal, still less to tell her so. I spent the whole four days thinking of her, feeling that I esteemed her, repenting that I had wronged her, but never having the firmness to decide to repair my wrongdoing. When I thought that, if I did not, she would hate me, I could not tolerate that idea either; and such is always the unhappy predicament of a man who must make a decision and cannot make it.

Fearing that some demon would lead me to fail in my duty to Mademoiselle de la M—re by compelling me to go to the theater or the opera, I went to dine at La Lambertini's with my mind still not made up. She was at mass. Tiretta was in his room playing the flute; as soon as he saw me he came out to pay me what his black clothes had cost him.

"So you are in funds now—I congratulate you."

"Better condole with me, for it is stolen money, though I am only an accomplice. There is cheating here, and I have been taught to lend a hand; and I take my share so they won't call me a fool. My hostess and three or four other women shear the sheep. It revolts me, I cannot put up with it. One day or another I shall be killed or I will kill, and either way it will cost me my life; so I am planning to get out of this den of thieves as soon as I can."

"That would be my advice to you, my friend, and I urge you to follow it. Better leave today than tomorrow."

"I do not want to precipitate anything, for Monsieur Lenoir, who is a gentleman and my friend, and who thinks I am the trollop's cousin and knows nothing of her infamous proceedings, would suspect something and might leave her when he learned what had driven me away. In five or six days I will find some excuse and come back to you."

La Lambertini said she was delighted that I had dropped in to take potluck; she told me that Mademoiselle de la M—re and her aunt would be of the company. I asked her if she was satisfied with "Six Times" and she answered that he did not always lodge in his fief but that she loved him none the less. Madame XXX arrived with her niece, who concealed her pleasure at seeing me. She was in half-mourning, and so beautiful that I was amazed at my indecision. Tiretta came down and as there was no reason why I should not show that I felt attracted by Mademoiselle de la M—re, I paid her every attention. I told her aunt that I would renounce my bachelorhood if I could find a wife like her.

"My niece, Monsieur, is virtuous and sweet-tempered, but she has neither intelligence nor piety."

"As for my intelligence, my dear aunt, I have nothing to say, but no one at the convent ever reproached me with lack of piety."

"I can well believe it. They are female Jesuits. Grace is what matters, my dear niece, grace; but let us change the subject. All I ask is that you please the man who will be your husband."

"Is Mademoiselle about to be married?"

"Her intended will arrive at the beginning of next month."

"I suppose he belongs to the legal profession?"

"He is an extremely well-to-do merchant."

"Since Monsieur Lenoir has told me that Mademoiselle is the daughter of a Councilor, I did not expect a misalliance."

"It does not signify. He is noble[17] if he is honest, and it will be her own fault if he does not make her happy."

Since this sort of talk could only be painful to the charming girl, who was listening and saying nothing, I changed the subject to the great crowd which would be at La Grève[18] to watch Damiens's execution; and seeing that they were all curious about the horrible spectacle I offered them a large window from which all five of us could see it. They accepted on the spot.[19] I promised to call for them; but since I had no window, when we rose from table I pretended I had some important business and hurried in a hackney coach to La

Grève, where within a quarter of an hour I rented a good window one flight up between two staircases for three louis. I paid and was given a receipt with a forfeit of six hundred francs. The window faced the front of the scaffold. Returning to La Lambertini's, I found her playing *piquet à écrire*[20] with Tiretta, while Madame XXX kept score.

As Mademoiselle de la M—re knew only "Comet,"[21] I offered her my company, and, since we had something to say to each other, we retired to the other end of the room. I told her that the receipt of her letter brought me to realize that I was the most fortunate of men and at the same time to realize that her mind and her character were such as to make her adored by any man endowed with common sense.

"You shall be my wife," I said, "and until my last breath I will bless the fortunate boldness with which I surprised your innocence, for without it you would never have come to prefer me to a hundred other men of your own rank, none of whom would ever have refused you even without the bait of fifty thousand écus, which are nothing in comparison with the charms of your person and your good sense. Now that you know what my feelings are, let us not be precipitate; trust me. Give me time to take a house, furnish it, and put myself in a position to be considered worthy to marry a girl of your condition. Consider that I am still living in a furnished room, that you have relatives, and that I should be ashamed to look like an adventurer in a matter of such moment."

"You heard that my supposed future husband is to arrive; and when he arrives they will move quickly."

"Not so quickly but that in twenty-four hours I can free you from all constraint without your aunt's even knowing that it will be I who deal her the blow. Know, my angel, that I have only to ask it and the Minister of

Foreign Affairs, certain that you want no other husband than myself, will secure a refuge for you in one of the best convents in Paris; that it is he who will supply you with a lawyer, and he who, if the language of the will is clear, will within a few days force your aunt to give you your dowry and furnish security for the rest of your inheritance. Keep calm, take no action, and wait for the merchant from Dunkirk. Be sure that I will not leave you in difficulties. You will no longer be in your aunt's house on whatever day they set to sign the contract.''

''You have convinced me, and I put myself entirely in your hands; but I beg you to give no weight to one circumstance which pains my delicacy in the highest degree. You said that I would never have proposed to you that you either marry me or cease to see me if you had not taken such liberties as you took last Sunday. It is true in one respect, for without an overpowering reason I should have been mad to offer you my hand point-blank; but our marriage could equally well have come about in a different way, for I can truly tell you that in any case I should have given you the preference over all men.''

On hearing this magnanimous confidence, I kissed her hand again and again and with such a fervor of feeling that I should not have waited a quarter of an hour to marry her if a notary and a priest empowered to give us the nuptial blessing had been present. Entirely absorbed in our own concerns, we paid no attention to the terrible racket the company was making at the other end of the room; but I thought I ought to look into it, at least in order to calm Tiretta.

I saw an open casket, filled with jewels ranging from mere trumpery to articles of value, and two men arguing with Tiretta, who had a book in his hand. I immediately thought it was a lottery; but why the quarrel? Tiretta said that they were scoundrels, who had won thirty or forty louis from them by means of the book, which he handed me. One of the men told me that the book contained a lottery than which nothing could be more honest.

"This book," he said, "contains twelve hundred leaves, two hundred of which represent prizes and the others are blanks. Each winning leaf, then, is followed by five losing ones. The person who wants to play pays a petit écu and puts the point of a pin at random between the leaves of the closed book. The book is opened at the place where the pin went in, and the leaf is examined. If it is blank the person who paid the petit écu loses it, and if it indicates a prize he is given the prize written on the leaf or its value in money, as stated on the same leaf. Observe that the smallest prize is worth twelve francs and that there are prizes which run up to six hundred and one to twelve hundred. In the hour during which these ladies and this gentleman have been playing they have already won several prizes, and Madame here has won a ring worth six louis, which she would still have if she had not preferred to take the money, which, continuing to play, she has lost."

"In short," said Madame XXX, who had won the ring, "there are six of us here, and these gentlemen have won our money with their accursed book. You can see that we were taken unawares."

Tiretta called them scoundrels, and one of them replied that in that case the collectors for the Military School lottery were scoundrels too. At that Tiretta gave him a sound slap; whereupon I stepped between them, demanded silence, and proceeded to end the matter.

"All lotteries," I said, "are advantageous to the backers; but the backer of the Military School lottery is the King himself, and I am the chief collector. As such, I confiscate this casket, and I give you your choice. Either you will give these persons back the money you have won and I will let you leave with your casket, or I will send for a police officer, who on my demand will put you in prison until tomorrow, when Monsieur Berryer[22] himself will judge the case. I will take this book to him tomorrow morning. We shall see if, because you are scoundrels, we have to admit that we are the same.''

Seeing that they were in a poor position they decided to give back the money. They were made to give back forty louis in all, though they swore they had won only twenty. I was convinced of it; but *vae victis* (''woe to the vanquished'')[23]; I was angry with them and was determined that they should pay. They asked for their book, but I would not give it to them. They thought they were lucky they could leave with their casket of jewels. The ladies were touched and after they were gone said that I might at least have let the poor wretches have their conjuring book.

They came to see me at eight o'clock the next morning, and they made me relent by presenting me with a large case containing twenty-four eight-inch Saxon porcelain[24] statues. At that I gave them back the book, threatening that I would have them arrested if they went about Paris any longer with their lottery. The same day I took all twenty-four of the pretty figures to Mademoiselle de la M—re. It was a sumptuous present, and her aunt thanked me profusely.

A few days later—it was March 28th[25]—I went very early to call for the ladies, who were breakfasting at Madame Lambertini's with Tiretta, and took them in my carriage to La Grève, holding Mademoiselle de la M—re on my lap. All three of the ladies crowded into the front of the window, leaning forward with their elbows on the sill so as not to prevent us from seeing. The window had two steps, they had got up on the second, and, since we were behind them, we had to be on it too, for if we had stood on the first we could have seen nothing. I have reasons for acquainting my reader with this particular.

We had the firmness to remain present at the horrible spectacle[26] for four hours. I shall say nothing about it, for it would take too long and in any case everyone knows the details. Damiens was a fanatic who had tried to kill Louis XV in the belief that he was doing a good deed. He had only just pierced the King's skin; but that made no difference. The populace at his execution called him a monster spewed up from Hell to assassinate "the best" of kings, whom they believed they adored and whom they had named "the Well-Beloved." Yet it was the same populace which massacred[27] the whole royal family, all the noblemen of France, and all those who gave the nation the fair character which made it esteemed, loved, and even taken as a model by all other nations. The people of France, said Monsieur de Voltaire himself, is the most abominable of all peoples. It is a chameleon which takes on all colors and is ready to do whatever a leader wants it to do, whether for good or for evil.

While Damiens was being tortured I had to turn away my eyes when I heard him shriek with only half his body left; but La Lambertini and Madame XXX did not look away; and it was not because they were hard-hearted. They told me, and I had to pretend to believe them, that they could not feel the least pity for such a monster because they loved Louis XV so well. It is true, however, that Tiretta kept Madame XXX so strangely occupied during the whole execution that it may have been only on his account that she never dared to stir or look around.

Being behind her and very close to her, he had raised her dress so as not to step on it, and that was all very well. But later, looking toward them, I saw that he had raised it a little too high; whereupon, determining neither to interrupt my friend's enterprise nor to embarrass Madame XXX, I took up a position behind my beloved which assured her aunt that what Tiretta did to her could be seen neither by myself nor by her niece. I heard the rustling of a dress for two whole hours, and finding the whole thing most amusing I never swerved from the resolve I had taken. I admired Tiretta's appetite even more than his boldness, for in that respect I had often been as daring as he.

When at the end of the execution I saw Madame XXX straighten up, I turned too. I saw my friend as lively, fresh, and calm as if nothing had happened; but I thought the lady looked pensive and more serious than usual. Between keeping La Lambertini from laughing at her and preventing her niece from discovering mysteries of which she should still be ignorant, she had been under the dire necessity of having to dissimulate and patiently put up with all that the brute had done.

I dropped La Lambertini at her door, asking her to leave Tiretta with me, since I needed him. Then I dropped Madame XXX at her house in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arts,[28] where she asked me to call on her the next day as she had something to say to me. I noticed that she did not curtsy to my friend. I took him to dinner at Landel's, who had a wineshop in the Hôtel de Buci[29] and furnished excellent meals, even on fast days, for six francs a head.

"What were you doing," I asked him, "behind Madame XXX?"

"I am sure neither you nor the others saw anything."

"That may well be; but having seen the beginning of the performance and guessing what you were going to do, I took up a position which prevented Mademoiselle de la M—re and La Lambertini from seeing you. I can imagine what you did, and I admire your hearty appetite; but Madame XXX is angry."

"Then she is pretending to be, for since she stayed still for two whole hours, I cannot believe anything but that I gave her pleasure.''

''I believe it too; but her self-esteem leaves her no choice except to claim that you affronted her—as indeed you did! You see that she is vexed with you and that she wants to talk with me tomorrow.''

''But I cannot imagine she will talk to you about anything so trifling. She would be out of her mind.''

''Why not? You don't know these pious women. They are delighted to have an opportunity to weep and confess such things to a third person, especially if they are ugly. It is quite possible that Madame XXX will demand reparation; and I shall be delighted to take a hand in it.''

''I do not see what kind of reparation she can demand. If she hadn't been willing she could have given me a kick which would have knocked me off the step backward.''

''La Lambertini is vexed with you too, I noticed. She may have seen what happened and feel that you have cheated her.''

''La Lambertini is vexed with me for another reason. Last night I raised a row and I shall move from there before evening.''

''Really?''

''Really. Here is the story. Last evening a young man in the tax farming administration, whom an old Genoese harridan brought to supper with us, after losing forty louis at *petits-paquets*[30] threw the cards in my hostess's face and called her a thief. I picked up the candlestick and put the candle out on his face, at the risk, I confess, of blinding him, but it did not go into his eyes. He ran for his sword, shouting, and if his Genoese friend had not held him round the waist there would have been a murder, for I had already unsheathed. When the poor fellow saw his wound in the mirror he became so furious that the only way they could quiet him was to give him back his money. They did so despite my protests; for giving it back was tantamount to admitting that they had cheated him. This led to a bitter quarrel between myself and La Lambertini after the young man had gone. She said that nothing would have happened and we should still have the forty louis if I had stayed out of it; that it was she and not I whom he had insulted; to which the Genoese added that if we had kept our heads we should have fleeced him for a long time, but God knew what he would do now with the scar on his face from the burning candle. Disgusted with their trollops' morality, I told them to go . . . . . themselves; on which my dear hostess said that I was a tramp. But for Monsieur Lenoir's arrival I would have given her a beating. They told me to keep still, but I was too angry. I told the worthy man that his mistress had called me a tramp, that she was a whore, that she was not my cousin, and that I would move out today. So saying I went up to my room and locked myself in. I shall go back there in two hours for my clothes, and I will drink coffee with you tomorrow morning."

Tiretta was right. The more I learned of his character, the more I saw that he was not born for the trade of fancy man.

The next day about noon I went on foot to call on Madame XXX, whom I found with her niece. A quarter of an hour later she told her to leave us alone, then spoke to me as follows:

"You will be surprised, Monsieur, by what I have to say to you. It is a complaint of an unimaginable nature, which I have determined to lay before you without making any long reflections, for the situation is both painful and urgent. To come to the decision I had only to remind myself of the impression you made on me the first time I saw you. I believe you to be intelligent, discreet, a man of honor and decent behavior, and, what is more, of true religious feeling; if I am mistaken it will be most unfortunate, for insulted as I feel that I have been, and not lacking in resources, I will find a way to avenge myself; and, as his friend, you will regret it."

"Are you complaining of Tiretta?"

"None other. He is a villain and he has insulted me in an unheard-of manner."

"I should never have believed him capable of it. What, Madame, is the nature of the insult? You may count on me."

"Monsieur, I will not tell you; but I hope you can guess it. For two whole hours yesterday at the execution of that monster Damiens he took the strangest advantage of his position behind me."

"I understand, and you need tell me no more. You are justified; and I condemn him, for it was a low trick; but permit me to tell you that the thing is not unheard-of, or indeed unusual; I even consider that it can be forgiven either to love or to the situation at the moment, to the extreme proximity of the fiendish temptation, to the extreme youth of the offender. It is a crime for which reparation can be made in a number of ways, with the full consent of the parties. Tiretta is a bachelor, a gentleman with the best connections, and a marriage can easily be arranged; and if a marriage does not accord with your ideas, he can make reparation by a most constant friendship, of a nature to give you the clearest evidence of his repentance and worthy of your indulgence. Consider, Madame, that he is a man and hence subject to all the weaknesses of humanity. Consider, too, that your charms must have played no small part in exciting his senses beyond measure. In short, I believe he may hope to obtain your forgiveness."

"Forgiveness? All that you have just said flows from the wisdom of a Christian soul; but your whole argument is founded on a false supposition. You do not know what took place. But alas! how could anyone guess it?"

Madame XXX then shed a few tears, which baffled me. I did not know what to think. "Can he have stolen her purse?" I wondered. After drying her tears she went on as follows:

"You imagine a crime which, by an effort, one could reconcile with reason and hence, I admit, discover some proper reparation for it; but what the brute did to me is so infamous that I must not even think of it, for it is of a nature to drive me mad."

"Good God! What are you saying? I tremble. Tell me, I beg you, if I have guessed."

"I think so, for I do not believe it possible to imagine anything worse. I see that you are upset. Yet such is the case. Forgive my tears, and seek their source, I beg you, only in resentment and shame."

"And in religion."

"That too. Indeed it is their chief source. I did not mention it because I do not know if you are as attached to it as I am."

"I am so to the extent of my powers, thank God!"

"Then be prepared to let me damn myself, for I demand vengeance."

"Renounce it, Madame; I could never be your accomplice in seeking vengeance, and if you will not renounce it, at least keep it from my knowledge. I promise to tell him nothing, even though, since he is staying with me, the laws of hospitality demand that I warn him."

"I thought he was staying with La Lambertini."

"He left her house yesterday. It was a den of iniquity. I got him out of there."

"What are you saying? You astonish and edify me. I do not seek his death, Monsieur; but admit that he owes me reparation."

"I admit it; but I know of none commensurate with the insult. I can think of only one, and I will undertake to procure it for you."

"Tell me what it is."

"I will trick him into coming here, I will hand him over to you and leave him alone with you to face all your righteous anger—but on condition that, without his knowing it, I shall remain in the room next to the one in which you will have him at your mercy, for I hold myself responsible for his life."

"I consent. You shall be in this room, and you shall leave him with me in the room in which I will receive you both; but he must not know."

"He will not even know that I am bringing him to your house. I do not want him to be aware that I know anything about his abominable crime. I will find some excuse for leaving him with you."

"When will you bring him? I can hardly wait to abash him. I will make him tremble. I cannot imagine what excuses he will jabber out to justify his insolence."

She made me stay for dinner with her and the Abbé Desforges,[31] who arrived at one o'clock. The Abbé was a pupil of the famous Bishop of Auxerre,[32] who was still alive. At table I talked so eloquently of grace and quoted St. Augustine to such good purpose that the Abbé and his sanctimonious disciple took me for a most zealous Jansenist,[33] which was against all probability. Mademoiselle de la M—re never once looked at me, and assuming that she had her reasons I never spoke to her.

After dinner I promised Madame XXX that I would bring her the culprit the next day when we were walking home from the Comédie Française,[34] for I was certain that at night he would not recognize her house.

But Tiretta only laughed when I told him the whole story, reproaching him in serio-comic vein with the horrible act he had dared to perpetrate on a woman in every way respectable.

"I should never have believed," he replied, "that she would bring herself to complain of it to anyone."

"Then you do not deny having done this horrible thing to her?"

"If she says I did, I will not contradict her; but may I die if I believe I can swear to it. In the position in which I was placed, I apparently could do nothing else. But I will calm her, and I will try to make short work of it so as not to keep you waiting."

"No, no. On the contrary, your interest and mine demand that you take a long time over it, for I am sure I shall not be bored. You must not know that I am in the house; and even if you stay with her only an hour, take a hackney coach and leave. There is a hack stand in the street. You must realize that the least Madame XXX owes me in the way of politeness is not to leave me alone and without a fire. Remember that she is well born, rich, and pious. Try to gain her friendship—not front to back but *de faciem ad faciem* ['face to face'], as the King of Prussia said.* [35] You may find it very profitable. If she asks you why you are no longer living with La Lambertini, do not tell her the reason. Your discretion will please her. In short, try your best to expiate your execrable crime."

"I need only tell her the truth. I didn't know where I was going in."

"It's an excuse in a million, and a Frenchwoman may very well consider it legitimate."

When we left the Comédie I dismissed my carriage, and I ushered the culprit into the presence of the matron, who received us most politely, saying that she never supped but that if we had let her know beforehand she would have had something for us. After telling her all the news I had heard in the foyer, I asked her to allow me to leave my friend with her, since I had to call on a foreigner at the Spanish Embassy.[36]

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* D'Alembert dared to correct him. I would have done the same. Why should a king insist on speaking Latin when he has not learned it? (C.'s note.)

"If I am not back within a quarter of an hour," I said to Tiretta, "do not wait for me. You will find hackney coaches in the street. We will meet tomorrow."

Instead of going downstairs I entered the adjoining room by the door from the hall. Two or three minutes later I saw Mademoiselle de la M—re, who, carrying a candle, said with a smile that she did not know if she was dreaming.

"My aunt," she said, "ordered me not to leave you alone and to tell the chambermaid not to come up until she rang. You have left 'Six Times' alone with her, and she told me to speak softly because he is not to know you are here. May I ask what this strange business is? I admit it makes me very curious."

"You shall know all, my angel, but I am cold."

"She also told me to make a good fire. She has become generous. As you see, there are candles."

As soon as we were seated in front of the fire I told her the whole story, to which she listened with the utmost attention but which she found it difficult to understand when it came to explaining the nature of Tiretta's crime. I was not sorry that I had to explain it to her in clear terms, accompanying them with gestures, which made her laugh and blush together. I told her that when I had made myself responsible for her aunt's receiving reparation, I had arranged the thing in a way to make it certain that she and I would be together and perfectly free during all the time that her aunt was occupied; and thereupon I for the first time covered her lovely face with kisses, which, as they were not accompanied by any other liberties, she candidly received as indubitable proof of my love.

"There are two things," she said, "which I do not understand. The first is how Tiretta managed to commit a crime on my aunt which I can see is possible if the party assaulted consents but which must be impossible if she does not—which leads me to conclude that, since the crime was committed, my good aunt must have consented to it."

"Certainly, for she could have changed her position."

"Even without that—for it seems to me she could simply have made it impossible for him to enter."

"In that, my angel, you are mistaken. A well-equipped man asks only for no change in position; granted that, he breaks through the barrier easily enough. Besides, I do not believe that achieving entrance in the case of your aunt is the same as it would be in, let us say, yours."

"That I defy a hundred Tirettas to do. The other thing I do not understand is how she can have told you about the affront, which, as she should have known if she had any intelligence, could only make you laugh, for it makes me laugh too. Nor do I understand what kind of reparation she can expect from a wild brute who probably considers the whole thing completely unimportant. I believe he would have tried to play the same trick on anyone behind whom he happened to be standing at that frenzied moment."

"You are right, for he told me himself that he had entered but really did not know where."

"Your friend is a strange sort of creature."

"As for the kind of reparation your aunt may demand, and which she perhaps hopes to obtain, she told me nothing; but I believe it will consist in a formal declaration of love on his part and that he will expiate the crime he unwittingly committed by becoming her devoted lover and spending this very night with her just as if he had married her this morning."

"Come now—that would be too amusing. I don't believe it. She is too much in love with her saintly soul; then, too, how can you suppose our young man can play the role of lover to her when he has her face before his eyes? He didn't see her when he did what he did to her at La Grève. Have you ever seen as repulsive a face as my aunt's? Her skin is freckled, her eyes are rheumy, her teeth rotten, and her breath unbearable. She is hideous."

"Those are trifles, dear heart, for a man like my friend, who, being twenty-five, is always ready. It is I who can only be a man when I am stimulated by charms like yours, which I cannot wait to possess completely and legitimately."

"You will find me the fondest of wives, and I am sure I shall conquer your heart so that nothing can take it from me until I die."

As an hour had already passed, and her aunt's conversation with Tiretta still continued, I saw that the thing had become serious.

"Let us eat something," I said.

"I can't give you anything but bread, cheese, and ham, and some wine which my aunt thinks very good."

"Bring them all, for my stomach is perishing."

No sooner have I spoken than she lays two places on a small table and brings everything she has. The cheese was Roquefort and the ham delicious. There was enough for ten people, but since there was nothing else we ate it all with ravenous appetites and emptied the two bottles. Pleasure shone in the charming girl's beautiful eyes; even so, we spent an hour over our frugal repast.

"Are you not curious," I asked her, "to know what your aunt has been doing with 'Six Times' during the two hours and a half they have been together?"

"They may be playing cards; but there's a hole. All I see is the two candles, with wicks an inch long."

"Didn't I tell you? Give me a coverlet, and I will lie down on this sofa; and you be off to sleep. Let us go see your bed.''

She took me into her little room, where I saw a pretty bed, a prayer stool, and a large crucifix. I said her bed was too small, but she said it wasn't, and she showed me that she was perfectly comfortable in it stretched out full length. What a charming wife I was to have!

''Oh, I beg you, don't move, and let me unbutton this dress which hides things unknown I am dying to devour.''

''My dear, I cannot defend myself; but afterward you will no longer love me.''

The unbuttoned dress showing me only half of her, she could not resist my insistence. She had to let my eyes enjoy all her bared beauties and my mouth devour them; and at last, burning with desires equal to mine, she opened her arms to me, making me promise to spare her in the one crucial point. What does one not promise in such moments? But where is the woman, if she really loves, who calls on her lover to keep his promise when love has taken the place vacated by his reason? After spending an hour in amorous toying which inflamed her and of which until that moment she had known nothing, I showed my mortification at having to leave her without paying her charms the chief homage they deserved. I saw her sigh.

As I had to resign myself to sleeping on the couch, and the fire having gone out, I asked her for a coverlet, since it was very cold. If I stayed in bed with her and abstained as I had promised I would, I should only too easily fall asleep. She told me to stay in bed while she went to light a faggot. Wanting to hurry, she did not think of dressing, and in a minute I saw a fine fire; but it was less strong than the one kindled in my mind and body by her charms, whose power, in the position she assumed to light the faggot, became overwhelming. I ran to her, determined to break my promise and certain that she would not have the firmness to resist me. Clasping her in my arms, I said that I would be too wretched unless, at least from pity if not from love, she would consent to make me happy.

"Then let us be happy," she answered, "and be sure that on my side pity has nothing to do with it."

We then lay down on the couch, and we did not leave each other until daybreak. After lighting the fire for me again, she went off to bed in her own room, locking the door behind her, and I fell asleep.

It was Madame XXX who waked me in the morning, dressed in a fetching dishabille.

"Good morning, Madame. What has become of my friend?"

"And mine. I have forgiven him. He gave me the clearest proof that he made a mistake. He has gone home. You must not tell him that you spent the night here, for he might think you had spent it with my niece. I am obliged to you. I am in need of your indulgence and especially of your discretion."

"You may count on that, Madame; it is enough for me to know that you have forgiven him."

"How could I help it? He is really something more than mortal. If you knew how he loves me! I am grateful to him. I am taking him to board with me for a year, and he will be well lodged and even better fed. So we shall leave today for La Villette,[37] where I have a charming little house. Just at the beginning I have to do this to silence spiteful tongues. At La Villette there will be a good room for you whenever you wish to come for supper. You will find a good bed in it. I am only sorry that you will be bored, for my niece is sulky."

"Your niece is very pleasant, she gave me a tasty supper and kept me excellent company until three o'clock in the morning."

"I congratulate her. How did she manage it when there was nothing in the house?"

"We ate all there was, and afterward she went off to bed and I slept very well here."

"I didn't think the girl had that much intelligence. Let us go see her. She has locked her door. Open up, will you! Why did you lock your door, you prude? Monsieur is a man of honor."

She opened her door, excusing herself for appearing in such undress, but she was dazzling.

"There she is," said her aunt. "As you see, she's not bad-looking. It's a pity she's so stupid. You were right to give Monsieur Casanova supper. I gambled all night; and when one gambles, one forgets everything else. I quite forgot that you were here, and not knowing that Count Tiretta would eat supper, I did not order anything. But in future we will sup. I have taken him to board. He is a young man of character and intelligence. You'll see how quickly he will learn to speak French. Get dressed, niece, for we must pack. After dinner we shall go to spend the whole spring at La Villette. And listen, niece, there's no need for you to tell my sister anything about all this."

"Never fear, my dear Aunt. Did I tell her anything *the other times?*"

"You see how stupid she is! Her 'the other times' would make one suppose the thing had happened to me before."

"I meant that I never tell her anything at all."

"We will dine at two o'clock, you shall dine with us, and we will leave immediately afterward. Tiretta promised me he would be here with his portmanteau. We will put everything in a hackney coach."

I promised her that I would not fail to come. I hurried home, very curious to hear the whole story from Tiretta himself. As he got out of bed he told me that he had sold himself for a year for twenty-five louis a month and board and lodging.

"I congratulate you. She tells me that you are something more than mortal."

"I worked all night for that; but I am sure you didn't waste your time either."

"Get dressed, for I am to dine there with you, and I mean to see you off for La Villette, where I shall go sometimes too, for your little darling has told me I have a room there."

We arrived at two o'clock. Madame XXX, dressed in clothes suitable for a girl, was a laughable sight, and Mademoiselle de la M—re was as beautiful as a star. At four o'clock they set out with Tiretta, and I went to the Comédie Italienne.[38]

I was in love with Mademoiselle de la M—re; but Silvia's daughter, with whom I had only the pleasure of supping at the family table, weakened a love which now left me nothing to desire. We complain of women who, though they love us and are sure that they are loved, refuse us their favors; and we are wrong. If they love us they must fear to lose us and hence must do all that they can to keep alive our desire to attain possession of them. If we attain it nothing is surer than that we will no longer desire them, for one does not desire what one possesses; so women are right in refusing to yield to our desires. But if the desires of the two sexes are equal, why is it that a man never refuses a woman whom he loves and who urges him on? The reason can only be this: The man who loves and knows that he is loved rates the pleasure he is sure he will give the loved object more highly than the pleasure which that object can give him in fruition. Hence he is eager to satisfy her. Woman, whose great preoccupation is her own interest, cannot but rate the pleasure she will herself feel more highly than the pleasure she will give; hence she procrastinates as long as she can because she fears that in giving herself she will lose what concerns her most—her own pleasure. This feeling is bound up with the nature of the female sex, and it is the sole cause of coquetry, which reason forgives in women and which it can never forgive in a man. And in fact coquetry in a man is very seldom seen.

Silvia's daughter loved me, and she knew that I loved her even though I had never made her a declaration; but she took great care not to let me know it. She feared she would encourage me to demand favors of her, and not feeling sure that she would have the firmness to refuse, she felt afraid that she would lose me afterward. Her mother and father planned to marry her to Clément,[39] who had been her harpsichord teacher for the past three years; she knew it, and she could do nothing but consent, for though she was not in love with him she did not dislike him. Knowing that he was to be her husband, she could not but see him with pleasure. Most well-brought-up girls enter marriage without love having played any part in it, and they are content to do so. They seem to know that their husbands are one thing and their lovers another. Men commonly take the same attitude, especially in Paris. Frenchmen are jealous of their mistresses, never of their wives; but Clément the harpsichordist was visibly in love with his pupil, and she was delighted that I noticed it. She knew that, once I was certain of it, I should be led to make a declaration, and she was not mistaken. I resolved on it after Mademoiselle de la M—re left, and I had reason to repent. After my declaration Clément was dismissed; but I found myself in a worse position. The man who declares that he is in love with a woman except by the language of gesture needs to go to school.

Three days after Tiretta left, I took his few belongings to him at La Villette, and Madame XXX was pleased to see me. Just as we were sitting down at table the Abbé Desforges arrived. The stern rigorist, who had been most friendly to me in Paris, ate his dinner without ever giving me a look and did the same to Tiretta. But the latter finally lost his patience at dessert. He rose from the table first, asking Madame XXX to let him know in advance when she again entertained the gentleman, with whom she immediately withdrew. Tiretta took me to see his room which, as might be expected, was next to Madame's. While he was putting away his clothes Mademoiselle took me to see my room. It was a very attractive one on the ground floor; hers was across from it. I pointed out how easily I could go into hers when everyone was in bed, but she replied that, as her bed was too small, she would come to me.

She then told me all the extravagant things her aunt was doing for Tiretta.

"She thinks," she said, "that we do not know he sleeps with her. She rang this morning at eleven o'clock and told me to go and ask him if he had had a good night. Seeing that his bed had not been unmade, I asked him if he had spent the night writing. He said that he had and asked me to say nothing about it to Madame."

"Does he make eyes at you?"

"No. But even if he did—stupid as he is, he must know that he is contemptible."

"Why?"

"Because my aunt pays him."

"You pay me too."

"Yes, but in the same coin as you give me."

Her aunt said that she was stupid, and she believed it. Not only was she not stupid, she was both intelligent and virtuous, and I should never have seduced her if she had not been brought up in a convent of Béguines.[40]

I went back to Tiretta's room, where I spent more than an hour. I asked him if he liked his work.

"I don't enjoy it; but since it costs me nothing I don't think I am badly off. I don't have to look at her face, and she is extremely clean."

"Does she take good care of you?"

"She is full of consideration. This morning she refused my morning greeting. She said she was sure her refusal would pain me, but that I ought to put my health above pleasure."

The Abbé Desforges having gone, leaving Madame alone, we went to her room. She treated me like an old crony, cuddling up to Tiretta in the most revolting fashion. But my dauntless friend returned her caresses so heartily that I was amazed. She assured him he would not see the Abbé Desforges again. After telling her that she was damned in this world and the next, he had threatened to abandon her and she had taken him at his word.

An actress known as La Quinault,[41] who had retired from the stage and who was a neighbor, came to call on Madame XXX, and a quarter of an hour later I saw Madame Favart[42] with the Abbé de Voisenon;[43] in another quarter of an hour Mademoiselle Amelin[44] arrived with a handsome youth whom she called her nephew and whose name was Chalabre; he looked like her, but she did not think it reason enough to admit that she was his mother. Monsieur Paton,[45] a Piedmontese who was with her, finally let himself be persuaded to make a bank at faro, and in less than two hours won everybody's money except mine, for I did not play. My attention was all for Mademoiselle de la M—re. In addition, the banker was obviously a swindler, but Tiretta did not realize it until he had lost all his money and a hundred louis on his word. The banker then laid down the cards, and Tiretta told him in good Italian that he was a scoundrel. The Piedmontese replied with the utmost coolness that he was a liar. At that I said Tiretta had been joking, and I made him admit it, though he laughed as he spoke. He went off to his room. The affair had no consequences, and Tiretta would have been in the wrong.*

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* Eight years later I saw Monsieur Paton in Petersburg, and in 1767 he was murdered in Poland. (C.'s note.)

That evening I preached him a most forceful sermon. I showed him that as soon as he played he laid himself open to the skill of the banker, who might be a scoundrel but at the same time a brave man, and hence, by daring to tell him so, he risked his life.

"Then am I to let myself be robbed?"

"Yes, for the choice is yours. You are at liberty not to play."

"By God, I won't pay the hundred louis."

"I advise you to pay even before he asks you for them."

Three quarters of an hour after I had gone to bed Mademoiselle de la M—re came to my arms, and we spent a much sweeter night than the first.

The next morning after breakfasting with Madame XXX and her lover I went back to Paris. Three or four days later Tiretta came to tell me that the merchant from Dunkirk had arrived, that he was to dine at Madame XXX's, and that she wanted me to be of the company. I dressed with anguish in my heart. I could neither consent to the marriage nor do what I could have done to prevent it. I found Mademoiselle de la M—re dressed more elaborately than usual.

"Your suitor," I said, "will not need all that to find you charming."

"My aunt does not think so. I am curious to see him, even though, since I trust you, I am sure he will never be my husband."

A moment later he arrived with the banker Kornmann,[46] who had arranged the marriage. I see a man of about forty with a handsome face expressing perfect frankness, very well dressed though unostentatiously, who presents himself to Madame XXX simply and politely and does not look at his future wife until Madame XXX introduces her to him. When he saw her his manner became less formal, and, eschewing any attempt at fine phrases, he said no more to her than that he hoped the impression she made on him might bear at least some resemblance to the impression he trusted he might make on her. She answered only with a graceful curtsy, continuing all the while to study him with grave attention.

Dinner is announced, the company sits down at table, all sorts of things are discussed, but never the marriage. The eyes of the couple met only by accident, and they never addressed each other. After dinner Mademoiselle withdrew to her room, and Madame went to her study with Monsieur Kornmann and the suitor, where she spent two hours. When they came out, since the gentlemen had to go back to Paris, she sent for her and in her presence told the suitor that she expected him the next day and that she was sure her niece would be glad to see him again.

"Will you not, my dear niece?"

"Yes, my dear Aunt. I shall be glad to see Monsieur again tomorrow."

But for that answer he would have left without having heard her voice.

"Well, what do you think of your husband?"

"Permit me, Aunt, not to talk of him until tomorrow; and at table please be so good as to talk to me; for it is possible that my looks may not have repelled him, but he cannot yet know if I am capable of thought."

"I am afraid you will say something stupid and spoil the good impression you have made on him."

"So much the better for him if the truth disabuses him, and so much the worse for him and for me if we decide to marry without first knowing at least something of each other's views and opinions."

"How do you like him?"

"I think he is agreeable; but let us wait until tomorrow. It may be he who will want no more of me tomorrow, for I am so stupid."

"I know perfectly well that you think you are bright; but that is exactly why you are stupid, despite Monsieur Casanova's saying that you have brains. He is laughing at you, my dear niece."

"I am certain he is not, my dear Aunt."

"There you are! No one could say anything more stupid."

"I beg your pardon," I said. "Mademoiselle is right in thinking that I am far from laughing at her, and I am also certain that tomorrow she will shine on whatever subjects we bring up for her."

"Then you will stay here; I am delighted. We will have a game of piquet and I will sit it out. My niece shall play with you, for she ought to learn."

Tiretta asked his little darling's permission to go to the theater. No visitors arrived, we played until suppertime; and after listening to Tiretta's attempts to tell us what the play was about we went off to bed.

I was surprised to see Mademoiselle de la M—re before me fully dressed.

"I will go and undress," she said, "after we have talked. Tell me frankly if I should consent to this marriage."

"How do you like Monsieur X?"

"I have nothing against him."

"Then consent."

"That is enough. Good-by. At this moment our love affair ends and our friendship begins. I am going to my own bed."

"Let our friendship begin tomorrow."

"No—not if it should kill me, and you too. It is hard, but I have made up my mind. If I am to become the man's wife, I must first assure myself that I am worthy of it. I may even be happy. Do not hold me, let me go. You know how much I love you."

"Let us at least kiss."

"Alas, no."

"You are weeping."

"No. In God's name, let me go!"

"Dear heart, you will go and weep in your room. I am in despair. Stay here. I will be your husband."

"No, I can no longer consent to it."

As she spoke these last words she tore her hands from mine and went, leaving me sunk in shame. I loathed myself. I did not know whether I was more guilty for having seduced her or for abandoning her to another.

At dinner the next day she shone. She conversed with her future husband so intelligently that I saw he was delighted with the treasure he was about to possess. As usual, I pretended to have a toothache as an excuse for saying nothing. Sad, thoughtful, and indeed ill from the painful night I had spent, I realized that I was in love, jealous, and in despair. Mademoiselle de la M—re never spoke to me or looked at me; she was right, but I would not admit it.

After dinner Madame went to her room with her niece and Monsieur X, and an hour later she came out and told us to congratulate her as she was to be married to Monsieur in a week and would leave with him for Dunkirk the same day.

"Tomorrow," she added, "we are all invited to dine at Monsieur Kornmann's, where the contract will be signed."

I am incapable of conveying to my reader the wretchedness which I felt.

They decided to go to the Comédie Française, and since there were four of them I excused myself. I went to Paris, where, thinking I had a fever, I immediately got into bed; but instead of my finding the rest I needed, the torments of my bitter repentance kept me in Hell. I believed that I must either stop the marriage or resign myself to dying. Being certain that Mademoiselle de la

M—re loved me, I could not believe that she would resist me when I made her understand that her refusal would cost me my life. With this idea in mind I got up and I wrote her a letter than which tumultuous passion could dictate nothing stronger. After thus soothing my grief I slept, and very early in the morning I sent my letter to Tiretta, asking him to convey it to the young lady secretly and saying that I would not leave my room until I had received an answer. I received it four hours later. This is what I read, trembling:

"My dear friend, it is too late. Leave your room. Come and dine at Monsieur Kornmann's, and be sure that in a few weeks we will both feel that we have won a great victory. Our love will no longer exist except in our memory. I beg you not to write to me again."

It was too much. Her refusal, with her more than cruel order not to write to her again, made me furious. I felt certain that her inconstant soul had fallen in love with the merchant. This supposition decided me to go and kill him. A hundred foul means of carrying out my infamous purpose crowded into a mind which, already in love and jealous, was now beside itself with anger, shame, and spite. Angel though she was, I saw her as a monster to be hated or a jilt to be punished. I thought of a method which could not fail, and though I considered it base I did not hesitate to embrace it. I determined to go to the future husband at Kornmann's where he was lodging and reveal to him all that had taken place between the young lady and myself, and, if that should not be enough to make him give up marrying her, to inform him that one of us must die, and finally, to murder him if he refused my challenge.

Thoroughly resolved to execute my horrible plan, the mere recollection of which today fills me with shame, I eat with a ravenous appetite, I go to bed, and I sleep soundly all night. When I wake I find no change in me.

I dress; I put a pair of excellent pistols in my pockets, and I go to Kornmann's in the Rue des Greniers-Saint-Lazare.[47] My rival was asleep; I wait. A quarter of an hour later I see him coming toward me with open arms. He embraces me; he says that he has been looking forward to my visit, for he could not but divine the feeling which he must also have inspired in one who was a friend of his future wife's and that he would always share in whatever feeling she entertained toward me.

His honest countenance, his frank manner, the conviction with which he spoke instantly make it impossible for me to talk to him as I had resolved to do. I am at a loss; I do not know what to say to him. Fortunately he gives me all the time I need to recover myself. He talked to me for a good quarter of an hour until Monsieur Kornmann came and coffee was brought. When I had to speak to him, what I said was unexceptionable.

Leaving the house a different man from the one who had entered it, I was amazed; not only was I glad that I had not carried out my purpose, I felt ashamed and humiliated that it was only to chance that I owed not being a base scoundrel. I ran into my brother, and after spending the morning with him I took him to dine at Silvia's, where I remained until midnight. I saw that it was her daughter who would make me forget Mademoiselle de la M—re, whom I felt that I must not see again before her marriage.

The next morning I packed my few traveling things in a hatbox and went to Versailles to pay my court to the ministers.

CHAPTER IV

The Abbé de Laville. The Abbé Galiani. Character of the Neapolitan dialect. I go to Dunkirk on a secret mission. I am completely successful. I return to Paris by way of Amiens. My comical escapades. Monsieur de la Bretonnière. My report gives satisfaction. I receive five hundred louis. Reflections.

THE MINISTER of Foreign Affairs asked me if I would be interested in undertaking secret missions and if I thought I had any aptitude in that way. I replied that I would be interested in anything which I considered honest and by which I could be sure of earning money, and that so far as aptitude was concerned I left it to him. He told me to go and talk with the Abbé de Laville.

The Abbé, the First Secretary, was a man of cold temperament, a profound politician, the soul of his department, and very highly esteemed. He had served the State well as Chargé d'Affaires at The Hague;[1] in gratitude, the King gave him a bishopric on the very day that he died. It was a little too late. The heir to all he possessed was Garnier,[2] a self-made man who had been cook to Monsieur d'Argenson[3] and who had become rich by profiting from the friendship which the Abbé de Laville had always felt for him. The two friends, who were about the same age, had named each other residuary legatee in wills which they had deposited with a notary. The survivor was Garnier.

The Abbé, then, after treating me to a short discourse on the nature of secret missions and on the prudence necessary in those who undertook them, said that he would inform me as soon as anything suitable for me turned up, and he kept me for dinner. At table I met the Abbé Galiani,[4] the Neapolitan Embassy Secretary. He was a brother of the Marchese Galiani, of whom I will speak when we come to my journey to the Kingdom of Naples. The Abbé was very witty. He had an extraordinary knack for giving his most serious remarks a tinge of humor, and always with a straight face, speaking French very well with the incorrigible Neapolitan accent, which made him a favorite in all circles. The Abbé de Laville told him that Monsieur Voltaire complained that his *Henriade*[5] had been translated into Neapolitan verse in a way which made readers laugh. He replied that Voltaire was in the wrong, for the nature of the Neapolitan language was such that it was impossible to handle it in verse except in a way which aroused laughter.

"If you can imagine it," he said, "we have translations of the Bible and the *Iliad* both of which are funny."

"I can believe it of the Bible, but I find it surprising in the case of the *Iliad*."

Having returned to Paris the day before Mademoiselle de la M—re, now Madame P., was to leave, I could not avoid going to Madame XXX's to congratulate her and wish her a good journey. I was more pleased than vexed by her easy and happy manner—a sure sign that I was cured. We talked to each other without the least constraint. I thought her husband a very worthy man. In response to his solicitations I promised him that I would visit them in Dunkirk, not intending to keep my word; but I did keep it. So Tiretta was left alone with his little darling, whom his fidelity made more madly in love with him every day.

My soul being now at peace, I began an Arcadian courtship of Manon Balletti, who every day gave me some new testimony to the progress which I was making in her heart. The friendship and esteem which I felt for her family kept me from harboring any idea of seducing her; but falling more in love with her every day and not intending to ask for her hand in marriage, I had no clear idea at what I was aiming.

At the beginning of May[6] the Abbé de Bernis wrote me that I should go to Versailles to talk with the Abbé de Laville. The Abbé asked me if I thought I was capable of paying a visit to ten or twelve warships which were anchored at Dunkirk and becoming well enough acquainted with their commanding officers to give him a detailed report on how well they were provisioned in all respects, especially as to their supplies in general, the numbers of their crews, their stock of munitions of all kinds, their administration, and their discipline. I answered that I could try, that when I returned I would give him my report in writing, and that it would be for him to tell me if I had done well.

"Since it is a secret mission," he said, "I cannot give you any letters. I can only wish you a successful journey and give you some money."

"I do not want any money. When I return you may give me what you consider I have deserved; as for my making a successful journey, I shall need at least three days before starting, for I must get some sort of letter."

"Then try to be back before the end of the month. That is all I have to say."

On the same day I had a half hour's conversation at the Palais Bourbon with my patron, who, unable to resist praising me for my delicacy in refusing to take any money in advance, gave me another roll of a hundred louis with his usual magnanimity. From then on I never again needed to make use of the generous man's purse, not even at Rome fourteen years later.

"Since the mission is secret," he said, "I am sorry that I cannot give you a passport; but through Silvia you can obtain one on some pretext from the First Gentleman of the Bedchamber[7] now serving. You must be extremely prudent in your behavior, and above all keep clear of anything *in munere* ['in the way of bribery'],[8] for you know, I believe, that if you get into any difficulty appealing to your principal will avail you nothing. You will be disowned. The only acknowledged spies are the ambassadors. So you need to be even more reserved and circumspect than they are. If when you come back you will let me see your report before you take it to the Abbé de Laville, I will give you my advice regarding what I think you should omit from it."

Full of this business, in which I was a complete novice, I told Silvia that, as I wanted to accompany some English friends to Calais and return to Paris, she would do me a great favor if she would obtain a passport for me from the Duke of Gesvres.[9] Glad to oblige me, she wrote to the Duke, telling me that I must deliver the letter to him personally, since passports of this kind could not be issued unless they contained a description of the bearer. They were valid only in the so-called Île de France,[10] but they procured respect in all the northern part of the kingdom. So I went to him with her husband. The Duke was at his estate in Saint-Ouen.[11] No sooner had he seen me and read Silvia's letter than he had a passport issued for me; and after leaving Mario I went to La Villette to ask Madame XXX if she wanted me to take any message from her to her niece. She said that I could take her the box of porcelain figures if Monsieur Kornmann had not yet sent it. So I went to see the banker, who delivered it to me and to whom I gave a hundred louis, asking him for the same amount in a letter of credit on a reliable house in Dunkirk together with a personal recommendation, since I was going there for pleasure. Kornmann gladly did both, and I set out toward evening of the same day.

Three days later I put up at the Conciergerie[12] in Dunkirk. An hour after my arrival I gave the charming Madame P. the most pleasant surprise by delivering her box and conveying her aunt's compliments to her. Just as she was praising her husband to me and saying that he made her happy, he arrived and, delighted to see me, at once offered me a room without even asking if my stay in Dunkirk was to be long or short. After duly thanking him and promising that I would come and take potluck for dinner at his house from time to time, I asked him to show me the way to the banker to whom Monsieur Kornmann had recommended me.

Scarcely had the banker read the letter before he gave me a hundred louis and asked me to expect him at my inn toward evening, when he would introduce me to the Commandant. The latter was Monsieur du Bareil.[13] With the politeness of all Frenchmen in high office, the Commandant, after asking me the usual questions, invited me to sup with his wife, who was still at the theater. She received me as cordially as her husband had done, and having excused myself from cards, I began making the acquaintance of the company, especially of the army and navy officers. Making a point of talking about all the European navies and giving myself out to be an expert on the subject from having served in the fleet of my Republic, it took me no more than three days not only to pick up an acquaintance of all the naval captains but to become good friends with them. I rattled away about shipbuilding and the Venetian system of maneuvers, and I observed that the worthy sailors who listened to me were even more attentive when I talked nonsense than they were when I said anything sensible. On the fourth day one of the captains invited me on board his ship for dinner; whereupon all the others invited me either to breakfast or to a between-meals repast. I devoted the entire day to each of the captains who thus honored me. I showed interest in everything, I went down into the hold, I asked countless questions, and everywhere I found young officers eager to show their importance, whom I had no difficulty in pumping. I got them to confide to me whatever I needed to know for my detailed report. Before going to bed I wrote down everything good or bad I had learned during the day about the ship on which I had been. I slept only four or five hours. In two weeks I considered that I had learned enough.

During this journey neither women nor any other pleasure turned me from my course; my mission was always the sole thing in my mind and the sole object of all my efforts. I dined once at the banker Kornmann's and once at Monsieur P.'s in the city and a second time in a small country house he owned a league away. Madame P. took me there in her carriage, and when she was alone with me I saw that she was delighted with my behavior. I showed her nothing but the fondest friendship. Seeing that she was charming, and my love affair with her having ended only five or six weeks earlier, I was surprised at my coldness. I knew myself too well to attribute my behavior to my virtue. Then what accounted for it? An Italian proverb, which speaks for human nature, gives the real reason: *C. . . non vuol pensieri* ("The p[rick] does not want to think").[14]

My mission being accomplished, I took leave of everyone and got into my post chaise to return to Paris, giving myself the pleasure of taking a different route from that by which I had come. Arriving about midnight at I forget what post station, I order horses to go on to the next. The postilion says that the next post is at Aire,[15] a fortified town which could not be entered at night. I answer that I will get the gate opened for me and I repeat my order to put two horses to my chaise. I come to Aire. The postilion cracks his whip and says, "Courier." After an hour's wait the gate is opened and I am told that I must go to see the Commandant.[16] I go there, cursing, and am shown into an alcove in which a man in an elegant nightcap was in bed with a woman whose pretty face I could see.

"Whose courier are you?"

"Nobody's, but since I am in a hurry——"

"That will do. We will talk tomorrow. Meanwhile you will stay in the guardhouse. Let me sleep. Be off."

I was taken to the guardhouse, where I spent the rest of the night sitting on the ground. Day breaks, I shout, I swear, I say that I must go. No one answers. Ten o'clock strikes; raising my voice, I tell the officer on duty that the Commandant has it in his power to have me murdered but that I cannot be refused writing materials or a courier for Paris. He asks my name; I show it to him on my passport; he says he will take it to the Commandant to read; I snatch it from him; he tells me to go with him and speak to the Commandant, and I consent.

We go. The officer enters first and comes out four minutes later to show me in too. I hand the Commandant my passport, he reads it, looking at me to see if I am the person named in it, then hands it back to me, saying that I am free. He orders the officer to let me take post horses.

"By now," I said, "I am no longer in a hurry. I have to send a courier to someone and wait for him to come back. By delaying my journey you have broken the law of nations.''

''It is you who broke it by saying that you were a courier.''

''On the contrary, I told you that I was not.''

''You told the postilion you were, and that is enough.''

''The postilion lied. All I said to him was that I would get the gate opened for me.''

''Why didn't you show me your passport?''

''Why didn't you give me time enough?''

''In three or four days we shall know which of us is in the wrong.''

''Do whatever you please.''

I was taken to the post station, which was also the inn, and a moment later I see my post chaise at the door. I ask the post master for an express messenger ready to leave at my demand, a room with a good bed, paper, pens, and ink, a broth at once and a good dinner at two o'clock. I have my trunk and everything I had in my chaise carried upstairs, I undress, I wash, and I sit down to write, not knowing to whom, for when all was said and done I was in the wrong; but I had undertaken to show my importance and I felt I must continue to play the role I had assumed. However, I was sorry I had made it necessary for me to stay in Aire until the messenger for whom I had asked should return. I had decided to spend the night there, at least I should get some rest. I had nothing on but my shirt and I was drinking the broth I had ordered when the Commandant appeared before me unattended.

''I am sorry,'' he said most politely, ''that you think you have reason to complain, whereas I have only done my duty, for I had to believe what your postilion would never have said unless you had ordered him to do so.''

''That is possible, but your duty did not extend to turning me out of your room.''

"I needed sleep."

"And I need it now, but politeness keeps me from imitating you."

"May I make bold to ask you if you have ever served?"

"I have served on land and sea, and I resigned at the age when many others are beginning."

"If you have served you must know that the gate of a fortified town is never opened at night except to royal couriers and to the supreme military command."

"But once it has been opened politeness might be observed."

"Are you disposed to dress and take a walk with me?"

I am as pleased by his proposal as I am nettled by his haughtiness. The thought of a sword thrust given or received comes to me instantly as a most attractive prospect. I answer calmly and respectfully that the honor of taking a walk with him is enough to make me put off all other business. I asked him to sit down while I hastened to dress. I put on my breeches, throwing the pistols which were in their pockets onto the bed, I send down for a hairdresser who does my hair in two minutes, and I draw my sword from an oilcloth sheath and hang it at my side. After locking my room I leave the key with the innkeeper, and we go out.

After walking along two or three streets we go through a porte-cochere into a courtyard through which I expect we will pass; but he stops at the end of it in front of an open door and I see a numerous gathering of men and women. It did not occur to me to turn back.

"This is my wife," said the Commandant, and, in the same breath, "this," he said to her, "is Monsieur de Casanova who has come to dine with us."

"I am very glad," said the beautiful woman, rising after laying down her cards; "otherwise, Monsieur, I should never have forgiven you for the distress you caused us by having us waked last night."

"Yet it is a fault for which I have paid rather dearly, Madame. After such a Purgatory permit me to say that I deserve the Paradise in which I find myself."

At that she laughed, made me sit down beside her, and returned to the game. I instantly realized that I had been outwitted in masterly fashion; but there was nothing I could do but put a good face on it, and the more so since the pretty trick got me out of a very ugly situation at no cost to my honor and gave me a very plausible excuse for leaving without sending the courier I had ordered to I knew not whom. The Commandant, whose pleasure in his victory put him in high spirits, spoke of the war,[17] the court, the news of the day, often addressing his remarks to me as imperturbably as if there had never been any quarrel between us. He was enjoying himself thoroughly in his role of hero of the play; but on my side I maintained the attitude of a young man who has obliged an old officer to accord him a reparation, for such it was and one which did me all the honor I could ask.

Dinner was served, and since success in my role depended entirely on how well I played it, I have seldom been more wide awake than I was at the table, where the only remarks addressed to me simply provided pretty opportunities for Madame to shine. She was at least thirty years younger than her husband, and the misunderstanding which had condemned me to six hours in the guardhouse was not once mentioned; but at dessert the Commandant himself almost brought things to a head by a sly joke which was not worth making.

"It was very kind of you," he said to me, "to believe that I was going to fight you. I fooled you."

"I don't know if I believed it," I answered, "but I know that I was instantly curious to see what the walk on which you invited me would turn out to be, and I admire your cleverness. But far from considering myself fooled, I consider that you have made me reparation, and I am very grateful to you."

He did not answer, and we rose from the table. Madame invited me to make a third at ombre, then we went for a walk, and toward nightfall I took my leave; but I did not resume my journey until the next morning, after making a fair copy of my report.

At five o'clock in the morning I was sleeping in my chaise when I was waked. I was at the gate of the city of Amiens, and the person who waked me was a clerk of the office at which the duties levied on merchandise in transit are paid. The clerk asked me if I had anything forbidden by the King's orders. In a bad humor, like any man whom some brute deprives of sweet sleep to ask him a tiresome question, I reply that by G.. I had nothing and that he could f...... well have let me go on sleeping.

"Since you see fit to be rude, we shall see."

He orders the postilion to bring my chaise in, has my bags taken off, tells me to get out, demands my keys, and keeps me waiting while everything has been examined.

I at once realized the mistake I had made, and I could no longer set it right. As I had nothing, there was nothing to fear, but my petulance was to cost me two hours of boredom while I raged in silence and let the villains use the right they had. I saw their pleasure in their revenge portrayed on their insolent faces. The clerks who in those days were stationed at the gates of French cities to examine travelers were the scum of the earth; but when they were politely treated by people of distinction they prided themselves on becoming tractable. A twenty-four-sou piece[18] graciously proffered made them human; they bowed to the traveler, they wished him a good journey and gave him no trouble. I knew all this; but there are moments when a man gives in to bad temper and forgets, or disregards, what he knows.

The brutes emptied my bags and even unfolded my shirts, among which, they said, I might have English laces. After going through everything they gave me back my keys; but that was not the end of it. My chaise had to be searched. The scoundrel who searches it exults when he finds the remains of a pound of snuff which I had bought at Saint-Omer[19] on my way to Dunkirk. The head of the gang triumphantly orders my chaise impounded and tells me I must pay a fine of twelve hundred francs.

This time I really lost my patience, and I leave my reader to guess all that I said to the cutthroats. I told them to take me to the Intendant;[20] but they answered that I was free to find my own way there. Surrounded by a growing mob, I enter the city, striding along like a madman. I go into the first open shop I see and ask the proprietor to take me to the Intendant; I tell my story, and a respectable-looking man who happened to be there says that he will show me the way himself but that I shall not find him since he must already be informed of the affair. He says that unless I pay or give security I will not easily escape from my difficulty. I ask him to show me the way and leave the rest to me. He says that I must first get rid of the mob by sending a louis to a distant tavern and telling them to go there for breakfast. I give him a louis and ask him to do me the favor. He executed the maneuver most successfully, and the whole mob disappeared with joyous shouts. Such is the people which today believes itself to be the King of France. The man who was to take me to the Intendant tells me that he is a prosecutor[21] by profession.

We arrive at the Intendant's house; but the porter tells us that he has gone out alone, that he will not come home until evening, and that he does not know where he will dine.

"There's the whole day gone," said the Prosecutor.

"Let us look for him where he is likely to be, he must have friends, habits. I will pay you a louis for your time."

"I am at your orders."

We spent four hours vainly looking for him at ten or twelve houses. In all of them I had talked to the master or the mistress, always exaggerating the indignity to which I had been subjected. They listened, they condoled with me, but the only comfort they offered me was to say that he would certainly come home to sleep and that then he would have to hear me out.

At half past one the Prosecutor took me to the house of an old lady who had great influence in the city. She was at table alone. After listening attentively to my story, she said with the greatest composure that she did not think it would be indiscreet in her to tell a stranger where to find a man whose office forbade him ever to be inaccessible.

"And so, Monsieur, I can reveal to you what is no secret. My daughter told me last evening that she was invited to Madame XX's and that the Intendant was to dine there too. So go there now, and you will find him at table with the best society in Amiens. I advise you," she said with a smile, "to go in without being announced. The servants taking dishes from the kitchen to the dining room will show you the way without your asking them. Once there, you can speak to him whether he likes it or not and despite your not knowing him; he will hear all the horrors you have told me in your justifiable indignation. I am sorry I cannot be present when you stage your surprise."

I bowed to her hurriedly and ran to the house she had named, accompanied by the exhausted Prosecutor. I had no difficulty finding my way with the servants and my guide to a room in which I saw twenty people at table in high spirits.

"Pray excuse me, ladies and gentlemen," I said, addressing the company, "if in the terrible state in which you see me I am obliged to come here to trouble the peace and festivity of your repast."

At this compliment, uttered in thunderous tones, everyone rises. My hair was in disorder and I was dripping with sweat; my face was that of a fiend; the reader can imagine the surprise of a company made up entirely of elegant women and of men entitled to pay court to them.

''For the last seven hours,'' I went on, ''I have been searching every house in this city for His Honor the Intendant, whom at last I find here because I know that here he is and that, if he has ears, he now hears me. I have come, then, to tell him to order his henchmen, who have impounded my conveyance, to release it to me instantly so that I can continue my journey. If Catalan laws[22] decree that, for seven ounces of snuff, which are for my own personal use, I must pay twelve hundred francs, I repudiate them and I inform him that I will not pay a sou. I will remain here, I will send a courier to my Ambassador, who will complain to the King that the law of nations has been violated upon my person in the Île de France, and I will have satisfaction. Louis XV is great enough to refuse to make himself an accomplice in these extraordinary and murderous proceedings. Moreover, if reparation is denied me this affair will become a great affair of State, for what my Republic will do in reprisal will not be to have every Frenchman traveling in her States murdered but to order every one of them to leave her territories. This is who I am. Read.''

Foaming with rage, I throw my passport in the middle of the table. A man picks it up and reads it, and I infer that he is the Intendant. While the paper passed from hand to hand among the startled guests he haughtily said to me that he was in Amiens for no purpose but to enforce the ordinances and that consequently I should not leave unless I paid or furnished security.

''If that is your duty, you should consider my passport an ordinance. Be my security yourself, if you are a gentleman.''

"Does the nobility in your country stand security for lawbreakers?"

"The nobility in my country does not lower itself by accepting dishonorable employments."

"In the King's service no employment is dishonorable."

"The hangman uses the same language."

"Take care what you say."

"Take care what you do. Know, Monsieur, that I am a free man and a man of nice honor who has been outraged and that I am afraid of nothing. I defy you to have me thrown out of the window."

"Monsieur," a lady said to me imperiously, "in my house no one is thrown out of the window."

"Anger, Madame, often makes a man lose his head. I am at your feet craving your forgiveness. Be so good as to consider that this is the first time in my life that I am the victim of fraudulent proceedings in a kingdom in which I believed I need only be on guard against the attacks of highway robbers; for them I have pistols; for these gentlemen I have a passport, but I find that it is worthless. For seven ounces of snuff which I bought at Saint-Omer three weeks ago this gentleman despoils me and interrupts my journey, when the King himself is my surety that no one will dare to interrupt it; I am ordered to pay fifty louis, I am consigned to the fury of a raging mob, from which that worthy man there delivered me for a price; I am treated like a criminal, and the man who should defend me sneaks away and hides. His cutthroats at the gate of this city have rumpled my coats and shirts to avenge themselves on me for not having given them twenty-four sous. What has happened to me will be the talk of the diplomatic corps at Versailles and Paris tomorrow, and in a very few days it will be read in numerous gazettes. I will not pay one sou. Speak, sir," I said to the Intendant. "Shall I send a courier to the Duke of Gesvres?"

"Pay. And if you refuse to pay, do whatever you please."

"Then good-by, ladies and gentlemen."

Just as I am leaving the room like a madman, I hear a voice telling me in Italian to wait a moment. I see an elderly man, who addresses the Intendant in these words:

"Give orders at once that the gentleman may leave. I will stand security for him. Do you hear me, Intendant? You do not know the Italian spirit. I served through the whole of the last war in Italy, and I had several opportunities to learn what it is. I consider that this gentleman is in the right."

"Very well, then," the Intendant said to me. "Simply pay thirty or forty francs to the office, for the matter has already been recorded."

"I repeat that I will pay nothing. But who are you, worthy sir, who stand surety for me without knowing me?"

"I am a commissary of war,[23] my name is La Bretonnière,[24] I live in Paris at the Hôtel de Saxe[25] in the Rue du Colombier; I shall be there day after tomorrow. Do me the honor of calling on me and we will go to Monsieur de Britard,[26] who, when he has been apprised of the matter, will release me from my suretyship, which I assume on your behalf with great pleasure."

After expressing all my gratitude to him and assuring him that he would see me at his lodging very soon, I made my excuses to the entire company and went to dine at an inn, inviting my worthy Prosecutor, who was beside himself, to accompany me. As we rose from the table I gave him two louis. But for this man and the stalwart Commissary, I should have been in a great quandary, for though I was not short of money I would never have made up my mind to leave fifty louis there.

My chaise being ready at the door of the inn, just as I was getting into it one of the clerks who had gone through my belongings came up and said that I should find everything in it that I had left there.

"That would surprise me," I answered; "shall I find my snuff too?"

"The snuff, my Prince, has been confiscated."

"That is too bad. I would have given you a louis."

"I'll go for it now."

"I haven't time to wait. Whip up, postilion."

I arrived in Paris the next day. Four days later I went to see La Bretonnière, who took me to the Farmer-General Britard, who released him from his suretyship. He was a young and very agreeable man, who blushed for all that I had been made to suffer.

I at once took my report to the Minister, at the Hôtel de Bourbon; he spent two hours with me making me delete whatever he considered unnecessary. I spent the night making a fair copy of it, and the next day I took it to Versailles to the Abbé de Laville, who after coldly reading it said he would let me know the outcome at his convenience. A month later I received five hundred louis, and I had the pleasure to learn that Monsieur de Crémille,[27] the Minister of Marine, found my whole report not only accurate but informative. A number of well-founded apprehensions made me decline the honor of making myself known to him, though my patron wished to procure it for me.

When I related my two adventures to him, one at Aire and the other at Amiens, he was amused; but he told me that the true courage of a man on a secret mission should consist in his never getting into difficulties, for even if he was able to get out of them with no help but his cleverness they were bound to make him talked about and that was precisely what he should avoid.

My mission cost the Department of Marine twelve thousand francs. The Minister could easily have found out everything I told him in my report without spending a sou. Any young officer could have served his turn, and any intelligent young officer would have served it well in order to gain his good opinion. But such were all the departments of the French ministry under the monarchical government. They squandered money which cost them nothing on their henchmen and on anyone they liked; they were despots, the people was downtrodden, the State in debt, and the finances in such bad condition that the inevitable bankruptcy would have overthrown it: *a revolution was necessary.* This is the language of the representatives who today reign in France, pretending to be the faithful ministers of the master of the Republic, the people. Poor people! Stupid people, which dies of hunger and poverty or goes to be massacred all over Europe to enrich those who have deceived it.

Silvia found my adventures at Aire and Amiens very amusing, and her daughter condoled with me over the wretched night I had been forced to spend in the guardhouse at Aire. I replied that I should have been in despair if I had had a wife with me, and she retorted that if she was a good wife it would have been her duty to go to the guardhouse with her husband.

"On the contrary, my dear daughter," said Silvia in her wisdom; "in such cases a wife who deserves the name, after seeing to the safety of their carriage, goes to the person in charge to plead for her husband's release."

CHAPTER V

The Count of La Tour d'Auvergne and Madame d'Urfé. Camilla. My passion for the Count's mistress; ridiculous incident which cures me. The Count of Saint-Germain.

DESPITE THIS budding love I did not lose my taste for the mercenary beauties who brightened the haunts of pleasure and got themselves talked about; but those who most interested me were the kept women and the ones who claimed to belong to the public only because they sang or danced or acted. Considering themselves free women in all other respects, they enjoyed their privilege by surrendering now to love, now to money, and sometimes to both at once. I had very easily managed to make the acquaintance of them all. The lobbies of the theaters are the noble mart to which men so inclined repair to exercise their talent for entering on intrigues. I had profited well from this pleasant school; I began by making friends with their official lovers, and I succeeded by never asserting any pretensions and especially by appearing to be not ingenuous but innocuous. It was always necessary to have my purse ready when the occasion demanded, but since the sums were not large the pain was not as great as the pleasure. I was sure that in one way or another it would be made worth my while.

Camilla,[1] actress and dancer at the Comédie Italienne, whom I had begun to love at Fontainebleau seven years earlier, was the woman of this kind on whom I especially fastened because of the pleasures I enjoyed in her small house at the Barrière Blanche,[2] where she lived with her lover the Count of Égreville,[3] who made much of me among their guests. The brother of the Marquis de Gamaches[4] and of the Countess du Rumain,[5] he was a handsome young man, very amiable and reasonably rich. He was never so happy as when he saw a great deal of company in his mistress's house. She loved only him; but, full of intelligence and tact, she drove none of her admirers to despair; neither miserly nor prodigal in granting her favors, she made all the members of her circle adore her without having to fear either a blabbing tongue or the mortification of being cast off.

After her lover the man whom she honored with her attention above all the rest was the Count of La Tour d'Auvergne.[6] He was a nobleman of ancient lineage who adored her and who, not being rich enough to have her entirely to himself, had to be content with the share in her which she granted him. She was said to love him second best. She allowed him a modest sum for the expenses of a young girl whom she had, in a manner of speaking, given him as a present on seeing that he had fallen in love with her when she was in her service. La Tour d'Auvergne kept her at Paris with him in furnished rooms in the Rue Taranne;[7] he said that he loved her because she was a present his dear Camilla had given him; and he often took her to sup with her at the Barrière Blanche. She was fifteen years old, simple, ingenuous, without a grain of ambition; she told her lover she would never forgive him an infidelity except with Camilla, to whom she thought she must yield him because she owed her happiness to her. I fell so much in love with the girl that I often went to sup at Camilla's only in the hope of finding her there and enjoying the artless remarks with which she enchanted the entire company. I tried my best not to betray myself, but I was so mad about her that by the time supper was over I would often have become very gloomy because I saw that my passion could not be cured in the usual way. Allowing my condition to be suspected would have made me ridiculous, and Camilla would have railed at me mercilessly. But now for what happened to cure me of my passion.

As Camilla's little house was at the Barrière Blanche I sent my lackey for a hackney coach to take me home when everyone was ready to leave after supper. Since we had remained at table until an hour after midnight he told me that no coaches were to be found. La Tour d'Auvergne said that it would be no inconvenience to him to take me home, though his carriage was only for two.

"My little girl," he said, "will sit on our laps."

I accept, of course, and here I am in the carriage, with the Count at my left and Babet sitting on our thighs. Full of desire, I determine to seize the opportunity, and, wasting no time, for the coachman was driving fast, I take her hand, squeeze it, she squeezes mine, I gratefully raise it to my lips, covering it with silent kisses, and, impatient to convince her of my ardor, I proceed as my state of bliss demands that I do; but just at the moment of crisis I hear La Tour d'Auvergne saying:

"I am obliged to you, my dear friend, for a piece of your country's politeness of which I thought I was no longer worthy; I hope it is not a mistake."

At these horrifying words I put out my hand, I feel the sleeve of his coat; there is no such thing as presence of mind at such a moment, and the more so since the words were followed by a laugh which would have confounded the most hardened of men. I let go, unable either to laugh at the thing or deny it. Babet asked her lover why he was laughing so hard, and when he tried to tell her the reason laughter overcame him again, I said nothing, and I felt an utter fool. Fortunately the carriage soon stopped at my lodging, and, my lackey opening the door for me, I went in, wishing them a good night, which La Tour d'Auvergne reciprocated still laughing uproariously. As for me, I did not begin to laugh at the episode until half an hour later, for, after all, it was funny; nevertheless it depressed and vexed me, for I saw that I must expect to be the butt of many jokes.

Three or four days later I decided to go at nine in the morning and ask the obliging nobleman to give me breakfast, for Camilla had sent to inquire after my health. I did not mean to let the incident stop my visits to her, but I wanted first to know how the thing had been taken.

As soon as the charming La Tour saw me he exploded into laughter and after laughing his fill came and embraced me, mincing like a girl. I begged him, half humorously, half seriously, to forget my silly blunder, for I really did not know how to defend myself.

"Why try to defend yourself?" he answered. "We all like you, it is a very funny story, which has delighted us and delights us every evening."

"Then everyone knows of it?"

"Can you doubt that? Camilla is dying of laughter, and you must come this evening, I'll bring Babet, and she will set you laughing too, for she maintains that you made no mistake."

"She is right."

"What! she is right? Tell that to someone else. You do me too much honor, and I do not believe a word of it; but you are taking the right stand."

And it was the stand I took at table, pretending to be amazed at La Tour's indiscretion and saying that I was cured of my passion for him. Babet called me a dirty swine and refused to believe I was cured. For unfathomable reasons the episode turned me against her and attached me to La Tour d'Auvergne, who had every quality to make everyone like him. But my friendship for him very nearly had a disastrous consequence.

It was on a Monday in the foyer of the Comédie Italienne that the charming Count asked me to lend him a hundred louis, promising to return them on Saturday.

"I haven't that much. But here is my purse at your service," I said, "with ten or twelve louis."

"I need a hundred, and immediately, for I lost them last night on my word at the Princess of Anhalt's." * [8]

"I haven't that much."

"A collector of the lottery must have over a thousand."

"Of course, but my cash box is sacred; I have to turn it over to the fiscal agent a week from today."

"It won't keep you from turning it over, for I will return them to you on Saturday. Take a hundred louis from your cash box, and put my word of honor in their place. Do you think it worth a hundred louis?"

At that I turn my back on him, telling him to wait for me, I go to my office in the Rue Saint-Denis, I take a hundred louis, and I bring them to him. Saturday arrives, I do not see him, and on Sunday morning I pawn my ring and put the same amount in my cash box, which I turn over to the fiscal agent the next day. Three or four days later in the amphitheater of the Comédie Française, up comes La Tour d'Auvergne and apologizes. I reply by showing him my hand and saying that I had pawned my ring to save my honor. He answers gloomily that someone has failed him but that he is sure he can return the amount to me on the following Saturday:

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* She was the mother of Empress Catherine of Russia. (C.'s note.)

"And I give you," he said, "my word of honor for it."

"Your word of honor is in my cash box, so you will permit me not to count on it further; you may return the hundred louis to me when you please."

At these words I saw the gallant nobleman turn as pale as a corpse.

"My word of honor, my dear Casanova," he said, "is dearer to me than life, and I will give you the hundred louis tomorrow morning at nine o'clock a hundred paces from the coffeehouse at the end of the Champs Élysées. I will give them to you privately, no one will see us, I hope that you will not fail to be there and that you will have your sword, as I shall have mine."

"I find it very regrettable, sir, that you insist on my paying so dearly for a jest. You do me infinite honor, but I would rather apologize to you, if that can prevent this unfortunate matter from going further."

"No, I am far more in the wrong than you, and the wrong can only be undone by the blood of one of us. Will you come?"

"Yes."

I supped at Silvia's in great depression, for I loved the gallant man, and I loved myself no less. I felt I was in the wrong, for my jest had really been too cutting, but it did not enter my mind not to keep the appointment.

I arrived at the coffeehouse a moment after he did; we breakfasted, he paid, and we left and walked in the direction of the Étoile. When we were sure we were not observed he handed me a roll of a hundred louis with the greatest courtesy; and, saying that one thrust should suffice on either side, he unsheathed after stepping back four paces. My only answer was to unsheathe too, and as soon as I saw that I was in measure I gave him my straight lunge, and, certain that I had wounded him in the chest, I jumped back, calling upon him to keep his word. Mild as a lamb, he lowered his sword, put his hand to his chest, and, showing it to me stained with blood, said that he was satisfied. I spoke to him with all the civility of which I was capable and which the occasion demanded, while he applied a handerchief to his chest. I was very glad when, looking at the point of my sword, I saw that only one line[9] of it showed blood. I offered to see him home and he refused. He asked me to be discreet and to be his friend thenceforward. After embracing him in tears, I went home very sad and considerably wiser in the ways of the world. Our meeting never became known. A week later we supped together at Camilla's.

About this same time I received twelve thousand francs from the Abbé de Laville as the honorarium for the mission I had accomplished in Dunkirk. Camilla told me that La Tour d'Auvergne was in bed because of his sciatica, adding that if I liked we would pay him a visit the next day. I accepted, we went, and after breakfasting I told him gravely that if he would let me do what I wished to his thigh I would cure it, for his trouble was not what was called "sciatica" but a damp humor which I would dispel with the Talisman of Solomon[10] and five words. He laughed but told me to do whatever I pleased.

"Then I will go and buy a brush."

"I will send a servant."

"No, for I must be sure that it is bought without haggling, and I have to get some drugs too."

I went for niter, flowers of sulphur, mercury, and a small brush, and I told him I needed a small quantity of his urine, which must be fresh. His laughter and Camilla's did not impair my gravity; I handed him a glass, I drew his curtains, and he obeyed me. After making a little amalgam with it, I told Camilla to rub his thigh with her hands while I murmured a spell, but that all would be lost if she laughed. After spending a good quarter of an hour laughing, they finally prevailed on themselves to behave as I was behaving. La Tour exposed his thigh to Camilla, who, pretending she was acting a role in a play, began massaging the patient while I mumbled words which they could not possibly understand since I did not myself know what I was saying. I almost spoiled the performance myself when I saw the faces Camilla was making to keep from laughing. Nothing could be funnier. After telling them at last that there had been enough massage I dipped the brush in the amalgam and, making one continuous stroke, drew the Sign of Solomon on him—the five-pointed star composed of five lines, thus ⛤. After that I wrapped his thigh in three napkins and told him that if he could stay in bed and not unwrap it for twenty-four hours I guaranteed that he would be cured. What pleased me was that I heard no more laughter from them. They were astonished.

After this comedy, which I made up and acted with neither purpose nor premeditation, we left, and in the hackney coach on the way I told Camilla a quantity of wonderful tales, to which she listened so attentively that when I left her I saw that she was vastly impressed.

At eight o'clock in the morning four or five days later, when I had almost forgotten what I had done to Monsieur de La Tour d'Auvergne, I hear horses stopping at my door. I look out of my window, I see him dismount and come in.

“You were sure of the result,” he said, embracing me, “since you did not come to see how I was getting on the morning after your amazing treatment.”

“Certainly I was sure, but if I had had time you would have seen me nevertheless.”

“Tell me if I am allowed to take a bath.”

“No bath until you feel you are cured.”

“I will obey you. Everyone is amazed, for I could not help telling all my acquaintances about your miracle. I find skeptics who laugh at me, but I let them say what they please.”

"You should have kept the secret, I think, for you know Paris. Everyone will say I am a quack."

"Not everyone is so narrow-minded, and I have come to ask you to do me a favor."

"What is your pleasure?"

"I have an aunt who is not only well known but famous for her knowledge of all the abstruse sciences, a great chemist, a woman of intelligence, extremely rich, sole mistress of her fortune, and whose acquaintance can only be useful to you. She is dying to meet you, for she claims that she knows you and that you are not the man Paris believes you to be. She begged me to bring you to dinner at her house, and I hope that you will have no objection. My aunt is the Marquise d'Urfé." [11]

I did not know her, but the name d'Urfé impressed me at once, for I knew the story of the famous Anne d'Urfé,[12] who had flourished at the end of the sixteenth century. The lady was the widow of his great-grandson; and I saw that, having entered the family, she might well have become versed in all the sublime doctrines of a science which greatly interested me though I considered it chimerical. I therefore answered Monsieur de La Tour d'Auvergne that I would go to his aunt's house with him whenever he pleased, but not for dinner unless there would be only the three of us.

"She has twelve people to dinner every day, and you will eat at her house with the best of Parisian society."

"That is exactly what I do not want, for I loathe the reputation of magician, which, in the kindness of your heart, you must have given me."

"Not at all; you are known and you are highly regarded. The Duchess of Lauraguais[13] told me that you went to the Palais-Royal four or five years ago and spent whole days with the Duchess of Orléans,[14] and Madame de Boufflers,[15] Madame du Blot,[16] and even Melfort[17] have spoken to me about you. You are wrong not to cultivate your old acquaintances. What you have done for me convinces me that you could have a brilliant and lucrative career. I know any number of the best people in Paris, both men and women, who have the same malady as mine and who would give you half of their possessions if you cured them.''

La Tour's reasoning was sound; but since I knew that what I had done to him was only a prank which had happened to succeed I had no wish to incur publicity. I told him that I absolutely declined to make a spectacle of myself, and that he had only to tell his aunt that I would wait on her privately and not otherwise and that I left it to her to indicate the day and the hour. When I got home about midnight of the same day I found a note from the Count telling me to be at the Terrasse des Capucins at the Tuileries the next day at noon, where he would meet me to take me to dinner at his aunt's, and assuring me that we should find her door open only to us.

Meeting punctually at the appointed place and hour, we went to the lady's house the next day. She lived on the Quai des Théatins[18] next door to the Hôtel de Bouillon. Beautiful despite her age, Madame d'Urfé received me most courteously with all the easy grace of the old court in the days of the Regency.[19] We spent an hour and a half in desultory conversation, but all the while, though of course we did not confess to it, she was studying me as closely as I was studying her. Each of us was trying to trap the other into admissions. I had no difficulty in pretending to be ignorant, for I really was so. Madame d'Urfé displayed nothing except curiosity, but I clearly saw that she could not wait to parade her lore. At two o'clock the three of us were served the same dinner which was served every day for twelve. After dinner La Tour d'Auvergne left us to go and see Prince Turenne,[20] whom he had left that morning with a high fever, and then Madame d'Urfé began talking to me of chemistry, alchemy, magic, and all the things with which she was infatuated. When we came to the subject of the Great Work[21] and I guilelessly asked her if she was acquainted with the primordial substance, she did not burst out laughing, for that would have been impolite, but with a gracious smile she told me that she already possessed what was called the philosopher's stone and that she was versed in all the great operations. She showed me her library,[22] which had belonged to the great D'Urfé[23] and his wife Renée of Savoy[24] and to which she had added manuscripts which had cost her more than a hundred thousand francs. Her favorite author was Paracelsus,[25] who, according to her, had been neither man nor woman and had had the misfortune to poison himself with too strong a dose of the universal medicine.[26] She showed me a small manuscript which set forth the great operation in French in very clear terms. She said she did not keep it under a hundred locks because it was written in a cipher of which she alone had the key.

"Then, Madame, you do not believe in steganography?"[27]

"No, Monsieur; and if you will accept it I make you a present of this copy."

I took it and put it in my pocket.

From the library we went to her laboratory, which really astonished me; she showed me a substance which she had kept on the fire for fifteen years and which needed to remain there four or five years more. It was a powder of projection[28] which was to perform the transmutation of all metals into gold in one minute. She showed me a tube through which coal to keep the fire in her furnace always at the same heat came down of its own weight, so that she often went three months without entering her laboratory at no risk of finding her fire out. A small conduit underneath carried off the ashes. The calcination of mercury was child's play for her; she showed me some already calcined and said that she would demonstrate the procedure to me whenever I pleased. She showed me the tree of Diana[29] of the famous Talliamed,[30] whose pupil she was. As everyone knows, Talliamed was the learned Maillet, who, according to Madame d'Urfé, had not died at Marseilles, as the Abbé Le Mascrier[31] had led everyone to believe, but was alive, and, she added with a slight smile, she often received letters from him. If the Regent[32] of France had heeded his advice he would still be among the living. She said that the Regent had been her first friend, that it was he who had nicknamed her Égérie[33] and had himself arranged her marriage to Monsieur d'Urfé. She had a commentary by Raymond Lully,[34] which made clear everything that Arnold of Villanova[35] had written following Roger Bacon[36] and Geber,[37] who, according to her, were not dead. This precious manuscript was in an ivory casket, to which she had the key, and in any case her laboratory was closed to everyone. She showed me a cask filled with *patina del Pinto,*[38] which she could turn into pure gold whenever she pleased. It was Mr. Wood[39] himself who had given it to her in 1743. She showed me the same platinum in four different vessels, three of which contained it intact in sulphuric, nitric, and hydrochloric acid, but in the fourth, in which she had used *aqua regia,*[40] the platinum had been unable to resist. She melted it by the burning glass[41] and said that without some admixture it could be melted in no other way, which in her opinion proved that it was superior to gold. She showed me some of it precipitated by sal ammoniac, which was never able to precipitate gold.

She had an athanor[42] which had been kept burning for fifteen years. I saw that the tower of it was filled with black coals, from which I concluded that she had visited it two or three days before. When we went back to her tree of Diana I respectfully asked her if she agreed with me that it was only a toy to amuse children. She answered with dignity that she had in fact only made it to amuse herself, using silver, mercury, and spirits of niter and crystallizing them together, and that she considered her tree only a metallic vegetation which showed in little what nature could do on a great scale; but she said that she could make a tree of Diana which would be a true tree of the sun, producing golden fruits which would be gathered and continuing to produce them until the exhaustion of an ingredient which she would mix with the six "lepers"[43] in proportion to their quantity. I modestly replied that I did not believe it was possible without the powder of projection. Madame d'Urfé answered only with a gracious smile. She then showed me a porcelain bowl, in which I saw niter, mercury, and sulphur, and a plate on which was a fixed salt.[44]

"I imagine," the Marquise said, "that you know these ingredients."

"I know them," I answered, "if the fixed salt is the salt of urine."

"You are right."

"I admire your sagacity, Madame. You have analyzed the amalgam with which I painted the pentacle[45] on your nephew's thigh; but there is no tartar which can show you the words which give the pentacle its efficacy."

"What is needed for that is not tartar but a manuscript by an adept which I have in my room and which I will show you, in which the words are set forth."

I made no answer, and we left the laboratory.

We had scarcely entered her room before she took from a casket a black book, which she placed on her table, then she began looking for a piece of phosphorus; while she was searching I opened the book, which was behind her, and I saw that it was full of pentacles, and luckily I saw the very talisman which I had painted on her nephew's thigh, encircled by the names of the Planetary Geniuses[46] except for two—those of Saturn and Mars—and I quickly closed the book. The Geniuses were the same as Agrippa's,[47] which I knew, but betraying nothing, I returned to her, and a moment later she found the phosphorus, which really surprised me; but I will speak of it elsewhere.

Madame sat down on her sofa, made me sit beside her, and asked me if I knew the Count of Trèves's[48] talismans.

"I never heard of them, but I know Polyphilus's."[49]

"They are said to be the same."

"I do not believe it."

"We shall find out if you will write down the words you spoke when you painted the pentacle on my nephew's thigh. It will be the same book if I find you those words around the same talisman in this one."

"That would be proof, I admit. I will go and write them."

I wrote the names of the Geniuses; Madame found the pentacle, read out the names to me, and, pretending astonishment, I gave her my paper, where with great satisfaction she read the same names.

"You see," she said, "that Polyphilus and the Count of Trèves were masters of the same science."

"I will admit it, Madame, if your book shows the way to utter the ineffable names.[50] Do you know the theory of the planetary hours?"[51]

"I believe I do, but it is not necessary in this operation."

"I beg your pardon. I painted the pentacle of Solomon on Monsieur de La Tour d'Auvergne's thigh at the hour of Venus, and if I had not begun with Anael,[52] who is the Genius of that planet, my operation would have had no effect."

"I did not know that. And after Anael?"

"One must go on to Mercury, from Mercury to the Moon, from the Moon to Jupiter, from Jupiter to the Sun. You see that it is the magical cycle according to the system of Zoroaster,[53] in which I skip Saturn and Mars, which science excludes in this operation.''

''And if you had operated during the hour of the Moon, for example?''

''In that case I should have gone to Jupiter, then to the Sun, then to Anael, that is, Venus, and I should have ended with Mercury.''

''I see, Monsieur, that you employ the hours with remarkable facility.''

''Without that, Madame, one can do nothing in magic, for one does not have time to calculate; but it is not difficult. A month's study will accustom any beginner to it. What is more difficult is the rites, for they are complicated; but one can learn them in due time. I never go out in the morning without knowing how many minutes compose the hour of that particular day, and I take care that my watch is perfectly regulated, for a minute is decisive.''

''Would you be so kind as to instruct me in the theory?''

''You have it in Artephius[54] and more clearly in Sandivonius.''[55]

''I have them, but they are in Latin.''

''I will translate them for you.''

''Will you be so obliging?''

''You have shown me things, Madame, which compel me to oblige you, for reasons which I will perhaps tell you tomorrow.''

''Why not today?''

''Because I must first know the name of your Genius.''

''You know that I have a Genius.''

''You must have one, if it is true that you have the powder of projection.''

''I have it.''

''Give me the oath of the Order.''

''I dare not, and you know why.''

"Tomorrow I shall perhaps do away with your fears."

The oath was that of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross,[56] which is never exchanged unless the parties first know each other; so Madame d'Urfé was afraid, and rightly so, that she might be indiscreet, and on my side I had to pretend that I felt the same fear. I thought I ought to gain time, but I knew what the oath was. It can be exchanged between men without indecency, but a woman like Madame d'Urfé must hesitate to give it to a man whom she was seeing for the first time that day.

"When we find the oath announced in our Sacred Scriptures," she said, "it is masked. 'He swore,' says the Holy Bible, 'putting his hand on his thigh.'[57] But it is not the thigh. So we never find a man taking an oath to a woman in that manner, for woman has no word."[58]

At nine in the evening the Count of La Tour d'Auvergne arrived at his aunt's and was surprised to find me still with her. He said that his cousin Prince Turenne's fever had increased greatly and that smallpox had broken out. He told her that he had come to take leave of her for at least a month, since he was going to shut himself up with the patient. Madame d'Urfé praised his zeal, and she gave him a sachet, making him promise that he would return it to her after the Prince was cured. She told him to hang it around the Prince's neck and to be certain of a harmless eruption and a sure cure. He promised, took the sachet, and left.

I then said to the Marquise that I did not know what her sachet contained, but that if it was magic I had no faith in it, for she had given him no instructions concerning the hour. She answered that it was an electrum;[59] and, that being the case, I asked her pardon.

She said that she admired my reserve, but that she thought I would not be disappointed in her circle if I would consent to make their acquaintance. She said that she would introduce me to all her friends by having me to dinner with them one at a time and that afterward I would enjoy their company together. In consequence of this arrangement I dined the next day with a Monsieur Gerin[60] and his niece, neither of whom I liked. Another day it was with an Irishman named Macartney, a physician of the old school, who bored me extremely. Another day she ordered her porter to admit a monk, who, talking of literature, said countless inane things against Voltaire, of whom I was fond in those days, and against the *Esprit des Lois*,[61] which he nevertheless refused to credit to its celebrated author, Montesquieu. He attributed it to the malice of some monk. Another day she had me to dinner with the Chevalier d'Arzigny,[62] a man of ninety, who was known as the "dean of the fops" and who, having figured at the Court of Louis XIV, displayed all its courtesy and knew its gossip. He amused me vastly; he wore rouge; his coats were adorned with the pompons of his century; he professed to be tenderly attached to his mistress, who did the honors of a small house for him where he supped every night in company with his friends, all of them charming young girls who forsook other company for his; nevertheless he was not tempted to be unfaithful to her, for he slept with her every night. This amiable though decrepit and shaky old man had such sweetness of character and such unusual manners that I believed everything he said. His cleanliness was extreme. A large posy of tuberoses and jonquils in the top buttonhole of his coat, together with a strong smell of ambergris from the pomade which kept his false hair and eyebrows attached to his head—even with these, his teeth gave off an extremely strong smell, which Madame d'Urfé did not mind but which I found intolerable. Except for that, I would have sought his society as often as I could. Monsieur d'Arzigny was a professed Epicurean, with a serenity which was amazing; he said that he would undertake to receive a drubbing of twenty-four blows every morning if that could assure him that he would not die within twenty-four hours, and that the older he grew the more of a drubbing he would accept.

On another day I dined with Monsieur Charon,[63] Councilor of the Great Chamber,[64] who was her referee in a suit she was prosecuting against Madame du Châtelet,[65] her daughter, whom she hated. The old Councilor had been her accepted lover forty years earlier, and for that reason he felt it incumbent on him to find in her favor. The French magistrates made justice go by favors and they considered they were at liberty to favor their friends because their right to judge was theirs by virtue of the money with which they had bought it.[66] The Councilor bored me.

But on another day I greatly enjoyed the company of Monsieur de Viarmes,[67] Madame d'Urfé's nephew, a young councilor, who came to dinner at her house with his wife. The couple were likable, and the nephew was extremely witty, as all Paris knew from reading the *Remonstrances au Roi,*[68] of which he was the author. He told me that the business of a councilor was to oppose everything the King might do even if it was good. The reasons he alleged for the soundness of this maxim were those put forth by all minorities in collective bodies. I shall not bore my reader by repeating them.

The dinner which I found most entertaining was the one to which she invited Madame de Gergy,[69] who came with the famous adventurer, the Count of Saint-Germain.[70] Instead of eating he talked from the beginning to the end of dinner; and I listened with the greatest attention, for no one was a better talker. He made himself out to be a prodigy in everything, he aimed to amaze, and he really amazed. His tone was peremptory, but no one took it amiss, for he was learned, speaking all languages well, a great musician, a great chemist, with an attractive face and the ability to win the friendship of all women, for at the same time that he gave them paints which beautified their complexions he persuaded them to believe, not that he could make them younger—for that, he said, was impossible—but that he could keep them in their present condition by means of a water which cost him a great deal but which he gave them as a present. This very strange man, who was born to be the most arrant of impostors, would say, without being challenged and as if in passing, that he was three hundred years old, that he possessed the universal medicine, that he could do whatever he pleased with nature, that he melted diamonds and out of ten or twelve small ones made a big one no less in weight and of the finest water. These things were trifles for him. Despite his egregious boasting, his eccentricities, and his obvious lies, I could not bring myself to consider him insolent, but I did not consider him worthy of respect; I found him astonishing despite myself, because he astonished me. I shall speak of him again when the time comes.

After Madame d'Urfé had introduced me to all these people I told her that I would dine with her whenever she wished, but always with no one else present except her relatives and Saint-Germain, whose eloquence and extravagant boasting amused me. When he dined, as he often did, at the best houses in Paris he never ate anything. He said that his life depended on his diet, and people willingly put up with him, for his tales were the spice of the dinner.

I had come to know Madame d'Urfé thoroughly, while she, on her side, believed that I was a genuine adept under the mask of a man of no consequence; but she was confirmed in this chimerical opinion five or six weeks later when she asked me if I had decoded the manuscript which contained the procedure for the Great Work. I told her that I had and hence had read it and that I would return it to her, giving her my word of honor that I had not copied it.

"I found nothing new in it," I said.

"You will excuse me, Monsieur, but without the key I consider the thing impossible."

"Shall I name your key to you, Madame?"

"Please do so."

I thereupon give her the word, which belonged to no language, and I see that she is surprised. She said that it was too much, for she believed that she alone possessed the word, which she kept in her memory and had never written down.

I could have told her the truth, which was that the same calculation by which I had managed to decode the manuscript had taught me the word, but I took it into my head to tell her that a Genius had revealed it to me. It was this false confidence which put Madame d'Urfé in my power. On that day I became the arbiter of her soul, and I abused my ascendancy. Every time I recollect it I feel sorry and ashamed, and I am doing penance for it now through the obligation I have assumed to tell the truth in writing my memoirs.

Madame d'Urfé's great chimera was believing in the possibility of conversing with what are called "elemental spirits." [71] She would have given everything she possessed to acquire the art; and she had known impostors who had swindled her by making her believe they could set her on the right road. Confronted with me, who had given her such a clear proof of my knowledge, she thought she had reached her goal.

"I did not know," she said, "that your Genius had the power to force mine to reveal his secrets."

"He did not have to use force, for he knows everything by virtue of his own nature."

"Then does he know what secret I lock in my soul?"

"Certainly, and he must tell it to me if I question him."

"Can you question him whenever you please?"

"Whenever I have paper and ink; and I can even let you question him yourself by telling you his name. My Genius is named Paralis.[72] Write a question addressed to him, as if you were putting it to a mortal; ask him how I was able to decode your manuscript and you shall see how I will make him answer you."

Trembling with joy, Madame d'Urfé writes her question; I put it into figures, then into a pyramid as always, and I make her obtain the answer, which she herself puts into letters. She finds only consonants, but by a second operation I make her obtain the vowels, which she combines with the consonants, and she has a perfectly clear answer which surprises her. She sees before her eyes the word which was required to decode her manuscript. I left her, taking with me her soul, her heart, her mind, and all her remaining common sense.

CHAPTER VI

Madame d'Urfé's mistaken and contradictory notions as to my power. My brother marries; plan conceived on his wedding day. I go to Holland on a financial mission for the government. I am given a lesson by the Jew Boas. Monsieur d'Affry. Esther. Another Casanova. I meet Teresa Imer again.

PRINCE TURENNE having recovered from the smallpox, the Count of La Tour d'Auvergne had left him, and, aware of his aunt's interest in the abstruse sciences, he was not surprised to find that I had become her only friend. I enjoyed his presence at our dinners, as I did that of all her relatives, whose courteous manner toward me delighted me. They were her brothers Monsieur de Pontcarré and Monsieur de Viarmes,[1] who had just been elected Provost of the Merchants,[2] and his son, whom I believe I have mentioned.[3] Madame du Châtelet was her daughter; but since a suit made them irreconcilable enemies she was never present.[4]

La Tour d'Auvergne having had to rejoin his Boulognese regiment in Brittany at this time, we[5] dined together, with no other company, nearly every day. Madame's servants considered me her husband; they said that I must be, thinking it the explanation for the long hours we spent together. Believing that I was rich, Madame d'Urfé supposed that I had taken a post in the Military School lottery only as a mask.

According to her, I not only possessed the stone but could converse with all the elemental spirits. Hence she believed that I had the power to turn the world upside down and determine the fortunes of France for good or evil, and she attributed my need to remain unknown only to my justified fear of being arrested and imprisoned, for that, she insisted, would necessarily follow as soon as the Ministry managed to learn who I was. These wild ideas came from the revelations which her Genius made to her at night and which her heated imagination made her believe were real. Setting them forth to me in perfect good faith one day, she said her Genius had convinced her that, since she was a woman, I could not give her the power to converse with the Geniuses, but that, by an operation which I must certainly know, I could make her soul pass into the body of a male child born from a philosophical union between an immortal and a woman or between a man and a female being of divine nature.

In lending my support to the lady's crazy notions I did not feel that I was deceiving her; for that was already done, and I could not possibly disabuse her. If in strict honesty I had told her that all her notions were ridiculous, she would not have believed me; so I took the course of drifting with the tide. I could not but enjoy letting myself be considered the greatest of all Rosicrucians and the most powerful of all men by a lady who was allied to the greatest houses in France and who, in addition, was even richer from her investments than from a yearly income of eighty thousand livres which she received from an estate[6] and from the houses she owned in Paris. I clearly saw that, if the need arose, she could refuse me nothing, and though I had laid no plan to gain possession of her wealth either in whole or in part, I did not have the strength of mind to renounce my power over her.

Madame d'Urfé was a miser. She spent barely thirty thousand livres[7] a year, and she invested her savings on the Exchange and doubled them. A broker brought her royal securities when they were at their lowest price and sold them for her when they went up. In this way she had greatly augmented her portfolio. She told me several times that she was ready to give all that she had to become a man and that she knew it depended on me.

I told her one day that it was true I could perform the operation, but that I could never bring myself to do it because I would have to take her life.

"I know that," she answered, "and I even know the kind of death to which I must submit, and I am ready."

"And what kind of death, Madame, are you pleased to believe it may be?"

"It is," she answered eagerly, "the same poison which killed Paracelsus."

"And do you believe that Paracelsus attained hypostasis?"[8]

"No. But I know the reason. He was neither man nor woman, and it is necessary to be completely one or the other."

"That is true; but do you know how the poison is made? And do you know that it cannot be made without the help of a salamander?"[9]

"That may be so, but I did not know it. I beg you to ask the cabala if there is anyone in Paris who possesses the poison."

I immediately thought that she believed she possessed it herself; and, not having hesitated to say so in my answer, I pretended to be astonished. It was she who was not astonished, and I saw her triumph.

"You see," she said, "that all I need is the child containing the male word[10] drawn from an immortal creature. I have been informed that it depends on you, and I do not believe you can lack the necessary courage because of a mistaken pity you may feel for my old carcass."

At these words I rose and I went to the window of her room, which gave onto the quay, and remained there for a quarter of an hour reflecting on her idiocies. When I returned to the table at which she was sitting she looked at me closely and said with deep feeling:

"Is it possible, my dear friend? I see you have been weeping."

I let her believe it, I sighed, I took my sword, and I left. Her carriage, which was at my disposal every day, was at the door, awaiting my orders.

My brother had been received into the Academy[11] by acclamation after exhibiting a painting he had made in which he depicted a battle and which gained the approbation of all the connoisseurs. The Academy itself wanted to own it and gave him the five hundred louis he asked for it. He had fallen in love with Corallina and would have married her if she had not been guilty of an infidelity which offended him so greatly that, to end any hope she might have of making it up, within less than a week he married a dancer[12] who appeared in the ballets at the Comédie Italienne. The wedding party was given by Monsieur de Saincy, bursar in charge of vacant ecclesiastical benefices,[13] who was very fond of the girl and who in gratitude for my brother's chivalry in marrying her got all his friends to order paintings from him, which paved the way to the considerable fortune he made and the great fame which he came to enjoy.

It was at my brother's wedding that Monsieur Kornmann, discoursing to me at length about the great scarcity of money, urged me to speak with the Comptroller-General concerning a way to remedy the situation. He said that by giving royal securities at a reasonable price to a company of brokers in Amsterdam it would be possible in exchange to acquire some other power's notes, which, not being discredited as France's were, could easily be realized. I asked him not to mention it to anybody, promising him that I would act.

No later than the next day I mentioned it to my patron the Abbé, who, considering it an excellent speculation, advised me to go to Holland [14] myself with a letter of recommendation from the Duke of Choiseul [15] to Monsieur d'Affry,[16] who could be sent several millions in royal paper to discount as I saw best. He told me to go at once and discuss the matter with Monsieur de Boulogne, and above all not to appear to be feeling my way. He assured me that, as soon as it became clear that I was not asking for any money in advance, I would be given all the letters of recommendation I wanted.

I was instantly enthusiastic. That same day I saw the Comptroller-General, who, considering my idea excellent, told me that the Duke of Choiseul would be at the Invalides[17] the next day and that I should lose no time before going to him to discuss the matter and give him the note he would write to him. He promised me he would have the Ambassador supplied with twenty millions in securities, which in any case could always return to France. I said somberly that I hoped not, if no more than a reasonable price was asked. He replied that peace was about to be made,[18] and in consequence I must dispose of them only at a very small loss and in that respect I should depend on the Ambassador, who would have all the necessary instructions.

I felt so flattered by a mission of this nature that I did not sleep all that night. The Duke of Choiseul, who was famous for moving rapidly, had no sooner read Monsieur de Boulogne's note and listened to me for five minutes than he had a clerk write a letter to Monsieur d'Affry in my behalf, which he read over and signed without reading it to me; after having it given to me sealed, he wished me a good journey. On the same day I obtained a passport from Monsieur de Berkenrode,[19] took leave of Manon Balletti and all my friends except Madame d'Urfé, with whom I was to spend the whole of the next day, and authorized my faithful clerk to sign the tickets at my office.

A month earlier a very pretty and decent girl, a native of Brussels, had been married under my auspices to an Italian named Gaetano, a dealer in secondhand goods. I had been her sponsor. The brute ill-treating her in his jealous rages, and the unhappy beauty constantly coming to me with her complaints, I had several times made peace between them. They came expecting me to give them dinner on the very day I was packing to leave for Holland. My brother and Tiretta were with me, and as I was still living in a furnished room I took them all to dinner with me at Landelle's,[20] where the food was excellent. Tiretta was in his carriage; he was ruining the ex-Jansenist,[21] who was still in love with him.

At dinner Tiretta, who was handsome and loved to clown and who had never seen the beautiful Fleming, began flirting with her outrageously. She was delighted, and we would have laughed and all would have gone well if her husband had been reasonable and polite; but, jealous as a tiger, the wretch was sweating blood. He did not eat, he kept turning white, he looked daggers at his wife, and he refused to take it as a joke. Tiretta made fun of him. Foreseeing unpleasant scenes, I tried to moderate his excessive high spirits, but in vain. An oyster dropped onto Madame Gaetano's beautiful bosom, and Tiretta, who was sitting beside her, quickly put his lips to it and sucked it in. Gaetano rose in a fury and slapped his wife so vindictively that his hand bounced back from her face to her neighbor's. Roused to rage, Tiretta seized him by the waist and stretched him out on the floor, and since, being unarmed, he took his vengeance only with his fists, we let him continue; but the waiter came up, whereupon the jealous husband left. His wife, her face disfigured by tears and blood—for she was bleeding from the nose, as was Tiretta—asked me to take her somewhere, for she thought her life would be in danger if she went home. I quickly got her into a hackney coach, leaving Tiretta with my brother. She asked me to take her to an old attorney, a relative of hers, who lived on the fourth floor of a six-story house on the Quai de Gesvres.[22] After hearing the whole unhappy story he said to me that, being poor, he could do nothing for the unfortunate girl, but that he would do everything if he had only a hundred écus. I gave them to him, and he assured me that he would set about ruining her husband, who would never be able to find out where she was. She told me she was sure he would do all that he had promised, and after expressing all her gratitude she let me go. On my return from Holland my reader will learn what became of her.

After I assured Madame d'Urfé that I was going to Holland for the good of France and that I would be back at the beginning of February, she asked me to sell some shares in the East India Company of Gothenburg[23] for her. She had sixty thousand francs' worth of them, and she could not sell them on the Paris Exchange because there was no money there; in addition she could not obtain the interest on them, which amounted to a considerable sum since it had been three years since any dividends had been declared. When I consented to do her the service she had to make me the owner of the shares through a bill of sale, which she did in due form on the same day, the transaction being certified by Tourton & Baur,[24] Place des Victoires. Back at her house I offered to give her an undertaking in writing to pay her the value of her shares on my return, but she refused. I left her, gratified to see not the slightest sign of suspicion on her face.

After obtaining a bill of exchange for three thousand florins[25] on the Jew Boas,[26] the court banker at The Hague, from Monsieur Kornmann, I set out; in two days I reached Antwerp, where I took a *jacht*,[27] which the next day brought me to Rotterdam, where I slept. On the day after I went to The Hague, where I put up at Jacquet's inn, the "English Parliament."[28] On the same day, which was Christmas Eve, I called on Monsieur d'Affry just when he was reading the letter from the Duke of Choiseul informing him about me and the business in hand. He made me stay for dinner with Monsieur Kauderbach,[29] Resident for the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, and he encouraged me to do my best, saying, however, that he doubted if I would succeed because the Dutch had good reason to believe that peace would not be made very soon.

On leaving the Embassy I took a carriage to the house of the banker Boas, whom I found at table with all his ugly and numerous family. After looking at my bill of exchange he said that only that day he had received a letter from Kornmann praising me. He asked me why, since it was Christmas Eve, I was not going to rock the Infant Jesus to sleep; I answered that I had come to celebrate the Feast of the Maccabees[30] with him. He and his whole family applauded my answer, and he begged me to accept a room in his house. Accepting his offer, I at once sent word to my valet to come to the house with my luggage, and when I took leave of Boas after supper I asked him to find me some good piece of business by which I could make eighteen or twenty thousand florins during the short time I intended to stay in Holland. He answered seriously that he would think it over.

The next morning after I had breakfasted with him and his family he said that he had found what I wanted and took me to his study, where, giving me three thousand florins in gold and notes, he said that there was nothing to stop me from making twenty thousand florins in a week, as I had told him I wanted to do the evening before. Greatly surprised, for I had only been joking, at how easy it was to make money in that country, I thank him for his kind interest and I hear him out.

"Here," he says, "is a note which I received day before yesterday from the Mint. It informs me that four hundred thousand ducats[31] have just been struck and that the Mint is prepared to sell them at the current price of gold, which, fortunately, is not very high at the moment. Each ducat is worth five florins, two and three-fifths stuivers.[32] Here is the rate of exchange at Frankfort on the Main. Buy the four hundred thousand ducats, take or send them to Frankfort, obtaining bills of exchange on the Bank of Amsterdam,[33] and there you have just what you asked for. You make one and one-ninth stuiver per ducat, which yields you twenty-two thousand two hundred and twenty-two of our florins. Obtain possession of the gold today, and in a week your profit will be liquid. There you are."

"But," I answered, "will the directors of the Mint not demur at entrusting me with such a sum, which comes to over four million livres tournois?"[34]

"Certainly they will, if you do not buy the ducats for cash or give an equal amount in good paper."

"My dear Monsieur Boas, I have neither that much money nor that much credit."

"Then you will never make twenty thousand florins in a week. Judging from the proposal you made me yesterday evening, I thought you were a millionaire. I will have one of my sons make the transaction today or tomorrow."

After giving me this sound lesson Boas went to his office and I went to dress. Monsieur d'Affry went to the "English Parliament" to return my visit and, not finding me there, wrote me a note asking me to call on him to hear what he had to tell me. I went there, I dined with him, and I learned directly from the letter he had just received from Monsieur de Boulogne that he was not to let me dispose of the twenty millions he was to receive except at a loss of eight percent, for peace was on the verge of being made. He laughed at the idea and I did likewise. He advised me not to discuss my business with Jews, the most honest of whom was only the least dishonest, and he offered me a letter of recommendation in his own hand to Pels,[35] of Amsterdam, which I gratefully accepted; and to assist me in the matter of my Gothenburg shares he introduced me to the Swedish Ambassador.[36] He, in turn, sent me to Monsieur D. O.[37] I left on the day after St. John's Day[38] because of the convocation of the most zealous Masons in Holland. The person who invited me to attend it was Count de Tott,[39] brother of the Baron who failed to make his fortune in Constantinople. Monsieur d'Affry presented me to Her Highness the Regent, mother[40] of the Stathouder,[41] whom I thought too serious for his age, which was then only twelve. She kept dozing off. She died not long afterward, and her brain was found to be swimming in water. There I also saw Count Philipp of Sinzendorf,[42] who was looking for five millions for the Empress and who easily obtained them at five percent interest. At the theater I met a Minister of the Porte[43] who had been a friend of Monsieur de Bonneval's,[44] and I thought I should see him die from laughing before my eyes. Here is the rather comical incident:

The play being given was the tragedy *Iphigenia.*[45] The statue of Diana was in the center of the stage. At the end of one act Iphigenia entered followed by all her priestesses, who as they passed the statue all bowed low to the goddess. The candle-snuffer, a good Dutch Christian, comes out and makes the same bow to the statue. The parterre and the boxes burst out laughing, and so do I, but not hard enough to die of it. When, as in duty bound, I explained the joke to the Turk he fell into such a fit of laughter that he had to be carried to his inn, the "Prince of Orange."[46] Not to laugh at the thing at all would have proved one stupid, I admit; but one had to have a Turkish sense of humor to laugh at it so hard. Yet it was a great Greek philosopher[47] who died laughing when he saw a toothless old woman eating figs. Those who laugh much are better off than those who laugh little, for gaiety unloads the spleen and generates good blood.

Two hours before reaching Amsterdam in my two-wheeled post chaise with my servant sitting behind, I meet a four-wheeled carriage, drawn by two horses like mine and also carrying a master and servant. The driver of the four-wheeled carriage wanted my driver to make way for him, mine protested that if he did he would upset me in the ditch, but the other insisted. I address the master, a handsome young man, and ask him to order his driver to make way for me.

"I am posting, Monsieur," I say, "and furthermore I am a foreigner."

"Monsieur, here in Holland the post has no special rights,[48] and if you are a foreigner you must admit that you have no greater claim than mine, since I am in my own country."

At that I get out in snow halfway up my boots, and holding my drawn sword I tell the Dutchman to get out or to make way for me. He replied, with a smile, that he had no sword and that in any case he would not fight for such a silly reason. He told me to get back in my chaise, and he made way for me. I arrived at Amsterdam about nightfall and put up at the "Star of the East."[49]

The next day I went to the Exchange and found Monsieur Pels, who said that he would give thought to my chief business, and a quarter of an hour later I found Monsieur D. O., who at once arranged for me to speak with a broker from Gothenburg, who wanted to discount my sixteen shares on the spot, giving me twelve percent interest. Monsieur Pels told me to wait and assured me that he would get me fifteen percent. He gave me dinner, and seeing me delighted with the excellence of his red Cape wine,[50] he laughed and said that he made it himself by mixing Burgundy with Malaga. The next day I dined at the house of Monsieur D. O., who was a widower of forty and whose only daughter, Esther,[51] was fourteen. She was a beauty except that her teeth were not good. She was the heir to all the wealth of her amiable father, who adored her. With her white complexion, her black hair, which she wore unpowdered, and her eloquent, very large black eyes, she made a great impression on me. She spoke French very well; she played the harpsichord with great delicacy, and was passionately fond of reading. After dinner Monsieur D. O. showed me his house, which was not occupied, for after his wife's death he had chosen an apartment on the ground floor in which he was very comfortable. The apartment he showed me was a suite of six or seven rooms which contained a treasure in antique porcelain; the walls and the casements were entirely covered with marble plaques, each room in a different color and with floors of the same under magnificent Turkish carpets made to order for the particular rooms. The large dining room was entirely covered with alabaster, and the tables and buffets were of cedarwood. The house was entirely covered with marble plaques on the outside too. One Saturday I saw four or five housemaids washing those splendid walls; what made me laugh was that the maids all had very wide panniers, which obliged them to wear breeches, otherwise they would have afforded too interesting a sight to passers-by. After seeing the house we went downstairs, and Monsieur D. O. left me alone with his daughter in the anteroom in which he worked with his clerks; but that day there was no one there. It was New Year's Day.

After playing a sonata for harpsichord, Mademoiselle

O. asked me if I was going to the concert. I replied that nothing could persuade me to go to it since I was with her.

"Are you thinking of going to it, Mademoiselle?"

"I should like nothing better than to go to the concert, but I cannot go all by myself."

"I should be very happy to escort you, but I dare not hope as much."

"You would be doing me a great favor, and I am certain that if you make the offer to my father he will not refuse you."

"Are you certain?"

"Perfectly certain; since he knows you, he would be guilty of rudeness; I am amazed that you could fear it; my father is most polite; I see that you do not know Dutch customs. In this country unmarried girls enjoy a decent freedom; they lose it only when they marry; go to him, go to him."

I go in to Monsieur D. O., who was writing, and ask him if he will do me the honor of letting me escort his daughter to the concert.

"Have you a carriage?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Then I need not order mine. Esther?"

"Yes, Father."

"You may get dressed. Monsieur Casanova is kind enough to take you to the concert."

"Thank you, dear Papa."

After kissing him she goes to dress, and an hour later she appears with joy on her countenance. I could only have wished she had used a little powder; but Esther was proud of the color of her hair, which made her complexion look even whiter. A transparent black fichu covered her bosom, which it revealed as just beginning to develop and too firm.

We go downstairs, I offer her my hand to help her into the carriage, and I wait, supposing that a maid or a governess will attend her; but seeing no one I get in, very much surprised. Her lackey, after closing the door, gets up behind. I thought it impossible. Such a girl alone with me! I was struck dumb. I asked myself if I should remember that I was a great libertine or if I should forget it. Esther, all animation, said we were to hear an Italian singer with the voice of a nightingale, and seeing me speechless she asked me why. I beat about the bush, but finally said that I thought her a treasure of which I did not deserve to be the guardian.

"I know," she said, "that in the rest of Europe girls are not allowed to go out alone with men, but here we are taught to behave ourselves, and we are certain that if we do not we will contrive our own unhappiness."

"Happy the man who will be your husband, and happier still if you have already chosen him!"

"Oh, it is not for me to choose him, that lies with my father."

"And if the man he chooses is not the man you love?"

"We are not allowed to love a man before we know he is to be our husband."

"Then you love no one."

"No one, and what is more I have not yet felt tempted to."

"Then may I kiss your hand?"

"Why my hand?"

She drew it away, she gave me her lips, and modestly returned my kiss with one which went to my heart, but I stopped at that when she told me she would do the same in her father's presence whenever I wished.

We arrived at the concert, where Esther found a quantity of young ladies who were friends of hers, all daughters of wealthy businessmen, some of them pretty, some ugly, and all eagerly asking her who I was. All she could tell them was my name, but she became animated when she saw a beautiful blonde nearby; she asked me if I thought her attractive; I answered, of course, that I was not attracted by blondes.

"Even so, I shall introduce her to you, for she may be a relative of yours; her name is the same, and here is her father. Monsieur Casanova," she said to him, "I beg to introduce Monsieur Casanova, a friend of my father's."

"Is it possible? I hope," he said, "I may be your friend too, but perhaps we are relatives. I am of the Naples family."

"Then we are relatives, though very distant ones, for my father was from Parma. Have you your genealogy?"

"I must have it somewhere; but to tell the truth I set little store by it, for in this country no one considers such trifles."

"Nevertheless, we can amuse ourselves with it for a quarter of an hour, and then laugh at it and keep it to ourselves. Tomorrow I shall have the honor of calling on you, and I will bring you a tree of my ancestors. Would it displease you to find the founder of your line among them?"

"I should be delighted, Monsieur, and I shall have the honor of calling on you myself at your lodging tomorrow. May I ask if you have a business establishment at home?"

"No, I am in finance and at present in the service of the French ministry. I am on a mission to Monsieur Pels."

Monsieur Casanova then beckoned to his daughter, who came at once and whom he introduced to me. She was Esther's intimate friend; I sat down between the two of them, and the concert began. After a fine symphony, a concerto for violin, and another for oboe, the Italian singer who was so highly praised under the name of Trenti appeared, taking her place behind the musician at the harpsichord. Great was my surprise when in this so-called Madame Trenti I saw Teresa Imer,[52] wife of the dancer Pompeati, whom the reader may remember.

I had known her eighteen years earlier, when old Senator Malipiero had given me a caning when he caught me in some childish naughtiness with her, and I had seen her again at Venice in 1753, where we had made love once or twice, not as children but as real lovers. She had left for Bayreuth, where she was mistress to the Margrave;[53] I had promised to visit her there; but C. C. and the nun M. M.[54] had not left me time for it. Then I was confined under the Leads, and I had heard no more of her. My surprise was great to see her now at a concert in Amsterdam. I said nothing, listening to an aria which she sang with the voice of an angel, preceded by a recitative which began: *Eccoti giunta al fin, donna infelice* ("You have come at last, unhappy woman").[55]

The applause would not end. Esther told me that no one knew who the woman was, that there were countless stories about her, that she was very badly off, and that she lived by traveling to every city in Holland and singing at public concerts, the only payment she received being what the audience put into a silver plate which she carried through all the rows at the end of the concert.

"Does she find her plate well filled?"

"Not at all, for everyone here has already paid for his ticket. So she does well if she takes in thirty or forty florins. Tomorrow she will be at the concert at Leiden and the next day at The Hague and the day after that at Rotterdam, then she comes back here; she has been leading this life for more than six months now, and people are always delighted to hear her."

"Has she no lover?"

"They say she has young men in every city, but that instead of their giving her money she spends it on them, for they haven't a sou. She never wears anything but black, not only because she is a widow[56] but because of some great blow she says she has suffered. You will see her going through our row in half an hour."

Keeping my hands in my muff, I counted out twelve ducats, wrapped them in paper, and waited with my heart beating in a way which made me smile, since I could see no good reason for it.

As she went through the row in front of mine I saw that she was very much surprised when she caught sight of me; but I at once looked away and began talking with Esther. When she stopped in front of me I put the little roll on her plate without looking at her, and she moved on. But I looked closely at a little girl of four or five years who was following her and who, when she reached the end of the row, came back and kissed my hand. I was extremely surprised when I saw that the child had precisely my features. I managed to hide it, but the little girl stood there staring at me.

"Would you like some bonbons, pretty child?" I said. "Take the box too."

So saying I gave her the full box, which was only tortoise shell, but I would have given it to her if it had been gold. At that she left, and Esther laughed and said the child was the image of me.

"A striking likeness," added Mademoiselle Casanova.

"Chance," I said, "often produces resemblances for no reason at all."

After the concert I left Mademoiselle Esther O. with her father, whom we had met there, and I went to the "Eastern Star," where I was lodging. I had ordered a dish of oysters and I was about to eat them before going to bed when I saw Teresa and the little girl appear in my room. I rose to give her the ecstatic embrace which the occasion demanded, whereupon she saw fit to sink into a chair in a faint, perhaps real, perhaps feigned. As it might be genuine, I was willing to play the expected part in the scene, and I revived her with cold water and making her smell eau de Luz.[57] Restored to her senses, she began staring at me without a word. I asked her if she wanted supper, and she answered yes. I quickly ordered three places set, and we were served the usual sort of supper except that it kept us at table until seven o'clock in the morning doing nothing but tell each other our good and bad fortunes. She was acquainted with most of my recent vicissitudes, and I knew nothing of hers. So it was she who talked for five or six hours on end. Sophie[58] (for such was the name of her daughter) slept soundly on my bed until daylight. Teresa kept the most important of her disclosures, and the one which was of greatest concern to me, for the end. She said that Sophie was my daughter, and she took from her pocket the baptismal certificate which showed the date of her birth. We had been lovers in Venice at the beginning of the Fair of the Ascension in 1753, and Sophie was born at Bayreuth the end of that year; she had now just turned six. I said that I was convinced of it, and that since I was in a position to provide her with the best education I was ready to take care of her; but she replied that she was her jewel and that I would tear her soul from her body if I took her away; instead, she offered me her son, who was twelve years old and whom she did not have the means to bring up properly.

"Where is he?"

"He is boarding at Rotterdam, or I had better say in pawn there, for the man with whom he is staying will never give him to me unless I pay him all I owe him."

"How much do you owe?"

"Eighty florins. You have given me sixty-two, give me four more ducats, and my son is yours and I shall be the happiest of mothers. I will bring him to you at The Hague next week, since you say you have to go back there."

"Yes, my dear Teresa. Instead of four ducats, here are twenty. We will meet again at The Hague."

The transports of her gratitude and the joy which flooded her soul were excessive; but they did not have the power to reawaken my old fondness, or, rather, the old hankering I had had for her, for I had never loved her passionately. She embraced me for more than a quarter of an hour, with increasing demonstrations of the most ardent desire, but in vain; I returned her caresses without ever giving her the proof she sought that they came from the same source as that to which Sophie owed her birth. Teresa melted into tears, then she sighed, took her daughter, and left, after reminding me that we were to meet again at The Hague and that she would leave at noon.

Teresa was two years older than I, she was pretty, blonde, full of intelligence and talent; but her charms were no longer the same, for I should have felt their power. The story of all that had happened to her during the six years after she left Venice for Bayreuth would be worthy of my reader's attention, and I should be glad to write it if I remembered all its details. Convicted of infidelity by the amorous Margrave because of a Monsieur de Montperny,[59] she had been turned out; she had separated from her husband Pompeati and had gone to Brussels with a lover, where for a few days she had taken the fancy of Prince Charles of Lorraine,[60] who gave her a special patent granting her the direction of all theatrical performances throughout the Austrian Netherlands. With this patent she had embarked on the most extensive enterprises which had led her to spend enormous sums, so that in less than three years, after selling all her diamonds, her laces, her wardrobe, and everything she owned, she had been obliged to go to Holland to avoid being sent to prison. Her husband had killed himself in Vienna[61] during a fit of madness brought on by intestinal pains; he had opened his abdomen with a razor and had died tearing out his entrails.

The business I had in hand did not allow me to go to bed. Monsieur Casanova came to drink coffee with me and invited me to dinner, arranging to meet me at the Amsterdam Exchange,[62] which is an amazing institution to any thinking foreigner. Millionaires who look like yokels are very numerous there. A man who has only a hundred thousand florins is so poor that he does not dare do business under his own name. Monsieur D. O. invited me to dine next day at a small house he had on the Amstel; and Monsieur Casanova treated me very well. After reading my genealogy, which had stood me in such good stead at Naples, he went for his, which he found to be exactly the same, but, completely unimpressed by the fact, he only laughed—quite unlike Don Antonio in Naples, who took it with the utmost seriousness and gave me such excellent proof that he did so. However, he offered me his services and his advice in anything to do with business if I needed them. I thought his daughter pretty, but I was not struck either by her charms or her intelligence; my mind was occupied with Esther, whom I mentioned several times at table, until finally I forced Mademoiselle Casanova to tell me she was not pretty. A girl who knows she is pretty triumphs when she can silence a man who speaks in favor of one of her contemporaries who has indubitable defects. Nevertheless, the girl was Esther's intimate friend.

After dinner Monsieur D. O. told me that if I would sell my shares at fifteen percent above par, he would take them himself and I would be under no expense for either a broker or a notary. I agreed, and after turning them over to him I asked him for payment in a bill of exchange on Tourton & Baur in livres tournois and to my order. After calculating the daler[63] of the Bank of Sweden at eight livres ten sous in accordance with the rate at Hamburg, he gave me a sight bill of exchange for seventy-two thousand francs, whereas at five percent[64] I expected to receive only sixty-nine thousand. It was six percent, which won me great esteem from Madame d'Urfé, who perhaps did not expect such honesty from me. Toward evening I went with Monsieur Pels to Zaandam[65] in a boat set on a sledge with sails. I found the journey extraordinary and most entertaining. We got there surprisingly fast with a wind which took us along at fifteen English miles an hour. It is impossible to imagine a conveyance more comfortable or steadier or freer from danger. There is no one who would not be glad to take a trip around the world in such a carriage over a frozen sea, but with a stern wind, for that is the only possible course, the rudder having no effect. What greatly pleased me was the perfect timing with which two sailors lowered two sails when, having come close to the island, they had to stop the ship. This is the only moment when one may feel afraid, for the ship continued on its way for over a hundred paces even after the sails were lowered, and if there had been a delay of only a second the violence of its collision with the shore would have smashed it to pieces. We ate perch and could not take a walk because of the high wind; but I went there once again, and I say nothing about it because everyone knows the wonders of Zaandam, the hotbed of all the rich merchants who, in time, become millionaires at Amsterdam. We went back to Monsieur Pels's house in a two-horse sleigh which belonged to him. He kept me for supper, and I did not leave him until midnight. He said, with the honesty which was displayed on his countenance, that since I had become his friend and Monsieur D. O.'s I would not need the services of the Jews in my principal business but should apply directly to them.

The next morning, with the snow falling in great flakes, I went early to Monsieur D. O.'s, where I found his daughter in a very good humor. In her father's presence she began by rallying me on having spent the night at my inn with Madame Trenti.

Monsieur D. O., after saying that I need not defend myself because anyone was entitled to love talent, asked me to tell him who the woman was. I said she was a Venetian whose husband had recently killed himself, and that it was almost six years since we had last seen each other.

"The sight of your daughter," said Esther, "must have surprised you."

I replied that the child could not be mine, since her mother's husband was still alive at the time; but she continued to discuss the resemblance and to joke about my having fallen asleep the evening before when I supped at Monsieur Pels's.

"I envy anyone," she said slyly, "who has the secret of getting a good sleep, for of late I never fall asleep until I have courted it for a long time yet dreaded it, for when I wake, instead of finding my mind freer, I find it stupefied and weighed down by the indifference which comes from fatigue."

"Try, Mademoiselle, spending the night listening to the long story of some man in whom you are interested, but from his own lips. You will fall happily asleep the night after."

"Such a person does not exist. I think I need books, and the help of someone who knows them to find me interesting ones. I like history and travels, but I have to be sure that what I read is not invented. If anything makes me suspect it, I stop reading at once."

I promised to bring her some books the next day before I left for The Hague; she accepted my offer, congratulating me on the prospect I had of seeing Madame Trenti again at The Hague.

Esther's frankness set me on fire, and Monsieur D. O. laughed heartily at the way his daughter was calling me to account. At eleven o'clock we got into a sleigh and went to the small house, to which she had told me that

Mademoiselle Casanova would also come with her fiancé. I saw her look pleased when I assured her that nothing could interest me more than herself.

We saw the two of them coming to meet us covered with snow. We get out; we enter a room to take off our furs; and I notice that the fiancé, after looking at me for a moment, whispers to his intended. She laughs, she goes and says something to Esther, who goes and tells her father, who laughs even more. They were looking at me, I was sure that it was about me they were talking; I pretended indifference, but that was no reason for me not to join them. Indeed, good manners demanded it.

"There may be some mistake," said Monsieur D. O.; "we really must look into it. Did anything out of the ordinary," he said, addressing me, "happen to you on your journey from The Hague to Amsterdam?"

At this question I looked at the fiancé, and I at once guessed what it was all about.

"Nothing out of the ordinary," I replied, "except meeting a fine fellow who wanted to see my carriage overturned, and I believe I see him here."

The laughter redoubled, and we embraced; but after he told the whole story in all its details Mademoiselle Casanova told him sharply that he should have fought. Esther disagreed, saying that he had shown more courage by listening to reason, and Monsieur D. O. declared that he was strongly of her opinion; but the refractory girl, after airing some romantic notions, became deliberately sulky with her lover. I chided her for it, which pleased Esther.

"Come, come," said the charming Esther gaily, "let us put on skates and lose no time amusing ourselves on the Amstel, for I fear the ice will melt."

I did not want to ask her to excuse me. Monsieur D. O. leaves us. Mademoiselle Casanova's fiancé puts skates on me, and the young ladies are ready, wearing short skirts and armed with black velvet drawers to guard against mishaps. We go down to the Amstel, and, since I was a complete novice at the sport, the reader can imagine that, having fallen abruptly on the hard ice at least twenty times, I thought I would end by breaking my back; but not a bit of it, I felt ashamed to leave off, and I stopped only when we were called in to dinner. When we got up from table I felt as if I were paralyzed in every limb. Esther gave me a jar of ointment and assured me that if I had myself rubbed when I went to bed I would feel perfectly well in the morning. She was right. Everyone laughed; I let them laugh; I realized that the whole skating party had been got up only to make me a laughingstock, and I saw nothing wrong in that. I wanted to bring Esther to love me, and I was sure that so much submission and obligingness on my part could not but set me on the road. I spent the afternoon with Monsieur D. O., letting the young people go back to the Amstel again, where they enjoyed themselves hugely until twilight.

We talked of my twenty millions, and I learned from him that I should never succeed in discounting them except with a mercantile company which would give me other papers in exchange, and that even by such a transaction I must be prepared to lose heavily. When I told him that I would like to make the transaction with the East India Company of Gothenburg he said that he would speak to a broker and that Monsieur Pels could be very useful to me.

When I woke in the morning I thought I was done for. My last vertebra, which is called the *os sacrum,* seemed to be in a thousand pieces. Yet I had had myself rubbed with almost all the ointment Esther had given me. I did not forget her wishes. I had myself driven to a bookseller's, where I bought all the books I thought might entertain her. I sent them to her, asking her to send me back all the ones she had read. She did so promptly, and, thanking me profusely, asked me to come and kiss her before leaving Amsterdam if I wanted to receive a nice present.

I went there very early, leaving my post chaise at her door. Her governess took me to her bed, where I found her in a merry mood, with a complexion of lilies and roses.

"I am certain," she said, "that you would not have come if I had not used the word 'kiss.' "

So saying, she surrendered all the charms of her face to my eager lips. Glimpsing the pink buds of her young breasts, I was about to lay hold of them, but as soon as she saw it she stopped laughing and defended herself. She said that I was well advised to go and amuse myself at The Hague with Madame Trenti, in whose care I had left a most precious pledge of my affection. I assured her that I was going to The Hague only to talk business with the Ambassador, and that she would see me again five or six days later, in love only with her. She answered that she relied on my word, and when I left her she granted me such a sweet kiss that I felt certain she would grant me everything on my return. I left very much in love and reached Boas's house at suppertime.

CHAPTER VII

My luck in Holland. I return to Paris with young Pompeati.

AMONG THE letters I received at the post I found one from the Comptroller-General which told me that twenty millions in royal securities were in the hands of Monsieur d'Affry, who would not deliver them at more than an eight percent loss; and another from my patron the Abbé de Bernis which advised me to make the most advantageous deal I could with them and to be sure that when the Ambassador communicated it to the Minister he would be ordered to consent to the transaction, provided that not less was offered than could be obtained on the Exchange at Paris.

Boas, astonished by the profitable sale I had made of my sixteen Gothenburg shares, told me he would undertake to get the twenty millions discounted for me in shares of the Swedish East India Company if I would persuade the Ambassador to sign an agreement in which I would undertake to deliver the French royal securities at a ten percent loss, taking the Swedish shares at fifteen percent above par, as I had sold my own sixteen. I would have consented if he had not stipulated that I give him three months and that my contract could be changed if peace was made. I saw at once that I would do well to go back to Amsterdam, and I would have gone if I had not given La Trenti my word that I would wait for her in The Hague. She arrived from Rotterdam the next day and wrote me that she expected me for supper. I received her letter at the theater. The servant who brought it said that he would take me to her lodging as soon as the play was over. After sending my lackey back to Boas's house, I went.

I found this most unusual woman on the fifth floor of a dilapidated house with her daughter and her son. In the middle of the room there was a table covered with a black cloth on which stood two candles. Since The Hague was a court city I was richly dressed. The woman, clad in black with her two children, made me think of Medea.[1] Nothing could be prettier than the two young creatures. I fondly embraced the boy, calling him my son. His mother told him that from that moment on he was to consider me his father. He recognized me as the man he had seen at Venice in May 1753, in Signora Manzoni's house, and I was very much pleased. His stature was short, he seemed to have an excellent constitution, he was well built, and his delicate features bespoke intelligence. He was thirteen years old.

His sister stood there motionless, seemingly waiting for her turn to come. Having taken her on my lap, I could not have enough of covering her with kisses. For all her silence, she enjoyed seeing that she interested me more than her brother did. She had on only a very light petticoat. I kissed every part of her pretty body, delighted to be the man to whom the little creature owed her existence.

"Isn't this the same gentleman, dear Mother, whom we saw at Amsterdam and who people thought was my father because I look like him? But that's not possible, because my father is dead."

"True," I said, "but I can be your fond friend. Do you want me?"

"Oh, my dear friend! Let's give each other a good hug!"

After the laughter which was to be expected, we sat down at table. The heroine gave me a choice supper and excellent wine. She had not, she said, treated the Margrave better at the suppers for two with which she entertained him. Wanting to know the character of her son, whom I had decided to take with me, I talked only with him. I discovered that he was false, secretive, always on his guard, always preparing his answers in advance, and hence never giving such answers as would have come from his heart if he had followed its bidding. All this, however, was accompanied by a show of politeness and reserve which he thought was bound to please me. I told him quietly that his calculated manner might be all very well at the proper time and place, but that there were moments when a man could not be happy unless he was unconstrained and that it was only then that he would be seen to have a lovable nature, if indeed it was such. At that his mother, thinking to praise him, said that his principal quality was discretion; that she had taught him to be discreet always and in everything, and hence she was not hurt by his habit of being as reserved with her as he was with everyone else. I told her to her face that it was abominable, and that I could not imagine how a father could have any fondness—let alone a predilection—for a son who never spoke out.

"Tell me," I said to the boy, "if you feel able to promise me that you will have complete confidence in me and will under no circumstances keep any secrets from me or leave anything unspoken between us."

"I promise you," he answered, "that I will die sooner than tell you a lie."

"That is his character," his mother interrupted; "such is the horror of lying that I have inculcated in him."

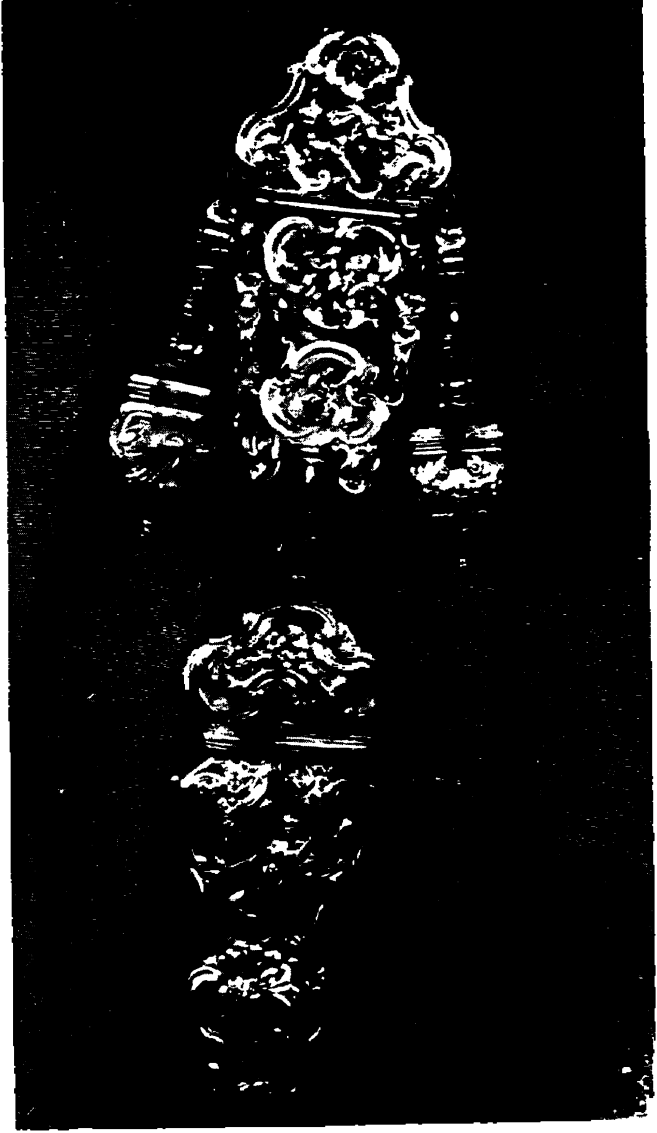
"That is all very well," I answered, "but you could teach your son a different road to happiness. Instead of showing him the ugliness of falsehood, you could show him the beauty of truth. It is the only way to make oneself lovable, and in this world to be happy one must be loved."

"But," he answered, with a sly smile which I did not like and which enchanted his mother, "aren't not lying and telling the truth the same thing?"

"Certainly not, for you would only have to tell me nothing at all. The thing is to disclose your soul, to tell me everything that goes on within you and around you, and to reveal to me even what might make you blush. I will help you to blush, my dear son, and before very long you will find yourself in no danger of it; but when we know each other better we shall soon see if we suit each other, for I could never consider you my son without loving you tenderly, and I will never permit you to call me father unless I see that you love me as you might love your closest friend; as for knowing you, I will undertake to do that, for you will never be able to hide the least of your thoughts from me; but if I find it out despite you, I shall love you no longer and you will be the loser. You shall come to Paris with me as soon as I finish my business in Amsterdam, where I am going tomorrow. When I return I hope I shall find that your mother has taught you the rudiments of a new system of conduct."

I was amazed to see my daughter, who, having listened to everything I had said to her brother without batting an eye, was making vain efforts to hold back her tears.

"Why are you crying?" said her mother; *"it's stupid."*



Small Nécessaire *Suspended from Belt*

At that the child burst out laughing, threw herself on her neck, and kissed her. I saw beyond doubt that her laughter had been as false as her feeling tears had been natural.

"Do you want to come to Paris with me too?" I asked her.

"Yes, my dear friend, but with Mamma, for without me she would die."

"What if I ordered you to go?" said her mother.

"I would obey, but away from you how could I live?"

Thereupon my dear daughter pretended to cry. That she was pretending was obvious. Even Teresa must have known it, and I took her aside and told her that if she had brought up her children to be actors she had succeeded, but that in polite society they were monsters in embryo. I stopped reproaching her when I saw her crying, but real tears. She asked me to stay at The Hague a day longer; I told her I could not, and I left the room to go somewhere; but I was very much surprised on my return to hear Sophie say to me that if she was to believe I was her friend she must have a proof of it.

"What proof, my little darling?"

"Coming to supper with me tomorrow."

"I cannot, for since I have just refused the same thing to your mother she would be offended if I granted it to you."

"Oh no—for it was she who just told me to ask you."

We laughed; but when her mother called her a little fool and her brother added that he would not have committed such an indiscretion, I clearly saw the distress of her soul in the little girl's face. I hastened to reassure her, not caring if I displeased her mother by giving her a taste of new moral principles, to which she listened with wonder. I ended by promising her I would come to supper with her the next day, but on condition that she would give me only one bottle of Burgundy and three dishes.

"For you are not rich," I said.

"I know it, my dear friend, but Mamma said that you would pay for everything."

At this answer I had to hold my sides, and her mother, despite her annoyance, had to do the same. The poor woman, artful though she was, took Sophie's ingenuousness for stupidity. It was intelligence, it was a diamond of the first water which only needed someone to polish it. She said that the wine cost her nothing, that a certain V. D. R.,[2] a young man who was the son of a burgomaster of Rotterdam, provided her with it, and that he would sup with us the next evening if I had no objection. I answered, with a laugh, that I would even be glad to see him. I left after devouring my daughter with kisses. I wished that her mother would give her to me, but it was no use my asking, for I saw that she regarded her as a resource for her old age. This is the usual attitude among adventuresses, and Teresa was nothing else. I gave the mother twenty ducats to spend on dressing my adopted son and Sophie, who, in an outburst of gratitude, flung herself on my neck. Joseph wanted to kiss my hand, but I warned him that in future he was not to show his gratitude to me only by kisses. When I started to go downstairs she showed me a little room in which her children slept. I saw her meaning, but I was far from having any of my old hankering for her. Esther completely occupied me.

The next day at Teresa's I found young V. D. R. A handsome youth of twenty-two, simply dressed, neither cold nor warm, neither polite nor impolite, with no social grace. He had every right to be Teresa's lover, but none to treat me cavalierly. When she saw that he wanted to play the "man in possession" and that he offended me she took a high tone with him. After criticizing the poorness of the dishes and praising the excellence of the wines he sent her, he departed, leaving us at dessert. I, in turn, left her at eleven o'clock, assuring her that I would see her again before I set out. A Princess Galitzin,[3] née Kantemir, had invited me to dinner.

The next day I received a letter from Madame d'Urfé, who sent me twelve thousand francs in the form of a bill of exchange on Boas, saying very generously that since her shares had cost her only sixty thousand francs she did not want to profit from them. This present of five hundred louis[4] pleased me. All the rest of her letter was filled with fantasies. She said that her Genius had told her that I would come back to Paris with a boy born from philosophical intercourse and that she hoped I would take pity on her. Strange coincidence! I laughed in anticipation of the effect which the appearance of Teresa's son would have on her soul. Boas thanked me for my willingness to let him pay me my bill of exchange in ducats. Gold in Holland is a commodity. Payments are made in paper or in silver. At the moment no one wanted ducats because the agio[5] had gone up to five stuivers.

After dining with Princess Galitzin I went for my redingote and then went to the coffeehouse to read the gazettes. I saw V. D. R., who, about to begin a game of billiards, whispered to me that I might well bet on him.

This friendly advance pleased me. I thought he was sure of his skill, and I began betting; but after he lost the third game I bet against him without his knowledge. Three hours later he stopped, having lost thirty or forty games, and, thinking that I had always bet on his side, he expressed his regret. I saw that he was surprised when, showing him thirty or forty ducats, I said that, being a little doubtful of his confidence in his own skill, I had won them by betting against him. All the players laughed; he could not stand a joke; he took great offense at my jibes; he left in a rage; and a moment later I went to Teresa's because I had promised her I would. I was to leave for Amsterdam the next day. She was expecting V. D. R., but she stopped expecting him when I told her how and why he had left the billiard room in a rage. After spending an hour with Sophie in my arms, I left her, assuring her that we would meet again in three or four weeks. On my way back to Boas's alone, with my sword under my arm, I am suddenly attacked in the brightest moonlight by V. D. R. He says he is curious to see if my sword is as sharp as my tongue. I try vainly to calm him by talking reasonably, I do not unsheathe though he has his bare sword in his hand, I say that he should not take mere jests so hard, I beg his pardon, I offer to put off my departure and beg his pardon at the coffeehouse. Not a bit of it—he is determined to kill me, and to persuade me to draw my sword he gives me a blow with the flat of his. It is the only blow I have received in my entire life. I finally draw my sword, and, still hoping to make him listen to reason, I fence with him, giving ground. He takes it for fear, and he gives a lunge which makes my hair stand on end. He pierced my cravat on the left, his sword veering off—four lines farther in, and he would have cut my throat. In my terror I jumped to one side, and, determined to kill him, I wounded him in the chest and, being sure of it, I invited him to stop. Saying that he was not yet dead, he came after me like a madman; I touched him three or four times in succession. At my last thrust he jumped back, saying that he had had enough and only begged me to leave.

I was glad when, starting to wipe off my sword, I saw that the point of it was very little stained. Boas had not yet gone to bed. When he had heard the whole story he advised me to leave for Amsterdam at once, despite my assuring him that the wounds were not mortal. My chaise being at the harness-maker's, I set off in a carriage belonging to Boas, leaving my servant orders to start the next day and bring my baggage to Amsterdam, at the "Second Bible,"[6] where I put up. I arrived there at noon, and my servant at nightfall. He had no news to tell me; but what pleased me was that nothing was heard of the matter at Amsterdam until a week later. Though simple enough, the thing could have done me harm, for the reputation of being a brawler is no way to please financiers with whom one is about to conclude profitable business.

As far as appearances went my first visit was to Monsieur D. O., but in reality it was Esther who received the homage of it. The way I had parted from her had set me on fire. Her father was not there; I found her writing at a table; she was entertaining herself with a problem in arithmetic; to divert her I made two magic squares; they delighted her; in return she showed me some trifles which I already knew and in which I pretended to be interested. My good Genius put it into my mind to perform the cabala for her. I told her to write a question asking something she did not know and was curious about, assuring her that by means of a certain calculation she would receive a satisfactory answer. She laughed, and she asked why I had come back to Amsterdam so soon. I show her how to construct pyramids with numbers drawn from words, and all the other ceremonies; then I have her extract a numerical answer herself, which I have her translate into the French alphabet, and she is astonished to read that what has brought me back to Amsterdam so quickly is love. All wonder, she says it is astonishing even if the answer is untrue, and she wants me to tell her what masters can teach such a wonderful calculation. I say that those who know it can teach it to no one.

"Then how do you know it?"

"I learned it by myself from a manuscript which my father left me."

"Sell me the manuscript."

"I have burned it. I am at liberty to teach it to only one person, but not until I reach the age of fifty. If I teach it before then I risk losing it. An elemental spirit who is attached to the oracle would leave it. I learned all this from the same manuscript."

"Then you can find out all the greatest secrets in the world?"

"I should have that privilege if the answers weren't in most cases very obscure."

"As it doesn't take long, would you have the kindness to extract the answer to another question for me?"

She then asked what her destiny was to be, and the oracle answered that she had not yet taken the first step on the road to it. All wonder, Esther calls her governess and thinks she will amaze her by showing her the two oracles; but the good Swiss woman sees nothing extraordinary in it. In her impatience she calls her a fool. She begs me to let her put another question, and I encourage her. She asks what person in Amsterdam loves her most, and, using the same method, she finds the answer that no one loves her more than the person to whom she owes her existence. The poor, intelligent girl then tells me with the utmost seriousness that I have made her miserable, for she will die of grief if she cannot learn the calculation. I do not answer, and she sees me downcast. She writes a question, hiding the paper with her beautiful hand. I get up to leave her free; but while she is constructing the pyramid I glance at the paper as I walk by, and I read her question. After doing everything I had taught her to do, she says that I can extract the answer without having to read her question. I agree, and she blushes and asks me to do her the favor. I consent, but on condition that she will not ask me to do her the same favor again. She promises. Since, having read her question, I know that she asked the oracle's permission to show her father all the questions she put, I produce the answer that "she will be happy if she never keeps anything which is important to her a secret from her father." At that she oh'd and ah'd, finding no words strong enough to show me her gratitude. I left her to go to the Exchange, where I talked at length with Monsieur Pels about my chief business.

The next morning a handsome and very gentlemanly man came bringing me a letter from Teresa in which she introduced him to me, assuring me that if I had any business to transact he could be useful to me. His name was Rigerboos.[7] She said that V. D. R.'s five wounds were all slight, that I had nothing to fear, that no one knew anything of the affair, and that there was nothing to stop me if I needed to go back to The Hague. She said that Sophie talked about me from morning to night, and that when I came back I would be much better pleased with her son. I asked Monsieur Rigerboos to give me his address, assuring him that if the occasion arose I should have perfect confidence in his probity. A moment after he left I received a note from Esther in which she asked me, in her father's name, to come and spend the whole day with her, unless some important business prevented me. I answered that except for a transaction of which her father knew, my only important business in the world would be whatever I could do to conquer her heart. I promised to go.

I went there at dinnertime. Esther and her father were busily examining the calculation which drew rational answers from the pyramid. Her father embraced me, with joy painted on his noble countenance, saying that he was fortunate to have a daughter who had deserved my attention. When I answered that I adored her he encouraged me to kiss her, and Esther gave a cry and literally sprang into my arms.

"I have attended to everything," said Monsieur D. O., "and I have the whole day to myself. I have known from childhood, my dear friend, that the science of which you are in possession exists in the world, and I was acquainted with a Jew who made a great fortune by it. He said, as you do, that he could impart it only to one person, upon pain of losing it himself. But he put it off so long that he died without being able to impart it to me. It was a high fever which deprived him of the power. Permit me to tell you that if you do not know how to profit by your skill, you do not know what you possess. It is a treasure."

"My oracle, Monsieur, answers very obscurely."

"The answers my daughter has shown me are perfectly clear."

"It seems she is fortunate in her questions, for the answers depend upon that."

"We shall see after dinner if I have the same good fortune, if you will be so good as to work with me."

At table we talked of other things entirely, for there were some employees present, and among them his head manager, an ugly, coarse fellow, who I thought had notions about Esther. After dinner we withdrew, and, with only Esther present, Monsieur D. O. took two very long questions from his pocket. In one he wanted to know how he should go about obtaining a favorable decision from the States-General [8] in a business matter which was of great consequence to him and of which he gave the details. I answered this question very obscurely and very quickly, leaving it for Esther to put it into words; when he asked his second question I took a notion to answer it clearly. He asked what had been the fate of a ship which was known to have sailed from the East Indies on a certain date, but what had become of it was not. It should have arrived two months since; he wanted to know if it was still in existence or if it had perished, and where and how. No one had ever had any news of it. The company which owned it would be satisfied with an insurer who would give them ten percent, but they found no one. What made it almost certain that the ship was lost was a letter from an English captain who testified that he had seen it go down.

The gist of my answer, which I was stupid enough to give without apprehending any ill consequences, was that the ship still existed and had suffered no damage, and that trustworthy news of it would arrive within a week. So it was that, wanting to raise my oracle's reputation sky-high, I risked its losing it entirely. But I should have done none of this if I had guessed what Monsieur D. O. would do in consequence of my oracle. He went pale for joy. He told us that it was of the utmost importance to speak of the matter to no one, for he was planning to go and insure the vessel at the best rate possible. Aghast, I told him that I did not answer for the truth of the oracle and that I should die of mortification if I were the cause of his losing a large sum. He asked me if the oracle sometimes deceived me, and I answered that it often led to mistakes by being equivocal. Esther, seeing my uneasiness, begged her father to take no steps in the matter.

Monsieur D. O. remained lost in thought, then spoke at length, reasoning erroneously on the so-called power of numbers, and told his daughter to read him all the questions she had asked. There were six or seven of them, all short and all of a nature to be answered plainly or equivocally or humorously. Esther, who had constructed all the pyramids, shone by extracting the answers with my all-powerful help. Her father, in ecstasies at seeing her so clever, thought that she would succeed in mastering the oracle, and Esther herself made bold to believe it. After spending seven hours discussing all the answers, which were acclaimed as divine, we supped. Monsieur D. O. invited me to dine at his house on the

Amstel, which I already knew. I accepted with pleasure.

Returning to my lodging, I passed a house where there was dancing, and, seeing people going in and out, I wanted to see what was doing. It was a *musicau*[9]—a dark orgy in a place which was a veritable sewer of vice, a disgrace to even the most repellent debauchery. The very sound of the two or three instruments which made up the orchestra plunged the soul in sadness. A room reeking with the smoke of bad tobacco, with the stench of garlic which came from the belches emitted by the men who were dancing or sitting with a bottle or a pot of beer to their right and a hideous slattern to their left, presented my eyes and my thoughts with a distressing image which showed me the miseries of life and the level of degradation to which brutishness could reduce pleasures. The crowd which gave life to the place was composed entirely of sailors and others of the common people, to whom it seemed a paradise which made up to them for all that they had suffered on long and painful voyages. Among the prostitutes I saw there I found not one with whom I could possibly have diverted myself for a moment. A shady-looking man who might be a tinsmith and who had the manners of a boor came and asked me in broken Italian if I wanted to dance for a sou. I declined. He pointed out a Venetian woman who was sitting there, saying that I could take her to a room upstairs and drink with her.

I approach, I think I recognize her, but the gloomy light of four unsnuffed candles does not let me make out her features. Impelled by curiosity, I sit down beside her and ask her if it is true that she is a Venetian and if it has been long since she left her native country. She answers that it has been about eighteen years. I am brought a bottle, I ask her if she wants to drink, she says yes, adding that I can go upstairs with her. I answer that I haven't time, I hand over a ducat in payment, I am given the change, which I put into the hand of the poor devil of a creature, who offers me a kiss which I refuse.

"Do you like Amsterdam better than Venice?" I ask her.

"In my own country I didn't follow this accursed trade. I was only fourteen, and I lived with my father and mother."

"Who seduced you?"

"A courier."

"In what *contrada*[10] of Venice did you live?"

"I didn't live in Venice but on an estate in Friuli not far from there."

An estate in Friuli, eighteen years, a courier—I am moved, I look at her closely, and I recognize Lucia[11] of Pasiano, but I am careful not to change my attitude of indifference. Far more than age, debauchery had withered her face and all its appurtenances. Lucia, fond, pretty, ingenuous Lucia, whom I had loved so much and whom I had spared out of delicacy, in such a state, ugly, repellent, in a brothel in Amsterdam! She drank without looking at me and without caring to know who I was. I did not feel curious to learn her story, I even thought I knew it. She said that she lived in the *musicau* and would give me pretty girls if I came to see her. I gave her two ducats and quickly left. I went to bed overwhelmed with sorrow. I thought I had spent a day of ill omen, remembering Monsieur D. O. too, who because of my silly cabala might be going to lose three hundred thousand florins. The thought, which made me despise myself, boded ill for the affection which Esther inspired in me. I foresaw her becoming my implacable enemy together with her father. A man cannot love except with the hope of being loved. The sight of Lucia in the *musicau* left an impression on me which brought me the most ominous dreams. I considered myself the cause of her misfortune. She was only thirty-two, and I foresaw a horrible future for her.

After tormenting myself and not sleeping, I get up, I order a carriage, and I put on a fine suit to go and make my bow to Princess Galitzin, who was lodging at the "Star of the East." She had gone to the Admiralty. I go there and find her in the company of Monsieur de Reischach[12] and Count de Tott, who had just received news of my friend Pesselier,[13] at whose house I had met him. I had left him very ill when I departed from Paris.

Leaving the Admiralty, I dismiss my carriage and my lackey, ordering him to be at Monsieur D. O.'s house on the Amstel at eleven o'clock. I go there on foot, and, dressed as I am, I find some of the Dutch populace hooting and whistling at me. Esther sees me from the window, a cord is pulled on the second floor, the door opens, I go in, close it behind me, and at the fourth or fifth step on my way up a wooden staircase my foot strikes against something yielding. I look, and seeing a green portfolio I stoop to pick it up, but I awkwardly give it a push, and it drops under the staircase through an opening which had been made in the front of the next step, apparently to give light to the place under the stairs. I do not stop but go on up. I am received as usual, and I explain the reason for my elaborate dress. Esther laughs at my looking like a different person, but I have the impression that they are gloomy. Esther's governess comes in and speaks to them in Dutch. I see Esther look distressed, then go and give her father a hundred caresses.

"I see," I say to him, "that some misfortune has befallen you; if my presence incommodes you, permit me to withdraw at once."

He answers that the misfortune is not great and that he has resigned himself to it, since he is rich enough to bear it with equanimity.

"I have lost," he said, "a quite well-furnished portfolio, which, if I had used my common sense, I would have left at home, for I had no need for it until tomorrow. I can only have lost it in the street—how, I don't know. It contains some sizable bills of exchange, on which I can stop payment, but also some English bank notes, of which the bearers can make what use they please. Let us thank God for all things, my dear Esther, and pray to him to keep us in health and to preserve us from still greater misfortunes. I have suffered worse blows in my life, and I have borne up. So let us say no more of this incident, which I will regard as a small bankruptcy."

I remained silent, with joy in my soul. I was sure that the portfolio was the one I had pushed through the opening, so it was not lost; but I at once thought that I would not let them recover it without some cabalistic trappings. The chance was too good a one for me to fail to use it and give my hosts a great example of the infallibility of my oracle. The idea having put me in a good humor, I said countless things which made Esther laugh and told her stories which ridiculed the French, whom she detested.

We dined very choicely and drank of the best. After coffee I said that if they liked cards I would play; but Esther said it would be a pity to waste time at that.

"I can't get enough of pyramids," she said. "May I ask who has found my father's portfolio?"

"Why not?" I said. "It's a simple question."

She framed it very briefly and the answer which came out, equally brief, told her that no one had found her father's portfolio. She ran and embraced her father, whom the answer had made sure that his portfolio would come back to him; but she was first surprised, then laughed a great deal, when I told her that any hope she had that I would go on working was vain unless she gave me at least as many caresses as she had given her dear father. At that she gave me a quantity of kisses, and she extracted the pyramid from the question which asked where the portfolio was. I elicited the words: "The portfolio dropped through the opening in the fifth step of the staircase."

D. O. and his daughter rise, greatly relieved, they go down, and I follow them. He himself shows us the opening through which the portfolio must have passed. He lights a candle, then enters a storeroom, goes down an underground staircase, and with his own hands picks up the portfolio, which was lying in water exactly under the opening in the stair. We go back up and spend an hour in the most serious discussion of the divinity of the oracle and its ability to make its possessor the happiest of men. Opening the portfolio, he showed us forty Exchequer bills for a thousand pounds sterling[14] each, of which he presented two to his daughter and two to me; taking them with one hand, I gave them to the beautiful Esther with the other, telling her to keep them for me. She would not consent until I threatened not to work with the cabala for her again. To Monsieur D. O. I said that I wanted nothing from him but his friendship. He embraced me and promised I should have it to the last day of his life.

By making Esther the custodian of twenty-two thousand florins, I was certain to bind her to me. The girl had a witchery in her eyes which intoxicated me. I said to her father that the business I had most at heart was to negotiate the twenty millions at little loss. He answered that he hoped to satisfy me, but that since he would often need me with him, I should come to lodge in his house. Esther added her solicitations to his, and I accepted, taking great care to conceal all the satisfaction I felt but at the same time showing them all the gratitude I owed them.

He then went to his study to write, and, left alone with Esther, I said that I felt ready to do anything for her which lay in my power but that first of all she must give me her heart. She said that the moment when I could ask her father for her hand would come when I was staying in their house. I assured her that she would have me there the next day.

Coming back, Monsieur D. O. said that the next day we would hear a great piece of news on the Exchange. He said that he would himself take over the supposedly lost ship for three hundred thousand florins—and let them call him a fool!

"I should really be a fool," he added, "if, after all that I have seen of the divinity of the oracle, I had doubts. I will make three millions; and if I lose it will not ruin me."

Esther, dazzled by the recovered portfolio, told her father that he must act at once, and for my part I could no longer retreat. Seeing me gloomy, Monsieur D. O. assured me that he would be no less my friend if the oracle proved to be fallacious. I asked him to let me question the oracle again before he risked such a large loss, and I saw that they were both delighted by my zeal for the good of their house.

But here is yet another incident which will make some of my readers incredulous or incline them to condemn me as a thoughtless and even dangerous person. I did everything myself—the question, the pyramid, and all the rest—refusing to let Esther take any part in it. I was delighted to be in time to prevent such a slaughter and determined that I would prevent it. A double meaning, which I could bring from my pen, would have discouraged them both, and since I had it in my head I thought I had expressed it perfectly in numbers on the paper which lay before me. Esther, who had the alphabet by heart, quickly translated it into words and amazed me when she read my answer. She read these words: "In such a case as this, there is nothing to *fear*. Your regret would be too painful." Nothing more was needed. Father and daughter together ran to embrace me, and Monsieur D. O. said that when the ship appeared he would owe me a tenth of his profit. Surprise prevented me from answering him and expressing my gratitude, for I felt certain that I had written "believe" [*croire*], not "fear" [*craindre*]. I could no longer draw back.

The next day I went to stay with them in a charming suite of rooms, and on the day after that I took Esther to a concert, where she rallied me on La Trenti's not appearing at it. The girl possessed me entirely, but since she constantly refused to yield to the essential purpose of my caresses she kept me languishing.

Four or five days later Monsieur D. O. communicated to me the decision reached at a conference he had held with Pels and the heads of six other banking houses concerning my twenty millions. They offered ten millions in cash and seven in obligations yielding five and six percent, with a deduction of one percent for brokerage fees. In addition they waived all claim to the twelve hundred thousand florins which the French East India Company[15] owed to the Dutch East India Company. I sent copies of the decision to Monsieur de Boulogne and Monsieur d'Affry, demanding a prompt answer. The answer I received a week later from Monsieur de Courteuil by order of Monsieur de Boulogne was that such terms were unacceptable and that I had only to return to Paris if I could not do better, and I was again told that peace was imminent. But Monsieur D. O.'s confidence had increased extraordinarily some days before this answer arrived. The Exchange itself had received trustworthy news that the ship in question was at Madeira. Four days earlier Monsieur D. O. had bought it with all its cargo for three hundred thousand florins. What a pleasure it was when we saw him come into our room with a look of triumph which confirmed the news! He said that he had already insured it from Madeira to Texel[16] for a trifle, and that a tenth of the profit was at my disposition. But what astonished me was these exact words, with which he ended his discourse:

"You are now rich enough to establish yourself in our country with the assurance of becoming immensely wealthy in a few years simply by using your cabala. I will be your agent. Let us make one household, and if you love my daughter I give her to you if she wants you."

Joy shone in Esther's eyes, but in mine she could see only my surprise, which was so beyond measure that it left me dumb and as if stupefied. After a long silence I entered upon a wiredrawn analysis of the feelings appropriate to the situation, ending by saying that though I adored Esther I must go back to Paris before coming to a resolve; I said I was sure that I would be able to decide my fate when I returned to Amsterdam. My answer won their approval and we spent the day in high spirits. The next day Monsieur D. O. gave a splendid dinner for his friends, who only said, amid good-natured laughter, that he had learned before anyone else that the ship was at Madeira, though no one could imagine how he had come to know it.

A week after this lucky incident he gave me an ultimatum on the business of the twenty millions, the upshot of which was that France would lose only nine percent on the sale of the twenty millions, on condition that I could not demand any brokerage fees from the purchasers. I sent accurate copies of this proposal to Monsieur d'Affry by express messenger, asking him to transmit them at my expense to the Comptroller-General together with a letter in which I warned him that the transaction would fall through if he let a single day pass before giving Monsieur d'Affry whatever powers he needed in order to give me the authority to contract. I appealed with no less urgency to Monsieur de Courteuil and the Duke, informing them all that I was to be given nothing but that I would conclude the transaction nevertheless, being certain that I would be reimbursed for my expenses and that what was due me as broker would not be refused me at Versailles.

As it was Carnival,[17] Monsieur D. O. saw fit to give a ball. He invited all the most distinguished men and women in the city. I will tell my reader only that the ball was sumptuous, as was the supper. Esther danced all the contradances with me with every possible grace, and shone arrayed in the diamonds of her late mother.

We were spending the whole of every day together, in love and unhappy because abstinence tormented us. Esther would only go so far as to permit me some little theft when I went to breakfast with her. She was generous only with her kisses, which, instead of calming me, made me frantic. She told me, like all the supposedly decent girls in the universe, that she was sure I would never marry her if she let me do whatever I wanted to her. She did not think I was married, for I had assured her too often that I was a bachelor, but she had no doubt that I had some strong attachment in Paris. I admitted it, and I assured her that I was going to free myself completely so that I could be bound to her until death by the most solemn of ties. Alas! I was lying, for she could not be separated from her father, who was only forty, and I could not imagine it possible that I should settle permanently in such a country.

Ten or twelve days after sending the ultimatum I received a letter from Monsieur de Boulogne in which he said that the Ambassador had received all the necessary instructions to enable me to conclude the business, and the Ambassador told me the same. He warned me to look to my arrangements, for he would not deliver the royal securities except upon receiving 18,200,000 francs in currency.

The sad moment of parting having thus come, we did not try to restrain our tears. Esther gave me the equivalent of the two thousand pounds sterling I had left with her on the day the portfolio was found, and her father, in accordance with my instructions, gave me one hundred thousand florins[18] in bills of exchange on Tourton & Baur and on Pâris de Montmartel [19] and a receipt for two hundred thousand florins which authorized me to draw on him until the entire amount was exhausted. When I left, Esther presented me with fifty shirts of the finest linen and fifty Masulipatam[20] handkerchiefs.

It was not love of Manon Balletti but a stupid vanity, a wish to cut a figure in Paris, which made me leave Holland. The fifteen months I spent under the Leads were not enough to cure the defects of my character. "Destiny" is a word without meaning; it is we who make our destiny, despite the maxim of the Stoics: *Volentem ducit, nolentem trahit* ("[Fate] leads the willing, drags the unwilling").[21] I am too self-indulgent if I apply it to myself.

After vowing to Esther that I would see her before the end of the year I left with a commissioner of the company which had bought the French securities and, reaching The Hague, went to stay with Boas, who received me with mingled astonishment and admiration. He said I had performed a miracle and that I should hurry on to Paris, if only to enjoy the incense of congratulations. He said, however, that he was sure I could not have done what I had done unless I had convinced the company beyond doubt that peace was on the verge of being made. I replied that I had not convinced them, but that peace would certainly be concluded. He said that if I could obtain for him a positive written assurance from the Ambassador that peace would be made he would present me with fifty thousand florins in diamonds. I replied that the Ambassador's certainty on the subject could not be greater than mine but that, even so, I considered it still only a moral certainty.

The next day I concluded everything with the Ambassador; and the commissioner returned to Amsterdam.

I went to supper at Teresa's, who showed me her children very nicely dressed. I told her to go to Rotterdam the next day and wait for my arrival there to entrust her son to me, for to avoid talk I did not want to take charge of him in The Hague.

From one of Boas's sons I bought a pair of diamond earrings and several fine stones for forty thousand florins. I had to promise him that I would stay with him when I came back to The Hague, but I did not keep my word.

At Rotterdam Teresa bluntly told me that she knew for certain I had made half a million in Amsterdam and that her fortune would be assured if she could leave Holland and set herself up in London. She got Sophie to tell me that my good fortune had been the result of her prayers to God. All this made me laugh. I gave her a hundred ducats and told her that I would arrange to have her paid another hundred when she wrote to me from London. I saw that she thought the amount small, but I did not let that persuade me to give her more. She waited until I had got into my chaise to ask me for another hundred ducats, and I whispered to her that I would give her a thousand on the spot if she would let me have Sophie. After thinking for a moment she said no. I left after giving my daughter a watch. I reached Paris on the 10th of February,[22] and I took a fine apartment in Rue Comtesse-d'Artois near the Rue Montorgueil.[23]

CHAPTER VIII

Flattering reception from my patron. Madame d'Urfé's delusions. Madame XCV *and her family. Madame du Rumain.*

DURING THE short journey I came to the conclusion that my newly adopted son's soul was not as attractive as his person. What his mother had chiefly instilled by the education she had given him was discretion. This quality in her son was the one which her own interest demanded that he should possess above all others; but the unschooled boy carried it too far; he combined it with dissimulation, suspicion, and false confidences. Not only did he not say what he knew, he pretended to know what he did not know; to be successful, he felt that he must be impenetrable, and to that end he had acquired the habit of imposing silence on his heart and never saying anything which he had not framed in his mind beforehand. He thought he was being prudent when he gave a false impression. Incapable of friendship, he became unworthy to win friends.

Foreseeing that Madame d'Urfé would count on the boy for the accomplishment of her chimerical hypostasis and that the more I made his birth a mystery, the more her Genius would lead her to invent wild fantasies, I ordered him to conceal nothing about himself if a lady to whom I would present him showed any curiosity about his circumstances when she was alone with him. He promised to obey me. He had not been expecting that I would order him to be sincere.

My first visit was to my patron,[1] whom I found entertaining a large company; among them I saw the Venetian Ambassador,[2] who pretended not to know me.

"How long have you been in Paris?" asked the Minister, taking my hand.

"No time at all. I have just got out of my post chaise."

"Then go to Versailles, you will find the Duke of Choiseul and the Comptroller-General there. You have performed miracles, go and be adored. Come to see me afterward. Tell the Duke that I have sent Voltaire a passport in which the King appoints him a gentleman-in-ordinary."[3]

One does not go to Versailles at noon, but this was the way Ministers talked when they were in Paris. It was as if Versailles were at the other end of the street. I went to Madame d'Urfé's.

The first thing she said to me was that her Genius had told her she would see me that very day.

"Kornmann," she said, "told me yesterday that what you have done is incredible. I am sure it was you who discounted the twenty millions. Securities have gone up, and within the week there will be a circulation of at least a hundred millions. Forgive me for having ventured to make you a present of twelve thousand francs. It is nothing."

I saw no need to tell her that she was wrong. She sent word to the porter to close the door to everyone, and we began talking. I saw her tremble with joy when I coolly told her that I had brought a twelve-year-old boy with me, whom I meant to bring up in the best boarding school in Paris.

"I will put him in Viar's,"[4] she said, "where my nephews are. What is his name? Where is he? I know what the boy is. I cannot wait to see him. Why did you not come straight here?"

"I will present him to you day after tomorrow, for tomorrow I shall be at Versailles."

"Does he speak French? Until I have made all the arrangements for his schooling, you simply must leave him with me."

"We will discuss it day after tomorrow."

After stopping at my office, where I found everything in order, I went to the Comédie Italienne, where Silvia was playing.[5] I found her in her dressing room with her daughter. She said she knew I had done very well with my business in Holland, and I saw that she was surprised when I said that I had worked for her daughter. The girl blushed. After saying that I would go to supper with them I took a place in the amphitheater. What a surprise! In one of the first-tier boxes I see Madame *XCV*[6] with all her family. Here is the story.

Madame *XCV*, of Greek origin, was the widow of an Englishman to whom she had given six children, four girls[7] and two boys. On his deathbed, unable to resist his wife's tears, he declared himself a Roman Catholic; but since his children could not inherit a capital of forty thousand pounds sterling which he had in England except by declaring themselves Anglicans, she had just come from London, where she had attended to all that.[8] It was at the beginning of the year 1758.[9]

In the year *1753* I fell in love with her eldest daughter[10] at Padua, where I acted in a play with her, and six months later at Venice Madame *XCV* saw fit to exclude me from her society. Her daughter made it possible for me to bear the affront calmly by a charming letter, which I still cherish; besides, being then in love with M. M. and C. C., I easily forgot her. The girl, though only fifteen[11] years old, was a beauty, and to the charms of her figure she added those of a cultivated mind, the spell of which is often more powerful. The Chamberlain to the King of Prussia, Count Algarotti,[12] gave her lessons, and several young patricians hoped to conquer her heart; the one who seemed to have the preference was the eldest son of the Memmo di San Marcuola[13] family. He died four years ago as Procurator of San Marco.

The reader can imagine my surprise when, five years later, I saw the whole family. Miss *XCV* [14] recognizes me instantly, she points me out to her mother, and the latter at once beckons to me with her fan. I went to her box at once.

She receives me by saying that we are no longer in Venice, that she is heartily glad to see me again, and that she hopes I will often come to call on her at the Hôtel de Bretagne[15] in the Rue Saint-André-des-Arts, where she is staying. Her daughter treats me to the same compliment with even greater insistence; she looks a goddess, and it seems to me that after a sleep of five years my love wakes again with an increase in power equal to that which the object before my eyes had gained in the same period of time.

They tell me that they expect to spend six months in Paris before going back to Venice; I reply that I intend to make my residence in Paris, that I have just returned from Holland that day, that I am obliged to spend the next day at Versailles, and that they will see me the day after that at their lodging, eager to offer them any services in my power.

"I have heard," says Miss *XCV*, "that what you have done in Holland must make you dear to France, and I have always hoped to see you; and your prodigious escape gave us the greatest pleasure, for we were always fond of you. We learned the details of it from a sixteen-page letter you wrote to Signor Memmo, which made us shudder and laugh. As for what you accomplished in Holland, we heard of it yesterday from Monsieur de la Pouplinière."[16]

The Farmer-General himself, whom I had first met at his house in Passy[17] seven years earlier, now entered the box. After congratulating me briefly, he said that if I could obtain twenty millions for the East India Company[18] in the same way, he would have me made Farmer-General. He advised me to get myself naturalized as a French citizen before it became generally known that I must be worth at least half a million.

"You cannot have made less."

"The business, Monsieur, will ruin me if I am denied my brokerage fee."

"You are right to speak out. Everyone is eager to make your acquaintance, and France is indebted to you, for you have made securities rise."

It was at supper at Silvia's that my soul reveled in delight. I was made as much of as if I had been a son of the house, and on my side I convinced the whole family that I wanted to be regarded as such. It seemed to me that I owed all my good fortune to their influence and their unfailing friendship. I made the mother,[19] the father, the daughter, and the two sons[20] promise to accept the presents I had for them. Since the richest one was in my pocket, I presented it to the mother, who immediately gave it to her daughter. It was a pair of earrings which had cost me six thousand florins. Three days later I gave her a small chest in which she found two pieces of superb calencar,[21] two of very fine linen, and trimmings of the Flemish needlepoint known as "English point." I gave Mario, who liked to smoke, a gold pipe, and my friend[22] a handsome snuffbox. I gave a watch to the Cadet,[23] of whom I was inordinately fond. I shall have occasion to speak of this youth, whose qualities made him superior to his station in every respect. But was I rich enough to give such substantial presents? No, and I knew it. I made them only because I was afraid I should not become rich enough. If I had been sure of it, I would have waited.

I set out for Versailles before dawn. The Duke of Choiseul received me pen in hand as he had before; his hair was being dressed. This time he laid down his pen. After a brief compliment he said that if I felt I was capable of negotiating a loan of a hundred million florins at four percent, he would give me a recommendation which would do me honor. I answered that I might consider it after I learned what recompense for what I had already done would be given me by way of encouragement.

"Everyone says you have made two hundred thousand florins."

"Saying it means nothing unless it is proved. I can claim the brokerage fee."

"True. Go and state your case to the Comptroller-General."

Monsieur de Boulogne stopped the work he was doing to receive me graciously, but when I told him he owed me a hundred thousand florins, he smiled.

"I know," he said, "that you are the holder of bills of exchange to your order for a hundred thousand écus."

"That is true, but what I own has nothing to do with what I did. I have proof of it. I refer you to Monsieur d'Affry. I have an infallible plan for increasing the King's revenues by *twenty millions* without causing any complaint among those who will provide them."

"Execute it, and I will have the King himself give you a pension of a hundred thousand francs and a patent of nobility if you will become a French citizen."

I went to the private apartments, where Madame la Marquise was having a ballet rehearsed. She greeted me as soon as she saw me and said that I was a clever negotiator whom the gentlemen "down there"[24] had not properly appreciated. She still remembered what I had said to her at Fontainebleau eight years earlier. I replied that all good things came from "up there," and that I hoped to share in them through her kind offices.

Back in Paris I went to the Hôtel de Bourbon to inform my patron of all the results of my journey. He advised me to be patient and to continue to do well; and, when I mentioned that I had seen Madame *XCV* at the theater, he said that La Pouplinière was going to marry her eldest daughter.

The news when I reached my lodging was that my son had left.

"A great lady," said my hostess, "came to call on the Count" (he had immediately been dubbed Count) "and took him away with her."

I pretended to be pleased, and I went to bed. The next morning very early my clerk brought me a letter. It was from the old attorney who was the uncle of the girl whose sponsor I had been when she married Gaetano and whom I had helped to escape from him.[25] He asked me to come and speak with him at the Palais[26] or to tell him where I would be during the day. I went to the Palais.

He told me that his niece had been obliged to take refuge in a convent, where she had instituted proceedings against her husband with the help of a Councilor of the Parlement who was paying all the expenses of the case; but that they absolutely needed me, Count Tiretta, and the servants who had witnessed the scene, to prove the truth of the accusation. I managed all this very easily, and three or four months later the whole affair was ended by a fraudulent bankruptcy[27] on Gaetano's part, which forced him to leave France. I will relate at the proper time and place where I found the wretch three years later. As for his wife, she remained in Paris, happy with her good friend the Councilor, and perhaps she is still living there. I have completely lost sight of her.

Leaving the Palais, I called on Madame XXX, in order to see Tiretta. He was not there. She was still in love with him. I left my address for him, and I went to the Hôtel de Bretagne, in the same street, to make my first call on Madame *XCV*. The woman did not like me, but she received me very cordially. At Paris, and rich, I seemed another person to her. She had with her an old Greek named Zandiri, brother to Signor Bragadin's major-domo, who had just died; I expressed my condolences, and he made no reply. But the whole family avenged me for the man's stupid stiffness. Miss, her sisters, and her two brothers, the elder of whom was fourteen, covered me with caresses. But the levity of the elder brother surprised me. He was impatient to come into his inheritance so that he could devote himself to the wildest profligacy.

Miss *XCV,* as I have described her for my reader, combined with an easy manner a cultivated mind, which she never paraded except when the occasion warranted it and then without the slightest pretension. It was difficult to be near her and not fall in love with her; but, as I came to know some weeks later, being in no degree a flirt, she never allowed the slightest hope to spring up in those who had not had the good fortune to please her. She could be cold without being impolite, and so much the worse for those whose eyes her coldness did not open. During an hour which I spent alone with her she bound me in her chains, I told her so, and she showed that she was pleased. She took the place in my heart which Esther had occupied only a week earlier; but she would not have conquered it if Esther had been in Paris. My attachment to Silvia's daughter was of a kind which did not prevent me from falling in love with another woman. Unless it receives a certain amount of food, a libertine's love very quickly becomes cold, and women know this when they have a little experience. The Balletti girl was a complete novice.

Signor Farsetti,[28] a Venetian nobleman, Commander of the Order of Malta,[29] a man of letters with an interest in the abstruse sciences and a fair poet in Latin verse, arrived at one o'clock. Dinner was about to be served. Madame *XCV* had a place set for him at once; and since I was to dine with Madame d'Urfé I declined the honor. Signor Farsetti, who had known me well in Venice, only gave me a glance. He smiled when Miss praised my courage. She said that I had forced all Venetians to esteem me, and that the French wanted me to become their fellow citizen. He asked me if my position as a collector for the lottery paid me well.

"Enough," I answered, "to keep my clerk happy."

At Madame d'Urfé's I found my supposed son in her arms. She outdid herself in excuses for carrying him off, but I laughingly turned them aside. I told the little man that he must regard Madame as his queen and always open his heart to her. She told me she had made him sleep with her, but that she would have to forgo the pleasure if he would not promise to be better behaved in future. I thought it sublime, and I saw the young man blush. He asked her to tell him how he had offended her.

She said that Saint-Germain would dine with us; she knew that the adept amused me. He came, he sat down at the table—not to eat but to talk, as he always did. He brazenly related incredible stories, which we had to pretend we believed because he said that he had been either an eyewitness or the chief actor in them; but I could not keep from bursting out laughing when he told of something which had happened to him when he dined with the Fathers of the Council of Trent.[30]

Madame was wearing a large armed magnet[31] hanging from her neck. She claimed that at one time or another it would draw lightning down on her and thus she would go to the sun.

"There can be no doubt of it," said the impostor; "but I am the only person on earth who can give magnets a strength a thousand times greater than the usual run of physicists give them."

I said coldly that I would wager twenty thousand écus that he would not even double the strength of the one Madame was wearing. Madame prevented him from accepting the wager, and she told me privately afterward that I would have lost because Saint-Germain was a magician. I said she was right.

A few days later the self-styled magician left for Chambord,[32] one of the royal castles, where the King had given him an apartment and a hundred thousand francs so that he could work without interruption on the dyes which were to make all the cloth manufactories in France prosperous. He had won over the King by installing a laboratory at Trianon for him which often amused him, for he suffered from boredom everywhere except when he was hunting; it was the Marquise who had introduced the adept to him to teach him chemistry; for after he had presented her with the water of youth she believed everything he said. This miraculous water, taken in the quantity he had prescribed for her, did not, the worshiper of truth admitted, have the virtue of restoring youth, for that was impossible, but it had the virtue of preventing old age by keeping the body *in statu quo* for several centuries. She had told the monarch that she really felt she was not aging.

The monarch showed the Duke of Zweibrücken[33] a diamond of the first water weighing twelve carats which he wore on his finger and which he was convinced he had made himself, having been initiated into the magisterium[34] by the impostor. He said that he had melted twenty-four carats of small diamonds which had become one, and that it had later been reduced to twelve when it was polished on the wheel. Thus convinced of the adept's knowledge, he had given him the same lodging at Chambord which he had given the illustrious Maréchal de Saxe[35] for his lifetime. I heard this story from the Duke's own lips when I had the honor to sup with him and the Swedish Count of Lewenhaupt[36] at Metz at the "King Dagobert" inn.[37]

Before leaving Madame d'Urfé I told her that the boy might be the person to assure her rebirth, but that she would spoil everything if she did not wait until he had reached puberty.

She sent him to board at Viar's, giving him all kinds of teachers and the name of Count d'Aranda, despite the fact that he was born in Bayreuth[38] and that his mother had never had the slightest acquaintance with any Spaniard of that name. I did not go to see him until three or four months after he was well settled there. I was always afraid I might be subjected to some affront because of the name the visionary Marquise had given him without my knowledge.

Tiretta came to see me in a fine carriage. He said that the lady wanted to marry him, but that he would never agree even though she had offered him all her wealth. He could have gone to Treviso with her, paid his debts, and lived very well there. His destiny prevented him from following my good advice.

Having made up my mind to take a country house, I decided on "Little Poland"[39] after looking at several. It was well furnished, a hundred paces beyond the Madeleine barrier.[40] The house was on a little hill near the "Royal Hunt"[41] and behind the Duke of Gramont's[42] garden. The name the owner had given it was "Airy Warsaw."[43] It had two gardens, one of which was on the level of the second floor, three master's apartments, a stable for twenty horses, baths, a good cellar, and a large kitchen with all the necessary pots and pans. The owner of the house was known as the "Butter King,"[44] and this was the name he always signed. Louis XV himself had given it to him one day when he had stopped at his establishment and found his butter excellent. He rented me his house for a hundred louis a year and gave me an excellent female cook, known as "the Pearl,"[45] to whom he consigned all his furniture and the tableware I should need for six persons, undertaking to furnish me as much of it as I wanted at one sou per ounce. He also promised to furnish me all the wines I should order from him at less than the price in Paris, since he could obtain them from outside. Everything was cheaper beyond the barriers. He also promised me cheaper fodder for my horses, and in fact everything, since whatever entered Paris had to pay and, being there, I was in the country.

In less than a week I acquired a good coachman, two carriages, five horses, a groom, and two good footmen in half-livery. Madame d'Urfé, for whom I gave my first dinner, was delighted with my house. She took it all as if it had been done for her, and I let her believe it. I also let her believe that young Aranda belonged to the Great Order,[46] that his birth was the result of an operation unknown to the world, that I was only his guardian, and that he would die without ceasing to live. All this came out of her own brain, and the best thing I could do was to agree with her; but she maintained that she knew nothing except from the revelations of her Genius, who spoke to her only at night. I escorted her home, and I left her supremely content.

About this time Camilla[47] sent me the ticket for a small *terna* she had won at my office, asking me to come to supper with her and bring the money. It was a thousand écus. At the supper, at which I found all her pretty fellow actresses present with their lovers, I was persuaded to go to the ball at the Opéra,[48] where I had scarcely arrived before I lost all my companions in the crowd. Not being masked, I was attacked by a female black domino,[49] who, telling me in falsetto a quantity of things about myself which were true, made me curious to know who she was. I managed to persuade her to come to a box with me. When she raised her mask I was surprised to see Miss *XCV*. She said she had come to the ball with one of her sisters, the elder of her brothers, and Signor Farsetti, and that she had eluded them to change her domino in a box. She laughed, imagining their uneasiness. She had no idea of relieving them from it until the end of the ball. Finding myself alone with her and in a position to keep her with me all through the ball, I began talking to her of my old flame and of the strength with which it had been rekindled. She received my words kindly; she did not refuse my embraces; and the few obstacles she put in the way of whatever I tried to do assured me that my happiness was only deferred. Delicacy obliged me not to insist, and she showed that she was grateful to me.

I told her I had heard at Versailles that she was to become the wife of Monsieur de la Pouplinière. She answered that people believed it, that her mother wanted it, and that the old Farmer-General expected it, but that she would never consent.

"He guarantees me a dower of a million," she said, "in case I become a widow without children, and his whole estate if I give him a child; but I do not want to make myself miserable with a man whom I dislike when I am no longer mistress of my heart. I love a man in Venice, and my mother knows it; but she insists that the man I love would not be a suitable husband for me. She would rather see me married to Signor Farsetti, who would give up his cross,[50] but I loathe him."

"Has he already spoken?"

"In unmistakable terms, and the indications of my dislike which I constantly give him do not abash him. He is a contemptible visionary, malicious and jealous, who once at table hearing me speak of you as you deserve saw fit to tell my mother she should not receive you."

I offered to serve her unhesitatingly in any way in which she thought I could be of use. She answered with a smile that she would consider herself only too happy if she could count on my entire friendship; and taking fire at that, I said that I had fifty thousand écus at her service and that I was ready to risk the clearest danger to my life in order to win rights over her heart. At this avowal she showed me the fondest gratitude, clasping me in her arms and joining her lips to mine. It would have been base in me to attempt anything further at such a moment. She asked me to come and see her often, assuring me that we would spend hours alone together; it was all that I could want. I promised I would dine with her the next day. So we parted.

After spending an hour in the ballroom, following her everywhere at a distance and congratulating myself on having become so thoroughly her friend, I went to Little Poland. It took me only a quarter of an hour. I was living in the country, and in a quarter of an hour I could be anywhere I pleased in the city. My coachman drove like the wind, my horses being of the kind called *enragés*[51] and not intended to be spared. Such horses, cast-offs from the King's stable, were a luxury. When he drove one of them to death for me I replaced it for two hundred francs. One of the greatest pleasures in Paris is driving fast.

Having promised to dine with Miss, I slept only a few hours. I went out lightly clad, I walked through the Tuileries, crossed the Pont Royal, and appeared before Madame *XCV* covered with snow, which was falling that day in great flakes. She received me with a laugh, saying that her daughter had told her that she had driven me wild at the ball and that I was to dine with her.

"It is Friday," she said, "and you will have to fast, but we have some excellent fish. Meanwhile, go and see my daughter, who is still in bed."

She was sitting up writing, and she put down her pen when she saw me. She said she was only staying in bed because she was lazy and it gave her more freedom. She was going to have some broth, for, not liking fast-day dishes, she did not intend to get up even to go to the table. Unembarrassed by her sister's presence, she took from her portfolio a letter in verse which I had written her when her mother had closed her door to me. She recited it to me from memory, and then was moved to shed a few tears.

"This fatal letter," she said, "which you entitled 'The Phoenix' [52] has decided my destiny and will perhaps be the cause of my death."

I had named it "The Phoenix" because, after lamenting my sad fate, I predicted in the tones of a bard that she would give her heart to a man who would have so many qualities that he could justly be called a phoenix. I devoted a hundred lines to describing such physical and moral qualities as really represented a perfect being worthy to be adored. It was the portrait of a god.

"Well," the tender Miss *XCV* went on, "I fell in love with this imaginary being, and, sure that he must exist, I spent six months looking for him everywhere and stopping when at last I thought I had found him. We loved; I gave him my heart, and we did not separate until I left Venice, four months ago. We stayed in London[53] until the end of the year and we have already been here for six weeks. I have received only one letter from him, but it is not his fault. I am kept under constraint, and I can neither receive letters from him nor write to him."

This narrative confirmed me in my philosophy. The most decisive actions of our lives arise from very trifling causes. My verse epistle was only a poetical extravaganza, and the being whom I portrayed in it was above humanity; but she thought such a being possible, and she fell in love with him in advance. When she thought she had found him it was not hard for her to find in him all the qualities she wanted him to possess, since it was she herself who gave them to him; and it was all up with her. But for my letter, none of all this would have happened. All things are linked together, and we are the instigators of events in which we are not actors. Hence anything important which happens to us in this world is only what is bound to happen to us. We are but thinking atoms, which move where the wind drives them.

We were summoned to table and we ate a choice dinner with the ocean fish which La Pouplinière had sent. Madame *XCV*, being Greek and extremely superstitious, could not fail to be a bigot. The alliance between God and the devil is infallible in the head of a vain, weak, voluptuous, and timid woman. A priest had told her that converting her husband would assure her of eternal salvation, for in the Scriptures God promised in unmistakable terms *animam pro anima* ("a soul for a soul")[54] to anyone who converted a heretic. Having converted her husband, she was convinced that she was safe; she had nothing more to do. However, she fasted on Friday, but she was the gainer by it. She liked fish better than meat.

After dinner I went back to Miss's bedside, where she proved to be a match for me until nine o'clock, during which time I was always able to subjugate my desires.

Since I was conceited enough to believe that hers were no less violent than mine, I did not wish to be the weaker.

Not having seen Farsetti, I suspected a break; but I was mistaken. She told me that nothing could persuade the visionary to leave his house on a Friday.

He had seen in his horoscope that he was to be murdered on that day, so his good sense decreed that he should seclude himself. Everyone laughed at him; but he was right nevertheless. He died in his bed four years ago[55] at the ripe age of seventy. He believed he thus proved that a man's destiny depends on good conduct, prudence, and taking precautions to avoid the evils which he has foreseen. The reasoning is excellent—except in the case of the evils foretold in a horoscope if we assume that a horoscope is what the astrologers want us to believe it is; for either the evils foretold can be avoided, and then the horoscope becomes puerile, or it is the voice of destiny, and then they are inevitable. Hence the Chevalier Farsetti was a fool if he thought he had proved anything. He would have proved something to a few limited minds if he had gone out every day and someone had killed him. Pico della Mirandola,[56] who believed in astrology, said: *Astra influunt non cogunt* ("The stars influence, they do not force").[57] I have no doubt of it. But should one have believed in astrology if Signor Farsetti had been murdered on a Friday? Certainly not, even so.

The Count of Égreville had introduced me to his sister the Countess du Rumain,[58] who, having heard of my oracle, had long wanted to meet me. In a few days I gained the friendship of her husband as well and of her young daughters, the eldest of whom, who bore the name Coëtanfao,[59] later became the wife of Monsieur de Polignac.[60] Madame du Rumain was more beautiful than pretty. She was loved for the sweetness of her character, her frankness, and her eagerness to use her influence on behalf of her friends. With her imposing height of five and a half feet, she awed all the Parisian magistrates to whom she applied. At her house I met Madame de Valbelle,[61] Madame de Roncherolles,[62] Princess Chimay,[63] and several other ladies who were the delight of what was called "good society" in Paris. Though Madame du Rumain did not dabble in the abstruse sciences, she needed my oracle even more than Madame d'Urfé did. She was useful to me in a disastrous situation, of which the story follows.

On the next day but one after my long conversation with Miss *XCV*, my valet told me that a young man wished to deliver a letter to me personally. I have him shown in and I ask him who gave him the letter; he answers that I will know when I have read it. He says he has been ordered to wait for my reply. I open it, and I find this:

"At two hours after midnight I need to sleep. What prevents nature from granting me that sad comfort is a burden which weighs on my soul; it is a secret of which I shall feel that I am relieved when it is no longer a secret to you, my only friend at this moment. I am pregnant, and my situation drives me to despair. I bring myself to write you this because I feel that I could never bring myself to tell it to you. A word in reply."

My surprise only allowed me to write her these few words: "I will call on you at eleven o'clock."

A misfortune cannot be called very great unless it turns its victim's brain. Her entrusting such a confidence to writing showed me that poor *XCV*'s wavering reason stood in need of help; and I was very glad that she had thought of me rather than anyone else, even if it meant that I would be ruined with her. Can one think otherwise when one loves? But what imprudence in the step she had taken! One must either speak or remain silent. The feeling which makes the victim of a misfortune prefer writing to speech can only derive from false shame (*malus pudor*),[64] which at bottom is nothing but pusillanimity. If I had not been in love with Miss, I should have found it easier to refuse her my help by letter than by word of mouth. But I was in love with her. "She must be counting on that," I said to myself, and the certainty nearly made me cherish her misfortune. If I could succeed in remedying it, I saw that I was sure of my reward, of the reward which is—alas!—the only goal of any man who loves.

I arrived to find her at the door of the hotel.

"You are going out? Where?"

"To mass at the Augustinians."[65]

"Is it a saint's day?"

"No, but my mother insists on my going every day. Give me your arm. We will talk in the cloister."

Her chambermaid remains in the church, and we go into the cloister.

"Have you read my letter?"

"Yes. Here it is. I return it to you. Burn it."

"I don't want it. You can burn it yourself. I am four months[66] gone with child, I am sure of it. I am in despair. I put myself in your hands. You must procure me an abortion."

"It is a crime."

"I know that, but it is no worse than killing oneself. Either an abortion or I will take poison. I have the poison ready. So, my only friend, you have become the arbiter of my destiny. Are you displeased that I preferred you to the Chevalier Farsetti?"

Seeing that I am aghast, she stops, draws her hood forward, and wipes away some tears. My heart bleeds.

"Crime or no crime, my dear Miss, abortion is not in our power. If the means used to bring it about are mild their effect is doubtful. If they are violent they threaten the pregnant woman's life. I will never take the risk of becoming your murderer; but I will not abandon you. Your honor is as dear to me as your life. Calm yourself, and from this moment imagine that it is I who am in your situation. Be sure that I will find a way out for you and that you will not take poison. Know in the meanwhile that I had no sooner read your letter than my first wholly involuntary reaction was to feel glad that you had chosen me before anyone else in a matter of such importance. You were not wrong. There is not a physician who knows this subject better than I do, and not a man in Paris who loves you better and who is more eager than I am to be useful to you. You shall begin at the latest tomorrow taking the drugs I will bring you, and I warn you that you cannot be too careful about secrecy, for it is a matter of breaking the severest laws. It is an infringement which is punished by death. Have you perhaps already confided in your chambermaid, in one of your sisters?"

"In no one, my dear friend, not even in him who is the cause of my misfortune. I shudder when I think what my mother would say, would do to me if she learned my condition, if she could guess it from watching my figure."

"Your figure is beyond suspicion, it is slim."

"It will become less and less so, and for that reason we must make haste. You shall find me a surgeon who does not know me, and take me to him when I am supposed to be at mass. I will let myself be bled as often as you want."

"I will not take that risk. The surgeon might betray us. I will bleed you myself. It is perfectly easy."

"I am grateful to you. I already seem to feel that you have restored me to life. The favor I ask of you is to take me to a midwife whom I could consult. We can easily go there the first evening there is a ball at the Opéra[67] without letting anyone see us when we leave the ballroom."

"There is no need for that, my dear. It is risky."

"Not at all, for in this vast city there are midwives everywhere, and we cannot possibly be recognized since we can even go masked. Do me this favor. The advice of a midwife can only be useful to me."

I did not have the strength of mind to refuse her the favor; but I made her consent to our waiting for the last ball,[68] where the crowd would make it easier for us to slip away unnoticed. I promised I would go to it in a black domino and wearing a white Venetian mask with a rose painted under my left eye. When she saw me go out she was to follow me and get into the same hackney coach she had seen me enter. All this was done; but we will return to it later.

I dined with her and the family, indifferent to the presence of Farsetti, who dined there too and who had seen me come back from mass with her. We never spoke to each other; but I disdained him.

But here is an enormous mistake[69] which I made, which I have to confess, and for which I have not yet forgiven myself.

Having promised Miss that I would accede to her wish and take her to a midwife, it is certain that if I had been wise myself[70] I ought to have taken her to a respectable woman, for it was only a matter of consulting her on the regimen a pregnant woman should follow and of obtaining some other innocent information. But not a bit of it. I pass through the narrow Rue Saint-Louis on my way to the Tuileries, I see La Montigny[71] going into her house with a pretty woman whom I do not know, I am seized with curiosity, I stop the coach, get out, and go up. After amusing myself for a time, since I am still thinking of Miss *XCV* I ask the procuress to give me the address of a midwife, as I need to consult one on some matter. She directs me to a house in the Marais,[72] the home, she says, of the cleverest of all midwives. She tells me several of her exploits, which show me that she is a criminal; but no matter, it was enough for me to know that I was not going to her on any illicit business. So I took down her address and, since I would have to go there at night, I went the next day to reconnoiter the door of her house.

Miss at once began taking the drugs which I did not fail to bring her, all of them potent to weaken and destroy what Love, Nature's master, had created; but seeing no effect from them she could not wait to talk with the midwife; the night of the last ball arrived, and, as we had arranged, she recognized me, followed me, entered the same hackney coach, and in less than a quarter of an hour we got out a hundred paces from the house in which the infamous creature lived. We see a woman of fifty,[73] who, showing every sign of being delighted by our visit, immediately offers us her services.

Miss tells her she thinks she is pregnant and has come to consult her about what she can do to conceal her pregnancy as much as possible until her time comes. The hussy replies with a laugh that she can tell her without beating around the bush that she will be very easy to abort and that she will accommodate her for fifty louis, half to be paid at once to buy the necessary drugs and the other half after she has had a successful miscarriage.

"Since I trust your honesty, you shall trust mine, give me the twenty-five louis now, and come or send tomorrow for the drugs and instructions for using them."

She then brusquely pulled up her client's skirt, who gently asked me not to look at her, and, after feeling her, lowered the curtain, saying that she could not be further along than the fourth month. She told us that if her drugs had no result, she would suggest other procedures, and that in any case she would return our money.

"I have no doubt of it," I answered; "but be so good as to tell me what the other procedures are."

"I will teach you how to kill the fetus, which then can only decamp."

I could have answered her that it was impossible to kill the child without mortally injuring the mother; but I did not want to argue with the infamous creature. I told her that if Madame decided to take her remedies I would come the next morning with the money to buy them. I gave her two louis, and we left.

Miss *XCV* told me she was sure the woman was a scoundrel and that she firmly believed the fetus could not be killed without endangering the mother, and hence she had confidence in no one but me. Saying that she felt cold, she asked me if we had time to make a quick fire at Little Poland, which she wanted to see. This sudden whim surprised and pleased me. On a very dark night she could see nothing of a country house except its interior, but I was far from raising any objection. I thought that the moment of my happiness was at hand.

I change coaches in the Rue de la Ferronnerie,[74] and a quarter of an hour later I am at my door. I give a master's ring, and "the Pearl" comes to open the door saying, as I very well knew, that there was no one at home. I tell her to light a fire and give us something to eat with a bottle of champagne. An omelet.

"Excellent, an omelet," said Miss gaily.

So there we are, in front of the fire, and I with my love in my arms, who seems to enjoy my transports and who does not tell me to restrain myself until she sees I have reason to think I am about to reach the summit of triumph. I have no difficulty in restraining myself, certain that after our little supper she will oppose no obstacle to my victory. Everything promised as much, her manner, her sweetness, her face which shone with gratitude, and her fond and languishing eyes. I was annoyed that she could think I could demand favors as rewards. I was magnanimous enough to want only love.

And now we have finished the bottle, we rise, and, half pleadingly, half using gentle force, I drop onto the bed, holding her in my arms; but she opposes my intention, first by honeyed words, then by too serious remonstrances, and finally by defending herself. That ends it. The mere idea of violence revolts me. I begin to plead my cause, sounding every note. I speak as a lover given hope, then deceived, then scorned. I say I am disabused, and I see that she is mortified. I then go down on my knees before her, I ask her to forgive me, and I hear her saying in the saddest voice that, since she is not mistress of her heart, she is more to be pitied than I am; then, melting into tears, she lets her head sink on mine, and our lips meet. The play is over. The idea of renewing the assault does not enter my mind except to be disdainfully rejected. After a long silence, of which we were both in the greatest need, she in order to still the feeling of shame which overwhelmed her, I to give my reason time to calm feelings of anger which I thought well justified, we resumed our disguises and went back to the Opéra. It was she who, on the way, went so far as to tell me that she would have to renounce my friendship if I set that price on it. I answered that feelings of love must yield to a sense of honor, and that her honor no less than mine obliged me to be her constant friend, if only to convince her that she did me an injustice by refusing me favors of which I was not unworthy, and that I would die before I would again attempt to gain them.

We parted at the Opéra, where the immense crowd hid her from my sight in a minute. She told me the next day that, even so, she had spent the whole night dancing as hard as she could. She hoped that violent motion might be the medicine she needed.

I went home in a very bad humor, seeking vainly for reasons which might justify a refusal I could never have expected. I could not conclude that Miss's action had been just and reasonable except by piling sophism on sophism. Simple common sense was enough to show me that I had been insulted, despite all imaginable conventions and all the prejudices which custom or education could enforce in civilized society. I thought of the witticism credited to Populia,[75] who had never allowed herself to be unfaithful to her husband except when she was pregnant. *Non tollo vectorem,* she said, *nisi navi plena* ("I do not take a passenger unless the ship is full").[76] It angered me that I had been shown beyond doubt that I was not loved, and I felt that it would be shameful in me if I continued to love an object which I could no longer hope to possess. I went to sleep resolved to avenge myself and to abandon her to her fate despite the heroism she would credit me with if I acted otherwise. My true honor demanded that I be duped by nothing.

When I woke in the morning I was calm and, consequently, in love. My final resolve was to continue to give her all the help in my power, displaying indifference to what she did not believe she was free to grant me. I knew how difficult it was to play this role well, but I had the courage to play it.

CHAPTER IX

I continue my intrigue with the attractive Miss XCV. *Vain attempts to bring on an abortion. The aroph. Miss runs away and enters a convent.*

I WENT to see her every morning, and since I was really concerned over her condition, she could not take my eagerness to help her out of her difficulty for anything but what it was. No longer seeing me in love with her, she could attribute it only to pure sympathy. So far as I could see, she approved of the change in me, but her approval might be only apparent. I knew that, even if she did not love me, seeing me resign myself so easily must have irritated her. One morning, congratulating me on having got the upper hand of my passion, she added with a laugh that my passion and my desires could not be very strong if I had succeeded in conquering them in less than a week. I answered deprecatingly that I owed my cure to my self-esteem.

"I know," I said, "that I am worthy to be loved, and when I saw that you did not recognize it I became indignant. Do you know the effect of indignation?"

"Very well. It is followed by scorn of the object which has aroused it."

"That is saying too much. Mine was followed by an examination of my conduct and a plan for revenge."

"What kind of revenge?"

"Forcing you to esteem me and at the same time convincing you that I can do without your treasures. I have already become accustomed to seeing them without wanting to possess them."

"And I suppose you think my esteem gives you your revenge; but you are mistaken, for I esteemed you a week ago no less than I do today. I never for a moment believed you capable of abandoning me as punishment for having refused to yield to your ardor, and I congratulate myself on having seen you for what you are."

She then spoke of the opiate which I was having her take and of which she wanted me to increase the dose since she saw no effect from it, but I did not respond; for I knew that taking more than half a dram of the remedy might kill her; nor would I consent to her being bled a third time. Her chambermaid, whom she had just let into the secret, had had her bled by a surgeon who was her lover. I having then told Miss that she should be generous with such people, and she having replied that she had no money, I offered her some. She said she would accept fifty louis, for which she would account to me, and that she needed the amount for her brother Richard.[1] Not having them with me I sent them the next day with a note in which I asked her to turn to no one except myself for anything she needed. But her brother thought I was the man to do him an even more considerable service.

He called on me the next morning to thank me and to beg my help in a serious situation. He showed me a chancre of a very ugly kind, which he had acquired from going all by himself to a place of ill fame. He asked me to speak to his mother and persuade her to have him treated, complaining that Signor Farsetti, after refusing him four louis, had washed his hands of the matter. I did as he asked, but when I told his mother what the trouble was she said it was better to leave him with the chancre he had, which was his third, for she was sure that after he was cured of it he would simply go and get another. I had him cured at my expense; but his mother was right. At the age of fourteen his profligacy knew no bounds.

Having now entered on her sixth month, Miss *XCV* was in despair; she would no longer leave her bed, and she made me miserable. Believing that I was no longer in love with her, she showed me and made me touch her hips and her belly to convince me that she could no longer let anyone see her. I played the role of midwife, displaying complete indifference to her charms and not letting her see a trace of my feeling; but I was at the end of my rope. She talked of taking poison in a tone which made me tremble. I was in the most agonizing of quandaries when Fortune extricated me in a way which proved to be high comedy.

Dining alone with Madame d'Urfé, I asked her if she knew a sure way to bring on an abortion. She answered that Paracelsus's aroph[2] was infallible and not at all difficult, and, seeing that I was interested, she went and fetched a manuscript, which she handed me. It called for preparing an unguent of which the ingredients were powdered saffron, myrrh, and a number of others, and the vehicle honey. The woman who hoped to empty her womb was to put a dose of this opiate on the end of a cylinder of the proper size and insert it into her vagina in such a way as to stimulate the round piece of flesh at the top of her such-and-such. The cylinder must at the same time stimulate the channel leading to the closed door of the little house which sheltered the little enemy whose departure was sought. This procedure, repeated three or four times a day for six or seven days, so weakened the little door that it finally opened and the fetus tumbled out.

Laughing heartily at the prescription, whose absurdity was instantly apparent to common sense, I gave Madame back her precious manuscript and I spent two hours reading the always astonishing Paracelsus and then Boerhaave,[3] who discusses aroph like a reasonable man.

At home by myself the next day and thinking of Miss *XCV*, I decided to communicate this prescription for producing abortion to her, hoping that she might need my help in introducing the cylinder.

Calling about ten o'clock and finding her in bed as usual and depressed because the opiate I was having her take produced no effect, I spoke to her of Paracelsus's aroph as of an infallible topical remedy for weakening the ring of the womb. It was on the spur of the moment that it occurred to me to tell her that the aroph had to be mixed with sperm which had not lost its natural heat for a single instant.

"It is necessary," I said, "for the sperm to touch the ring immediately upon coming out. Repeating the procedure three or four times a day for five or six days, the little door is obliged to open and the fetus to come out perforce of its own weight."

After making certain that she understood the thing thoroughly and showing her the apparently sound physiological reasons for using the remedy, I said that, her lover being absent, she needed to have a friend who would live in the house with her, and whom no one could suspect, to administer the amorous remedy to her three or four times a day. She could not keep from laughing at the idea. She asked me seriously if it was a joke, and I finally saw that she had no more doubts when I offered to bring her the manuscript in which the whole theory of what I had just told her was set forth.

She did not urge me to bring it when I said that the manuscript was in Latin; but I saw that she was persuaded when I told her about the wonders of aroph and what Boerhaave said about it.

"Aroph," I said, "is a great specific for bringing on menstruation."

"And menstruation," she[4] replied, "cannot appear as long as a woman is pregnant, so aroph is an infallible remedy for bringing on an abortion. Do you know how to make it?"

"It is perfectly easy. There are five ingredients, which are powdered and put in honey or butter. It is an unguent which, when it touches the ring, must find it in amorous excitement."

"Then I should think the person who administers it must be in love too."

"Of course, unless he is a being who has so much the nature of a donkey that he does not need to love."

She remained thoughtful for a full quarter of an hour. Though she was very intelligent, the candor of her soul prevented her from suspecting a fraud. Astonished on my side that I had rattled off this nonsense with all the earmarks of truth yet completely on the spur of the moment, I said nothing.

Breaking the silence at last, she said sadly that she could not think of using the remedy, which, however, she considered admirable and natural. She asked me if compounding aroph took a long time, and I answered that it would take only two hours if it was possible to obtain English saffron,[5] which Paracelsus preferred to that from the East.

Her mother, accompanied by the Chevalier Farsetti, came and interrupted our conversation. She asked me to stay for dinner, and I accepted when Miss told me she would dine at the table too. She came to it with the figure of a nymph. I could not believe she was pregnant, much as she had tried to convince me of it. Signor Farsetti sat down beside her, and her mother took a place beside me. Miss, who was thinking of aroph, took it into her head at dessert to ask her table companion, who boasted that he was a great chemist, if he knew of it.

"I even believe," he replied, "that I know it better than anyone."

"What is its use?"

"Your question is too indefinite."

"What does the word 'aroph' mean?"

"It is an Arabic word. You must go to Paracelsus for that."

"It is neither Arabic," I said, "nor of any language. It is a word which hides two others: *aro: aroma; ph: philosophorum.*"

"Is it Paracelsus," Farsetti replied cuttingly, "who made you so learned?"

"No, sir; it was Boerhaave."

"Permit me to laugh, for Boerhaave nowhere says that; but I like a doughty quoter."

"Laugh as much as you please; but here is the touchstone. I never misquote."

So saying, I throw my purse, which is full of louis, on the table. Farsetti says in a scornful tone that he never wagers. Miss laughs and tells him it is the sure way never to lose. I put my purse back in my pocket, and pretending a need, I go out and send my lackey to Madame d'Urfé's to fetch the volume of Boerhaave in which I had read the statement the evening before. I return to the table, and I keep the company amused by my remarks until my lackey brings me the book. I immediately find the place, and I invite Signor Farsetti to see that I had not misquoted. Instead of looking he gets up and leaves. Madame says that he has gone away angry and will not come back; Miss offers to wager that he will come back the next day, and she would have won. After this incident the man became my inveterate enemy, as he always showed me he was when occasion served.

We all went to Passy to a concert given by La Pouplinière, and we stayed for supper. I found Silvia there, and her daughter, who was sulky with me; she was justified, I could not see her every day, but I did not know what to do about it. The man who kept the company entertained, and who ate nothing, was the adept Saint-Germain. Everything he said was empty boasting, but everything was courteous and witty. I have never in my life known a cleverer and more persuasive impostor.

I spent the whole of the next day at home, answering a great many questions sent me by Esther, but very obscurely in all cases when they touched on business. Aside from my fear of compromising my oracle, I shuddered at the thought that, by misleading her father, I might jeopardize his financial position. He was the most honest millionaire in all Holland. As for Esther, she was now only a fond memory to me.

Miss *XCV* occupied me completely, and despite my seeming indifference I was only too certain that I loved her and that I could not be happy except by becoming her lover with no reservations. But I was miserable when I thought of the situation I should be in when she could no longer hide her big belly from her family. I repented that I had told her about aroph; seeing that she had let three days go by without mentioning it to me, I thought I had aroused her suspicions and that the esteem she had felt for me had changed to scorn. The supposition had humiliated me; I no longer had the courage to call on her, and I do not know if I should have brought myself to do so if she had not written me a note in which she said she had no friend but myself and that she asked no other proof of my friendship except my coming to see her every day, if only for a moment. I took her my answer in person, assuring her that my friendship was constant and that I would never abandon her. I had hoped that she would bring up the subject of aroph, but in vain. At that I concluded that she had not believed any of it and that I could no longer count on it. I asked her if she would like me to invite her mother and the whole family to dinner at my lodging, and she answered that it would please her.

The dinner was very animated. I invited Silvia and her daughter, an Italian musician named Magali,[6] with whom one of Miss's sisters was in love, and La Garde,[7] the basso profundo, who frequented the best society. I had never seen Miss *XCV* gayer than she was that day. When she left me about midnight she told me to come to her early the next day because she had something very important to discuss with me.

Far from failing to appear, I went there at eight o'clock in the morning. She told me she was in despair because La Pouplinière wanted to conclude the marriage and that her mother was pressing her. She was to sign the contract and a tailor was to come and take her measurements to make bodices and all kinds of clothes for her. She said—and she was right—that it was impossible the tailor would not see she was pregnant. She would rather kill herself than either marry when she was pregnant or confess to her mother. I urged it on her that any course was preferable to the dreadful course of suicide, and that in any case it was in her power to get rid of La Pouplinière simply by revealing her condition to him. He would laugh and make the best of it, he would keep her secret and would say no more about marrying her.

"And after that would I be much better off?"

"I undertake to bring your mother round."

"You do not know her. Honor would oblige her to get me out of sight; but she would make me suffer torments to which the most painful death is preferable. But why have you stopped talking about aroph? Is it all a joke?"

"I believe it is a reliable remedy, but what is the use of my talking to you about it? Consider the delicacy which prevents me from doing so. Confide your condition to your lover in Venice, and I undertake to have your letter delivered to him by a trustworthy man in five or six days. If he is not rich I will give you a purse full of gold, so that he can come here immediately and save your honor and your life by administering the aroph to you himself."

"It is an admirable plan and generous on your part; but it is not in the realm of possibilities, and you would agree if you knew all. But suppose that I could bring myself to receive aroph from some man who was not my lover, tell me how I could do it. Even if my lover himself were hidden in Paris he could not spend seven or eight days with me as freely as it seems he would have to do to follow the prescription exactly. So you see there is no use thinking of this remedy any more."

"Then to save your honor you would consent to give yourself to another man?"

"Certainly, if I were sure no one knew about it. But where is such a man to be found? Do you think I could go looking for him, or that it would even be easy to find him?"

Her last words petrified me, for she knew that I loved her. I clearly saw that she wanted me to ask her to make use of my person. Despite my love I could not bring myself to risk a humiliating refusal which would have been an atrocious insult; and besides, I could not believe she was capable of affronting me in this fashion. To force her to speak out, I rose to leave, saying in a sad and pathetic tone that I was more unhappy than she.

She stopped me, asking me how I could say I was more unhappy than she, which left me no alternative to saying, in a rather resentful tone, she had shown me clearly enough that she despised me so greatly that in her present need she would reject my services in favor of those of some unknown man, whom, I added, I had no intention of finding for her. She answered that I was cruel and unjust, that I did not love her to begin with, that I wanted her cruel situation to serve my triumph, which she could only regard as a revenge.

So saying, she turned away to shed tears which touched me; but I let no time pass before I dropped to my knees before her.

"Knowing that I adore you," I said, "how can you suppose that I entertain plans of revenge, and how can you think that I do not feel it when you tell me clearly that, your lover being away, you cannot see what man would help you out of your difficulty?"

"Could I count on you after my refusals?"

"So you think that a true lover could cease to love because of a refusal which may even spring from virtue? Permit me to tell you that at this happy moment I am certain that you love me and that you are sorry I may suppose you would never have made me happy except for the need under which you are laboring."

"You are, my dear friend, the faithful interpreter of my feelings; but it remains to be seen how we can be together with all the freedom we must have."

"I will rack my brains for the answer, and in the meanwhile I will compound the aroph."

Compounding it did not trouble me, for I had already decided that it should be nothing except honey; but I had to spend several uninterrupted nights with her, and that was difficult. I was sorry I had made the stipulation, and I could not think of retracting it. One of her sisters slept in the same room with her, and I could not consider making her spend nights away from the hotel. Chance, as it nearly always did, came to my rescue.

A natural need having made me go up to the fifth floor, I run into the kitchen boy, who tells me not to go to the toilet because someone is there.

"But you have just come out of it."

"Yes, but I only started in."

"Very well, I will wait."

"I beg you not to wait."

"You've been having fun with a girl. I want to see her."

"She won't come out, because you know her. She has locked herself in."

I go to the door and through a crack I see Magdelaine,[8] Miss's chambermaid. I reassure her; I promise her I will be discreet, and I ask her to open the door, my need being urgent. She opens, I give her a louis, and she runs away. After doing my business I go down, and halfway downstairs I find the kitchen boy, who laughs and says I ought to make Magdelaine give him twelve francs.[9] I promise him a louis if he will tell me everything, and he admits that he sees her in the garret, where he spends nights with her, but that the mistress, having put game there three days before, had locked the door. I make him take me there, and I see through the keyhole that the game left room for a mattress, I give the kitchen boy the louis I had promised him, and I go away to ripen my plan. I thought that Miss, if she took Magdelaine into her confidence, could easily come up and spend the night with me in the garret. On the same day I procured a picklock and several skeleton keys, and in a tin box I put several doses of the supposed aroph. I mixed honey with powdered stag's horn.

The next morning I went to the Hôtel de Bretagne, where I immediately had the pleasure of unlocking and locking the garret without needing to use the picklock. I entered Miss's room carrying the key, and in a few words told her my whole plan, showing her the prepared aroph. She said that since she could not leave her room except by passing through the small room in which Magdelaine slept, we should have to let her into our secret and that she left it to me to win her over by the means one uses with all servants. What troubled us was the kitchen boy, who, if he managed to find out what was afoot, might decide to do us harm. On that score I had to consult Magdelaine. I left her,[10] promising that I would act and would keep her informed of everything through the chambermaid.

As I went out I told the latter that I would wait for her in the cloister of the Augustinians, having to talk with her on an important matter, and she came. After understanding the whole plan perfectly and assuring me that her own bed would be in the garret at the appointed hour, she showed me that we could not do without the kitchen boy, and that prudence itself obliged us to let him into the secret. She answered for his fidelity and said that I should leave her to deal with him. So I gave her the key and six louis, saying that everything must be ready for the next day and that she must make arrangements with Miss. A chambermaid who has a lover is never so happy as when she is given a role which puts her own mistress in her power.

The next day at Little Poland the kitchen boy appeared before me; I was expecting as much. Before he spoke I told him he must beware of my servants' curiosity and refrain from coming to my house except when necessary. He promised he would be cautious, and he told me nothing new; as Magdelaine had assured me, everything would be in readiness in the garret the next day, as soon as the whole family had gone to bed. He gave me the key to the garret, saying that he had obtained another for himself, and admiring his foresight I gave him six louis, which had more effect than all my words.

The next morning I saw Miss only for a moment, to tell her that she would find me in the garret at ten o'clock, and I was there punctually, sure that no one had seen me either enter the hotel or go up to the garret. I was wearing a redingote. I had my box of aroph, a reliable flint and steel, and a candle in my pocket. Besides the mattress I found cushions and a good blanket, which was needed since the weather was cold and we had to spend hours there.

At eleven a slight noise causes me a palpitation which always seems a good augury. I go out, I grope my way to Miss and whisper a few words of a sort to reassure us both. Then I show her into our hiding place, shut the door, and barricade it. I quickly light my candle and she appears uneasy; she says that the light may betray us to someone going to the toilet. I reply that we must take the risk, since in the dark she cannot crown me with the aroph in the necessary manner. She agrees, saying that we will blow out the candle immediately afterward. We undress very fast, entirely dispensing with the preliminaries which always precede the performance when love leads up to it. Both of us concentrating on our roles, we play them to perfection. In our utter seriousness we appeared to be a surgeon getting ready to perform an operation and the patient who submits to it. Miss was the operating surgeon. She sets the open box at her right, then lies down on her back, and, spreading her thighs and raising her knees, arches her body; at the same time, by the light of the candle, which I am holding in my left hand, she puts a little crown of aroph on the head of the being who is to convey it to the orifice where the amalgamation is to be accomplished. The astonishing thing is that we neither laughed nor felt any desire to laugh, so engrossed were we in our roles. After the insertion was completed, the timid Miss blew out the candle, but two minutes later she had to let me light it again. The thing had been done to perfection so far as I was concerned, but she did not feel sure about herself. I obligingly said that I did not mind repeating the performance. My formal tone made us both laugh, and she had no difficulty in crowning me again, after seeing that some of the aroph had changed color very slightly from the amalgamation.

This second time the application of the remedy took a quarter of an hour, and she assured me that it had been perfect. I was certain of it. She showed me, with an expression which spoke love and gratitude, that the amalgamation had been twofold, for what she had contributed to it was clearly visible. She said that since our work was not yet over we would do well to sleep.

"You see," I said, "that I am not in need of it," and she surrendered. Another preparation, another combat to the most successful conclusion, which was followed by a longish sleep.

A reflection on our resources which pleased me decided her to husband my strength. We had to preserve ourselves for the nights to come. She went down to her room, and at daybreak I left the hotel with the help of the kitchen boy, who made me slip out by a door I did not know of.

Toward noon I paid Miss a visit. She talked to me reasonably, and she outdid herself in thanks which really exhausted my patience.

"I am amazed," I said, "at your not understanding that your thanks are degrading to me and prove either that you do not love me or that, if you love me, you suppose my love is not equal to yours."

She admitted that I was right, and we became emotional; but we had to save ourselves for the night. My situation was peculiar. Though I loved her I could not be sorry that I had deceived her. It was a slight revenge which I owed to my self-esteem. She on her side said that she was punished for the wrong she had done me when she had refused to yield to my fond entreaties, since I now had a reason to doubt her love. What I really won from her during the nights we spent in vain efforts to bring on an abortion was her promise to think no more of suicide and, whatever the outcome might be, to entrust herself to me and be guided entirely by my advice. She told me several times during our nocturnal dialogues that she felt happy and that she would not cease to feel so even if the aroph should have no effect; but despite this magnanimous sentiment, she continued to hope that it would, and she never stopped applying it to our two selves until the last night of our combats. At our final parting she said that all we had done would seem more apt to engender a superfetation in her organ than to bring it to a repugnance whose consequence would be to make it cast out the fruit of which it was the repository. No one could reason more logically.

Having lost her last hope of bringing on an abortion, and unable to delay any longer in signing the contract of marriage with La Pouplinière and receiving the tailors, she told me she had decided to run away, and she laid it on me to find the means. It became my sole preoccupation. The decision was taken in principle; but I was not willing either to risk being convicted of abducting her or to take her out of the kingdom. Neither of us had ever thought of uniting our destinies by marriage.

With this flea in my ear, I went to the Concert Spirituel [11] at the Tuileries. The piece was an anthem, with words by the Abbé de Voisenon set to music by Mondonville,[12] the proper title of which was "The Israelites on Mount Horeb." [13] It was a new work. It was I who had given the idea for it to the amiable Abbé, who had written it in charming irregular verse. Getting out of my carriage in the Cul-de-sac Dauphin,[14] I see Madame du Rumain getting out of hers alone. She congratulates herself on having met me there; she says she is going to hear the new piece, that she has reserved two seats, and that I would be doing her a favor if I would occupy one of them. Such an invitation being an honor of whose value I was thoroughly aware, I accept. In Paris people do not chatter when they go to a theater to hear music;

so Madame would not have inferred from my silence that I was melancholy; but she guessed it after the concert from my countenance, on which she saw my depression and the sorrow which wrung my soul. She asked me to come and spend an hour at her house to obtain answers to three or four questions which deeply concerned her and to do it quickly because she was going out to supper.

It was all done in half an hour; but the charming woman could not help asking what was the matter with me.

"You are," she said, "quite unlike yourself; you must certainly be fearing some great misfortune; you have some very difficult decision to make. I do not wish to pry into your affairs; but if I can be of use to you at Court, speak, all my influence is at your disposition; you will find me ready to move heaven and earth and even to go to Versailles myself tomorrow morning if the matter is urgent; I have every Minister's ear. Confide your troubles to me, my dear friend, and if I cannot[15] relieve you of them, at least let me share them with you, you can rely on my discretion."

This little discourse seemed to me veritably a voice from Heaven, a command from my Genius to speak freely to this paragon among women who had seen into my soul and who let me know, in unmistakable terms, all the interest she took in me. After looking at her without answering but with eyes in which she could not but see gratitude:

"Yes, Madame," I replied, "I am in the most critical of situations and perhaps on the verge of ruin; but what you have just so openly said to me leads me to hope. I shall now inform you of my painful quandary, entrusting you with a secret which honor makes inviolable; but, certain of your discretion, I do not hesitate to reveal it to you. If you honor me with advice I promise to follow it, and I swear that no one shall ever know I had it from you."

After this short exordium, which gained me all her attention, I told her the whole story in detail, concealing neither the young lady's name nor any of the circumstances which made it my duty to find some way of saving her. However, I did not tell her the too comical story of the aroph, but I confessed that I had given her drugs to bring on an abortion.

After spending a quarter of an hour in silence she rose, saying that she must now go to Madame de la Marck's,[16] among other things to speak with the Bishop of Montrouge,[17] but that she hoped she could be of use to me.

"Meanwhile," she said, "please come to see me day after tomorrow at eight o'clock, and be so good as not to take any step until we have talked. Good-by."

She left me with relief in my soul, and I determined to do whatever she told me to do.

The Bishop of Montrouge, to whom she had to speak concerning a matter of which I knew, was the Abbé de Voisenon, who was so called because he went there very often. It was an estate near Paris which belonged to the Duke of La Vallière.[18]

The next day I told Miss *XCV* only that I hoped to bring her good news in two or three days. I did not fail to call on Madame du Rumain on the following day at the appointed hour. The porter told me, with a smile, that I should find the doctor there; but when I appeared he left. It was Herrenschwandt,[19] whom all the pretty women in Paris wanted to have—the same whose role the unfortunate poet Poinsinet[20] took in *The Circle,* a one-act play which had a great success in Paris.

Madame du Rumain began by telling me that she had solved my difficulty and that it was now my part to keep her intervention an inviolable secret.

"Yesterday," she said, "I went to C . . .[21] and I told the Abbess,[22] who is an intimate friend of mine, the whole story. She will receive the young lady into her convent and will give her a lay sister who will serve her in everything, even during her confinement. The young lady is to go alone with a letter which I will give you and which she will send in to her. She will be at once taken in and lodged, she is to receive no visitors and no letters except those which pass through her hands, and she[23] undertakes to send her answers only to me, for you realize she must correspond with no one except you. Hence she will never write to you except through me. You will do likewise, and all the addresses will be left blank. However, I had to tell the Abbess the young lady's name, but I did not tell her yours and she did not ask to know it. Inform her of all this, and when she is ready come and tell me, and I will give you the letter. She must take with her only what she absolutely needs—no diamonds or jewelry of any value. I can also assure you that the Abbess will see her from time to time, and that she will be friendly and will supply her with all sorts of decent books. As for the lay sister who will wait on her, she is not to confide anything to her. Inform her of all this. After she is delivered the young lady will go to confession in preparation for making her Easter communion, and the Abbess will give her a formal certificate which will obviate any difficulties when she appears before her mother, who will be only too glad to see her; and there will be no more question of the marriage, which she will give as the only cause of her running away of her own free will."

After outdoing myself in thanks and praising her prudence, I asked her to give me the letter at once, since there was no time to lose. Here is the short letter which she wrote for me:

"The young lady who brings you this letter, my dear

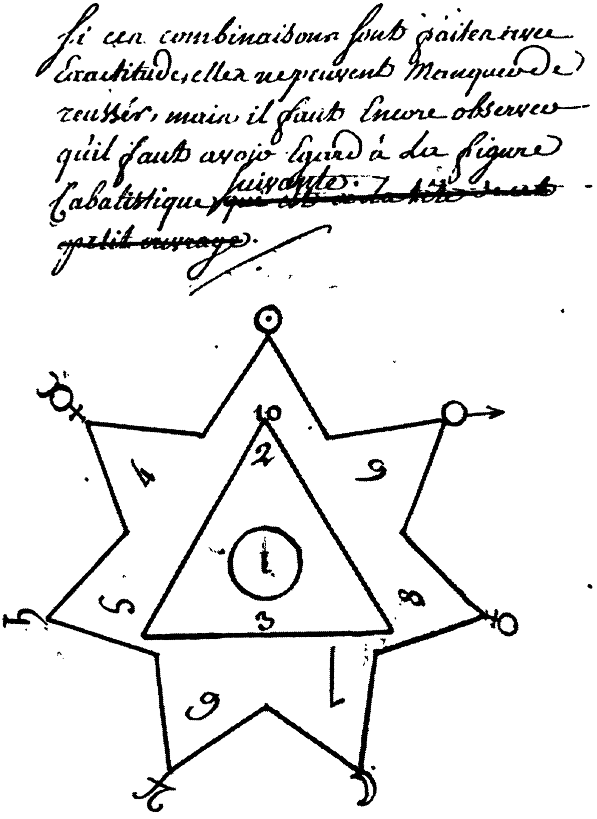
Abbess, is the one about whom I spoke to you. She wishes to spend three or four months under your protection in your convent to recover her peace of mind, perform her devotions, and be certain that when she returns to her home there will be no more question of a marriage which she loathes and which is the cause of her present decision to absent herself from her family for a time.''

She gave it to me unsealed so that Mademoiselle could read it. The Abbess was a princess; in the extremity of my gratitude I went down on my knees before the lady, who was also useful to me later, as I will relate when the time comes.

Leaving Madame du Rumain's, I went to the Hôtel de Bretagne, where Miss had only time to tell me that she was engaged all day and that she would come to the garret at eleven o'clock, where we should have all the time we needed to talk. It was charming, for I foresaw that after that day I should not again have an opportunity to hold her in my arms. I spoke to Magdelaine, who undertook to warn the kitchen boy, and everything was in readiness.

I repaired to the garret at ten o'clock, and at eleven I saw Miss, and after giving her the letter to read I put out the candle and we spent the night like real lovers without any further thought of aroph.

I repeated exactly to her all the instructions I had received from the lady, whose name she made no objection to my concealing. I told her that she must leave the hotel at eight o'clock with her bundle, take a hackney coach, and go to the Place Maubert,[24] where she would dismiss it. There she must take another to the Porte Saint-Antoine,[25] and from there go in yet another to the convent of which I gave her the name. I begged her not to forget to burn all the letters she had received from me and to write to me as often as possible, sealing her letters, but always leaving the outside blank. I ended by



si ces combinaisons sont faites avec Exactitude, elles ne peuvent Manquer de reussir, mais il faut Encore observer quil faut avoir Egard à la figure Cabalistique suivante. ~~qui est à la tête de ce petit ouvrage~~

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Casanova's Thoughts on the "Cabalistic Treasure" making her accept two hundred louis, urging it upon her that she might need them though we could not then see how. She wept when she thought of the dangerous situation in which she was leaving me; but I reassured her by saying that I had plenty of money and very powerful protectors. After concerting these measures, we parted. She promised to set out on the next day but one, and I promised to go to the hotel on the day after her flight, pretending to know nothing about it, and to write her whatever was said.

Her future worried me. She was intelligent; but without experience intelligence often does more harm than good. I waited in a hackney coach at the corner of a street, where I saw her arrive, get out at an alley, pay, and dismiss the coach. A minute later I saw her emerge with her hood over her head and get into another coach, which at once drove off. Thus assured that she would faithfully carry out the rest of my instructions, I went about my business.

The next morning—it was Quasimodo Sunday[26]—I felt that I must not fail to go to the Hôtel de Bretagne. Since I went there every day I could not stop going without confirming the suspicions of which I must have become the object. But what a painful task! Obliged to appear gay and untroubled amid a family whom I was sure to find distraught and sad!

I went at the hour when the whole family would be at table, so I walked straight into the dining room. I enter, smiling and gay as ever, and I take a seat half behind Madame. I pretend not to have noticed either her surprise or her flushed face. A minute later I ask her where Miss is; she looks at me and does not answer.

"Is she ill perhaps?"

"I have no idea."

Her curt tone decides me to appear serious, I assume a pensive air, and I remain there for a good quarter of an hour without speaking. I finally break the silence by rising and asking her if I can serve her in any way. She declines very coldly. I leave and go to Miss's room, where I find Magdelaine alone. I ask her, with a wink, where her mistress is, and she begs me to tell her myself if I know.

"Did she go out alone?"

"I have no idea, but they say you know everything. Please leave me."

Pretending to be astonished, I slowly leave the house and get into my carriage, very glad to have got through this burdensome task. I decide that the natural thing for me to do will be not to appear again before the lady, who must know that she has received me very badly, and that, guilty or innocent, I must have been aware of it.

Very early on Tuesday I saw a hackney coach stop at my door and Madame *XCV* and Signor Farsetti get out of it. I go to meet them, I thank them for having come to breakfast with me and ask them to sit down by a good fire. Madame replies that she has not come for breakfast but to talk with me on an urgent matter. She sits down, and Signor Farsetti remains standing. I reply that I am entirely at her service.

"I have come to ask you to restore my daughter to me if she is in your custody, or to tell me where she is, in which case I will attend to it myself."

"Madame, I know nothing of her, and I am amazed that you should suspect me of a crime."

"I do not accuse you of an abduction, I am not here to reproach you with crimes or to threaten you; I have come to ask you to show me your friendship. Help me to recover her this very day; I am sure that you know all; you were her only friend; she spent two or three hours with you every day; it is impossible that she should not have confided everything to you. Take pity on a heartbroken mother. All will be saved, for no one knows anything yet. Her honor will not suffer."

"I understand all that, Madame, but I repeat that I know nothing about her."

She then went down on her knees to me, melting into tears, while Farsetti told her she should be ashamed to humiliate herself before a man of my kind.

"Explain," I said to him, rising, "what you mean by 'my kind.' "

"It is certain that you know everything."

"Only fools are certain. Leave, and wait till I come. You will see me in a quarter of an hour."

I pushed him by the shoulders, and he left, telling Madame to follow him, but she stayed behind to calm me, saying that I must forgive a man who loved her enough to marry her.

"I know that, but your daughter loathes him, even more than she does the Farmer-General." [27]

"She is wrong; but there will be no more question of her marrying him. You know everything, for you gave her fifty louis, without which she could not have gone anywhere."

"That is not true."

"It is true. Here is a piece of your letter."

She handed me a scrap of the letter I had written Miss when I sent her the fifty louis which the elder of her two brothers needed. These are the words which could be read:

"I hope that these paltry fifty louis may convince you that I will never spare anything, even my life, to make you sure of my affection."

"Since I am obliged to admit," I said, "that I sent her this money, I will also tell you that I supplied her with it only to pay the debts of your elder son. He received it, and he has thanked me for it."

"My son?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then I will now make you full atonement."

With that she goes down to the courtyard, where Farsetti was waiting for her, and makes him come upstairs to learn from my own lips that the fifty louis I had sent had been for her son; but he has the impudence to tell me that it was beyond belief. I laugh in his face, and I ask Madame to verify the fact, assuring her that I had always tried to persuade her daughter to marry La Pouplinière.

"How dare you say that," Farsetti interrupts me, "when in your letter you speak of your affection?"

"I admit," I replied, "that I loved her and that, hoping for the honor of cuckolding her husband, I was laying the foundations for it. My love, criminal or not, was the theme of what I said during all the hours I spent with her. If she had confided to me that she wanted to run away, either I would have dissuaded her or I would have gone with her, for I was, as I still am, in love with her. I would never have given her money to go away without me."

"My dear Casanova," Madame then said, "I will believe you are innocent if you will join me in finding her."

"I am perfectly ready, Madame, and I promise to begin making inquiries today."

"When you learn anything, come and tell me."

In accordance with this promise I did not find it hard to call the next morning on Monsieur Chaban, the chief clerk in the police office, and urge him to investigate the girl's flight. I innocently thought that my taking this step would only serve to make me even safer. The man, who was thoroughly imbued with his profession and who had liked me ever since Silvia had introduced me to him at her house five or six years earlier, began to laugh when he learned to what matter I desired him to give his attention. He asked me if I really wanted the English girl's whereabouts discovered. On my side I had no difficulty in seeing that he was only trying to worm information out of me. I had no further doubt of it when, on my way out, I met Signor Farsetti.

I went the next morning to report on my as yet unsuccessful effort to Madame *XCV*. She replied that her own investigation had been more successful than mine, and that if I would go with her to the house in which her daughter then was, she was sure I could persuade her to come home. I answered most calmly that I was ready to go anywhere with her. Taking me at my word, she rose, put on her tippet, and, handing me a card, told me to order my coachman to drive to the address on it.

Cruel moment for me! My palpitating heart seemed to be bursting from my breast. I expected to see the address of the convent where Miss was. I do not know how I should have managed it, but I certainly would not have gone there.

My soul returned to its seat when I read "such-and-such an alley off the Place Maubert."

I give the appropriate order to my coachman; we get out at the alley; and, by exercising great politeness, I give the poor mother the satisfaction of taking her to visit every room, front and back, on every floor. At the end of this strange and useless search I saw that she was unhappy but satisfied and close to begging my pardon. She had learned from the hackney coachman who had driven her daughter that he had let her out at this alley. She told me that the kitchen boy at the hotel had said he had been to my lodging twice with letters, and that Magdelaine said nothing except that she was certain Miss loved me as I loved her.

After taking Madame *XCV* home I called on Countess du Rumain to tell her all that had happened and to write a long letter to the young recluse.

Three or four days later Madame du Rumain gave me the first of her letters, in which she told me of the peace which her soul was enjoying and her extreme gratitude for all that I had done for her. She praised the Abbess and the lay sister and told me the names of the books she had been given, all of them to her taste. She paid six francs a day, and she had given the lay sister four louis, promising her the same amount each month. What she did not like was that the Abbess had asked her never to leave her room.

But what pleased me even more was the letter from the Abbess to the Countess. She spoke in the highest terms of the unfortunate beauty, praising her sweetness, her intelligence, her dignity, and her manners. She promised she would go to see her every day. Madame du Rumain's satisfaction delighted me. I gave her my letter from her to read, and I saw that she was even more content.

The only people who were not contented were Madame *XCV*, Farsetti, and the old Farmer-General, whose disaster was already the talk of reception rooms, the Palais-Royal, and every coffeehouse. I was given a share in it, but I did not care.

As for La Pouplinière, he so far resigned himself that he even made it the subject of a one-act play which he wrote himself and had performed at his little theater[28] in Passy. Such was his character. His device was a cock with the words *Fovet et Favet* ("He forwards and fosters"). Emblem of tolerance, of which, however, he gave a poor exhibition in the famous episode of the fireplace.[29] Three months after "the English girl," as everyone called her, disappeared, he sent one of his cronies to Bordeaux and there married by proxy a very pretty young lady, the daughter of a Capitoul.[30] At the end of two years[31] she gave him a son, who was born six months after his death. The avaricious harridan who was the rich man's heir accused the widow of adultery and had the infant declared illegitimate, to the shame of the Parlement which so adjudged him, and despite the laws of God and man, the entire nobility, and all the intelligent people in France, who had to tolerate the iniquity of this infamous judgment. The scandal was universal, and the innocent widow did not dare to appear anywhere after the incredible loss of a suit which added fresh opprobrium to the same Parlement, which in former times had declared legitimate a child born eleven months after the death of its father, that is of the widow's defunct husband.

A week or ten days after Miss's flight I entirely suspended my visits to her mother; the cold reception I found there decided me to take this course.

CHAPTER X

Further incidents. J. J. Rousseau. I establish a business. Castel-Bajac. An action at law is brought against me. Monsieur de Sartine.

A MONTH later there was no more talk of the matter, I thought it was over, but I was wrong. In the meanwhile I amused myself, and the pleasure I took in spending money lavishly kept me from thinking of the future.

The Abbé de Bernis,[1] on whom I called once a week, told me one day that the Comptroller-General [2] kept asking him for news of me and that I was making a mistake in neglecting him. He advised me to forget my claims and to lay before him the plan for increasing the revenue of the State concerning which I had spoken to him earlier. Since I set great store by the Abbé's advice, for I owed him my fortune, I went to the Comptroller-General and, full of confidence in his good faith, gave him my project. It was for a new law, to be registered by the Parlement, which would oblige every heir to an estate, except estates which passed from father to son, to cede the first year's income from it to the King. All gifts formally made before a notary *inter vivos* ("between living persons") would also be subject to the same law, which could not offend the recipients, for they had only to imagine that the testator had died a year later. The Minister[3] said that my project presented no difficulties; he put it in his secret portfolio and assured me that my fortune was made. A week later he was dismissed, and when I applied to his successor, Silhouette,[4] he coldly told me that he would have me informed if the occasion arose to promulgate the law. The law was instituted in France two years later, and I was laughed at when, saying that I was the originator of it, I asked to what recompense I was entitled.

Not long afterward, the Pope[5] having died, the succession was conferred on the Venetian Rezzonico,[6] who immediately bestowed a cardinalate on my patron De Bernis, whom the King exiled to Soissons two days after he gave him the cardinal's hat;[7] so I was left without a patron, but rich enough not to be troubled by the misfortune. The illustrious Abbé, then at the pinnacle of his fame for having destroyed all Cardinal Richelieu's[8] work by collaborating with Prince Kaunitz to transform the old hatred between the houses of Bourbon and Austria into a flourishing alliance, thus delivering Italy from the miseries of the war of which it became the theater each time there was a break between the two houses, which gained him the first nomination to a cardinalate made by a Pope who, as Bishop of Padua, had come to know all his merits—this noble Abbé, who died last year[9] at Rome, enjoying the particular esteem of Pius VI, was banished from Court for telling the King, who had asked his advice on the subject, that he did not consider the Prince of Soubise[10] the best man to command his armies. As soon as La Pompadour heard it from the King himself, she had power enough to ruin him. Everyone deplored his disgrace, but found comfort for it in verses. A strange nation, which ceases to feel its afflictions as soon as poems or songs make it laugh! In my day the authors of epigrams and songs which attacked the government and the Ministers were put in the Bastille; but that did not prevent the wits from continuing to amuse their particular circles—for in those days the word "club" was unknown—with their satirical jests. A man whose name I have forgotten appropriated the following verses from the younger Crébillon[11] about this time and let himself be sent to the Bastille rather than disavow them. Crébillon told the Duke of Choiseul that he had composed the verses, but that it was possible the prisoner had composed them too. This witticism by the author of *The Sofa*[12] raised a laugh, and nothing was done to him.

Grand Dieu! Tout a changé de face.
Jupin opine du bonnet ....Le Roi
Vénus au conseil a pris place ..La Pompadour
Plutus est devenu coquet .....M. de Boulogne
Mercure endosse la cuirasse ....Le Mar. de Richelieu
Et Mars a le petit collet. ....Le duc de Clermont,
Abbé de
St.-Germain-des-Prés.

("Good God! everything has changed. Jupiter says yes to everyone [the King], Venus has a seat in the Council [La Pompadour], Plutus has become a ladies' man [Monsieur de Boulogne],[13] Mercury has put on armor [Marshal de Richelieu], and Mars wears a clerical collar [the Duke of Clermont, Abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés]." [14])

The illustrious Cardinal de Bernis spent ten years in his exile, *procul negotiis* ("far from business")[15] but not happy, as I learned from his own lips fifteen years later at Rome. It is said that there is more pleasure in being a minister than in being a king; but, *caeteris* *paribus* ("other things being equal"), I find nothing more idiotic than this dictum, if, as I ought to do, I consider it in my own case. It amounts to asking if independence is or is not preferable to dependence. The Cardinal was not recalled to Court, for there is no example of Louis XV's ever recalling a dismissed minister; but when Rezzonico[16] died he had to go to the conclave and for the rest of his life he remained the French Ambassador[17] in Rome.

About this time Madame d'Urfé took a fancy to make the acquaintance of J. J. Rousseau;[18] we went to Montmorency[19] to visit him, taking some music, which he copied wonderfully well. People paid him twice as much as they would have paid another copyist, but he guaranteed that there would be no errors. It was the way he made his living.

We found a man who reasoned well, whose manner was simple and modest, but who was entirely undistinguished either in his person or his wit. We did not find what is called a pleasant man. We thought him rather impolite, and it took no more for Madame d'Urfé to set him down as vulgar. We saw a woman[20] of whom we had already heard. She scarcely looked at us. We went back to Paris laughing at the philosopher's eccentricity. But here is a faithful account of a visit paid him by the Prince of Conti,[21] father of the Prince who was then known as the Count of La Marche.[22]

The charming Prince goes to Montmorency by himself, on purpose to spend a pleasant day talking with the philosopher, who was already famous. He finds him in the park, he accosts him and says he has come to dine and spend the day with him in unconstrained conversation.

"Your Highness will eat poor fare; I will go and order another place set."

He goes, he comes back, and after spending two or three hours walking with the Prince he conducts him to the room in which they are to dine. The Prince, seeing three places laid:

"Who," he said, "is the third person with whom you want me to dine? I thought we should dine alone together."

"The third person, Monseigneur, is another myself. It is a being who is neither my wife nor my mistress nor my servant nor my mother nor my daughter; and she is all those."

"I believe it, my dear friend; but since I came here only to dine with you, I will leave you to dine with all those other selves. Good-by."[23]

Such are the absurdities of philosophers when, trying to be remarkable, they only succeed in being eccentric. The woman was Mademoiselle Levasseur, whom he had honored with his name, except for one letter of it, under the mask of an anagram.[24]

About this same time I was present at the failure of a French comedy entitled *Aristides' Daughter*.[25] Its author was Madame de Graffigny.[26] That worthy woman died of grief five days after her play failed. I saw the Abbé de Voisenon in great distress; it was he who had encouraged her to have her play presented and who had perhaps worked on it, as he had on her *Peruvian Letters* and her *Cénie*.[27] Pope Rezzonico's mother died of joy[28] at this same time on seeing her son become Pope. Grief and joy kill more women than they do men. This shows that women are more sensitive than we are, but also weaker.

As soon as my supposed son was, according to Madame d'Urfé, well settled in Viar's boarding school, she insisted that I go with her to visit him. And to tell the truth, I was surprised.

A prince could not be better lodged, better treated, better dressed, or more respected by everyone in the establishment. She had given him all kinds of teachers, and a schooled pony so that he could learn equitation. He went by the name of Count of Aranda. A girl of sixteen or eighteen and very pretty, the daughter of Viar, proprietor of the school, never left him and announced herself as his young lordship's governess with every sign of satisfaction. She assured Madame d'Urfé that she took particular care of him, that when he woke she brought him his breakfast in bed, then dressed him, and did not leave him until she had put him to bed. Madame d'Urfé approved of all her attentions and assured her she was grateful. The little fellow could say nothing to me except that I had made his life happy. I decided to go back by myself one day to sound him out and learn on what terms he was with the pretty girl.

On the way back I told Madame that I was pleased with everything except the name Aranda, which might cause difficulties. She replied that the boy had said enough to show beyond doubt that he really had a right to bear the name.

"In my desk," she said, "I had a seal with the arms of that house; as soon as the boy saw them he seized on the seal and asked me how I happened to have the arms. I answered that I had them from the Count of Aranda himself, urging him to tell me how he could prove he was of the family; but he silenced me by saying that his birth was a secret he had sworn never to reveal to anyone."

Curious to discover the source of an imposture of which I should never have believed the young rascal capable, I went to see him by myself a week later. I found him with Viar, who, seeing that he addressed me with something very close to humility, must have thought that he belonged to me. Praising the young Count's talents in the highest terms, he said that he played the flute excellently, danced and fenced very nimbly, rode very well, and that no one was better at drawing all the letters of the alphabet. He then showed me some pens he had cut, with one, three, five, and up to eleven nibs, and urged me to examine him in heraldry, a science so necessary to a nobleman and of which no one had a better knowledge than he.

The boy then blazoned his arms in herald's jargon, which made me laugh for I knew almost none of the terms; but I took pleasure in seeing how skillfully he wrote freehand with his various pens, which simultaneously drew as many straight and curved lines as they had nibs. I told Viar that it was all very gratifying; and very much pleased, he left me alone with him. We went into the garden.

"May I ask," I said, "what this nonsense about your calling yourself Aranda is?"

"It is nonsense, but let it pass, I beg you, for I have to do it to inspire respect here."

"It is a lie which I cannot let pass, for it may have disagreeable consequences which will involve us all. It is an imposture, my friend, of which I did not believe you capable, a feather-brained whim which may become criminal and which I do not know how to make good and save your honor after all you have said to Madame d'Urfé."

I did not end my scolding until I saw him weep and heard him implore me. He said that he would rather endure the mortification of being sent back to his mother than the shame of having to admit to Madame d'Urfé that he had lied and having to give up the name which he had claimed as his own at school. He moved me to pity. I could really do nothing to mend matters short of sending him to live under another name fifty leagues from Paris.

"Tell me," I said, "and mind you tell me the truth, what exactly is the nature of the affection of the pretty young lady who lavishes such attentions on you."

"I think, my dear Papa, that this is a time for the discretion which you and my Mamma have so often recommended to me."

"So that is it! Your objection has told me everything; but there is no place for discretion in a confession."

"Well then, Mademoiselle Viar loves me and gives me proofs of it which leave me in no doubt."

"And you?"

"I love her too; and certainly it can't be wrong for me to return her affection—she's so pretty! and her sweetness and her caresses are such that I could be insensible to them only if I were made of marble or utterly ungrateful. I have told you the truth."

With this avowal, which had already corrupted me, the young man blushed furiously. I was too much interested to change the subject. The charming young girl, in love, demonstrative, holding the little fellow in her arms, making him return her ardors, rose into my mind to beg my indulgence, and she had no difficulty in gaining it. I needed to make him continue his narrative to learn if he had nothing to reproach himself with in the response which it seemed to me he could not but accord to so pretty a girl.

So, assuming that kindly manner in which there is no shadow of reproach:

"Then," I said, "you have become the charming girl's little husband?"

"She tells me so every morning and every evening, and then I enjoy seeing how happy it makes her when I call her my little wife."

"And you are not afraid someone will catch you?"

"That is up to her."

"You are in each other's arms as God made you?"

"Yes, when she comes to put me to bed, but she only stays an hour at most."

"Would you like her to stay longer?"

"Not really, because after I've made love I can't help falling asleep."

"I imagine she is your first mistress in the fine art of love."

"You may be sure of that."

"And if she becomes pregnant?"

"She has assured me it is impossible, and when she told me the reason she convinced me; but in a year or two we both think she would have to fear it."

"Do you think she has had another lover before you?"

"Oh no, I'm sure she hasn't."

This whole dialogue only had the effect of making me irretrievably in love with his young mistress. I left him after asking him at what hour she brought him his breakfast. I could neither disapprove nor put obstacles in the way of the mutual affection of their two young hearts; but I thought the least recompense they owed me for my tolerance was to let me witness their amorous ecstasies at least once.

A Bohemian count, of the Clary[29] family, who had come to me with a letter of introduction from Baron de Bavois,[30] and whom I saw nearly every day, was at that time so filled with the venomous juice which in Italy we call "the French disease" that he needed to go into seclusion for six weeks. I arranged for him to stay at the surgeon Faget's[31] for the sum of fifty louis, which I lent him, since, he said, he was then out of money because of the negligence of his cashier, who lived at Töplitz, to which principality he was the heir. It was untrue. Clary was a handsome man who lied from dark to dawn; but my friendship for him was such that I only pitied him. He lied every time he spoke, and not to deceive but from an unconquerable trait of his character. No man is more unhappy than a liar, especially if he is born a gentleman; and he can only lie if he lacks intelligence since he knows that, once he is discovered to be a liar, he can only be despised. His lack of intelligence consists in his believing that he has not been found out and in imagining that the things he comes out with will be taken for true if they merely appear probable. He does not know that despite their probability they do not have that stamp of truth which is strikingly and instantly apparent to anyone of intelligence. Yet the liar thinks he is far more intelligent than those who tell the truth, which according to him they would not do if they had the divine faculty of invention. Such a man was the unfortunate Count Clary, of whom I shall speak again and who came to a bad end. He was very lame; but since it was due to his hip he carried himself so well when he walked that I did not observe the very pardonable defect until three months after I first met him. I saw him limping as he walked in his room once when he thought he was alone; when he turned I asked him if he had hurt himself the day before, and he answered that he had, blushing to the ears. That time I could not condemn him for having lied. Walking without a limp was the lie which cost him the most effort, for on promenades and when he danced he was bathed in sweat. Being young and handsome, he did not want anyone to be able to say he had this defect. He liked gambling when he could improve upon luck, but in shady company, for among gentlemen he would not have had the courage to fight if there was a quarrel; then, too, his manners were not polished enough for him to figure in good society.

The style in which I lived in Little Poland made it famous. Everyone talked of the excellent table I kept. I had fowl fed on rice in a dark room; they were white as snow, with an exquisite flavor. To the excellence of the French cuisine I added whatever the other cuisines of Europe offered to tempt the most refined palates. My macaroni *al sughillo,*[32] my rice sometimes as pilau,[33] sometimes *in cagnoni,*[34] my *olla podridas*[35] were the talk of the town. I matched well-chosen guests with exquisite suppers, at which my company saw that my pleasure depended on the pleasure I provided for them. Ladies of distinction, all of them versed in love, came during the morning to walk in my garden with unseasoned young gallants who did not dare open their mouths and whom I pretended not to see; I gave them fresh eggs and butter which surpassed even the celebrated butter from Vambre.[36] These were followed by plenty of Zara maraschino,[37] than which none better was to be had anywhere. I often lent the unoccupied part of my house to some bigwig who came there to sup with a woman above suspicion. My house then became a sanctuary impenetrable even to myself. They knew that nothing escaped me; but the lady was grateful to me for pretending not to know her whenever I saw her.

Delighted with this life, and needing an income of a hundred thousand francs to maintain it, I often tried to think of some way to make it permanent. A man fertile in schemes whom I met at Calzabigi's seemed sent by Heaven to provide me with an income even above my hopes. He talked to me of the extravagant profits made by silk manufactories, and of those which could be made by a man who, having the necessary capital, would also have the courage to establish a manufactory of painted silks like those from Pekin. He showed me that, with perfect silks, pure colors, and our designers, who were better than any in Asia, there was a vast fortune to be made. He convinced me that, at a price a third less than was asked for those imported from China, such silks, which would be even more beautiful, would be preferred all over Europe, and that despite their being sold so cheaply the manufacturer would make a profit of a hundred percent. He definitely captured my interest when he told me that he was himself a designer and painter and that he was prepared to show me some samples of his talent. I told him to come and dine with me the next day, bringing his samples, and we would discuss the matter when I had seen them. He came, I looked at them all, and I was amazed. What won me over was the design and the beauty of the colors, of which he had the secret and which would resist rain. The beauty of the foliage in silver and gold surpassed what was admired in silks from China which were sold at very high prices in Paris and everywhere. I saw that the thing would be very easy once the design was applied to the fabrics, since the working girls I would hire and would pay by the day would only have to color it according to instructions and that they would produce as many pieces as I wanted in proportion to their number.

The idea of becoming the head of a manufactory[38] pleased me. I congratulated myself that I would become rich in a manner which would recommend me to the State. However, I decided not to make any move until I had first seen everything clearly, thoroughly investigated receipts and expenditures, and engaged or made sure of trustworthy persons upon whom I could rely, since my own part in the enterprise was to consist in my being furnished the accounts and seeing that everyone did his duty.

I arranged for my man to come and spend a week or so in my house. I wanted him to design and paint under my eyes on fabrics of all colors. He did it very rapidly, and he left me all that he had produced, saying that so far as the lastingness of the colors was concerned I could put the pieces he had painted to any test. I carried the samples in my pockets for five or six days, and I saw that all my good friends were delighted with their beauty and my project. I decided to establish the manufactory; and to that end I consulted my man, who was to be the director.

Having decided to rent a house in the Enclos du

Temple,[39] I went to the Prince of Conti, who, after praising my project warmly, promised me his patronage and any franchises I might want. In the house which I chose, the rent for which cost me only a thousand écus a year, I had a large room in which all my girls were to work, each at her own frame. I set apart another large room as a storehouse, and several other apartments on all the floors as lodgings for the more important employees and for myself when I wanted to stay there.

I divided my enterprise into thirty shares, of which I gave five to my painter and designer, keeping the other twenty-five to distribute proportionally among associates who would put up the capital. I gave one share to a doctor who furnished security for the position of storehouse keeper and who came to live in the building with his whole family, and I hired four lackeys, two maidservants, and a porter. I also had to give another share to a bookkeeper, who supplied me with two clerks and also came to live in the building. I did all this in less than three weeks, keeping several carpenters busy making closets in the storehouse and twenty frames in the large room. I left it to the director to find twenty girls to do the painting, whom I would pay every Saturday; and I put in store three hundred lengths of strong taffeta, *gros de Tours,*[40] and white, yellow, and green camlet,[41] to receive the painted designs, the choice of which I reserved to myself. I paid for everything in cash.

According to a rough calculation made with my director on the basis that sales of our product would not begin until the end of a year, I needed a hundred thousand écus, which I had. In any case I could sell shares at twenty thousand francs, but I hoped I should never have to sell any, for I was aiming at an income of two hundred thousand francs a year.

I saw that the enterprise would ruin me if sales proved insufficient; but how could I fear that, when I saw the beauty of my fabrics and heard everyone telling me that I should not sell them so cheaply? In less than a month I spent some sixty thousand francs establishing the firm, and I had undertaken to pay out twelve hundred francs a week. Madame d'Urfé laughed, believing that I was only doing it to put the curious off the scent and ensure my incognito. What pleased me very much, though it should have made me tremble, was the sight of twenty girls, all between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, all of modest appearance and more than half of them pretty enough, listening attentively to the painter's instructions at their new work. The most expensive among them cost me only twenty-four sous a day, and they were all of good reputation, chosen by the director's wife, who was pious, and to whom I was very pleased to grant this satisfaction, sure that I should have her as my accomplice if I took it into my head to conquer one of the girls. But Manon Balletti shuddered when she saw me the master of this seraglio. She did not hide her displeasure, even though she knew that at nightfall they all went home to eat supper and sleep. But now for what dropped on me from the blue to shatter my peace of mind.

Miss *XCV* had been in the convent for three months and was nearing her time; we wrote to each other twice a week, and I felt perfectly easy about the matter. Monsieur de la Pouplinière having already married, when Miss came out of the convent she would go home, and there would be no more talk.

One day after dining at Madame d'Urfé's I took a stroll in the Tuileries. In the principal walk I see an elderly woman accompanied by a man dressed in black and wearing a sword, who stops and looks at me, then speaks to her. It is perfectly simple; I continue my stroll; but the next time around I see her again, closer to me and standing still to look at me, and I remember having seen the man who was walking with her at a gambling house, and that he bore the Gascon name of Castel-Bajac.[42] On my third time around I recognize the woman as the one to whom I had gone with Miss to consult her about her pregnancy. This convinces me that she has recognized me, but considering it of no significance I leave the garden and go elsewhere.

On the next day but one at eleven o'clock, just as I was getting into my carriage, I see a disreputable-looking man who hands me a paper and tells me to read it. Seeing an incomprehensible scrawl, I ask him to read it himself, and I hear that I am ordered to appear before the Commissary[43] that same day after dinner to answer a complaint lodged against me by the midwife so-and-so. He then leaves.

Unable to imagine what the harridan could be complaining of, and certain that she could not convict me of knowing her, I go to an attorney of my acquaintance and formally empower him to represent me. I inform him that I do not know, and have never known, any midwife in Paris. The attorney went to the Commissary and next day brought me a copy of the complaint.

She alleged that I had come to her on such-and-such a night with a lady five months pregnant, both of us wearing dominoes, which showed that we had come from the ball at the Opéra, and that I had demanded that she give me drugs to bring on an abortion, holding a pistol in my right hand and a roll of fifty louis in my left and ordering her to choose. Fear had made her answer that she did not have the necessary drugs ready, but that she would have them the next evening, whereupon I had left, promising to return. Believing that I would not fail to come, she had the next morning asked Monsieur de Castel-Bajac to hide in the room next to the one in which she would receive me, to protect her against violence, but she had not seen me again. She would not have put off lodging a complaint if she had known who I was. On the previous day she had recognized me in the Tuileries, and Monsieur de Castel-Bajac, who knew me, having told her my name and address, she had hastened to accuse me,[44] and she demanded that I be subjected to the full rigor of the laws. This was the satisfaction which her outraged honor led her to desire. Castel-Bajac's name was signed as witness.

My attorney said it was a libel without a shadow of probability and hence it was my part to see that the shameless midwife who was proceeding against me should be punished according to the laws. He said that I should take the case to the Criminal Lieutenant,[45] and I authorized him to do whatever he thought advisable. Four days later he came and told me that the magistrate wanted to speak with me privately at his own house at three o'clock in the afternoon.

I found a most amiable man. He was Monsieur de Sartine,[46] whom the King two years later[47] rewarded by naming him Lieutenant of Police. His former office was one which he sold, the latter an appointment which was not for sale. He immediately asked me to sit down.

"Monsieur," he said, "I have asked you to come here for our mutual advantage, since our interests are inseparable. In the matter of the criminal charge which has been brought against you, you are right to lodge a counteraccusation before me if you are innocent; but first of all you must make your innocence perfectly clear. I am ready to help you, my position as your judge set aside; but you must realize that your opponent cannot be found guilty of libel until convicted of it. I ask you to give me an extrajudiciary statement. Your case is already of the utmost gravity. It is of such a nature that despite your innocence you may feel that your honor demands a certain discretion from you. Your opponents will not respect your delicacy, and they will press you so hard that you will find yourself forced either to accept a verdict of guilty if you do not tell all or to fail in what you may consider your honor demands of you in order to prove your innocence. I now make you a confidence completely between ourselves. Know that, within certain limits, honor is so dear to me that I often defend it at the expense of the strict and rigorous rules of criminal justice. Pay me in the same coin; have confidence in me; tell me everything; give me all the information possible, and thus gain my friendship. If you are innocent I risk nothing, for being your friend can never prevent me from being an incorruptible judge; but if you are guilty I am sorry for you. I warn you that I will be just.''

After saying everything to him which a due regard for his noble offer prompted, I assured him that since I was not in a situation in which honor demanded discretion of me I had nothing to tell him extrajudicially. The midwife who was accusing me and whom I did not know could only be a criminal who had joined with a man of her own stamp to extort money from me.

''I am willing to believe it,'' he said; ''but if she is a criminal, hear how chance has favored her to make it a long and difficult task for you to prove your innocence. Mademoiselle *XCV* ran away three months ago. You were her intimate friend. No one knows where she is. You are suspected; from the moment she disappeared spies have been paid to follow your every step. The midwife, through the advocate Vauversin,[48] yesterday laid before me an indictment in which it is claimed that the pregnant lady you took to her is the lady who disappeared. The midwife says you were both wearing black dominoes; and it has already been ascertained that you both went to the ball in black dominoes on the night on which the midwife says you went to see her. These are only half-proofs, but they make one tremble.''

"What reason have I to tremble?"

"Because a false witness may be paid to swear that he saw you both leave the ball and get into a hackney coach, and a bribed coachman may even swear that he took you to the midwife's house. In that case I should have to begin by ordering your arrest to oblige you to name the person whom you took to the midwife's. You are accused of having subjected her to an abortion and, three months having elapsed, she is thought to be dead."

"I should be found guilty of murder, innocent though I am, and it is you who would sentence me to death. I am sorry for you."

"You are right to be sorry for me; but do not suppose that I would sentence you lightly. Indeed, I am certain that I would never sentence you to death if you are innocent; but you might languish for a long time in prison, innocent though you may be. You see now that this matter has become very serious in twenty-four hours and that in a week it may become terrible. What gained you my interest is the absurdity of the midwife's accusation, which made me laugh; but the rest, which complicates the matter, is grave. I see the likelihood of an abduction; I see love and honor imperiously commanding you to be discreet. I decided to talk with you. Tell me all, and I will spare you all the difficulties which you must expect even though you are innocent. Tell me all, and be sure that the young lady's honor will not suffer. But if you have the misfortune to be guilty of the crimes with which you are charged, I advise you to take measures which it is not for me to suggest to you. I warn you that in three or four days I will have you summoned to the court record office,[49] where you will see me only in my capacity of judge."

Petrified by this harangue, which revealed all the danger of my situation and showed me beyond doubt that I must put the highest value on the worthy man's offer, I said sadly that, completely innocent though I was, I must avail myself of his kindness in respect to the honor of Miss *XCV*, who had committed no crime yet whom this foul accusation put in danger of seeing her reputation besmirched.

"I know," I said, "where she is, and I can assure you that she would never have left her mother if she had not tried to force her to marry the Farmer-General."

"But he is married;[50] let her return to her home, and you are safe, unless the midwife persists and proves that you induced an abortion."

"Alas, Monsieur, there is no question of abortion; but other reasons prevent her from returning to her family. I cannot tell you more without a consent which I shall try to obtain. I can then give you all the information to which your noble character entitles you. Grant me the honor of a second hearing in this place day after tomorrow."

"I understand; I will hear you with pleasure, and I thank you no less than I congratulate you. Good-by."

Seeing that I was on the brink of ruin, I felt that I was ready to leave the kingdom rather than betray my unhappy darling's secret. I would gladly have hushed up the affair with money if I had been in time. It was obvious that Farsetti had played the principal part, and that he had never ceased to pursue me and to pay the spies who followed me everywhere. It was even he who had set the advocate Vauversin on me. I saw that I must tell Monsieur de Sartine everything; but I could not do that until I had obtained Madame du Rumain's permission.

CHAPTER XI

I am examined. I give the court record clerk three hundred louis. The midwife and Castel-Bajac are sent to prison. Miss gives birth to a boy and obliges her mother to make me amends. My case is quashed. Miss leaves for Brussels and goes with her mother to Venice, where she becomes a great lady. My working girls. Madame Baret. I am robbed, imprisoned, and set free. I leave for Holland. Helvétius' Esprit. *Piccolomini.*

I WENT to her the next morning very early. Since the matter was urgent I had her waked, and I gave her an account of all the circumstances. She said it was no time for hesitation, that the Criminal Lieutenant must be informed in full, and that she would go and speak to him herself. She immediately wrote him that she would come to speak with him about an important matter at three o'clock that afternoon, and he answered that he would expect her. She went, she told him the whole story, she said that she[1] was on the eve of being confined and that after her confinement she would go back to her mother, but without confessing to her that she had been pregnant. She assured me that I had nothing more to fear; but that, since the case would continue, I would be summoned to the court record office on the next day but one. She advised me to go and see the record clerk[2] and find some excuse for giving him money.

I was summoned and I appeared. I saw Monsieur de Sartine *sedentem pro tribunali* ("sitting as judge"). At the end of the hearing he said that he was obliged to issue a writ of summons for me. He warned me that I must not leave Paris nor could I marry while it ran, since any criminal prosecution carried with it the suspension of the right to make civil contracts. At my examination I acknowledged that I had gone to the ball wearing a black domino on the night named in the action, but I denied all the rest. In regard to Miss *XCV* I said that neither I nor any member of her family had ever thought that she was pregnant.

Since as a foreigner I had to fear that Vauversin would obtain a writ for my arrest by accusing me of preparing to flee, I made it my excuse to pay a visit to the record clerk and place in his hands, without asking for a receipt, three hundred louis as a guarantee for the court costs if I should have to pay them. He advised me to demand the same guarantee of the midwife, and I instructed my attorney to attend to it; but this is what happened four days later.

As I was taking a walk on the rampart opposite the Rue du Temple[3] a Savoyard approached me and put a note in my hands. I read, and I find that a person who is waiting in an alley fifty paces away wishes to speak with me. I order my carriage, which was following me, to stop, and I go to the alley.

Great was my surprise when I saw Castel-Bajac. He immediately said that he had only a few words to say to me and that we could be sure that no one saw us.

"I have come," he said, "to offer you a sure way of ending a case which must be worrying you and costing you a great deal of money. The midwife is certain that it is you who came to her with a pregnant woman, and she is now sorry to have been the reason for your being accused of abducting her. Give her a hundred louis and she will tell the record clerk she was mistaken. You need not pay the amount until afterward. Come with me to talk with the attorney Vauversin and he will persuade you. I know where he is. Let us go. Follow me at a distance."

· Delighted to see how easily the scoundrels were about to betray themselves and curious to learn how they would go about it, I followed the man to the fourth floor of a house in the Rue aux Ours,[4] where I found the advocate Vauversin. As soon as he saw me he came to the point. He told me that the midwife would appear at my lodging with a witness to tell me to my face that I had been at her house with a pregnant woman, and that she would not recognize me. In his opinion this would be enough to make the Criminal Lieutenant stop all proceedings and would put me in a position to defeat the young lady's mother in court. Considering the scheme well conceived, I told him that I would make myself available at my house in the Enclos du Temple every day until noon. He then said that the midwife needed a hundred louis, and I promised to give them to him whenever she had filed a statement of her mistake at the court record office; and he replied that she would take my word for it but that I must first pay a quarter of the amount, which he was to receive for his expenses and his fee. I stated that I was ready to pay it if he would give me a receipt, and on this question we had a long discussion; but in the end he gave me the receipt with the most complete guilelessness, and I counted him out twenty-five louis. He said that he would secretly advise me how to counter all Madame *XCV*'s proceedings, even though she was his client, since he believed I was innocent. I said I hoped he would continue his good offices, and I went home and wrote an account of the whole incident and immediately sent it to Monsieur de Sartine.

Three days later my valet tells me that a woman is there with a man and asks to speak with me. I come out, I ask her what she wants, and she answers that she wants to speak with Monsieur Casanova.

"I am he."

"Then I have made a mistake."

The man who was with her smiled and they left. On the same day Madame du Rumain received a letter from the Abbess in which she announced that her protégée had been successfully delivered of a fine baby boy, whom she had already sent to a place where he would be properly cared for. She said that the new mother would not leave the convent until six weeks had passed, when she would go home to her mother with a certificate which would protect her against any kind of annoyance.

Two or three days later[5] the midwife was sentenced to prison and put in solitary confinement. Castel-Bajac was sent to Bicêtre,[6] and Vauversin was stricken from the list[7] of advocates. Madame *XCV*'s proceedings against me continued until her daughter reappeared,[8] but always without effect. Miss *XCV* returned to the Hôtel de Bretagne toward the end of August,[9] appearing before her mother with a certificate from the Abbess stating that she had kept her for four months, during which time she had never either gone out or received a visitor; she was returning home now that she need no longer fear being forced to marry La Pouplinière. She made her mother go in person to the Criminal Lieutenant with the same certificate, thereby dropping all proceedings against me. He advised her to maintain a prudent silence on the matter in future, and to accord me some reparation because I would have cause to lodge a complaint, which would be even more injurious to her daughter's honor.

Her daughter, though she had no such fear, obliged her to make me full amends in a written statement, which I caused to be registered at the record office and which enabled me to put a formal end to the case. I did not go to see her again, in order not to encounter Farsetti, who undertook to conduct Miss to Brussels, since her honor forbade her to appear in Paris, where everyone knew her story. She remained in Brussels with Farsetti and Magdelaine until her mother, with the rest of the family, rejoined her there to take her to Venice, where three years later she became a great lady. I saw her again fifteen years later, widowed and passably happy in the consideration she enjoyed because of her rank, her intelligence, and her social virtues; but I never again indulged in the slightest intimacy with her. Four years from now the reader will learn where and how I saw Castel-Bajac again. Toward the end of this same year 1759, before I left for Holland I spent a further sum of money to obtain the midwife's release from prison.

The life I was leading was that of a happy man; but I was not happy. The great sums I was spending made me foresee difficulties. My manufactory would have put me in a position to maintain it if my sales had not been halted by the war.[10] I had four hundred pieces of painted fabrics in my storehouse, and there was no likelihood of selling them before the peace, and since the so greatly desired peace was not being made I had to take my bearings. I wrote to Esther to get her father to let me have half of my capital, send me a clerk, and go into equal partnership with me. Monsieur D. O. replied that if I would transfer the manufactory to Holland he would see to everything and give me half of the profits. I loved Paris and I did not consent.

I was spending a great deal at my house in Little Poland, but the expenditure which was undermining me, and which no one knew about, was very much greater. I became interested in all of my working girls in whom I saw any merit, and, since I did not have the patience to obtain them cheaply, they had only to seize the opportunity to make me pay a high price for my curiosity. The example of the first one was enough to make them all demand a house and furniture as soon as they saw that they had aroused desires in me. My fancy often lasted only three days, and I always thought the new substitute more worthy of me than her predecessor. I stopped seeing her, but I went on paying her expenses. Madame d'Urfé, believing me wealthy, did not interfere with me; I kept her happy by having my oracle encourage her in her magical operations. Manon Balletti made me miserable with her jealousy and her justified reproaches. She could not understand how I could put off marrying her if I really loved her; she kept saying I was deceiving her. Her mother died of consumption about this time, in her arms and mine. Ten minutes before she expired she commended her daughter to my care. I promised from my soul that I would make her my wife; but Destiny, as is so often said, was against it.

About this same time a serious illness also brought my friend Tiretta's mistress to the grave. Four days before her death she dismissed him in order to devote all her thoughts to her soul, making him a present of a valuable ring and two hundred louis. Tiretta, after asking her to forgive him, packed his things and came to me in Little Poland with the sad news. I put him up at the Enclos du Temple, and four weeks later, approving of his feeling that he should seek his fortune in India, I gave him a letter of introduction to Monsieur D. O. at Amsterdam. In less than two weeks he got him a position as clerk on an East India Company ship which was going to Batavia. He would have become rich if he had behaved himself; he became involved in a conspiracy, he had to flee and underwent great vicissitudes. In 1788 I learned from one of his relatives that he was in Bengal and fairly well-to-do, but that he could not obtain possession of his capital in order to return to his native country and live there happily. I do not know what became of him.

At the beginning of November[11] a household official at the Court of the Duke of Elbeuf[12] came to my manufactory with his daughter to buy her a dress for her wedding day. The girl's charming face dazzled me. She chose a piece of very shiny satin, and I saw her satisfaction and the joy of her soul when she saw that her father was satisfied with the price; but I could not resist the pain her sorrow caused me when she heard the clerk tell her father that he must buy the whole length. It was the rule in my establishment, only the whole length could be sold. I went to my study to avoid being forced to make an exception to the rule; and nothing would have happened if the girl had not asked the director to take her to me. She entered, her eyes swollen with tears, telling me point-blank that I was rich, I could buy the whole length myself and let her have the yards she needed for her dress. I looked at her father, who appeared to be asking me to forgive her for a boldness which showed that she was still a child. I told him I liked frankness, and I immediately ordered what she needed for her dress cut off. She then bewitched me completely by coming and kissing me, while her father, thinking it a great joke, laughed uproariously. After paying the price of the material he invited me to the wedding.

"I am marrying her," he said, "on Sunday; there will be a supper and dancing, and you will be doing me honor. My name is Gilbert;[13] I am steward to His Grace the Duke of Elbeuf, Rue Saint-Nicaise."[14]

I promised him I would go.

I went, but I could neither eat nor dance. Gilbert's charming daughter kept me as if in ecstasy all the time I was there, though, in any case, I could never have adapted myself to the tone of the company. It was a crowd of nothing but household officials with their wives and daughters, I knew no one, no one knew me; I was stupid. In such gatherings the man who is the wittiest often becomes the dullest. Everyone made his joke to the bride, she answered them all, and there were bursts of laughter when they did not understand each other. The bridegroom, thin and downcast, praised his bride for keeping everyone in high spirits. Far from making me jealous of his good luck, the fellow aroused my pity; he was obviously marrying to better himself; I took it into my head to question the bride, and she gave me an opportunity by coming to sit beside me after a contradance. She thanked me for what I had done for her, which had enabled her to have the beautiful dress on which everyone was complimenting her.

"But I am sure you can't wait to take it off, for I know what love is."

"It's strange how everyone insists I'm in love, when the fact is I didn't know Monsieur Baret[15] existed until he was introduced to me a week ago."

"And why are you being married in such a hurry?"

"Because my father does everything in a hurry."

"No doubt your husband is rich?"

"No, but he may become so. Day after tomorrow we open a shop for silk stockings at the corner of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue des Prouvaires.[16] I hope you will buy your stockings from us."

"You may be sure of it, and I promise I will be your first customer even if I have to spend the night at the door of your shop."

She laughed, she called her husband, she told him what I had said, and he answered, thanking me, that it would bring him good luck. He assured me that his stockings never became fluffy.

On Tuesday at daybreak I waited in the Rue des

Prouvaires for the shop to open and I went in. The maid asks me what I want and tells me to come back later because her master and mistress are asleep.

"I will wait here. Go get me some coffee."

"I'm not fool enough to leave you alone in my shop."

She was right.

Baret finally comes down, scolds her for not having called him, orders her to go and tell his wife I am there, opens packages, and shows me waistcoats, gloves, pantaloons, until his wife comes down fresh as a rose, white with a whiteness than which it was impossible to see anything more dazzling, asking me to excuse her for being only half dressed and thanking me for having kept my promise.

Madame Baret was of middle stature, seventeen years of age, and, though not a perfect beauty, all that a Raphael [17] could have imagined and executed in the way of prettiness, which has far more power than beauty to fire a heart whose ruling passion is love. Her eyes, her laugh, her always parted lips, the attentiveness with which she listened, her sparkling sweetness, her intense vivacity, the little pride she showed in her charms, the extent of whose power she seemed not to realize at all, kept me in an ecstasy of admiration for this little masterpiece of Nature, which chance or basely interested motives had put in the possession of the poor thin, sickly man before me, concerned with nothing but his stockings, which he valued far more highly than he did the jewel which marriage had given him.

After choosing some twenty-five louis' worth of stockings and waistcoats and enjoying the pleasure I saw displayed on the face of the shop's pretty mistress, I told the maid that I would give her six francs when she brought me the parcel at Little Poland. I left full of love, but without any plan, since I thought the beginning of a marriage presented too many difficulties.

It was on the following Sunday that Baret himself came with my parcel. I gave him six francs, asking him to take them to the maid; he replied that he would not be ashamed to keep them for himself. I gave him a breakfast of fresh eggs and butter, asking him why he had not come with his wife; he answered that she had asked him to bring her, but that he had not dared to for fear of giving offense. I assured him that she would have given me pleasure, for I thought her charming.

"You are very kind."

When I passed her shop in my carriage, which went like the wind, I threw her kisses but did not stop, for I was not in want of stockings and it would have bored me to mingle with the fops whom I always saw at her counter. At the Palais-Royal and the Tuileries everyone was talking of the pretty new shopkeeper, and I was very glad to hear that she was only holding off until she could find a good dupe.

Eight or ten days later, seeing me coming from the direction of the Pont-Neuf,[18] she beckoned to me. I pull the cord,[19] and she asks me to get out. Her husband, after apologizing profusely, says that he wants me to be the first to see some pantaloons in various colors which he has just received. They were the height of fashion in Paris at the time. No well-dressed man would think of going out in the morning except wearing pantaloons. They looked very smart when the young man was well built; but the pantaloons had to be neither too long nor too short, neither too full nor too tight. I tell him to have three or four pairs made to order for me, saying that I am willing to give him the money in advance. He assures me that the ones before me were of all sizes, and he urges me to go upstairs and try them on, asking his wife to go and help me.

The moment was crucial. I go up, she follows me, I ask her to excuse me if I have to take off my nether garments, she replies that she will imagine she is my valet and will be glad to do his duties. I immediately agreed, quickly unbuckling my shoes and yielding to her ministrations when she insisted on pulling down my breeches; but I was careful to take them off with due respect for modesty and to keep on my drawers. It was now she who took over the whole task of putting pantaloons on me and taking them off again when they did not fit, always with a modesty equal to that which I had imposed on myself for the duration of these pleasant proceedings. She decided that four of them fitted me perfectly and I did not dare to contradict her. After giving her the sixteen louis she asked for them, I said I would be glad if she would kindly bring them to me at her convenience. She hurried downstairs to solace her husband and convince him that she was a good saleswoman. When he saw me appear he said he would come with his "little wife" to bring me my pantaloons on the following Sunday; I said it would be a pleasure, and an even greater one if he would stay for dinner with me. He answered that since he had important business to transact at two o'clock he could only accept my invitation if I would permit him to leave to attend it, assuring me that he would return about five o'clock to take his wife home. I said that he could easily do so, since I would not have to go out until six. So the appointment was made, to my great satisfaction.

On Sunday the couple were as good as their word. I at once ordered my valet to admit no one, and impatient to see what would happen after dinner I had it served at noon. The choice dishes and the good wines having put the couple in high spirits, it was the husband who suggested to his wife that she should go home alone if he should happen to be delayed in coming back.

"In that case," I said, "I will see her to your house at six o'clock after taking a turn on the ramparts."

So it was settled that he would find her at home about nightfall, and he set off very well pleased when he found a hackney coach at my door and I told him it was hired for the rest of the day. So there I am, left alone with the jewel and sure of having her to myself until evening.

He had scarcely gone before I complimented her on the good husband fate had given her.

"With a man of his character you must be happy."

"The word is easily said; but to be happy one must feel it and enjoy peace of mind. My husband's health is so frail that I have to consider him an invalid, and he has debts which oblige us to observe the strictest economy. We came here on foot to save twenty-four sous. The income from our enterprise, which could suffice us if we had no debts, is insufficient. We do not sell enough."

"Yet you have many customers; every time I go by I see your shop full."

"They are not customers but idlers, wastrels, profligates, who bore me with their fawning. They haven't a sou, and we always keep an eye on them for fear they will rob us. If we'd been willing to sell to them on credit we'd have nothing left in our shop. All I can do to get rid of them is to sulk; but it's no use. Nothing discourages them. When my husband is in the shop I leave; but most of the time he's not there. Besides, the scarcity of money results in our selling nothing, and we have to pay our work people every Saturday. We shall have to dismiss them, for we have promissory notes out which fall due soon. We have to pay six hundred francs on Saturday and we have only two hundred."

"I am surprised at your being in such straits so soon after your marriage. Your father must have known the situation, and you certainly brought him a dowry."

"My dowry is six thousand francs and he received four thousand in cash. He used them to open the shop and pay some debts. Our stock is worth three times what we owe; but when there are no sales capital lies idle."

"What you have told me distresses me, and if peace is not concluded I foresee that your situation will become steadily worse and your needs perhaps greater."

"Yes, for when my husband recovers his health we may well have children."

"What! Does his health prevent him from paying you the dues of a husband?"

"Yes, but I do not care."

"I am amazed. It seems to me that a man in your company cannot feel ill unless he is dying."

"He is not dying, but he shows no signs of life."

This sally made it proper for me not only to laugh but to applaud it by embraces which became loving when, mild as a lamb, she offered no resistance. I encouraged her by saying that I could help her in the matter of the promissory note which she had to honor on Saturday, and I took her to a boudoir where nothing necessary for bringing love to its proper conclusion was lacking.

At first she enchanted me by the willingness with which she raised no obstacle either to my caresses or my curiosity; but she surprised me when she took a different attitude from that which should be the forerunner of the supreme enjoyment.

"What!" I said, "could I expect such a refusal at this moment when I believed I saw in your eyes that you shared my desires?"

"My eyes did not deceive you; but what would my husband say if he found me other than what I was yesterday?"

She sees that I am astonished, and she urges me to convince myself.

"Have I a right," she says, "to dispose of a fruit which is the prerogative of marriage before marriage has tasted it at least once?"

"No, my angel, no; I pity you and I adore you; come to my arms and fear nothing. The fruit will be respected, but it is incredible."

We spent three hours in a hundred delicious toyings whose effect was only to increase our ardor, whatever people say to the contrary. A solemn promise to be wholly mine as soon as she could make Baret believe he had recovered his health served as surrogate for all that I could desire. After a stroll on the ramparts I took her home in my carriage, accompanying her to the door and slipping a roll of twenty-five louis into her hands.

In love with her as I thought I had never been in love with any woman, I passed her shop three or four times a day, paying no attention to my coachman's repeated warnings that the long detours were killing my horses. I loved the way she threw kisses and the eagerness with which she watched for the first glimpse of me. We had agreed that she would not beckon me to get out until her husband had put her in a condition to make us happy without any fear. The *fateful* day was not long in arriving. At a sign from her, I stopped. Getting up on the step of my carriage, she told me to wait for her at the door of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.[20] Eager to learn what she had to say, I go there, and a quarter of an hour later I see her with her head hidden in her hood; she gets into my carriage, and saying that she has some errands to do, asks me to take her to the Palais Marchand.[21] I had business; but *amare et sapere vix deo conceditur* ("to love and be wise is scarcely granted to a god").[22] I order my coachman to take me to the Place Dauphine.[23] Good-by to my money! but love commanded me to satisfy her.

At the Palais Marchand she entered every shop into which the pretty proprietress invited her, addressing her as "Princess." Could I object? It was only to look at all the jewelry, the trinkets, the fittings which were rapidly laid before us with honeyed words: "Look at this, my beautiful Princess, look at that. Oh, how it would become you! It is for half-mourning[24] that will be over day after tomorrow." She would look at me then, saying that it certainly was very pretty if only it weren't too expensive; whereupon I, her willing dupe, had to persuade her that if a thing pleased her it could never be too expensive. But while she was choosing gloves and mittens here is what inescapable fate brought to pass so that I should be in a pitiable situation four years later. One thing leads to another in an endless chain.

To my left I notice a girl of twelve or thirteen with a most interesting face in the company of an ugly old woman who was decrying a pair of paste earrings which the girl was holding and admiring; she seemed sad that she could not buy them. I hear her tell the old woman that the earrings would make her happy. The old woman snatches them from her and starts to leave. The shopkeeper tells the girl that she has some which she will let her have more cheaply, and the girl answers that she does not want them. Leaving the shop, she drops a low curtsy to my Princess Baret, who, addressing her as "little Queen," tells her she is as pretty as an angel and kisses her. She asks the old woman who she is, and she answers that she is Mademoiselle de Boulainvilliers,[25] her niece.

"And are you so hardhearted," I say to the old aunt, "that you refuse such a pretty niece these earrings which would make her happy? Will you permit me to present them to her?"

So saying, I hand the earrings to the young lady, who, blushing red as fire, looks at her aunt. The latter gently tells her to accept them and give me a kiss. The shopkeeper says to me that the earrings cost only three louis; at which the scene becomes a comedy, for the aunt angrily tells her she had been going to let her have them for two. The shopkeeper maintains that she had said three. At that the old woman, who was right and who could not bear to let the cheating shopkeeper profit so shamelessly by my politeness, tells the little girl to put down the earrings, and all would have been well; but she spoiled everything by saying that if I would give her niece the three louis she would go and buy earrings twice as pretty in some other shop. As it made no difference to me, though I could not help smiling, I laid the three louis down in front of the young lady, who was still holding the earrings; but the shopkeeper takes them, saying that the bargain had been struck, that the earrings belonged to the young lady and the money to herself. The aunt then called her a cheat, the shopkeeper called her a bawd, passers-by stopped, and foreseeing unpleasantness I gently led out the aunt and the niece, who, delighted to have the pretty earrings, did not care that I had been made to pay a louis too much for them. We will return to the girl at the proper time and place.

I took my Baret, who had made me throw away twenty louis which her husband would have regretted more than I did, back to the church door. She told me on the way that she could come to spend five or six days at Little Poland and that it was her husband himself who would ask me to do them the favor.

"When?"

"No later than tomorrow. Come and buy a few pairs of stockings, I will have a headache, and my husband will talk to you."

I went and, not seeing her, asked him where she was. He said she was sick in bed and that she needed to breathe good country air for a few days. I offered him an apartment at Little Poland, and his face lighted up.

"I will go and ask her to accept," I said; "in the meanwhile, pack me up a dozen pairs of stockings."

I go up, I find her in bed, laughing despite her made-to-order headache. I tell her the thing is done and that she will be told so within a minute. Her husband comes up with my stockings and tells her that I will be kind enough to put her up in my house for a few days; she expresses her gratitude, she is sure she will recover her health by breathing good air, and I ask her to excuse me beforehand if my business prevents me from giving her as much of my company as politeness demands; but that she will lack for nothing and that her husband can come to sup with us every day and leave as early in the morning as he pleases. After thanking me at length, Baret ended by saying that he would have his sister come for all the time that she was to stay at my house. I left, saying that I would give orders that day, and that they would be taken care of whenever they appeared, whether I was at home or not. On the next day but one, coming home at midnight, I learned from my cook that the couple had eaten a good supper and gone to bed. I told her I would have dinner and supper there every day and would be at home to no one.

The next morning when I woke I learned that Baret had left at daybreak, that he had said he would not come back until suppertime, and that his wife was still asleep. I at once paid her my first visit, and after congratulating ourselves again and again on being in unhampered possession of each other, we breakfasted, after which I locked my door and we surrendered to the God of Love.

Surprised to find her just as I had left her the last time I had held her in my arms, I said that I hoped—but she did not let me finish my protest. She said that her husband believed he had done what he had not done, and that it was for us to put him in a position to have no doubt of it in the future. Indeed, it was doing him a necessary service. So Love was the priest at this first sacrifice which my Baret made to Hymen, and I never saw the altar so stained with blood. In her youthful person I observed the greatest satisfaction arising from the proof she was giving me of her courage and from the conviction she was arousing in my inmost being that her passion was of the most genuine kind. I assured her again and again that I would be forever constant to her; and she filled my cup of joy by assuring me that she counted on it. We did not get out of bed except to make our toilets, and we dined together perfectly happy, sure that we would renew our desires only to have the pleasure of quenching them by fresh enjoyments.

"How did you manage," I asked her over dessert, "filled as I know you to be with the fire of Venus, to keep what is due to marriage until you were seventeen?"

"I never loved, that is all. I have been loved, but I could not be persuaded. My father may have believed otherwise when, a month ago, I asked him to get me married quickly."

"Why did you hurry him so?"

"Because I knew that when the Duke of Elbeuf came back from the country he would oblige me to marry a man I loathed and who wanted me at any price."

"Who is this man whom you loathed?"

"One of his pets. A base, infamous swine. The monster! he sleeps with his master who, at the age of eighty-four, insists that he has become a woman and cannot live except with such a husband."

"Is he handsome?"

"Everyone says so, but to me he is revolting."

My charming Baret spent eight days with me, each as happy as the first. I have seldom seen women as pretty as she was, and never any as white. Her dainty breasts, her smooth abdomen, her rounded hips which rose from her flanks to meet her thighs in a curve which no geometrician could ever draw, offered my hungry eyes the beauty which no philosopher has yet been able to define. I never stopped looking at her except when my inability to satisfy the desires she aroused in me made me unhappy. The frieze of the altar on which my flame had ascended to heaven was a composition into which nothing entered but little curls of the finest and palest gold imaginable. In vain did my fingers try to straighten them; the curls, merely assuming a different form, showed me that it was impossible. My Baret shared my intoxication and my ecstasies in a state of perfect calm, never surrendering to Venus until she felt every element of her charming person in tumult. She then became like a dead woman; and she seemed to recover her senses only to reassure me by demonstrating that she was not. Two or three days after she went home I gave her two Mézières[26] notes for five thousand francs each. Her husband was cleared of debt and found himself in a position to go on with his manufactory, keeping his work people, and wait for the end of the war.

At the beginning of November I sold ten shares in my manufactory to Sieur Garnier,[27] of the Rue du Mail,[28] for fifty thousand francs, giving him one third of the painted fabrics in my warehouse and accepting a comptroller appointed by him and paid by the company. Three days after signing the contract I received the money; but the doctor who was in charge of the warehouse emptied it and made off—a robbery which could not possibly have been carried out unless he was in connivance with the painter. To make the blow still worse for me, Garnier had me served with a summons to repay him the fifty thousand francs. I replied that I owed him nothing since his comptroller had already taken office; so the loss must fall equally on all the partners. I was advised to go to court. Garnier began by declaring the contract nul and void, even casting a suspicion of fraud on me. The doctor's surety had disappeared. It had been from a merchant who had just gone bankrupt.

Garnier obtained an order sequestrating everything in the manufactory and my horses and carriages, which were at Little Poland in the hands of the "Butter King." Beset by such difficulties, I dismissed the working girls and all the employees and servants at my manufactory. Only the painter remained in the building, having nothing to complain of since he had always seen to it that he paid himself his share when fabrics were sold. My attorney was an honest man, but my advocate, who assured me every day that I could not lose my case, was a scoundrel. In the course of the proceedings Garnier sent me an accursed summons ordering me to pay, which I at once took to my advocate, who assured me that he would lodge an appeal the same day and who did nothing of the kind, thus appropriating to himself all the money I had laid out to recover what was mine. The next two summonses were kept from reaching me, and a warrant was issued without my knowledge to arrest me for having failed to appear. I was arrested at eight o'clock in the morning in the Rue Saint-Denis[29] in my own carriage, the chief constable sitting beside me while another, sitting beside my coachman, forced him to drive me to the Fort-l'Évêque.[30]

As soon as I got there the record clerk told me that if I paid fifty thousand francs or gave security, I could go home at once; but having neither the money nor the security ready I remained in prison. When I told the clerk that I had received only one summons he said that it happened only too often but that it was difficult to prove. I demanded that writing materials be brought to the room in which I was put, and I informed my advocate and my attorney and then all my friends, beginning with Madame d'Urfé and ending with my brother, who had just married.[31] My attorney came at once; but my advocate only wrote to me, assuring me that he had lodged the appeal and so, my arrest being illegal, I could make it cost my opponent dearly but that I must be patient for a few days and let him act. Manon Balletti sent me her earrings through her brother; Madame du Rumain sent me her advocate, who was known for his honesty, writing me that if I needed five hundred louis she could send them to me the next day; my brother did not answer me. Madame d'Urfé answered that she would expect me for dinner. I thought she had gone mad. By eleven o'clock my room was full of people. Baret, who had heard of my arrest, came in tears to offer me his shop. I was informed that a lady had arrived in a hackney coach, and not seeing her appear I asked why she was not allowed to come up. I was told that she had left after conferring privately with the record clerk. From the description I was given of her I gathered that she was Madame d'Urfé.

I was extremely annoyed to be where I was, for it could not but hurt my reputation all over Paris, aside from the fact that the discomfort of the prison distressed me. Since I had thirty thousand francs in ready money and sixty thousand in jewels, I could have deposited the amount and left at once, but I could not bring myself to do so, despite Madame du Rumain's advocate, who tried to persuade me to get out of prison no matter by what means. According to him I need only deposit half the amount, which he would "pin down" at the court record office until an appeal brought me a verdict which, he assured me, would be in my favor.

While we were still discussing this the jailer came to tell me that I was free and that a lady was waiting at the door for me in her carriage. I sent Leduc (such was my valet's name) to find out who the lady was, and when I learned that it was Madame d'Urfé I made my bow to everyone. It was noon. I had spent four very disagreeable hours[32] in the place.

Madame d'Urfé received me in her berlin with great dignity. A judge[33] who was with her asked my pardon in the name of his nation and country, in which foreigners were likely to suffer such indignities. I thanked Madame in a few words, saying that I was delighted to be in her debt but that it was Garnier who profited from her noble generosity. She answered with a smile that he would not so easily profit from it and that we would discuss the matter at dinner. She advised me to go walking in the Tuileries and the Palais-Royal at once, to convince the public that the rumor of my imprisonment was false. I took her advice, saying that she would see me again at two o'clock.

After showing myself to good purpose in the two great promenades, where, pretending not to notice it, I saw all my acquaintances astonished to see me, I went and returned her earrings to my dear Manon, who gave a cry when I appeared. After thanking her and assuring the whole family that my arrest had been due to a plot for which I would make all those who had taken a hand in it pay dearly, I left, promising that I would come to supper with her, and I went to dine with Madame d'Urfé, who at once made me laugh by swearing her Genius had informed her that I had arranged to be arrested on purpose to get myself talked about, for reasons which I alone knew. She said that after learning from the record clerk at the Fort-l'Évêque how matters stood she had gone home for some municipal obligations[34] she owned which would have covered a hundred thousand francs and had deposited them; but that Garnier would have to deal with her before he got the money if I should be unable to obtain justice.

She said I ought to begin by attacking my advocate in criminal court since it was obvious that he had not lodged my appeal. I left assuring her that she would recover her security in a few days.

After showing myself in the lobbies of the two theaters

I went to sup with Manon Balletti, who was delighted to have seized the opportunity to give me a proof of her affection. Her joy knew no bounds when I told her I was going to give up my manufactory, for she thought my working girls were the reason why I could not make up my mind to marry her.

I spent the whole of the next day with Madame du Rumain.[35] I felt how deeply I was indebted to her; but she had no such feeling; on the contrary, she thought she could never sufficiently show me her gratitude for the oracles which insured her against ever taking a false step. Despite all the intelligence the lady possessed, she was taken in. I was sorry that I could not open her eyes, and mortified when I considered that I was deceiving her and that but for my deceit she would not feel the regard for me which she showed.

My imprisonment, though it lasted only a few hours, disgusted me with Paris and inspired me with a hatred for all legal proceedings which I still feel. I was involved in two, one against Garnier,[36] the other, in criminal court, against the advocate. My soul was in torment every time I had to curry favor, spend my money on advocates, and waste my hours, which I thought only well used in procuring me pleasures. In this state of turmoil I resolved to assure myself of a regular income sufficient to give me complete peace of mind. I decided to abandon everything, make a second journey to Holland to renew my financial resources, and then return to Paris and invest all the capital I should have accumulated in an annuity for the lifetimes of two persons. The two lifetimes were to be mine and my wife's; and the wife was to be Manon Balletti. I informed her of my plan, and she could not wait to see it executed.

I began by giving up my house[37] in Little Poland, which was to remain mine only to the end of the year; and I withdrew from the Military School the eighty thousand francs which served as the security for my office in the Rue Saint-Denis. In this way I resigned my paltry position of collector of the lottery. I gave my office to my clerk, who had married, and so made him a small fortune. The man who stood security for him was, as always, a friend of his wife's; but the poor fellow died two years later.

Not wanting to leave Madame d'Urfé involved in a suit against Garnier, I went to Versailles to persuade the Abbé de Laville, his great friend, to become the mediator in a compromise. The Abbé, who saw that he was in the wrong, undertook it, and a few days later wrote me to go and talk with Garnier himself, assuring me that I would find him prepared to listen to reason. He was at Rueil,[38] and I went there. It was a country house four leagues from Paris which had cost him four hundred thousand francs. Garnier, who had been Monsieur d'Argenson's cook, had made a fortune in provisions during the last war but one.[39] He lived in opulence, but having the misfortune to be seventy years old and still to love women he could not be happy. I found him with three girls, sisters and of good family as I later learned. They were poor and he kept them. At table I observed that they showed a certain dignity and modesty through the humiliation with which poverty afflicts all people of sensibility. Need forced them to pay court to the old unmarried profligate, with whom they had perhaps to undergo painful private relations. After dinner he fell asleep, leaving me to entertain the young ladies, and when he woke we withdrew to discuss our business.

When he learned that I was on the verge of leaving, perhaps never to return to Paris, and that he could not stop me, he foresaw that the Marquise d'Urfé would use every legal trick against him to drag the thing out as long as she pleased and perhaps win the suit. I had to spend the night there. In the morning he told me, as his last word, that he wanted twenty-five thousand francs or he would litigate until his dying day. I answered that he would find the amount in the hands of Madame d'Urfé's notary after he had released her security at the court record office at the Fort-l'Évêque.

Madame d'Urfé was not persuaded that I had done well to make an arrangement with Garnier until I told her that the Order[40] demanded that I should not leave Paris without first settling all the affairs which could lead to the supposition that I had gone because I could not pay my debts.

I went to take leave of the Duke of Choiseul,[41] who said that he would write Monsieur d'Affry to help me in all my negotiations if I could arrange a loan at five percent, whether from the States-General or from a private company. He said that I could assure everyone that peace would be concluded during the course of the winter and that I could also be sure that he would not let me be denied what was due me when I returned to France. Such were his words to me, and he knew that peace would not be made; but I had no project in mind, and I was sorry I had entrusted Monsieur de Boulogne with my project concerning wills, in which the new Comptroller, Silhouette, showed no interest.

I sold my horses, my carriages, and all my furniture, and I stood security for my brother, who had gone into debt to a tailor, but he was sure that he would soon be able to pay all his debts since he was finishing several pictures for which the people who had ordered them were waiting impatiently.

I left Manon in tears, but I was sure I should make her happy when I returned to Paris.

I set off with one hundred thousand francs in bills of exchange and as much again in jewels, all by myself in my post chaise and preceded by Leduc, who liked to ride at full gallop. He was a Spaniard eighteen years of age whom I cherished because no one dressed my hair better than he. A Swiss lackey, also on horseback, served me as courier. It was December 1st[42] of the year 1759. I had in my carriage Helvétius' *L'Esprit,*[43] which I had not yet found time to read. After reading it I was even more surprised by the sensation it had created than by the Parlement which had condemned it and done everything possible to ruin its author, who was a most agreeable man and far more intelligent than his book. I found nothing new either in the historical part concerning the manners of nations, which was in many places sheer invention, or in the system of ethics founded on reason. It had all been said again and again, and Blaise Pascal [44] had said far more, though more guardedly. If Helvétius wanted to go on living in France he had to retract. He preferred the pleasant life he led there to honor and his own system of philosophy, that is, his own mind. His wife, whose soul was nobler than her husband's, wanted to sell everything they had in France and go to live in Holland rather than submit to the dishonor of a palinode; but her husband thought he should prefer anything to exile. He would perhaps have followed his wife's advice if he could have foreseen that his retraction would make his book a laughingstock. By retracting he appeared to say that he had not known what he was writing, that he had only been joking, that all his arguments were paralogisms. But a number of intelligent minds did not wait until he had contradicted himself to contemn his system. What! because in everything he does man is always the slave of his self-interest, must it follow that any feeling of gratitude becomes absurd and that no act can earn us merit or blame? Are criminals not to be hated and honest men not to be loved? Pitiful philosophy!

It could have been demonstrated to Helvétius that it is false that in everything we do our own interest is our prime motive and the first to be consulted. Then Helvétius did not admit virtue, which is very odd. He was himself highly virtuous. Is it possible that he never saw that he was an honest man? It would be amusing if what made him publish his book was a feeling of modesty. Was he right to make himself contemptible in order to escape the stigma of being proud? Modesty is a virtue only when it is natural; if it is assumed, or practiced because it has been inculcated in school, it is only hypocrisy. I never knew a man more naturally modest than the famous D'Alembert.[45]

I spent two days in Brussels, happening to put up at the "Empress"[46] where Miss *XCV* and Farsetti were staying. I pretended not to know her. I went to the Moerdick[47] and crossed it, leaving my post chaise on the hither side. At The Hague I put up at the "Prince of Orange." The innkeeper persuaded me to eat at the public table when he told me who the company were. He said they were staff officers of the Hanoverian army, English ladies, and a Prince Piccolomini[48] with his wife. I at once decided to go down to supper.

Unknown to everyone and saying nothing, I attentively examined the face, the manners, and the bearing of the supposed Italian Princess, who was pretty enough, and more especially of her husband, whom I thought I knew. I learned at table that the famous Saint-Germain was staying at the same inn.

Just as I was going to bed Prince Piccolomini enters my room and embraces me as an old acquaintance.

"One glance that you gave me," he said, "showed me that you recognized me immediately. I recognized you instantly too, despite the sixteen years which have passed since we last met in Vicenza.[49] Tomorrow you may tell everyone that we have recognized each other; that I am not a prince, but Count Piccolomini, and here is my passport from the King of Naples, which I beg you to read.''

He had not let me say a word, and I could not place him. I read the passport and I find ''Ruggero di Rocco, Count Piccolomini.'' I then recollect a Rocco Ruggeri who taught fencing in Vicenza, I look at him, and I remember him. I congratulate him on no longer practicing the profession. He answers that, his father still being alive at that time and not giving him anything to live on, he practiced the profession to keep from starving, concealing his name and rank. After his death he had gone to take over his inheritance and at Rome had married the beautiful lady I had seen. He ended by inviting me to come to his room after dinner, where I would find pleasant company and a faro bank which he kept. He said frankly that if I liked he would take me into partnership with him and that I would not lose by it. I promised to pay him a visit.

After visiting the Jew Boas and politely refusing the lodging he offered me I made my bow to Count d'Affry, who, after the death of Her Highness the Princess of Orange, Regent of the Netherlands, had assumed the rank of Ambassador.[50] He received me very well, saying that if I had come back hoping to enter into some transaction which would be profitable to France, I was wasting my time. He said that the action of the Comptroller-General Silhouette[51] had lowered the credit of the nation to such a degree that its bankruptcy was expected. He was very sorry about it. Though he kept saying that payments were only suspended for a year and that it made no difference, he was wasting his breath; everyone was indignant.

After thus bemoaning his situation, he asked me if I knew a certain Count of Saint-Germain who had recently[52] arrived at The Hague, whom he had never seen, and who said that the King had authorized him to borrow a hundred millions.

''When people come to ask me about him,'' he said, ''I can only answer that I do not know him, for I am afraid I may compromise myself. You cannot but see that such an answer from me must only hamper his negotiations, but it is his own fault. Why did he not bring me a letter from the Duke of Choiseul or from Madame la Marquise? I believe the man is an impostor, but I shall have information about him in a week or ten days."

I then told him everything that was known about this strange and extraordinary man, and he was surprised to learn that the King had given him an apartment at Chambord; but when I told him that he possessed the secret of making diamonds he laughed and said he no longer doubted he could find the hundred millions. He invited me to dinner the next day.

I had scarcely got back to the inn before I sent in my name to the Count of Saint-Germain, who had two Haiduks[53] at his door. He received me by saying that I had forestalled him.

"I imagine," he said, "that you have come here to do something for our Court; but you will find it difficult, for the Exchange is scandalized by the action that idiot Silhouette has just taken. However, that will not prevent me from finding a hundred millions; I gave my word for it to Louis XV, whom I may call my friend, and in three or four weeks my mission will be accomplished."

"Monsieur d'Affry will help you to succeed."

"I do not need him. I shall not even go to see him, for he might boast that he had helped me."

"You go to the Court, I presume, and the Duke of Brunswick[54] could be useful to you."

"He is of no interest to me. I do not care to make his acquaintance. I need only to go to Amsterdam. My own credit is enough. I love the King of France, for there is not a better man than he in the whole kingdom."

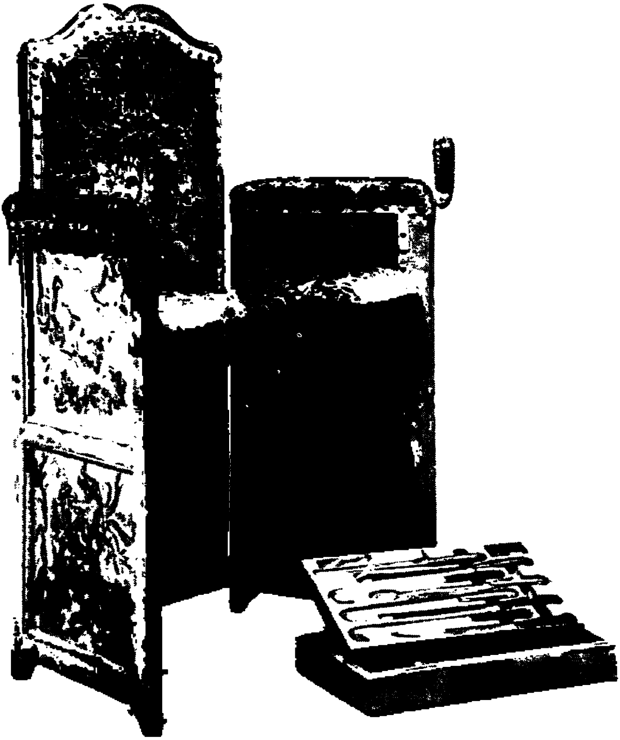
"Then come down to dinner at the common table, you will find people of distinction."

"You know I do not eat; besides, I never sit down at a table where I may find people with whom I am not acquainted.''

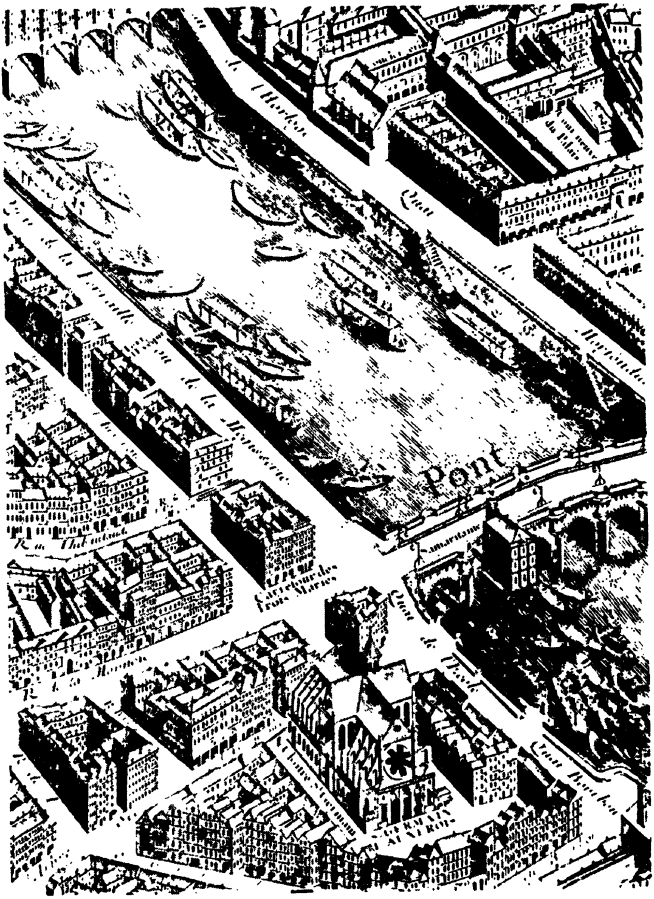
''Then good-by, My Lord, we shall meet again in Amsterdam.''

I went down to the public room, where, while waiting for dinner to be served, I chatted with the officers who were present. When I was asked if I knew Prince Piccolomini I replied that I had recognized him after supper and that he was a count, not a prince.

He came down with his wife, who spoke only Italian. I paid her my respects, and we sat down to dinner.



Gynecological Chair and Obstetrical Instruments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Samaritaine
Carrefour des Trois Maries

Fort-l'Évêque, Paris

Volume Six

CHAPTER I

Portrait of the pretended Countess Piccolomini. Quarrel, duel. I see Esther and her father, Monsieur D. O. Esther still fascinated by the cabala. Piccolomini's forged bill of exchange; consequences. I am fleeced and in danger of being murdered. Orgy with two Paduan women; consequences. I reveal a great secret to Esther. I thwart the swindling Saint-Germain; his flight. Manon Balletti is unfaithful to me; her letter announcing her marriage; my despair. Esther spends a day with me. My portrait and my letters to Manon come into Esther's hands. I spend a day with that charming young woman. We are on the verge of talking marriage.

THE ADVENTURESS was Roman, still young, tall, well built, with black eyes and a dazzlingly white complexion—but of the artificial whiteness one sees at Rome on the faces of nearly all loose women and which is so distasteful to delicate perceptions which love natural beauty. She had attractive manners and an appearance of intelligence, but it was only an appearance. Since she spoke only Italian no one but an English officer named Walpole[1] talked with her. Despite his never addressing a word to me, I felt drawn to him; and it was not an effect of sympathy, for if I had been blind or deaf Sir Walpole would have left me completely indifferent.

Signora Piccolomini irked me; but after dinner I went up to her room with the entire company. The Count sat down to a game of whist and Walpole played primero[2] with the Countess, who cheated him. He stopped after losing some fifty ducats, and the lady asked him to take her to the theater.[3] She left her husband playing whist. I went too.

In the parterre I found Count Tott,[4] brother of the Count Tott whose stay in Constantinople made him famous. He told me he had left France because he had fought with a man who had rallied him on not being present at the Battle of Minden,[5] having purposely put off rejoining his corps. He proved his courage by giving him a wound with his sword. He said he had no money, and I opened my purse to him; he opened his to me five years later at Petersburg. Having seen me speak to the Italian Countess, he said that her husband was a cheat; I did not answer.

After the play I go back to the inn. The waiter tells me that Prince Piccolomini has left in a hurry with his valet and a small trunk. A moment later his wife appears, her maid whispers something to her, and she says that her husband has left because he has fought a duel and that it often happened to him. She invited me to supper with Walpole, and she ate with a very good appetite.

At dessert an Englishman who had made one at the whist table with Piccolomini came upstairs and told Walpole that the Italian Count, caught cheating, had given the lie to their fellow Englishman, who had accused him, and they had gone out together. An hour later the Englishman had come back to the "English Parliament," where he was lodging, wounded in the forearm and shoulder. It was a trifling affair. I went to bed.

The next day after dining with Count d'Affry[6] I return to the inn and I receive a letter from Count Piccolomini, dispatched by express messenger and containing an enclosure addressed to his wife. He asked me to bring her to him in Amsterdam at the "City of Lyons,"[7] where he was lodging, after giving her his letter. He wanted to know how the Englishman he had wounded was doing.

The favor he asked of me almost made me laugh, for I had no inclination to grant it. I took her letter to the Signora, who was sitting up in bed playing cards with Walpole. She has scarcely read it before she tells me she cannot leave until the following day, and she specifies an hour. I reply that business prevents me from having the honor of serving her, and Walpole, informed of the matter, offers to take advantage of my refusal. She accepts, and they arrange to leave after dinner the next day in time to spend the night at Leiden. The plan was carried out as made; but now for my turn.

The day after they left I sit down at table with all the others and with two Frenchmen who have just arrived. After taking their soup one of the two Frenchmen says that the "famous" Casanova must be in Holland. The other replies that he would be very happy to find him and call him to account in no uncertain terms. As I am sure that I have never had anything to do with the man, the blood instantly rushes to my head, but I control myself. I ask him quietly if he knows Casanova.

"I have good reason to know him," he replies in the self-satisfied tone which is always offensive.

"You do not know him," I say sharply, "for I am he."

Not in the least disconcerted, and even with a certain insolence, he says that I am mistaken if I think I am the only man in the world named Casanova.

His answer put me in the wrong, and I was left with no reply but determined that, at the right time and place, I would take him by the collar and force him to show me the other Casanova who might possibly be in Holland and whom he wanted to call to account. Meanwhile I bit my lips and bore with patience the sorry figure I must be cutting in the eyes of the officers who, having heard the tone of the short dialogue, might well suspect me of cowardice. Meanwhile the impudent fellow, making the worst of my situation and the best of his victory, which gave him the upper hand of me at least on the score of wit, talked away about anything and everything. He went so far as to ask me from what country I came, and I thought it proper to reply that I was a Venetian.

"Then you are a good friend to France, for your republic is under French protection."

I was in too bad a humor to laugh. I told him, in the tone one uses to make someone understand that he arouses one's contempt, that my republic was not, and had never needed to be, under the protection of France or of any other sovereign nation during the thirteen centuries of its existence.

"And will you now," I said, "to excuse your ignorance, tell me that there are two republics of Venice in the world?"

At that a general burst of laughter restored me to life and seemed to impose silence on the insolent fool; but his evil demon started him talking again at dessert. The conversation turned to the Earl of Albemarle.[8] The Englishmen present, praising him, said that if he had lived France and England would not then be at war. Another praised Lolotte,[9] his mistress. I said that I had met her at the Duchess of Fulvy's,[10] and that no woman had ever better deserved to become the Countess of Hérouville. The Count of Hérouville,[11] Lieutenant-General and man of letters, had just married her. But I had scarcely concluded her eulogy before the Frenchman looks at me with a laugh and says he once spent a night with her at La Pâris's.[12] It was then that I could not keep from raising my plate with four fingers and showing him the under side of it. He got up and, going to the fireplace, stood with his back to it. He had his sword and the sword knot which indicated that he was an officer. The conversation turned to other matters. Two minutes later we all got up from table. Everyone left except my man, who had told his crony that they would meet at the theater. Being now certain that the fool would follow me, I left the inn and walked in the direction of Scheveningen. I saw him follow me at forty paces' distance and come toward me when he saw me stop and stand in the wood waiting for him.

At ten paces from me he unsheathed, and I did not need to fall back in order to have time to do the same. It was he who fell back when he felt the point of my sword in his chest from my straight lunge, which has never failed me, without my needing to fence at all. He said when I came up to him, lowering my sword, that we would meet again in Amsterdam if I was going there. I did not see him again until six years later in Warsaw, where I took up a collection for him. His name was Varnier. I do not know if he was the Varnier[13] who was President of the National Convention[14] under Robespierre.

When I returned to the inn after the play I was told that he had left for Rotterdam with his crony after spending an hour in his room with a surgeon. At supper no one said anything about the matter to me nor did I speak of it. Only an English lady said that a man of honor could not sit down at a common table without feeling called upon to fight, prudent though he might be.

Having nothing to do at The Hague, I left the next morning an hour before dawn in order to reach Amsterdam that evening. At noon I encountered Sir James Walpole at an inn, where he told me he had left Amsterdam on the previous day an hour after restoring the chaste wife to the arms of her scoundrelly husband. He had satisfied his passing fancy and he wanted no more of her.

I reached Amsterdam about midnight and found very good lodgings at the "Second Bible."[15] My impatience to see Esther kept me from sleeping well. Her nearness revived all my old flame.

At ten o'clock I called on Monsieur D. O., who received me with demonstrations of the greatest friendship, lamenting that I had not come to stay with him. When he learned that I had given up my manufactory he said that since I could not decide to transfer it to Holland I had done well, for it would have ruined me. After complaining of the bad faith of France, the cause of his being involved in several bankruptcies, he told me to go and see Esther.

She received me by giving a cry and running into my arms. I found her two inches taller and her figure proportionately fuller. No sooner had we sat down than the first thing she wanted to do was to convince me that she had become as well versed in the cabala as I was. She said that it made her life happy, that through it she had become mistress of her father's will, and so she was sure he would never marry her except to a man of her own choice.

"Your father," I said, "must suppose that I taught it to you."

"So he does; and he told me one day that he forgives me anything I may have sacrificed to you to win the great secret. But I told him the truth, I stole it from you, and, like you, I have become the surprising divinity who answers; for I am sure that your answers come from nowhere but your own mind."

"How could I have said where the portfolio was and that the ship was not lost?"

"It was you who threw the portfolio there after finding it, and as for the ship, you took a chance. Admit that, since you are honest by nature, you must have been very uneasy. But I shall never be so bold. When my father gives me questions of that sort I answer very obscurely. I do not want him to lose the confidence he has in my oracle, still less would I want to become the cause of some misfortune which would affect me too nearly."

"If the deception makes you happy I cannot but leave you to practice it. But permit me to feel the utmost admiration for your talent. You are unique."

"I am not interested in your admiration, I want a sincere avowal."

"I cannot be more sincere than I am."

At that the charming girl became serious. Determined not to lose the advantage I had over her, I thought of predicting something to her which could be known only to God, or of guessing what she thought. I was absolutely determined to keep the upper hand of her. We went down to dinner; but a sad and silent Esther greatly troubled me.

There was a fourth person at the table, and I concluded that he was in love. He kept his eyes on her constantly. We did not speak of the cabala until after he had left us. He was her father's favorite secretary, with whom he would have liked to see her in love; but he was not fit for the role.

"Is it possible," Monsieur D. O. asked me, "that my daughter has learned to draw answers from your oracle without your having taught her?"

"I did not believe it possible until today, but she has just convinced me that I was wrong. I can now teach it to no one else, on pain of losing it myself. Such was the oath I made to the wise man who taught me the calculation. Your daughter, not having taken the same oath, can freely communicate her knowledge to anyone she pleases."

With great quickness of mind she replied that the oracle itself, when she had asked it if she could communicate the method of calculating it to anyone else, had answered that if she revealed its secret without its permission she would no longer find truth in its replies. I saw her soul, and I rejoiced to see that she had become calm. Whether I had been lying or not, she owed me gratitude. I had upheld her to her father; but she saw that I had done it only out of politeness, and she wanted me to admit as much when I was alone with her.

The worthy man had the curiosity to ask us both the same question, to see if one would answer white and the other black. Esther saying that she was curious too, he wrote the same question on two sheets of paper. She went to her room to obtain her answer and I obtained mine where I was. She came back with hers before mine was finished. Monsieur D. O. asked if he would do well to get rid of all the French securities he had, at no matter what loss. Esther's oracle answered that, on the contrary, he should try to acquire more of them cheaply, for France would never go bankrupt. Mine answered that if he sold he would be sorry, for a new Comptroller-General[16] would pay everyone the following year. After embracing us both the worthy man left, saying that the agreement between our answers would make him richer by at least half a million in the course of the year, though at the risking of losing three. His daughter looked alarmed; but he embraced her again, saying that it would be only a quarter of what he owned.

Esther, left alone with me, was very much pleased by the compliments I offered her on her excellent answer, which was appropriate yet at the same time daring, for she would not be as well informed as I was concerning French affairs.

"I thank you," she said, "for upholding me. But admit that, to please me, you lied like a trooper."

"Of course, for I see that you are happy; and I will even tell you that you need know no more about it."

"Say that I *cannot* know more. Admit that is true."

"I will admit it to ease your mind."

"You are a cruel man. You answered that there will be a new Comptroller-General in France. By that you risk compromising the oracle; I should never dare to. My dear oracle! I am too fond of it to expose it to such a disgrace."

"It proves that I am not the author of it; but I would wager that Silhouette will be dismissed, now that the oracle has told me so."

"My dear friend, your stubbornness makes me miserable. I cannot be satisfied until I am sure that I possess the cabala as you do, neither more nor less, and now you can no longer tell me that you make it up in your head. You must convince me of the contrary."

"I will consider it, if it will please you."

And so I spent the whole day with the girl, who had everything to make her the happiest of mortals and who would have made me happy if, not loving my freedom[17] above everything else, I could have considered settling in Holland.

The next morning my evil genius made me go to the "City of Lyons"; it was the inn at which Piccolomini was staying. I found him with his wife and a collection of scoundrels who, as soon as they heard my name, all flocked around me. There was a Chevalier Saby,[18] who was wearing the uniform of a major in the service of the King of Poland and whom I had met in Dresden. There was a Baron Wiedau,[19] from Bohemia, who at once told me that his friend the Count of Saint-Germain had arrived[20] at the "Star of the East" and had immediately asked where I was staying. There was a gaunt bravo who was introduced to me as the Chevalier de la Perrine and whom I at once recognized as the Talvis[21] who had broken the Prince-Bishop's bank at Pressburg and had lent me a hundred louis. There was another Italian, who looked like a tinsmith, who was named Neri, and who told me he had seen me at a *musicau* a year earlier.[22] I remembered that I saw the unfortunate Lucia there. With all these sharpers there was also the pretended wife of the Chevalier Saby; she was a rather pretty Saxon woman who was paying court to the Countess Piccolomini, speaking very broken Italian. The first thing I did was to return, with polite thanks, a hundred louis in cash to La Perrine, who insolently remarked that he now remembered having lent me a hundred louis in Pressburg, but that my returning them had not made him forget what was really of consequence.

"You owe me a revenge," he said, "sword in hand. Here is the scar of the pink you gave me seven years ago."[23]

With that he opens his ruffle and shows the company a small scar. The scene had struck the whole room dumb; the hundred louis, the scar, the demand for revenge, all seemed equally extraordinary. I told the Gascon that in Holland I gave no revenges, for I had business, but that I would defend myself wherever I should be attacked and in the meanwhile I warned him that I always went armed with pistols. He replied that he wanted his revenge sword in hand, but that he would give me time to finish my business.

Piccolomini, who already had designs on the hundred louis, immediately made a bank at faro. If I had been wise I would not have played; but the desire to recover the hundred louis I had just paid out prompted me to take a *livret*.[24] Before supper I lost a hundred ducats and after supper I won them back in counters. When I asked to be paid so that I could go to bed, Piccolomini gave me a bill of exchange on the Bank of Amsterdam drawn by a firm in Middelburg.[25] I did not want to take it; but I thought I must yield when he said he would negotiate it for me in the morning. I left the gang of thieves, refusing La Perrine, who had lost the hundred louis, the loan of another hundred which he insisted I owed him in requital. In his ill humor he said insulting things to me; but I bore it and went off to bed, thoroughly resolved not to return to such a den of cutthroats.

However, the next morning I go out, intending to get the value of the bill of exchange from Piccolomini. I first go into a coffeehouse for breakfast, and there find Rigerboos, Teresa's friend, whom my reader may remember.[26] After an embrace and some talk of "our lady" (as he always called her), who was in London and making a fortune there, I showed him my bill of exchange, telling him how it had come into my possession. He looks at it and says it is forged, that it is a copy of the genuine one, which had been paid the day before. Seeing that I am loath to believe it, he takes me with him to the merchant, who shows me the original which he had paid to a person he did not know. I ask Rigerboos to come with me to call on Piccolomini, who would perhaps cash it for me even so, and, if not, he would be a witness to whatever might take place.

We go there. Piccolomini, after greeting us politely, tells me to give him the bill of exchange, which he will at once send to the merchant to be cashed. Rigerboos speaks up and tells him that the merchant on whom it was drawn will not pay it since he has paid it already, and that the bill he had given me was only a copy of the original. He pretends to be astonished, he says it is unbelievable, but that he will look into the matter.

"You shall look into it," I said, "at your convenience; but in the meanwhile give me five hundred florins."

He says that I know him, that I can wait, that he guarantees the bill, he raises his voice, his wife comes and joins in, and then his valet, who is a ruffian. Rigerboos takes me by the arm, leads me outside, and takes me to see a very fine-looking man who was the equivalent of a police lieutenant. After hearing the whole story he asks me to leave the bill with him and to tell him where I shall be dining. I name Monsieur D. O. and that is enough. We leave, I thank Monsieur Rigerboos, and I go to see Esther.

She receives me with some concern, reproaching me for not having put in an appearance the day before. It flatters me. She was charming. I say that I have to be careful not to see her every day, for her eyes search my soul. After saying that she does not believe a word of it she asks if I have thought of a way to convince her. She says that if it is true that my cabala is an intelligence which has nothing to do with hers, I could make the cabala itself tell me how to go about enlightening her. I pretend to find her expedient a good one, and I promise to ask the question for her. Her father arrived from the Exchange and we sat down at table. We had come to dessert when a police officer arrived bringing me five hundred florins from the Magistrate, for which I gave him a receipt. After he left I told Monsieur D. O. the whole story, and the beautiful Esther reproached me for preferring bad company to hers. She asked me to go with her to a Dutch comedy, at which I was bored because she gave it her entire attention. Back at her house she told me the whole plot of the play, then we ate supper, and nothing was said of the cabala. I promised her and Monsieur D. O. that I would come to dine with them every day or would let them know when I could not.

The next morning at eight o'clock I saw Count Piccolomini before me in my room; his not having had himself announced made me suspicious. I quickly rang, and my Spaniard came up. He asked me to send him away because we needed to talk privately. I said that he did not understand Italian and that I had good reason to keep him there; but my valet understood everything.

"Yesterday about noon," he said, "two men entered my room accompanied by the innkeeper, for not knowing French they needed an interpreter. One of them asked me if I would or would not instantly pay five hundred florins which I owed you because of a forged bill of exchange which I had given you and which he had with him. He said that I must answer yes or no on the spot without arguing, for such was the order they had received from the Police Magistrate. Thus badgered, I decided to pay and did so; but I was very much surprised when the same man told me through the interpreter that he would not give me back the bill until I had stated from whom I had received it, since it was forged and the laws governing commerce demanded that the forger be found. I replied that I did not know the person who had given it to me. I said that I had been amusing myself in my room with a small bank at faro when a man had come in and begun playing on the security of the note and had left after losing it. After he had gone I learned that he had come alone and that none of the persons present knew him. The other man had the interpreter tell me that I should take measures to find the man, for otherwise the law would hold me to be the forger and would proceed against me. After signifying all this to me they left with the bill. My wife went after dinner to the Police Magistrate to remonstrate with him, and he heard her out after sending for an interpreter. The answer he gave her was that it was his duty to discover the person guilty of forgery, that law and order demanded it, to say nothing of the honor of Monsieur Casanova, who might be suspected of being the forger, and that the merchant himself could proceed against me in an effort to find out who had forged his signature. You see my situation. Everything depends on you; you have received your money, get me out of this difficulty. You have friends, use your influence, and no more will be heard of the matter.''

I answered that I did not see what I could do, and I ended by advising him to sacrifice the scoundrel who had given him the forged bill or to disappear. He left, saying I would be sorry.

My Spaniard told me he had heard threats and that I should be on my guard; but I ordered him to hold his tongue, I dressed, and I went to Esther's, where I was faced with trying once more to convince her that my oracle was divine.

She gave me a question in which she challenged the oracle to reveal something which could be known only to herself. It was no time to take chances. Really at a loss, I said that the oracle might reveal some secret which she would later regret my having learned. She replied that she had nothing to fear, and that it was no use for me to think up excuses. Here is the bright idea which finally came into my mind.

In the middle of the little dimple at the bottom of her chin Esther had a pretty black mark, very small but slightly rounded and garnished with four or five slender very short black hairs. This little mark, which we Italians call *neo*,[27] added a charm to her pretty face. Knowing as I did that all marks of this kind which are seen on anyone's face or neck or hands or arms are duplicated on the part of the body corresponding to the visible part, I was certain that Esther must have exactly the same kind of mark as the one on her chin in a place which, modest as she was, she could never have let anyone see, and that she might not even know herself that she had it. Strong in this certainty, I decided to astonish her by answering a question of the kind in exactly these words: "Beautiful and discreet Esther, no one knows that you have a mark exactly like the one at the bottom of your chin on the most secret place in your body consecrated only to love."

Esther did not need a translation, for as the numbers came from my pen she read them as if they had been letters. She said calmly and serenely that, since I did not need to know what the answer said, I would be doing her a favor if I left it to her.

"Gladly. I even promise you I will never be curious about it. I am satisfied if you are convinced."

"I shall be convinced when I find that what it says is true."

"Do you think I do not know the thing the answer says?"

"I shall be sure you do not know it when I find that what it says is true; but if it is true the oracle will be justified. The thing is so secret that I do not even know it myself. There is no occasion for your knowing it. It is a trifle which cannot interest you, but enough to convince me that the oracle is animated by an intelligence which has nothing to do with your mind."

Unfeigned feeling, driving out deceit, softened me to the point of shedding some tears, which Esther could only interpret to my advantage. They came from my remorse. I loved her, nevertheless I deceived her; but, admitting my guilt, I could only like myself the less, and that avenged her.

Yet I was not entirely sure that what my oracle had told Esther would convince her of its divinity. She could not but be convinced for the moment; but she might cease to be so if she ever learned that the correspondence between marks on the human body was natural and necessary, and with that her conviction would not only disappear but be replaced by contempt. This fear put me in agony, for love loses heart as soon as it discovers that the object it loves is unworthy of its esteem.

After dinner I took leave of her to call on Rigerboos and thank him for what he had done for me with the Police Magistrate. As for Piccolomini's threat, he advised me to go armed with pistols against anything that might happen to me and to fear nothing in Holland. He said he was about to leave for Batavia on a ship of which he owned the entire cargo and was putting all his money into it, that in the ruinous state of his affairs it was the only resource left to him. He was making the voyage without insuring the ship, which would double his profit. If it was captured or shipwrecked he would perish too; so he could lose nothing. He laughed as he told me all this, but he could not talk in such a fashion unless he was in despair. My dear old friend Teresa Trenti[28] had contributed in no small measure to his ruin. She was in London, where, according to what she wrote us, she was doing well. Instead of Trenti she now called herself Cornelys. This was Rigerboos's name,[29] though I had not known it until then. We spent an hour writing to that most unusual woman, a man whom Rigerboos was commending to her good offices being about to leave for London. After that we went sleighing at top speed on the frozen Amstel. This amusement, so much enjoyed by the Dutch and in my opinion so boring, cost a ducat an hour. After that we went to eat oysters, and then we stopped in at *musicaus,* one after another, with no idea of indulging in debauchery; but this is what happened. It was decreed that every time I preferred certain diversions to Esther's society some misfortune would befall me.

As we entered one *musicau* Rigerboos inadvertently called me by my name; at the same moment I saw one of the strumpets who are always to be found in these filthy bordellos come up and look at me closely, and despite the dim light which lit the stinking room I at once recognized Lucia, whom I had also seen in another place of the same kind a year earlier[30] and who had not recognized me. I turned away, but it was no use; she came closer, spoke to me sadly, reminded me who she was, saying that she was as happy to see me in such a flourishing condition as I must be sad to see what she had become. I condoled with her, and I called to my friend and invited him to go to a room upstairs with me, where the girl would entertain us by telling her story. Lucia had not become actually ugly, but something worse—repulsive. In the nineteen years which had passed since I saw her at Pasiano every kind of debauchery had made her so. She told a very short story at great length. The courier L'Aigle[31] had taken her to lie in at Trieste, where he had remained for five or six months afterward, living on her. A ship's captain who had fallen in love with her persuaded the courier, who passed for her husband, to take her with him to Zante,[32] where he was going for merchandise. At Zante the courier had enlisted and four years later had deserted, leaving her stranded; she stayed there five or six more years, living on what her charms brought her. She had left Zante with a very pretty girl with whom an English naval officer had fallen in love and had gone to England, which she had left two or three years later for Holland, where I saw her. Aside from her mother tongue she had a smattering of Greek, English, French, and Dutch. She emptied two bottles during the hour she spent telling us her sad story, she told us she lived on what some pretty girls she was keeping earned, they being obliged to give her half. Her beauty having vanished, her only resource had been to become a bawd; it was the classic ending; but poor Lucia was only thirty-three; however, she looked fifty, and a woman's age is exactly the age she looks.

Rigerboos asked her if the girls who lived with her were at the *musicau,* and she answered that they were not and that they would never come there, for they were young ladies of good birth who lived with their uncle, who was a Venetian gentleman. At that I burst out laughing. Lucia said that she was only telling me what they had told her and that if we wanted to see them they were only fifty paces away in a house she rented; we could go there without apprehension, for their uncle slept in another part of the city. He only came to dinner to learn what acquaintances they had made and to collect the money they had earned. Rigerboos declared that we must go to see them, and being very curious to speak with some noble Venetian ladies, I told Lucia to take us there. I knew very well that they could only be whores, that their uncle must be a complete rascal, but there was nothing for it but to go.

I see two quite pretty girls. Lucia announces me as a Venetian; at which they are beside themselves with surprise and delighted to see someone with whom they can talk. I know at once from their dialect that they are Paduans, I tell them so, they admit it; I ask them their uncle's name, and they say there are good reasons why they cannot tell me. Rigerboos says that we can do without knowing and takes the one he finds most to his taste. Lucia orders up oysters, ham, a quantity of bottles, and retires to her room. I did not feel like playing the fool; but Rigerboos wants to laugh and be rowdy; they try to play the prude, he banters them, I follow his lead, they decide to give in, and after putting them in a state of nature we proceed, often changing partners, to do to them whatever animality suggests to those who go to such places only for something to laugh at. After three or four hours we pay and leave. I privately give poor Lucia six ducats. The girls got four ducats each, which in Holland is very good pay. We leave and go to our lodgings to sleep.

The next morning I wake up very late and in a bad humor, partly from the debauch of the previous night, which always leaves the soul sad—*adfigit humo* ("fastens to earth")[33]—partly because of Esther, who must have been expecting me. I was to go there for dinner, it was a regular arrangement, but I shall not want for excuses;

I ring for Leduc to dress me. He goes down to fetch my coffee. I see La Perrine come in, with the so-called Wiedau whom I had seen at Piccolomini's and who said he was a friend of the Count of Saint-Germain, the adept. I was sitting on the bed putting on my stockings. I had three fine rooms, but they were at the back of the house, where, if I had made an outcry, no one would have heard me; I had a bell near the fireplace, which was at the other end of the room; it would be at least a quarter of an hour before Leduc came back with my coffee, I saw almost nothing for it but to let myself be murdered. It was Wiedau who began, telling me that to get out of his difficulty Count Piccolomini had accused them of having given him the bill of exchange in question, and that he had warned them he had done so.

"Our safety demands that we leave at once, and we have no money; we are desperate. Give us only four hundred florins immediately, that will be enough—but immediately and without arguing. Otherwise we will make our escape on foot; but not until we have taken what we see over there; and this is what will persuade you." So saying each of the two robbers draws two pistols from his pockets.

"Violence," I said, "is not necessary. Here you are—and I wish you a good journey."

I take from my breeches pocket a roll of a hundred ducats, I say I do not care about the extra hundred and twenty florins, and I advise them to go before my valet comes up. Wiedau takes it, his hand shaking, puts it in his pocket without even opening it, and La Perrine, always the Gascon,[34] comes over to me and, praising me for my magnanimity, embraces me. After which the two scoundrels make for the door and leave. I consider myself very fortunate to have escaped from the danger so cheaply. I ring repeatedly, not to have them followed but to be dressed quickly, letting my toilet go by the board and stopping neither to inform Leduc of the incident nor to complain to the host of what has happened to me in his inn. After ordering Leduc to go to Monsieur D. O.'s and present my apologies for being unable to dine with him, I go to the Police Magistrate, for whom I have to wait two hours. After hearing my story the worthy man said he would do everything in his power to have the robbers arrested, but that he feared it was too late. I told him that Piccolomini had come to see me, and after giving him a full account of all that he had wanted me to do, I told him he had threatened that I would be sorry. He assured me he would see to it. After that I went home, with a very bitter taste in my mouth, to make my toilet and catch my breath. A lemonade without sugar made me vomit a great deal of bile. I went to Monsieur D. O.'s about nightfall and found Esther serious and looking a little offended; but she changed her attitude when she saw that I looked discomposed.

"Tell me, quick—quick—" she said, "if you have been ill, and I shall feel relieved."

"Yes, my dear, and worse than ill; but now I am perfectly well; you will see it at supper, for I have eaten nothing since dinner yesterday."

It was true; I had eaten only some oysters with the Paduan hussies. The charming Esther invited me to embrace her, and unworthy though I was, I assured her of my affection.

"The news I can tell you," she said, "is that I am sure you are not the author of your oracle, or at least that, like me, you are so only when you wish to be. The answer it gave me is correct, and correct to the point of being divine. It told me something that no one could know, since I did not know it myself. You cannot imagine how surprised I was when I discovered this truth. You are in possession of a treasure; your oracle is infallible; but if it is infallible, it must never lie about anything; it tells me that you love me, and that makes me rejoice, for you are the man of my heart; but I need a proof of your love which, if it is true that you love me, you cannot refuse me. Here, read your answer, I am sure you do not know what it says. Afterward I will tell you what you must do to make Esther perfectly happy."

I read, pretending that I am reading it for the first time. I kiss the words of the oracle which said that I loved her, I express my delight that the answer has convinced her so easily, then I ask her to forgive me if I cannot believe that such a thing was unknown to her. She replies, blushing slightly, that I would not think it impossible if it was allowable for her to convince me. Then, coming to the proof she demanded to assure her that I loved her, she said I must tell her my secret.

"You love me," she said, "and you cannot object to making a girl happy who will very soon be your wife and whose master you will become. My father will consent. When I am your wife I will do whatever you ask; we will even go to live somewhere else if you wish; but all this will never happen until you have taught me how to obtain an answer without first going to the trouble of making it up in my own head."

I took her beautiful hands and, kissing them, I said that she knew I was bound to keep my promise to a girl in Paris who certainly could not be compared to her, but that, even so, I was no less obliged to keep it. Alas! Could I give her a better excuse, since I could not teach her a different method of consulting the oracle than the one she used?

Two or three days later an officer was announced to me by a name which I did not know; I sent him word that I was occupied and, my valet being out, I locked my door. After all that had happened to me I had determined to receive no one. The police had failed to catch up with the two robbers who had tried to murder me, and Piccolomini had vanished; but there were still members of their gang in Amsterdam.

An hour later Leduc comes back and hands me a letter written in bad Italian, which had been given him by an officer who was waiting for the answer. I saw that it was signed by the same name which I did not know. He wrote that we were acquainted, but that he could only tell me his name in private and that he had come to see me only for my own good.

I told Leduc to show him in and to remain in my room. I see a man of my stature, forty years of age, wearing a military uniform, and with the look of a gallows bird.

He begins by telling me that we had met in Cerigo sixteen or seventeen years earlier.[35] I then remember that I had gone ashore there for a short time when I was accompanying the Bailo[36] to Constantinople, and that the man must be one of the two poor wretches to whom I had given alms. I asked him if it was he who had told me he was the son of a Count Pocchini,[37] of Padua, who was not a Count, and he congratulated me on my good memory. I ask him what he has to say to me, and he answers that he cannot speak in my servant's presence. I tell him to speak in Italian, and I order Leduc to wait in the antechamber.

He then tells me that he has learned I had visited his nieces, that I had treated them like whores, and so he insists that I give him satisfaction. Weary of being pestered, I run for my pistols and, aiming one of them at him, I order him to leave. Leduc comes running, and the scoundrel makes off, saying that he will find me somewhere.

Ashamed to go and complain to the Police Magistrate, to whom I should have had to tell the whole scandalous story, I merely reported the matter to my friend Rigerboos, leaving it to him. The result of his intervention was that the police ordered Lucia to get rid of the two

Countesses. Lucia herself came the next morning to tell me, with tears in her eyes, the story of the police action, which reduced her to destitution again. I gave her six sequins and she left in better spirits. I asked her not to come to visit me again. Everything I did away from Esther turned out disastrously for me.

It was the perfidious Major Saby who, three days later, came to tell me to be on my guard because a Venetian officer who claimed that I had dishonored him was saying everywhere that since he had vainly asked me to give him satisfaction he had the right to murder me. He said he was desperate, that he wanted to leave, and that he had no money.

When I think of all the annoyances to which I was subjected during the short time of my second stay in Amsterdam, when I could have been living there perfectly happily, I conclude that we are always the first cause of our misfortunes.

"I advise you," Saby went on, "to give the wretch fifty florins and so rid yourself of an enemy."

I agreed, and I gave them to him at noon in a coffeehouse which the Major named to me. My reader will see where I met him again four months later.

Monsieur D. O. invited me to sup with him at the Burgomaster's Lodge. It was a great favor, for, contrary to all the usual rules of Freemasonry, no one was admitted there except the twenty-four members who composed it. They were the richest millionaires on the Exchange. He said that he had announced my coming, and that in compliment to me the Lodge would be opened in French. I made such a good impression that I was declared a supernumerary for as long as I should stay in Amsterdam. Monsieur D. O. told me the next day that I had supped with a company which could command three hundred millions.

The next day Monsieur D. O. asked me to do him the favor of obtaining the answer to a question which, saving his daughter's presence, her oracle had answered too obscurely. Esther urged me to comply. He asked the oracle: Was the man who was trying to persuade him and his associates to enter into a transaction of the utmost consequence really a friend of the King of France?

I instantly see that the man can be no one except the Count of Saint-Germain. Monsieur D. O. was not aware that I knew him. I could not help remembering what Count d'Affry had told me. Here was the opportunity to add luster to my oracle and give my charming Esther something to think about.

After framing the question in a pyramid and writing above the four keys the letters O S A D, all only to impress her the more, I extract the answer, beginning with the fourth key, D. Here it is:

"The friend disavows. The order is signed. It is granted. It is refused. Everything disappears. Delay."

I immediately pretend to find my answer very obscure. Esther, surprised, concludes that it says a great deal in a strange style. Monsieur D. O. says that it is clear to him, and he calls the oracle "divine."

"The word 'delay,' " he says, "is directed to me. You are both clever, you and my daughter, at obtaining oracles, but in interpreting them I am cleverer than you. I shall stop everything. The project is to pay out a hundred millions against the pledge of the French crown diamonds. It is a transaction which the King wants to complete without his ministers' having a hand in it or even knowing of it. So I beg you to mention it to no one."

As soon as Esther was alone with me she said that for once she was certain that this last answer did not come out of my head, and she begged me to tell her what the four letters meant and why I usually omitted them. I replied that I omitted them because experience had taught me that they were not necessary, but that since writing them was enjoined as part of constructing the pyramid I added them when I thought there was a special need for it.

"What do the four letters mean?"

"They are the initials of the ineffable names of the four cardinal intelligences of the earth. It is forbidden to utter them, but anyone who wishes to receive the oracle must know them."

"Ah, my dear friend, do not deceive me, for I believe everything, and since my good faith is divine, it is murder to abuse it. Then you would have to tell me the four ineffable names if you should teach me the cabala?"

"Certainly. And I cannot reveal them except to the person whom I make my heir. Breaking that command is punished by forgetting. Admit, beautiful Esther, that the threat must make me afraid."

"I admit it. Alas for me! Your heir will be your Manon."

"No. She does not have a mind capable of this art."

"Yet you must decide on someone, for you are mortal. My father will give you half of his fortune without obliging you to marry me."

"Alas! What have you said? As if the condition that I must marry you could be irksome to me!"

Three or four days later at ten o'clock in the morning Monsieur D. O. comes hurrying into Esther's room where she was working with me at learning how to operate the oracle by all the four keys and to double, triple, and quadruple it at will. Surprised by his excitement, we rise, he embraces us again and again, he tells us to embrace each other.

"What is this, my adorable Papa?"

He makes us sit down on either side of him and he reads us a letter he has just received from Monsieur Calkoen,[38] one of the secretaries to Their High Power.[39]

The letter said in substance that the French Ambassador, in the name of the King his master, had demanded that the States-General deliver over the pretended Count of Saint-Germain and that he had been answered that the person so named would be delivered to His Most Christian Majesty[40] as soon as he was found. In consequence of this promise, the letter went on, it having been discovered that the person sought was lodging at the "Star of the East," officers had been sent to the inn to take him into custody, but they had not found him. The innkeeper said that the Count had left at nightfall, taking the road to Nijmegen. He was being pursued, but there was no hope of catching up with him. *It was not known* how he had managed to discover that the order had been given and thus escape his doom.

"*It is not known,*" said Monsieur D. O. with a laugh, "but everybody knows it. Monsieur Calkoen himself must have informed this friend of the King of France that a search would be made for him at midnight and that he would be seized if he let himself be found. He was not such a fool. The government will tell the Ambassador it is very sorry His Excellency delayed too long before asking for the person; and the answer will be no surprise to him, for it is the one which is always given in such cases. All the words of the oracle have been verified. We were on the verge of paying him the one hundred thousand florins which he required at once. The pledge was the finest of the crown diamonds, which remains in our hands, but which we will return to him as soon as he appears to claim it, unless the Ambassador demands it. I have never seen a finer stone. You now see the nature of the great debt I owe to your oracle. I am going at once to the Exchange, where the whole Company will express its gratitude to me. After dinner I will entreat you to ask whether we should declare that we have this fine diamond or had better remain silent."

After this magnanimous discourse he again embraced us and then left.

"Now is the time," said Esther, "when you could give me the greatest proof of friendship you can give me, which will cost you nothing and will fill my cup with honor and happiness."

"Command me, my angel, how could I refuse you what will cost me nothing?"

"After dinner my father will want to know if the return of the diamond will be demanded, or if the Company would do better to announce that it is in their custody before they are summoned to produce it. Tell him to apply to me for the answer, and offer to ask the question yourself as well, if my answer is obscure. Put the question now, and I will answer in exactly your words. My father will love me all the better."

"Oh, my dear Esther! Would that I could do far more to assure you of my friendship! Come, let us begin at once."

I insist that she frame the question herself, that she put the four puissant letters in their place with her own hand, and I make her begin her answer by using the divine key. Then, after performing the additions and subtractions which I suggest, she is amazed to obtain the following answer: "The Company would do better to say nothing, for all Europe would laugh at it. The supposed diamond is only paste."

I thought the charming girl would go mad for joy. She was choking with laughter.

"What an answer!" she said. "The diamond is false. How stupid of them to let themselves be taken in! And it is from my oracle that my dear papa will learn this! And it is you who give me such a present! It will be verified at once, and finding that the stone is false, the grave and reverend Company will be under the greatest obligation to my father, for actually it is on the verge of dishonor. Can you leave me the pyramid?"

"I leave it with you very gladly, but it will not help you to learn more than you already know."

The scene became comic after dinner when the worthy Monsieur D. O. learned from his daughter's oracle that the stone was false. He burst into incredulous exclamations. He thought it unbelievable; and he asked me to put the same question, and when he saw the same answer come out, though in different words, he left to have the diamond submitted to every test and to advise silence when the truth was discovered. But his advice proved useless. Everyone heard the story, and people said, as they were bound to say, though it was not true, that the Company had fallen into the snare and given the impostor the hundred thousand florins he had demanded.

Esther was very proud; but her longing to possess the science of the oracle as she was convinced I possessed it became extreme. Word arrived that Saint-Germain had gone to Emden and then to England. I shall return to him at the proper place. But now for the blow which fell on me out of the blue on Christmas Day[41] and which nearly killed me.

I received a large package from Paris with a letter from Manon which read as follows:

"Be reasonable and receive the news I send you calmly. This package contains all your letters and your portrait. Return my portrait to me, and if you still have my letters burn them. I count on your honor. Think of me no more. On my side I will do all that lies in my power to forget you. Tomorrow[42] at this hour I shall be the wife of Monsieur Blondel,[43] Architect to the King and member of his Academy.[44] You will greatly oblige me if, when you return to Paris, you will pretend not to know me wherever you may meet with me."

Her letter left me in consternation after depriving me of thought for two full hours. I sent word to Monsieur D. O. that as I was not well I would stay in my room all day. I open the packet and, looking at my portrait, I think I behold a prodigy. My countenance, which had been cheerful before, now seems threatening and angry. I began writing to the faithless girl, each time tearing up my letter as soon as I had finished it. At ten o'clock I took a bowl of soup, then I went back to bed; but I could not sleep. Countless plans, no sooner formed than rejected. I decided to go to Paris and kill this Blondel whom I did not know and who had dared to marry a girl who belonged to me and whom everyone believed to be my wife. I raged at her father and at her brother, who had not written the news to me. The next morning I sent word to Monsieur D. O. that I was still ill. I spent the whole day now writing, now reading over the faithless girl's letters. My empty stomach sent vapors to my brain which prostrated me; when I recovered I raved, talking to myself in fits of rage which lacerated my soul.

At three o'clock Monsieur D. O. came to urge me to go with him to The Hague, where on the next day, which was St. John's Day,[45] all the notable Freemasons of Holland were to assemble; but he did not insist when he saw the state I was in.

"What is the trouble with you?"

"A great grief; I beg you not to ask me more."

He left in distress, asking me to see his daughter. I saw her appear before me the next morning with her governess. Astonished to see me so undone, she wanted to know what the grief was which my mind could not conquer. I asked her to sit down and not to insist on my talking of it, assuring her that her mere presence was enough to keep my sorrow from increasing.

"As long as we talk of other things, my dear friend, I will not think of the misfortune which crushes my soul."

"Get dressed and come and spend the day with me."

"Since Christmas Eve I have lived on nothing but chocolate and a few bowls of broth. I am very weak."

At that I saw alarm on her charming countenance.

A moment later she wrote a few lines and handed them to me to read. She said that if a large sum of money, aside from the amount her father owed me, could lighten my grief, she could be my doctor. I answered, after kissing her hand, that what I lacked was not money but a mind strong enough to make a decision. She then said that I should turn to my oracle, and I could not help laughing.

"How can you laugh at it?" she said, with admirable logic. "It seems to me that the cure for your sorrow must be perfectly well known to it."

"I laughed, my angel, because, oddly enough, it was in my mind to tell you that it was you who should consult your oracle. I will tell you that I do not consult mine because I am afraid it will suggest a remedy which I should like even less than the sorrow which afflicts me."

"You could always refuse to employ it."

"If I did that I should fail in the respect which I owe the intelligence."

I saw that my answer overwhelmed her. A moment later she asked me if I would like to have her stay with me all day. I answered that if she would stay for dinner I would get up, I would have three places set at a small table, and I would certainly eat. I saw that she was pleased and happy; she said she would prepare salt cod [46] at the table just as I liked it, and cutlets and oysters. After telling her governess to send their sedan chair home, she went to the hostess's room to order a choice dinner and the stove and the alcohol she needed to cook her little ragouts on the table.

Such was Esther. She was a treasure who was willing to be mine, but on condition that I give her my treasure, which I could not give her. Feeling cheered by the idea that I was to spend the whole day with her, I became certain I could begin to forget Manon. I used the time to get out of bed. When she came back she was delighted to see me up. She begged me with the most enchanting cajoleries to have my hair done and to dress as if I were going to a ball. Her sudden whim made me laugh. She said it would amuse us. I called Leduc and, telling him that I was going to a ball, ordered him to fetch a suitable coat from my trunk, and when he asked me which one Esther said she would choose it. Leduc opened the trunk and, leaving her to her own devices, came to shave me and dress my hair. Happy in her role, Esther made her governess help her lay out on the bed a ruffled shirt and the coat she liked best among my stock. I took a second bowl of broth, of which I felt the need, and I foresaw that I should spend a pleasant day. I began to think that I did not hate Manon but felt contempt for her; analyzing this new feeling gave me hope and renewed my old courage.

I was by the fire letting Leduc dress my hair and enjoying the pleasure which Esther, whom I could not see, was taking in her occupation, when I see her before me, sad and uncertain, holding the letter in which Manon gave me my dismissal.

"Am I to blame," she said timidly, "if I have discovered the cause of your grief?"

"No, my dear. Pity me and let us say no more about it."

"Then may I read them all?"

"All, if you like. You will only pity me the more."

All of the faithless girl's letters and all mine were arranged by date on the night table. Esther fell to reading. As soon as I was dressed and we were alone, for her governess was making lace and never joined in our conversation, Esther said that nothing she had read had ever interested her as much as these letters.

"These accursed letters," I replied, "will be the death of me. After dinner you shall help me burn them all, even the one which orders me to burn them."

"Give them to me instead; they shall never leave my hands."

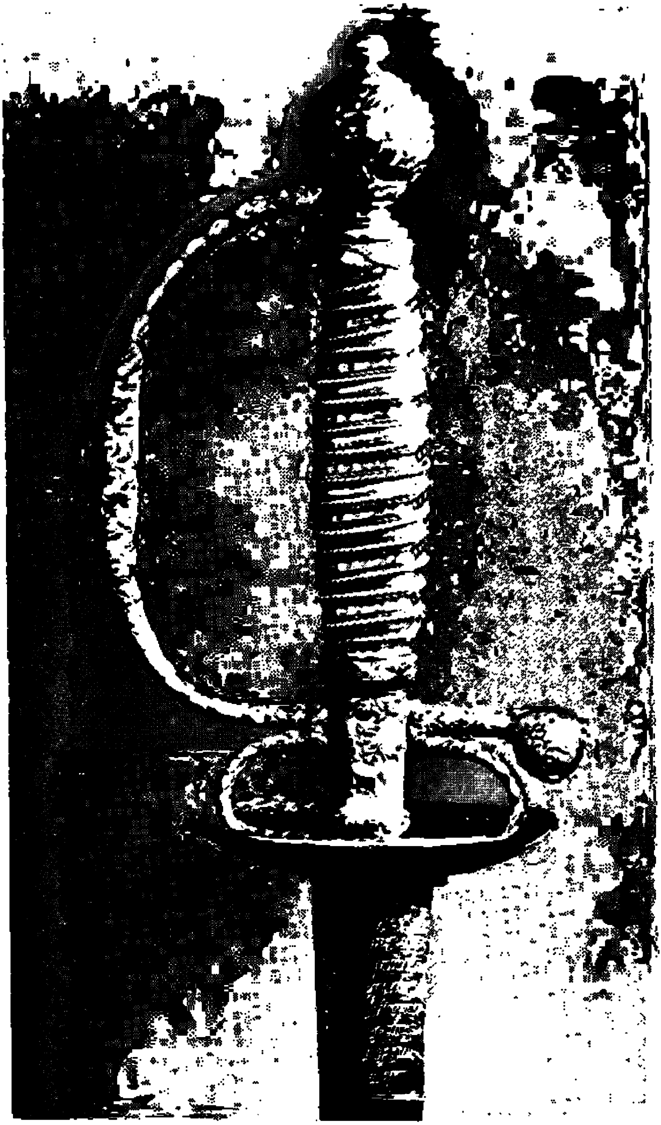
"I will bring them to you tomorrow."

There were more than two hundred [47] of them, and the shortest were four pages long. Delighted to have been given them, she said she would gather them together at once and take them home that evening. She asked me if I would send her back her portrait, and I answered that I did not know what to do with it.

"Send it back to her," said Esther indignantly; "I am sure your oracle will give you the same advice. Where is it? May I see it?"

I had her portrait inside a gold snuffbox which I had never shown her for fear that, finding Manon was the prettier, she would suppose I was only showing it to her from a vanity which could not but be injurious to me. I quickly opened my jewel case and handed her the snuffbox. Any other woman but Esther would have found Manon ugly or at least thought she must pretend to find her so; but Esther praised her to me, saying only that the girl's base soul did not deserve to have such a pretty body.

She then wanted to see all the portraits I had, which Signora Manzoni had sent me from Venice, as my reader may remember. There were some nudes, but Esther did not play the prude. O-Morphi[48] delighted her, and she thought her history, which I told her in full, most curious. The portrait of M. M. as a nun and then stark naked made her laugh; she wanted to know the story, but I excused myself. We sat down to dinner and spent two hours over it. Passing very rapidly from death to life, I dined with the greatest possible appetite; Esther kept congratulating herself on having had the skill to be my doctor. Before we rose from the table I promised her I



Hilt of French Dress Sword

would send Manon's portrait to her husband the next day, and Esther at once approved of my resolve; but an hour later she put a question to the oracle, writing O S A D above the keys and asking if I ought to send her portrait back to the jilt. She calculated, she computed, she added, all the while telling me, though with a smile, that she was certainly not making up the answer, and she extracted the command that I should return the portrait, but to herself, and not commit the base act of sending it to her husband.

I praised her, I embraced her again and again, I told her I would obey the oracle's command, and I ended by congratulating her on no longer needing me to teach her the science, since she was already in full possession of it. At that Esther laughed and, fearing that I really believed it, was at pains to assure me of the contrary. It is in such toying that love delights and in a very little time grows gigantic.

"Should I be too curious," she said, "if I asked you where your portrait is? She says in her letter that she is sending it back to you."

"In my anger I threw it I don't know where. You must realize that such an object, so scorned, can give me no pleasure."

"Let us look for it, my dear friend, I should like to see it."

We found it at once beside some books I had on my bureau. Esther, in astonishment, says that it is a speaking likeness; I think I may go so far as to offer it to her, declaring, however, that it is unworthy of such an honor; and she accepts it with demonstrations of the most vehement gratitude. I spent one of those days with her which we may call happy, if we make happiness consist in a reciprocal and tranquil satisfaction, with none of the violence of aroused passion. She left at ten o'clock, after I promised her I would spend all the next day with her.

After nine hours of the kind of sleep which amazes us when we wake because we seem not to have slept at all, I called on Esther, who was still sleeping but whom her governess insisted on waking. She received me sitting up in bed, all smiles, and pointing to my correspondence, over which she had spent the greater part of the night. She let me kiss her rose and lily face, preventing my hands from touching her alabaster bosom, a third of which dazzled me, but not keeping my eyes from gazing on its beauty. I sat down by her knees, praising her charms and her intelligence, both of a quality to cast a thousand Manons into oblivion. She asked me if her whole body was beautiful, and I answered that, not having become her husband, I had no idea, and she smiled and praised my discretion.

"However," I said, "I learned from her nurse that her figure was perfect and that no blemish broke either the whiteness or the smoothness of her hidden parts."

"You must have a different idea of me," said Esther.

"Yes, my angel, for the oracle let me into a great secret; but that does not keep me from believing you are perfectly beautiful everywhere. If I were your husband I could easily refrain from touching you there."

"Then you think," she said blushing and a little aggrieved, "that by touching me there you would feel something which might lessen your desires?"

At this thrust, which unmasked me completely, I felt overwhelmed with shame of the most painful kind. I begged her to forgive me, and the force of feeling made me shed a few tears on her beautiful hands, to which she responded in kind. Both of us burning with the same fire, we would have seized the occasion to yield to our desires if prudence had permitted. We enjoyed only a sweet ecstasy followed by a calm which made us reflect on the sweet enjoyments which it was in our power to procure. Three hours passed very quickly. She told me to go into her sitting room so that she could dress. We dined with the secretary, whom she did not like and who could not but be very jealous of my good fortune.

We spent the rest of the day together in the confidences which are exchanged when the first foundations of the most intimate tenderness are laid between two persons of different sex who feel that they are born for each other. We were still on fire; but in her sitting room Esther was not as free as in her bedchamber. I went home to my lodging well satisfied with my position. I thought I saw that she might decide to become my wife without demanding that I teach her what I could not teach. I regretted that I had not left her to believe her mastery was as great as mine, and I felt that it was no longer possible for me to show her that I had deceived her and still obtain her forgiveness. Yet only Esther could make me forget Manon, whom I already began to think unworthy of all that I had meant to do for her.

Monsieur D. O. having returned, I went to dine with him. He had been glad to learn that his daughter had cured me by spending a whole day with me. When we were alone he told us he had learned at The Hague that the Count of Saint-Germain had the secret of making diamonds which differed from real ones only in weight, which, however, was no bar to his acquiring great wealth through this art alone. I should have made him laugh heartily if I could have told him all I knew about the man.

The next day I took Esther to the concert. She said that on the following day she would not leave her room and that we could talk about our marriage. It was the last day of the year 1759.[49]

CHAPTER II

I enlighten Esther. I leave for Germany. My adventure near Cologne. The Burgomaster's wife; I conquer her. Ball at Bonn. Welcome from the Elector of Cologne. Luncheon at Brühl. First intimacy. I sup uninvited at General Kettler's. I am happy. My departure from Cologne. La Toscani. The jewel. My arrival at Stuttgart.

January 1, 1760.

THIS MEETING with Esther could not but have consequences. Love had summoned me to it, and Honor must be of the party. I went, determined not to deceive the angelic girl and certain that I would not fail in my resolve. I found her in bed. She said she would stay there all day and that we would work. Her governess brought us a small table, and she placed before me several questions, all intended to convince me that, before becoming her husband, I should impart my science to her. They were all of a tenor which would oblige the intelligence either to command or forbid me to satisfy her. I could do neither, for a prohibition might have irked her to the point of losing any inclination to grant me her favors. I got out of it by equivocal answers until Monsieur D. O. came to summon me to dinner. He allowed his daughter to remain in bed, but on condition that she would spend the rest of the day without working, for intellectual effort could only increase her headache. She promised, and I was greatly relieved.

Leaving the table, I returned to her room and found her asleep. I felt I should respect her slumbers; but when she woke, reading the heroid[1] of Eloise and Abelard set us on fire. The conversation turning to the secret which the oracle had revealed to her and which could be known only to herself, she allowed my hand to search for it, and when she saw me doubtful because it could not be felt she made up her mind to expose it to view. It was no bigger than a millet seed. She let me kiss it until I lost my breath.

After spending two hours in amorous toyings without ever coming to the great act, which she was right to refuse me, I resolved to tell her the truth, although I saw that after two confessed false confidences the third might well revolt her.

Esther, who was infinitely intelligent and whom I could never have deceived if she had been less so, heard me without surprise, without interrupting me, and without the slightest trace of anger. At the end of my confession she replied that, being sure that I loved her and finding this last confidence obviously false, she was convinced that my reason for not teaching her to operate the cabala was that it did not lie in my power, and hence she would no longer urge me to do what I could not or would not.

"And so," she said, "let us be good friends until death and say no more on the subject. I forgive you, and I am sorry for you if love deprived you of the courage to be sincere. You have convinced me of your science only too well. That is over and done with. You could never have known a thing which concerned only me, and which I myself did not know."

"My dear, don't let your logic run away with you.

You did not know you had the mark, and I knew you had it.''

``You knew it? How did you find out? It is incredible.''

``I will tell you all.''

I thereupon expounded to her the whole theory of the correspondence between the signs on the human body, ending by astonishing and convincing her when I said I was certain that her governess, who had a large mole on her right cheek, must have one like it on her left thigh.

``I will find out,'' she said; ``but I am surprised that you alone possess this knowledge.''

``The thing is well known, my charming friend, to everyone acquainted with anatomy, physiology, and even astrology, a chimerical science when it is carried to the point of finding the causes of all our actions in the stars.''

``Then tomorrow, tomorrow and no later, bring me books in which I can find out many such things. I cannot wait to become learned and able to astonish the ignorant with my numerical cabala, for any science without charlatanry never impresses them. I will devote myself to study. Let us love each other, my dear friend, until death. We need not marry to do that.''

I returned to my inn well satisfied and as if relieved of a great burden. The next day I brought her all the books I could find which were sure to entertain her. There were good ones and bad, but I warned her of that. My *Conics*[2] pleased her because she saw that it bore the stamp of truth. Wanting to shine with the help of the oracle, she needed to become a good natural scientist, and I set her on the right road. I then decided to make a little journey in Germany before returning to Paris; and she approved my plan, very glad when I assured her that I would see her again before the end of the year. But though I did not see her again I cannot reproach myself with having deceived her, for everything that happened to me prevented me from keeping my promise.

I wrote to Monsieur d'Affry, asking him to send me a passport which I needed because I wanted to make a trip through the Empire, where the French and all the then belligerent powers were campaigning.[3] He replied very politely that I did not need one, but that if I insisted he would send it to me. His letter was enough. I put it in my portfolio, and at Cologne it gave me more standing than a passport.

I transferred to Monsieur D. O. all the money I had in the hands of several bankers. He gave me a circular letter of credit drawn on ten or twelve of the most prominent firms in Germany. So I left in my post chaise, for which I had sent to Moerdijk, with nearly a hundred thousand Dutch florins at my disposal, with plenty of valuable jewels and rings, and richly turned out in every respect. I sent back to Paris a Swiss lackey with whom I had started out, keeping only Leduc, who sat behind.

Such is the whole story of my second short stay in Holland, where I accomplished nothing to better my fortune. I had troubles there, but when I remember them I conclude that love made up to me for everything.

I stopped at Utrecht for only a day to see the estate[4] belonging to the Herrnhuters;[5] and on the next day but one I reached Cologne at noon; but half an hour before I arrived there five deserters, three on my right and two on my left, aimed at me, demanding my purse. My postilion, threatened with death by a pistol in my hand, gave his horse both spurs, and the murderers fired their muskets at me, but they harmed only my carriage. They did not have the sense to fire at the postilion. If I had carried two purses, as the English do, the lighter one being intended for bold robbers, I should have thrown it to the wretches; but since I had only one, and it very well stocked, I risked my life to save it. My Spaniard was amazed that the balls, which he had heard whistling past his head, had not touched him. At Cologne the

French were in winter quarters.[6] I found lodgings at the "Sign of the Sun."[7] Entering the public room, I saw the Count of Lastic,[8] Madame d'Urfé's nephew, who after making me all the usual offers took me to see Monsieur de Torcy,[9] who was the Commandant. Instead of a passport I showed him Monsieur d'Affry's letter, and no more was needed. When I told him what had just befallen me he congratulated me on my good luck, but he blamed me in no uncertain terms for the display I had made of my courage. He said that if I was in no hurry to leave I should perhaps see them hanged; but I wanted to leave the next day.

I had to dine with Monsieur de Lastic and Monsieur de Flavacourt,[10] who together persuaded me to go to the theater.[11] So I had to dress, for I was sure to be introduced to ladies and I wanted to make an impression.

Having taken a place on the stage[12] and seen a pretty woman turn her lorgnette on me, I asked Monsieur de Lastic to introduce me, and between the first and second acts he took me to her box, where he began by naming me to Count von Kettler,[13] Lieutenant-General in the Austrian service who was attached to the French army, as the French Monsieur de Montazet[14] was to the Austrian. Immediately afterward he introduced me to the lady, who at once struck me. She first asked me questions about Paris, then about Brussels, where she had been brought up, though she did not seem to listen to my answers. My laces, my watch charms, my rings, distracted her attention.

Changing the subject, as if she had suddenly remembered it was her duty to inquire, she asked me if I would spend some days in Cologne, and she pretended to be hurt when I answered that I expected to dine in Bonn the next day. General Kettler then rose, saying that *he was sure the beautiful lady could persuade me to put off my departure;* and he went out with Lastic, leaving me alone with the interesting beauty. She was the wife of

Burgomaster *X*,[15] and Count Kettler was always with her.

"Is he wrong," she said invitingly, "to be certain I have that power?"

"I do not think so, but he might be wrong in thinking that you would wish to use it."

"Excellent. Then we must trap him, if only to punish him for his indiscretion. Stay."

This unfamiliar language left me gaping. I had to recollect myself. Could I expect such terminology in Cologne? I thought "indiscretion" sublime, "punishment" perfectly apt, "trap" delicious, and the idea of my being the instrument of the trapping struck me as divine. It would have been stupid to inquire further. Assuming a submissive and grateful air, I indicated my obedience by bending over her hand and kissing it.

"Then you will stay, and it is very kind of you, for if you left tomorrow it would seem that you had come here only to affront us. The General is giving a ball tomorrow, and you shall dance with us."

"Dare I flatter myself, Madame, that I shall not share the honor of escorting you in all the contradances with anyone else?"

"I will dance with someone else only when you are tired."

"That is, when I drop dead."

"But where did you get that pomade which perfumes the air? You were on the stage and I smelled it."

"It comes from Florence, and if it goes to your head I will at once have my hair dressed again."

"Good Heavens, that would be murder! Such a pomade would make me completely happy."

"And you will make me so if you will permit me to send you twelve jars of it tomorrow."

The General's return prevented her from answering. I rose to leave.

"I am sure," he said, "that you have put off your departure. Madame has made you promise to sup and dance at my house tomorrow. Has she not?"

"She has led me to hope, General, that you would do me so much honor, and that I shall have the honor of dancing the contradances with her. How could I leave after that?"

"You are right. I will expect you."

I left the box in love and already happy in imagination, and went back to the stage, where the scent of my pomade won me compliments from all the young officers. It was a present from Esther, and this was the first time I had used it. The box contained twenty-four jars; I took out twelve and sent it to her at nine o'clock the next morning, wrapped in waxed cloth and sealed, and addressed to her as if it came from a merchant.

I spent the morning having a hired servant show me the wonders of Cologne, all of them heroi-comic. I laughed when I saw the statue of the steed Bayard,[16] which Ariosto has made so famous, ridden by the four sons of "Aymon."[17] He was Duke Amone, father of the invincible Bradamante and the fortunate Ricciardetto.

All the guests at Monsieur de Castries's,[18] where I dined, were surprised that General Kettler had himself invited me to his ball, since he was extremely jealous of his lady, who only put up with him to feed her vanity. He was advanced in years, with a repulsive face and no qualities of mind which gave him any claim to inspire love. However, he had to resign himself to my sitting beside her at his supper and spending the whole night either talking or dancing with her. I returned to my lodging so much in love that I gave up all thought of leaving. In a moment of fervor I made bold to tell her that if she would promise me a meeting alone I would stay in Cologne for the whole Carnival.[19]

"And if after I promised," she answered, "I failed you, what would you say?"

"I would lament my fate in solitude and say that you had been unable to keep your word."

"You are kind. Stay with us."

On the next day but one after the ball I made her my first visit and she introduced her husband, a fine man who was neither young[20] nor handsome but most obliging. An hour later, hearing the General's carriage stop at her door, she said that if he asked me if I was planning to attend the Elector's[21] ball at Bonn I must answer that I would certainly be there. Five or six minutes later I slipped away.

I knew nothing about the ball, but I at once made inquiries. The entire nobility of Cologne were invited to it, and, since it was a masked ball,[22] anyone could attend it. I decided to go, but as incognito as possible, even if the General did not ask me the question. It seemed to me that, by advising me how to answer him, Madame *X* had ordered me to go. I could put no other interpretation on it. I was certain that she would be present, and I hoped. The woman's mind was of the subtlest. Nevertheless, to everyone who asked me if I was going to the ball, I answered that I had reasons for not attending it; and to the General himself I said that I would not go when he asked me, in Madame *X*'s presence, if I would be there. I said that my health did not permit me that pleasure. He replied that all pleasures were to be eschewed when they might injure one's health.

The day on which the ball was to be given I left at nightfall alone in a post carriage with my strongbox and two dominoes and wearing a coat which no one had seen on me. At Bonn I engaged a room, where I masked and left the second domino and my strongbox. I locked it and went to the Court in a sedan chair. Unknown to everyone, I saw all the ladies of Cologne, and the beautiful *X* with her face unmasked sitting at a faro bank punting by ducats. I see with pleasure that the banker is Count Verità,[23] of Verona, who had made my acquaintance in Bavaria. He was in the Elector's service. His small bank contained only five or six hundred ducats, and the punters, both men and women, were some ten or twelve. I stand beside Madame, and the banker gives me a *livret* and offers me the cards to cut. I decline, and Madame *X* cuts.

I begin punting, staking ten ducats on one card, it loses four times running, and the same thing happens to me at the next deal. At the third deal no one will cut. The banker turns to the General, who was not playing, and he cuts. I take it for a good omen, I stake fifty ducats, and I get the *paroli.*[24] At the next deal I broke the bank. Everyone was curious, I saw that I was followed, nevertheless I managed to escape. I had my sedan chair carry me to my room, where I changed dominoes and left my money; I went back to the ball, where I saw a new banker and a great deal of gold; but having decided to play no more I had no money. Everyone was wanting to discover who the masker was who had broken the bank. I prowl everywhere; I see Madame *X* conversing with Count Verità, who is sitting beside her, I approach, and I hear them speaking of me; he was saying that the Elector wanted to know who the masker was who had broken the bank, and that General Kettler had informed him that it might be a Venetian who had arrived in Cologne a week or ten days earlier. She said I had told her I was not well enough to go to the ball. The Count said that he knew me, that if I was in Bonn the Elector would learn of it, and that I would not leave before he had spoken with me. Hearing all this, I foresaw that I could easily be discovered after the ball; but I defied him to do it as long as I was there. But I did the wrong thing. A contradance was being formed, I took a fancy to dance, not foreseeing that I should have to remove my mask. This proved to be the case when it was too late for me to retreat. When Madame *X* saw me she said she had been mistaken and had wagered that I was a masker who had broken Count Verità's bank. I replied that I had only just arrived.

But at the end of the contradance, when Count Verità saw me, he said that since I was at the ball he was sure I was the person who had broken his bank; I kept denying it, and after eating something at the buffet I went on dancing. Two hours later Count Verità told me with a laugh that I had gone to change my domino and where my room was.

"The Elector," he said, "has learned the whole story, and to punish you for your trickery he commands me to tell you that you shall not leave tomorrow."

"Will he have me arrested?"

"Why shouldn't he, if you refuse to dine with him tomorrow?"

"I will obey. Where is he? Present me at once."

"He has left; but come to me tomorrow at noon."

When he presented me the prince was standing among five or six courtiers, and I had an awkward moment, for, never having seen him, I was looking for a person in ecclesiastical dress and did not find him. It was he himself who ended my embarrassment by saying to me in the Venetian dialect that he was robed as the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order.[25] I nevertheless made him the customary slight genuflection, and when I started to kiss his hand he withdrew it and clasped mine. He said that when he was in Venice I was under the Leads, that his nephew the Elector of Bavaria[26] had told him that when I escaped I had stopped in Munich, and that he would not have let me go if, instead of to Munich, I had gone to Cologne. He said he hoped that after dinner I would tell him the story of my escape, and that I would stay for supper and a little masquerade which we would find amusing. I promised to tell him the whole story of my escape if he had the patience to listen, for it took two hours to tell it, and I then made him laugh by repeating my brief dialogue with the Duke of Choiseul[27] on the subject.

During dinner the prince continued to speak to me in Venetian; he said the most obliging things. He was gay, and with the health he appeared to enjoy no one would have foreseen that his life was to be short. He died a year later.

As soon as he rose from the table he asked me to tell the whole story of my escape, which kept the whole distinguished company interested for two hours. My reader knows the story; but in written form it is nowhere near as interesting as it is when I tell it.

The Elector's little ball was most pleasant. It was a masquerade. We had all dressed as peasants[28] in a private wardrobe of the prince's, where the ladies went to dress in one room while the men dressed in another. Since the Elector himself was dressed as a peasant, anyone who should have refused to wear a similar disguise would only have made himself ridiculous. General Kettler looked a real peasant; Madame *X* was delicious. Nothing was danced but contradances and ballets in the style of several German provinces,[29] which were most unusual. There were only three or four women of the recognized nobility; the rest, some pretty, others less so, were private acquaintances of the Elector, who was all his life a great lover of the fair sex. Two of these women[30] danced the furlana,[31] and the Elector took the greatest pleasure in making me dance it. It is a Venetian dance which has not its equal for violence in all Europe; it is danced by couples and, there being two women, they almost killed me. Completely out of breath after twelve or thirteen, I begged for mercy. In a dance whose name I have forgotten the men kissed the peasant girls they caught; I did not beat about the bush: I kept catching Madame *X*, and the peasant-Elector kept saying "Bravo, bravo." Poor Kettler was furious.

She found an opportunity to tell me that all the ladies from Cologne would leave the next day at noon, and that it would be to my credit if I would invite them all to luncheon at Brühl,[32] sending them two or three[33] notes in which I should write the names of the men by whom they were escorted.

"Put yourself in Count Verità's hands," she said, "and he will see to it; just tell him that you want to do the same thing the Prince of Zweibrücken[34] did two years ago; but lose no time. Count on twenty people, and set the hour. Above all make sure that the notes are distributed at nine o'clock in the morning."

Delighted with the power which the charming woman believed she could exercise over me, I instantly decided to obey her. Brühl, luncheon, twenty people, like the Duke of Zweibrücken, one o'clock, Count Verità—I was as well informed as if she had spent an hour instructing me.

I leave at once, still dressed as a peasant; I ask a page to show me to Count Verità's rooms. He laughs to see how I am dressed, I tell him my plan in a few words, I ask his help as if my business were a most urgent matter of state.

"What you want," he said, "is perfectly easy. It will cost me no more than the trouble of writing a note to the steward in charge there and sending it to him at once. Simply tell me how much you wish to spend."

"As much as possible," I said.

"You mean as little."

"No, as much, for I wish to entertain splendidly."

"All the same you must name an amount, for I know the man."

"Tell him two hundred ducats."

"That is enough. The Duke of Zweibrücken spent no more."

He writes the note, he sends it, assuring me that all will be attended to. I leave him, thinking of the notes. I speak to a bright-looking Italian page. I tell him I will pay a ducat to a valet who will give me the names of the ladies from Cologne who had come to Bonn and of the gentlemen who had accompanied them. A half hour later I received word that all was done. Before going to bed I myself wrote eighteen notes, and the next morning sealed and sent them to their addresses by a hired servant for whom the innkeeper vouched.

At nine o'clock I went to take leave of Count Verità, who gave me, on the Elector's behalf, a gold box adorned with a portrait-medallion of him robed as Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. I was very sensible of this mark of condescension; I wanted to go and thank His Highness, but the Count said I might wait until I passed through Bonn on my way to Frankfort.

The hour for my luncheon was set at one o'clock, but at noon I was already at Brühl. It is a pleasure house belonging to the Elector, the beauty of which lies in the taste of its furnishings. It was a copy of Trianon.[35] In a spacious room I saw a table set for twenty-four persons; there were silver-gilt forks and spoons, porcelain plates, and, on the buffet, a profusion of silverware and large silver-gilt dishes. On two other tables at the other end of the room I saw bottles filled with the most celebrated wines of all Europe and an assortment of all kinds of sweets. When I told the steward that it was I who was giving the luncheon, he said that I would be well satisfied and that he had been there since six o'clock in the morning. He said that the cold collation would be limited to twenty-four dishes; but that I should have twenty-four plates of English oysters and a dessert which would cover the entire table. Seeing a large number of servants, I said they were not needed; but he said they were, for the guests' own servants would not come in. He said I should not be concerned, because they were informed of it.

I received all my guests at the doors of their carriages, confining my compliments to begging pardon for the boldness which had procured me the honor of their company. At one o'clock the luncheon was served, and I saw joy in Madame *X*'s lovely eyes when she saw the same lavishness which the Elector would have displayed. She was not unaware that everyone knew it was all done for her, but she was delighted to see that I paid no more attention to her than I did to the others. There were twenty-four places set, and though I had sent out only eighteen notes the places were all taken. Hence there were six people who had come without being invited. This pleased me. I refused to sit down; I served the ladies, darting from one to another and eating what they gave me where I stood.

The English oysters ended only with the emptying of the twentieth bottle of champagne. When the luncheon itself began, the company was already tipsy. Composed, as it should be, only of entrées, it was the choicest of repasts. Not a single drop of water was drunk, for neither Rhine wine nor Tokay will tolerate it. Before the dessert was served an immense dish containing a ragout of truffles was set on the table. It was emptied in accordance with my advice to wash it down with maraschino.

"It is like water," said the ladies, and they drank it as if it really were water. The dessert was magnificent. The portraits of all the sovereigns of Europe appeared on it, the guests complimented the steward, who was there, and he, bridling with vanity, said it was all pocketable, whereupon everyone pocketed some. Then the General made a very stupid remark, which the company howled down by a general burst of laughter.

"I am sure," he said, "that this is a trick the Elector has played on us. His Highness has wished to remain incognito, and Monsieur Casanova has perfectly served the prince's design."

After the great burst of laughter, which gave me time to think:

"If, General," I said modestly, "the Elector had given me such an order I should have obeyed it; but it would have been a humiliation. His Highness has seen fit to do me a far greater honor, and here it is."

So saying, I handed him the snuffbox, which then made the round of the table two or three times.

My guests rose, and everyone was astonished to have spent three hours at table. After all the usual compliments the distinguished company set off for Cologne in order to be there in time for the play. Very well pleased with my brilliant entertainment, I left the worthy steward twenty ducats for the servants. He asked me to write Count Verità that I was satisfied.

I reached Cologne in time to go to the curtain raiser. Having no carriage, I went to the theater in a sedan chair. Seeing Madame *X* with Monsieur de Lastic, I went to her box. She at once said mournfully that the General had felt so ill that he had been obliged to go to bed. A moment later Monsieur de Lastic left us alone, whereupon the charming woman paid me compliments which were worth a hundred of my luncheons. She said that the General had drunk too much Tokay and that he was a filthy beast who had said it was well known who I was and that it was entirely improper to treat me like a prince. She had replied that, on the contrary, I had treated them like princes of whom I was the very humble servant. At that he had insulted her.

"Tell him to go to the devil," I said.

"It is too late. A woman whom you do not know would capture him; I would pretend indifference, but I should not like it."

"I understand very well. Why am I not a great prince! In the meanwhile I must tell you that I am far more ill than Kettler. I am at death's door."

"You are joking, I suppose."

"I am speaking seriously. Those kisses at the Elector's ball gave me a taste of a strange nectar. If you do not take pity on me I shall leave here unhappy for the rest of my life."

"Put off leaving. Forget about Stuttgart. I think of you; and it is not my fault. Believe me, I have no wish to deceive you."

"This evening, for example, if you did not have the General's carriage and I had mine I could see you home with perfect propriety."

"Do not worry! Haven't you yours?"

"No."

"In that case it is I who must take you home; but, my dear friend, it must come about perfectly naturally. You will give me your arm to my carriage, I will ask you where yours is, and when I hear you say you haven't one I will tell you to get in and I will drop you at your inn. It will only be ten minutes; but until we can do better it is something."

I answered only with my eyes, for joy overwhelmed my soul. After the play up comes her footman to tell her the carriage is at the door. We go down, she asks me the question we have agreed upon, and when she hears that I have no carriage, she does better. She tells me that she is going to the General's to ask after his health, and that if I wish to go there she can take me to my inn afterward.

Her quickness of mind was divine. We had to cross the whole, ill-paved city twice. It was a closed carriage. We did what we could, but almost nothing. The moon was ahead of us, and the beastly coachman kept looking around. It gave me the horrors. The sentinel told the coachman that His Excellency could see no one. She orders him to drive to my inn, and now we had the moon behind. We did a little better, but badly, nothing was right. The scoundrel never drove so fast in his life. However, when I got out I gave him a ducat. I went to bed, mortally in love, and in a sense worse off than before. Madame *X* had convinced me that making me happy made her happy. I decided to stay on in Cologne until the General was gone.

The next day at noon I went to the General's to have my name entered;[36] but he was receiving visitors. I was shown in. Madame *X* was there. I pay the General the appropriate compliment, and he responds only with a cold bow. There were many officers standing about, so four minutes later I slipped away. He stayed at home for three days, and Madame *X* never went to the theater.

On the last day of the Carnival the General invited a large company[37] to supper, and after supper there was to be dancing. I go as usual to make my bow to Madame *X* in her box, I am left alone with her, she asks me if the General has invited me to supper, I answer no, and she replies in a peremptory and indignant tone that I must go even so.

"You have spoken without thinking," I said gently, "I will obey you in anything except that."

"I know all that you can say. You must go. I shall consider myself insulted if you are not at the supper. You can never give me a greater proof of your affection and esteem."

"Say no more. I will go. But tell me if you realize that your fatal command puts my life in danger, for I am not the man to pretend indifference if the brute insults me."

"I am well aware of that; I love your honor at least as much as I do your life. Nothing will happen to you, I answer for it, leave it all to me. You must go. Promise me this instant that you will, for I have made up my mind. If you will not go, I will not go either; but after that we shall not see each other again."

"I will go. Let us say no more about it."

Monsieur de Castries entered just then, and I went back to the stage. Foreseeing the worst of insults, which was bound to have fatal consequences, I spent two hours in hell. Yet I prepared to be on my good behavior. I went to the General's immediately after the play; only five or six people were present. I go up to a canoness who was fond of Italian poetry, and our conversation becomes engrossing; within half an hour the room was full; the last to arrive was Madame *X* with the General. Occupied with the lady, I remain where I am, so he does not see me. Madame *X*'s cajoleries left him no time to look over the company. He goes elsewhere. A quarter of an hour later the Canoness is summoned to supper, she takes my arm, in a moment I am sitting at the table beside her, and in another moment all the places are occupied. But a foreigner who must have been invited remains standing. The General exclaims that it is impossible, and while he waits for a place to be set for him he passes his guests in review, and since I am not looking at him he names me and says:

"*Monsieur, I did not invite you.*"

I reply, firmly but respectfully:

"*That is true, General, but since I am sure it can only have been an oversight, I have come nevertheless to pay Your Excellency my respects.*"

After answering in these words, I continued talking to the Canoness without looking at anyone. Nobody spoke until after three or four minutes of the bleakest silence. The Canoness then said some amusing things, which I relayed to the other guests, and suddenly the whole table was gay.

The General sulked, which was by no means all the same to me. I was determined to put him in a good humor, and I watched for the opportunity. It came at the second course. Monsieur de Castries praised the Dauphine,[38] the conversation moved on to her brother the Count of Lausitz,[39] to her other brother the Duke of Kurland,[40] and then to the former Duke Biron,[41] who was in Siberia, and to his personal qualities. One of the guests said that his only merit was to have pleased the Empress Anna;[42] I begged to differ.

"His great merit is to have faithfully served the last Duke Kettler,[43] who, but for the courage of the now unfortunate man, would have lost all his field equipment in the war then ending. It was Duke Kettler himself who, with a heroism worthy of history, sent him to the Court of Petersburg, and Biron never asked for the dukedom. He only wanted to enforce his claim to the countship of Wartenberg,[44] recognizing the rights of the younger branch of the house of Kettler, which would be reigning today but for the whim of the Czarina, who insisted on making her favorite Duke."

"I have never met anyone better informed," said the General, looking at me, "and but for that whim I should be reigning today."

After this modest statement he burst out laughing and sent me a bottle of Rhine wine with a label bearing the date 1748. From then on he talked with no one but me, and we rose from the table good friends. There was dancing all night; the Canoness was my partner. I danced only one minuet with Madame *X*. Toward the end of the ball he asked me if I was leaving soon, a question which no one of any intelligence asks. I replied that I should not leave until after the review.

I went to bed well satisfied that I had given Madame *X* such a proof of my love that it would be hard to imagine a stronger, but thanking Fortune that the reply which my good Genius had suggested to me had reduced the brute to reason, for God knows what I would have done if he had dared order me to leave his table. The first time we met again she told me that she had shuddered when she heard him tell me he had not invited me.

"It is certain," she said, "that he would have said more to you if your proud excuse had not petrified him, and in the contrary case I had made up my mind what I should do."

"What?"

"I would have risen and we would have left together; Monsieur de Castries has told me that he would have done likewise, and I believe that all the ladies you invited to Brühl would have followed our example."

"But even that would not have ended the matter, for I would have demanded satisfaction."

"I understand that, and I ask you to forgive me for having exposed you to the danger; but on my side I shall never forget it until I have completely convinced you of my gratitude."

Hearing three or four days later that she was ill, I went to see her at eleven o'clock in the morning, so that I should not find the General there. She received me in her husband's room; he at once asked me if I had come to dine with them, and I answered yes. I enjoyed the dinner more than I did the supper at the General's two days after I arrived in Cologne. The Burgomaster was one of those men who preferred peace in his household above all things, and his wife ought to have loved him, for he was not among those who say: *Displiceas aliis, sic ego tutus ero* ("Be unpleasing to other men, and I shall be safe").[45]

Before dinner she showed me the whole house:

"This is our bedroom, and this is a little room in which I sometimes sleep alone when propriety demands it; and this is a public church, which we can consider our chapel,[46] for from these two grated windows we see the mass. We attend it only on feast days, making our way down this small staircase, at the foot of which there is a door, of which this is the key."

It was the second Saturday in Lent; we ate a very good fast-day dinner; but the food was what interested me least. What made my amorous soul completely happy was the charming woman, whom, at the age of twenty-five, I saw adored by her whole family. She had a sister-in-law and several children—the progeny of a brother of her husband's—whose guardian he was. I left early to write to Esther, whom my new passion was leading me to neglect.

The next day, wearing early-morning dress, I went to hear mass at Madame *X*'s little church. It was a Sunday. I saw her come out of the little door under the grated windows. She was followed by her nieces, and her lovely head was swathed in the hood of her cloak. The door was so far recessed into the wall that it could not be seen. The devil, who, as everyone knows, sets more snares in church than anywhere else, instantly inspired me with the happy plan of spending whole nights in her arms, going up to her room through this auspicious door.

I told her my plan the next day at the theater. She laughed. She said she had thought of it too and that she would give me a note with the necessary directions, wrapped up in the gazette, as soon as possible. We could not talk. A lady from Aix-la-Chapelle who had come to spend a few days in Cologne occupied her entire attention, and the box was full of visitors.

She publicly gave me the gazette the next day, saying that she had found nothing of interest in it. Here is a copy of the letter I found enclosed:

"The happy plan which love has conceived is not susceptible to difficulties but it is to uncertainties. The wife sleeps in the little room only when the husband requests her to permit this separation; and then it may continue for three or four days. She thinks that the reason for the request will soon arrive, but long familiarity makes it impossible for her to impose upon him. Hence it will be necessary to wait. The woman in love will see to informing the lover. The method will be to hide in the church, and there can be no thought of corrupting the man who opens it and locks it up. Though poor he is too stupid to corrupt. He would betray the secret. The only way is to hide in the church and be locked in. He locks it at noon on week days and in the evening on feast days, and he opens his church at dawn every day. When the time comes the door will be shut in such a way that, to open it, the lover will only need to give it a little push. Since the little room is separated from the bedroom only by a very thin partition, he is warned that he must never blow his nose and that he must not catch a cold, for it would be disastrous if he happened to cough. The lover's getting away will present no difficulty. He will go down to the church and he will leave it as soon as he finds it opened. Since the beadle will not have seen him when he locked up, it is against all probability that he will see him when he opens it."

Her letter put my soul in ecstasy. I kissed it countless times. The next morning I went and examined the whole inside of the church; this was the most important thing to do. There was a pulpit, in which the man would not have seen me; but the steps to it were in the sacristy, which was kept locked. I decided on one of the two confessionals, which had half doors in front. By lying down where the confessor put his feet, I might well not be seen; but the space was so small that I thought it could not possibly contain me with the half door closed. I waited until about noon, and I got into it when I saw there was no one left in the church. I fitted, but so poorly that I would be seen by any person who came near. In all undertakings of this kind one accomplishes nothing if one does not count on Fortune. Resolved to entrust myself to her sway, I went home fairly well satisfied. I wrote my goddess an account of all I had done, wrapping my narrative in the same gazette and handing it to her at the theater, where I saw her every day.

A week or ten days later she asked the General in my presence if he had any errand for her husband, who was to leave for Aix-la-Chapelle the next day at noon and would return in three days.

It was all I needed to know. A glance she gave me told me that I was to take advantage of her announcement. What joy! And all the greater because I had a slight cold. The next day was a feast day, which was even more to the good; I would not hide in the confessional until evening and so should avoid the fatigue of spending the whole day in the church.

I went there at four o'clock and crouched in the darker confessional, commending myself to God. At five o'clock the man with the keys, after making a round of the church which was only perfunctory, left and locked the door. I came out and sat down on a bench, from which, seeing her outline through the grating, I was sure that she had seen me. She closed the blind.

A quarter of an hour later I went to the door, pushed, and it opened. I closed it and, groping my way, sat down on the lowest stairs. There I spent five hours, which, as I was expecting my happiness, I should not have found trying if the rats which kept coming and going close by had not constantly preyed on my mind. Accursed beast, which I have never been able to ignore, even as I have never succeeded in overcoming the unbearable nausea it causes me! Yet it is only ugly and stinking.

At ten o'clock she came, carrying a candle, to rescue me from the anguish in which I lived only for her. The reader can imagine the reciprocal delights of that happy night in general, but he cannot guess its details. She said she had got together a little supper for me; but I had no appetite except that which her charms aroused; besides, I had dined at four o'clock. We spent seven hours in intoxication, often interrupting them by amorous talk only to renew our delights.

Le bellezze d'Olimpia eran di quelle
Che son più rare; e non la fronte sola
Gli occhi, le guancie, e le chiome avea belle,
La bocca, il naso, gli omeri, e la gola;
Ma discendendo giù da le mammelle,
Le parti che solea coprir la stola
Fur di tanta eccellenza, che ante porse
A quante ne avea il mondo potean forse.

Vinceano di candor le nevi intatte
Et eran più che avorio a toccar molli:
Le poppe ritondette parean latte
Che fuor de giunchi allora allora tolli:
Spazio fra lor tal discendea, qual fatte
Esser veggiam fra piccolini colli
L'ombrose valli in sua stagion amene
Che'l verno abbia di neve allora piene.

I rilevati fianchi, e le bell'anche,
E netto più che specchio il ventre piano
Parean fatte, e quelle cosce bianche
Da Fidia a torno, o da più dotta mano.
Di quelle parte debbovi dir anche etc. etc.

("Olympia's beauties were of the rarest; not her forehead alone but her eyes, her cheeks, her hair were beautiful, and her mouth, her nose, her shoulders, and her throat; but, to descend from her breasts, the parts which her dress usually covered were of such excellence that they might well have been rated above all the excellencies the world had to show. They vanquished untouched snow in whiteness and were softer to the touch than ivory: her little rounded breasts were like curds just taken from their reed basket; a space ran down between them such as we see the shady valleys between little hills to be in their pleasant season but which winter had then filled with snow. Her molded flanks, her

> beautiful hips, and her flat stomach, more shining than a mirror, seemed shaped, with her white thighs, by Phidias or some more skillful hand. Of those parts I must further tell you," etc. etc.)[47]

Madame *X* had a husband who needed nothing but his own constitution and the affection he felt for her to do his duty to her every night without fail. Whether by way of regimen or from scrupulosity, he did not claim his rights during the critical days of each moon, and to insure himself against temptation he banished his dear wife from his side; but during the happy night we spent together she was not in a state that called for separation. We both owed our unexpected happiness to the excellent man's lucky journey. I parted from her exhausted but not satiated. Clasping her in my arms, I assured her that she would find me no less eager the next time we could meet. I returned to the confessional, where the light of the dawning day should make it easier for me to hide from the eyes of the man with the keys. As soon as I saw the door open I went home to bed. I did not go out until time for the theater, where I should again see the charming object of which love had granted me possession.

It was not until two weeks later that, getting into her carriage, she told me she would sleep in the little room the next night. It was a weekday. Since the church was open only in the morning I went there at eleven o'clock after eating a good breakfast. I slipped into the confessional as easily as I had the first time, and the beadle locked up his church about noon.

The thought that I had to spend ten hours either in the church or in the darkness at the foot of the stairs in company with the rats was not pleasant, but Love makes waiting precious to the lover who is sure that Love will keep his word.

At one o'clock I saw a sheet of paper fall to the pavement under the grated window. With my heart pounding, I go and pick it up, and I find these words:

"The door is unlocked. I think you will be better off there than in the church. You will find a small dinner, a night lamp, and books. You will be uncomfortably seated, but I could do nothing about that. These ten hours will be less long to you than to me, you may be sure. I told the General I was ill. So you can imagine there is no chance of my going out today. May God keep you from coughing, especially tonight, for a man's cough is entirely different from a woman's."

Love! Charming god who thinks of everything! I do not hesitate for an instant. I go in, and on part of three steps I see napkins, tableware, tasty little dishes, bottles, glasses, a portable stove, and a bottle of alcohol. I see ground coffee and lemons, sugar and rum, in case I should feel like making punch. Also some amusing books. What surprises me is that Madame *X* had been able to do it all without anyone in the household being the wiser.

The charm of the preparations lay in their seeming rather intended to keep a man entertained than to feed him. I spent three hours reading, then three hours eating, making tea, and then punch. After that I went to sleep; and my angel came to wake me at ten o'clock. But this second night was less animated than the first; there were fewer possibilities because of the darkness and more constraint because of the nearness of her husband, whom the slightest noise would have wakened. We spent three or four hours in the arms of sleep.

This was the last night we spent together. The General went to Westphalia,[48] and she had to go to the country. I promised her I would come back to Cologne the following year; but several misfortunes kept me from doing so. I took leave of everyone, and I left regretted.

My stay of two and a half months[49] in that city did not lighten my purse, despite the fact that every time I was persuaded to play for money I lost. The game at

Bonn more than paid my expenses with something over. The banker Frantz[50] complained that I had drawn nothing from him. I would not have behaved so well had I not had a tender attachment, which made it necessary for me to convince everyone who was watching me that I deserved to be treated well.

I left at the middle of March and stopped at Bonn to make my bow to the Elector. His Highness was not there. I dined with Count Verità and the Abbé Scampar,[51] who was His Highness's favorite. An unofficial letter which the Count gave me for a Canoness whom he praised and who was to be at Coblenz was my reason for stopping there; but instead of the Canoness, who had gone to Mannheim, I found at my inn a woman of the theater named Toscani,[52] who was on her way back to Stuttgart with her very young and charming daughter. She had come from Paris, where she had spent a year having her taught serious dancing by the celebrated Vestris.[53] Delighted to see me again, the girl immediately showed me a spaniel which I had given her a year earlier. The little creature was her delight. The girl, who was a veritable jewel, easily persuaded me to take a trip to Stuttgart, where, in any case, I could not but enjoy all possible pleasures. Her mother was eager to see what the Duke[54] would think of her daughter, whom she had destined from childhood to the lust of a prince who, though he then had an official mistress, wanted also to have all his ballerinas in whom he saw anything of interest. La Toscani assured me at supper that her little girl was a virgin, and she swore that the Duke should not have her until he had dismissed his reigning mistress and given her the same position. The reigning mistress was the dancer Gardela,[55] the same daughter of a Venetian gondolier of whom I spoke in my first volume and the same wife of Michele dall'Agata whom I encountered in Munich when I escaped from the Leads.

Neither the Toscani girl nor her mother was offended by my curiosity as to the purity of the jewel reserved for the Duke of Württemberg, and their vanity was concerned to convince me they were telling the truth. It was a pastime which engaged me for two full hours the next day with the two adorable creatures, for nothing in the world would have persuaded the mother to leave me alone with her treasure, of which I might boldly defraud her. But far from objecting to her presence, I showed her that she was dear to me. She laughed, and admired my honorably extinguishing in herself all the fire which her daughter kindled in my soul with her charms, from which I never turned my eyes. Though still young, the mother did not seem to mind my needing the spectacle in order to play the role of lover to her successfully. She seemed to consider her daughter, whom she adored, a part of herself; but she was sure that she was playing the leading role. She was wrong, and I asked nothing better. Her daughter would not have needed her mother to set me on fire; but without the presence of the former the latter would have found me ice.

So I decided to go to Stuttgart to see La Binetti,[56] who was forever talking about me as of some miracle of nature. La Binetti was the daughter of the Venetian gondolier Ramon, and I had had a hand in getting her launched the same year in which Signora Valmarana[57] had married her off to the French dancer Binet, who had Italianized his name. At Stuttgart I was to renew my acquaintance with La Gardela, the younger Balletti,[58] of whom I was very fond, the Vulcani girl [59] whom he had married, and several other old friends who were to make the short time I was prepared to spend in that city a veritable paradise. At the last post station I renounced the precious company of La Toscani. I went to lodge at the "Bear," [60] to which the postilion took me. In the next volume[61] the reader will see what kind of mishaps befell me in that city.

CHAPTER III

1760. La Gardela as reigning mistress. Portrait of the Duke of Württemberg. My dinner at La Gardela's and its consequences. Unlucky encounter. I gamble, I lose four thousand louis. Lawsuit. Successful flight. My arrival in Zurich. Church consecrated by Jesus Christ in person.

AT THIS period the most brilliant Court in all Europe was that of the Duke of Württemberg. He maintained it through the large subsidies which France paid him for the use of ten thousand men. It was a fine army, which all through the war had distinguished itself only by its mistakes.

The great expenditures in which the Duke indulged went for munificent salaries, superb buildings, hunting establishments, and all sorts of whims; but what cost him fabulous sums was the theater. He had actors and singers for French plays and comic operas, he had Italian *opera seria* and *opera buffa,* and ten couples of Italian dancers,[1] every one of whom had been the leading dancer in some famous Italian theater. The composer of his ballets was Noverre,[2] who often used a corps of a hundred; he had a machinist to make settings which tempted the audience to believe in magic. All his ballerinas were pretty, and they all boasted that they had at least once made their amorous sovereign happy. The leading ballerina was a Venetian, the daughter of the gondolier Gardelo, the very girl whom the Venetian Senator Malipiero, who was the first person to give me a good education, brought up for the theater by paying a dancing master to teach her. The reader may remember that on my escape from the Leads I encountered her at Munich, married to the dancer Michele dall'Agata. The Duke of Württemberg, having fallen in love with her, applied for her to her husband, who considered himself fortunate to be able to surrender her to him; but a year later,[3] loving her no longer, he gave her the title of Madame and retired her with a pension. By thus elevating her he made all the other ballerinas jealous; for, believing that they were more worthy to become his mistresses than one who, after all, held only the title and the honors, they did all they could to topple her. But La Gardela knew how to maintain her position. Far from boring the Duke by reproaching him with his infidelities, she congratulated him on them. Since she did not love him she felt far happier in his neglect than she would have been if she had been obliged to put up with him as a lover. Her overpowering ambition was satisfied by the honors which he accorded her. She enjoyed seeing all the ballerinas who aspired to please the Duke solicit her good offices; she received them amiably and encouraged them to win the sovereign's love, while he, considering such tolerance in the favorite admirable and heroic, felt obliged to do everything possible to convince her of his undivided esteem. In public he paid her all the honors which, according to etiquette, he could legitimately have paid only to a princess.

What I clearly realized in a few days was that whatever the prince did was done only to get himself talked about. He wanted it said that no living prince was more intelligent or more talented than he, or more accomplished in the art of inventing pleasures and enjoying them, or better fitted to reign, or possessed of a better constitution for coping with all the pleasures of the table, of Bacchus, and of Venus, without ever infringing on the time he needed to rule his State and manage its departments, of which he insisted on being head. To have leisure for all this he had decided to cheat nature out of the time he needed for sleep. He thought it was within his power, and he dismissed in disgrace any valet who could not get him out of bed after three or four hours of sleep to which he had been obliged to succumb. The valet whose task it was to wake him was authorized to do whatever he pleased with his sovereign person to deliver it from the poppies of Morpheus. He shook him, he made him swallow quantities of coffee, he even put him in a cold bath. When His Most Serene Highness was at last awake he assembled his ministers to deal with current business; then he gave audience to all comers, who for the most part were thick-headed, ignorant, obstinate peasants with grievances, who thought they need only speak with their sovereign for a moment to have him right their wrongs on the spot. But nothing was more comical than these audiences which the Duke granted to his poorer subjects. He became furious trying to make them listen to reason, and they left his presence in terror and despair. He acted differently with pretty peasant girls. He examined their grievances in private, and though he granted them nothing they went away satisfied.

Since the French subsidies were not enough for his immense expenditures he loaded his subjects with taxes, which became so intolerable that a few years later they appealed to the Diet of Wetzlar,[4] which forced him to change his methods. His dearest notion was to rule, following in the footsteps of the King of Prussia, who always laughed at him. His Highness had married the daughter of the Margrave of Bayreuth,[5] who was the most beautiful and accomplished princess in all Germany. About this time she took refuge with her father, unable to bear a cutting affront[6] to which her undeserving husband subjected her. Those who said that she left him because she could not bear his infidelities were misinformed.

After putting up at the "Bear" and dining alone, I dress, I go to the Italian *opera seria,* with which the Duke provided the public gratis in the fine theater he had built. He was in the circle in front of the orchestra, surrounded by his court. I take my place alone in a box on the first tier, delighted that I could listen undistracted to the music of the famous Jomelli,[7] who was in the Duke's service. An aria sung by a celebrated castrato[8] having greatly pleased me, I clap. A moment later a man comes and speaks to me rudely in German. I reply with the four words of German I know, which mean, "I do not understand German." He leaves and another comes and tells me in French that, since the sovereign is present, it is forbidden to clap.

"Very well. I will come when the sovereign is not present, for when an aria pleases me I cannot help clapping."

After giving this answer I send for my carriage, but the same officer appears and says that the Duke wishes to speak with me. So I go to the circle with him.

"You are Monsieur Casanova?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Where have you come from?"

"From Cologne."

"Is this the first time you have been in Stuttgart?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Do you expect to stay here long?"

"Five or six days, if Your Highness permits."

"As long as you please, and you will also be permitted to clap."

At the following aria the Duke clapped, and everyone did the same; but since I had not liked the aria I remained still. After the ballet the Duke went to call on his pensioned favorite, where I saw him kiss her hand, then leave.

An officer who did not know that I was acquainted with her told me that she was "Madame," and that since I had had the honor to speak with the prince I could also have that of going to kiss her hand in her box. I took it into my head to reply that I thought I need not do so because she was a relative of mine. An arrant lie, which could only do me harm. I see that he is surprised; he leaves me and goes to my relative's box and informs her of my sudden appearance. She turns to look at me and beckons me with her fan. I go, laughing to myself over the stupid role I am about to play. I have no sooner entered her box than she gives me her hand, which I kiss, addressing her as "cousin." She asks me if I had told the Duke I was her cousin, I answer no; but she undertakes to do it and invites me to dine with her the next day.

At the end of the opera she leaves, and I go to pay my respects to the ballerinas while they undress. When she catches sight of me La Binetti, whom I had known the longest, appears to be overcome with joy and invites me to eat at her table every day. The violinist Kurz,[9] who had been with me in the orchestra at San Samuele,[10] introduces his marvelously pretty daughter[11] to me, saying peremptorily that the Duke should never have her; but he soon afterward had her and was loved by her; she gave him two children; she could well have made him constant, for she was intelligent as well as beautiful; but at that time the Duke had a need to be inconstant. After Kurz's daughter I saw the youthful Vulcani girl, whom I had known at Dresden and who surprised me by introducing her husband, who flung himself on my neck. It was the younger Balletti, brother of my jilt,[12] a lad full of talent and intelligence whom I loved to distraction.[13]

All these acquaintances were gathered around me when the officer to whom I had said I was related to La Gardela came up and told the company the whole story; but La Binetti said to him in so many words that it was not true and laughed in my face when I told her she could not know enough about it to contradict me. She too being the daughter of a gondolier, La Binetti thought I should have given her the preference over the other, and perhaps she was right.

The next day I dined very gaily with the favorite despite her telling me that, not having seen the Duke, she did not know how he would take it. Her mother considered our joke of calling cousins unworthy of her approval. She told me that her relatives had never been actors; I asked her if her sister was still alive, and she was very much put out by my question. Her sister was a fat, blind slut who begged for alms on a bridge in Venice.

After spending the whole day pleasurably in the company of the favorite, who was the oldest of all my acquaintances of this kind, I took my departure, assuring her that I would come to breakfast with her the next morning; but as I left the house her mustached porter most ungraciously paid me a compliment in the worst taste. He ordered me, without telling me at whose bidding, not to set foot in the house again. Thus brought to recognize what a stupid thing I had done, I returned to my inn in a very bad humor. If I had not promised La Binetti that I would dine with her the next day, I should have decamped immediately and thus have avoided all the unpleasant things which happened to me in that city by my own fault.

La Binetti lived in the house of her lover, who was the Viennese Envoy.[14] The house formed part of the rampart, so that by climbing through her windows one was outside of the town. If I had been capable of falling in love at the time, all my old fondness would have reawakened, for her attractions were enchanting. The Viennese Envoy was tolerant, and her husband was a real beast who frequented houses of ill fame. We dined very gaily, and having nothing further to do in Württemberg, I decided to leave on the next day but one, for on the following day I was to go to see Ludwigsburg with La Toscani and her daughter. The engagement had already been made, and we were to meet at five o'clock in the morning; but here is what happened to me when I left La Binetti's house toward nightfall.

Three engaging-looking officers whose acquaintance I had made at a coffeehouse come up to me, and we take a few turns together. They tell me they have got up a party with light women, and that if I wish they will be happy to have me join them. I say that, not speaking German, I should be bored; they reply that the women they are to meet are Italian; and they persuade me.

Toward dusk we return to the city and go to the fourth floor of a disreputable-looking house where in a dirty room I find the two supposititious nieces of Pocchini, and a moment later I see Pocchini himself,[15] coming to embrace me with great effrontery and calling me his best friend. The caresses to which the girls treat me confirm our old acquaintance, and the whole situation decides me to dissimulate.

The officers begin raising a row, I do not follow their example; but that does not abash them. I repent too late of having agreed to go there with men whom I did not know, but the thing was done. All the misfortunes which befell me in Stuttgart arose entirely from my own bad conduct.

A pothouse supper is served, I do not eat, but not to appear impolite I drink two or three glasses of Hungarian wine. Cards are brought, one of the officers makes a bank, I punt, with my head spinning; I lose fifty or sixty louis which I have with me. I refuse to play any more; but the noble officers cannot bear that I should leave regretting that I supped with them. They persuade me to make a bank of a hundred louis, and they give me counters for the amount. I lose; I replenish the bank, and I lose it, then I increase it and keep increasing it, always losing, and at midnight they say "Enough." We reckon up all the counters, and I am found to owe them something like four thousand louis. My head was spinning so fast that they had to send for a sedan chair to take me back to my inn. As he undresses me my valet says I have neither my watches nor a gold snuffbox. I do not forget to tell him to wake me at four o'clock, and I fall asleep.

He wakes me punctually. I am astonished to find in my pockets about a hundred louis, though I perfectly recollect the large sum I had lost on my word; but I put off thinking about it, together with my watches and my snuffbox, until another time. I take another snuffbox, I go to La Toscani's, we go to Ludwigsburg, I am shown everything, we dine very well, and we return to Stuttgart. I was in such a good humor that no one in the party could have imagined the considerable misfortune which had befallen me the night before.

The first thing my Spaniard told me was that no one in the house where I had supped knew anything about either my watches or my snuffbox; and the second was that three officers had come to call on me at nine in the morning and had told him they would come to breakfast with me the next day. They did so punctually.

"Gentlemen," I said, "I have lost an amount which I cannot pay, and which I should certainly not have lost were it not for the poison you made me swallow in your Hungarian wine. In the bordello to which you took me I was robbed of valuables worth three hundred louis; but I will complain of it to no one. If I had been sensible nothing would have happened to me."

They began protesting loudly. They talked to me in accordance with the role which a show of honor obliged them to play; but all their words were useless, for I had already decided that I would pay nothing. At the height of our dispute, in come Balletti, La Toscani, and the dancer Binetti, who heard what the whole dispute was about. They left after breakfasting; and one of the three officers then proposed the following compromise:

They would take at their actual value everything I had in the way of gold jewelry and diamonds, and if these did not suffice to make up the amount I owed they would accept a written undertaking from me to pay them at a specified time.

I replied that I could not pay them at all, whereupon they began to threaten. I said, with perfect self-possession, that they had only two ways to make me pay. One would be to bring suit against me, and in that case I would procure an advocate to defend me. The other, which I proposed with all due modesty, was to let them take it out on my body in all honor and in complete secrecy, one at a time and sword in hand. As usual, and as I might have expected, they replied that they would do me the honor of killing me after I had paid them. They went off cursing and assuring me that I would be sorry.

I left and went to La Toscani's, where I spent the whole day with a gaiety which, situated as I was, seemed madness; but such was the power of her daughter's charms, and I needed to be gay.

La Toscani, however, who had witnessed the rage of the three intrepid gamblers, convinced me that I should be the first to take legal action against them, for if I let them get the start of me they might gain a great advantage; so she sent for an advocate, who, after hearing the facts, said that I should go directly to the sovereign. They had taken me to a house of ill fame; they had made me drink doctored wine which had deprived me of my reasoning powers, they had gambled, and gambling was forbidden, they had won an enormous amount from me, and in the brothel I had been robbed of my possessions, which, being drunk, I had realized only when I got back to my inn. The facts spoke for themselves. To the sovereign, to the sovereign, to the sovereign!

The next morning I decide I will do it; and, since he hears everyone, I think I need not write; I go to Court to talk with him. At twenty paces from the palace door I encounter two of my gentlemen, who swagger up to me and say that I must think about paying them; I start to go on without answering; I feel my left arm caught, and by a perfectly natural impulse I angrily draw my sword, the officer of the guard comes running, I cry out that I am being stopped from laying a justified complaint before the sovereign. The officer hears from the sentry and from all the crowd around me that I had drawn my sword only in self-defense, he decides that no one can keep me from going up.

I go up; I am allowed to proceed to the last anteroom, I demand a hearing, I am assured that I will receive it, the officer who had caught me by the arm comes up, he tells what story he pleases in German to the officer who is serving as chamberlain and who apparently belonged to the gang; and an hour passes and I am not granted an audience. Finally the same officer who had assured me the sovereign would give me a hearing comes and tells me that the sovereign already knows everything, that I may go home, take no steps, and be sure that I will receive justice.

So I leave the palace, intending to go to my inn; but I run into the dancer Binetti, who, having heard the whole story, persuades me to come and dine at his house, where the Viennese Envoy would take me under his protection to safeguard me from the violence these scoundrels might attempt to do me, despite what the fellow in the Duke's antechamber had said. I go; La Binetti, blazing up over my wrongs, goes to inform the Envoy, who, after hearing the whole story from me, says that the Duke might well know nothing about it, so I should write a brief account of the occurrence and send it to him. In this way, according to the Envoy, I should be certain to receive justice.

I quickly write down the ugly story, and the Envoy assures me that it will be in the prince's hands in less than an hour. At dinner La Binetti gives me the most unequivocal assurances that the Viennese Envoy will be my protector, and we spend the day in good spirits; but toward nightfall my Spaniard comes to tell me that if I go to the inn I shall certainly be arrested, for an officer who had gone to my room and not found me there had stationed himself at the street door; he had been there for two hours and had posted two soldiers at the foot of the stairs. La Binetti does not want me to go to the inn; she makes me stay at her house, and my valet leaves, coming back with everything I need to undress and spend the night under the roof of my good friend, where I had no violence to fear. The Envoy comes home at midnight, he makes no objection to La Binetti's having given me a refuge, he says that the sovereign has undoubtedly read my petition.[16] So I go to bed quite easy, and three days pass without my seeing any result from my petition or hearing anyone say a word about my case. La Binetti would never let me go out.

On the fourth day, when I was consulting the whole household on what I should do, the Envoy received a letter from the Secretary of State[17] asking him, at the sovereign's behest, to dismiss me from his house, since I had a suit pending with some of His Highness's officers and my being in his house prevented justice from taking its course and deciding in favor of one party or the other in the matter to be examined. In this letter, which I read, the Secretary assured the Envoy that strict justice would be done me. So I had to accede to going back to my inn. This made La Binetti so furious that she called the Envoy names, at which he merely laughed and said he could not keep me in defiance of the Duke.

After dinner, when I was on the verge of going to see my advocate, a bailiff brings me a summons, which my host translates for me. I was to go at once to I forget what notary, who was to receive and record my deposition. I went with the summons server, and I spent two hours with the man, who wrote down in German all that I told him in Latin. He told me to sign, but I protested that I could not sign a document whose contents I did not know, and at that point we had a long argument, but I remained unshaken. He became angry, saying that I could not cast doubt on the good faith of a notary; I replied that in that case he could do without my signature, and, leaving him, I went on to see my advocate, who told me that I had been right not to sign, that he would come to me at my inn the next morning to receive my power of attorney, and that thereafter my business would be his.

Relieved by the man's apparent honesty, I went back to the inn to eat supper and sleep tranquilly; but the next morning my valet came in with an officer who told me quite politely in good French that I must not be surprised to find myself under arrest in my room with a sentry at my door, for, I being a foreigner, my opponent had the right to make sure that I would not flee while the preliminary investigation was being made. He asked for my sword, which to my great regret I was obliged to give him. It was steel, worth fifty louis, and had been a present to me from Madame d'Urfé. I at once sent word of my arrest to my advocate, who assured me that it would continue for only a very few days. Having to stay in my room, I began to receive visits from dancers male and female, who were the only honest people I knew. Poisoned by a glass of wine, cheated, robbed, I was now deprived of my freedom and in fear of being sentenced to pay a hundred thousand francs, to procure which I should have to let myself be stripped to my shirt, since no one knew what I had in my portfolio. My mind was as if numbed by such tyranny; I had written to "Madame" Gardela, and had received no answer. La Binetti, La Toscani, and Balletti dining or supping with me were my only consolation. The swindling officers had all come to talk with me one after the other, each trying to make me give him money without the knowledge of the others and each promising to get me out of my difficulty. Each in turn would have been satisfied with three or four hundred louis; but even if I had given it to one of them I had no assurance that the other two would not return to the charge. I told them in turn that they bored me and that I would take it as a favor if they would no longer trouble themselves to visit me.

On the fifth day of my arrest the Duke of Württemberg left Stuttgart for Frankfort, and on the same day La Binetti came to say that the Viennese Envoy had told her to inform me that the sovereign had promised the officers he would not intervene in the matter, hence he thought I was in danger of becoming the victim of an iniquitous judgment. So he advised me to try to extricate myself by sacrificing everything I had in gold and diamonds in exchange for a formal release from my pretended creditors. La Binetti did not share his opinion, but she felt it her duty to convey what the Envoy had ordered her to communicate to me.

I could not bring myself to give up my rings and empty my strongbox, in which I had watches, snuffboxes, other kinds of boxes, cases, and portraits to the value of more than forty thousand francs; but it was my advocate himself who made me resolve on vigorous action when, talking with me privately, he said without beating around the bush that if I could not manage to settle the matter by paying, I should begin to think of taking to my heels, for otherwise I was lost. "The police judge," he said, "will give a summary judgment, for you, as a foreigner, will not be allowed to delay your case by the ordinary legal maneuvering. You would have to begin by furnishing bail. Witnesses have been found in this city to testify that you are a professional gambler, that it was you who lured the officers to the lodging of your countryman Pocchini, that it is not true that they got you drunk, and not true that your watches and snuffbox were stolen. It is averred that they will be found in your luggage when the court orders all your effects inventoried. Look for that to happen tomorrow or the day after, and beware of doubting any part of what I have told you. Officers of the court will come here and empty your two trunks, your strongbox, and your pockets, everything will be listed and everything put up for auction the same day; and if the money realized is not enough to pay your debt and the court costs and the costs of your arrest, you will be *enrolled, Sir,* as a common soldier in the troops of His Most Serene Highness. I myself heard the officer who is your largest creditor say with a laugh that the four louis you will be given as enlistment money will be counted in, and that the Duke will be delighted to have acquired a very fine man."

The advocate took his departure, leaving me petrified. His discourse threw me into such a spasm that in less than an hour I thought all the fluids in my body were seeking an outlet from their several seats. I! Stripped to my shirt and made a soldier! I! It shall not be! Let us find some way to gain time!

I at once wrote to the officer who was my principal creditor that I would settle; but only with all three of them together in the presence of a notary and witnesses to legalize their release and so make it possible for me to leave at once. It was unlikely that one of them would not be on guard duty the next morning, but I hoped I should gain at least a day; meanwhile I trusted that God in his mercy would send me some ideas.

I wrote a letter[18] to the presiding police magistrate, addressing him as "Monseigneur" and begging for his powerful protection. I said that, having decided to sell my belongings to put an end to the actions at law with which my creditors were seeking to overwhelm me, I begged him to suspend the proceedings, the costs of which I would pay. In addition I asked him to send me a trustworthy man to appraise my possessions as soon as I informed him that I had come to an agreement with the officers who were my creditors, with whom I begged him to intervene on my behalf. It was my valet who delivered the two letters to their respective addresses.

After dinner the officer, who had received my letter and who was demanding two thousand louis, came to my room. He found me in bed, I told him I thought I had fever, and it was with pleasure that I heard him condole with me. He said that he had just been talking with the presiding police magistrate, who had given him my letter to read.

"Your decision to make a settlement," he said, "is the right course; but there is no need for the three of us to be together. I shall have full powers from my two friends, which the notary will accept."

"Sir, all I ask is to see you together, and I do not think you can refuse me that satisfaction."

"You shall have it; but if you are in a hurry I warn you that you cannot have us together until Monday, for one of us is on guard duty for the next four days."

"I will wait until Monday; but give me your word of honor that all legal proceedings will be stopped until then."

"I give it, and here is my hand. In return I ask you for a small favor. I have taken a fancy to your post chaise. I ask you to let me have it for what it cost you."

"Gladly."

"Call the innkeeper and tell him it is my property."

"Certainly."

He summons the innkeeper; I tell him that my chaise is the gentleman's property, and he replies that I can do what I like with it when I have paid him, and so saying he goes. The officer laughs, he says he is sure he will have the chaise, he thanks me, and he leaves.

Two hours later an honest-looking man who spoke good Italian comes to bring me word from the chief of police that my creditors will meet together on the coming Monday, and that it is he who will appraise my belongings. He advises me to stipulate in the settlement that my effects are not to be put up for auction and that my creditors will abide by the values he sets on them. He promises that I will be satisfied. After replying that I will make him a present of a hundred louis, I rise and ask him to look at everything in my two trunks and at my jewels.

After examining everything and saying that my laces alone were worth twenty thousand francs, he assures me that I have more than the value of a hundred thousand francs and that he will privately tell my creditors something very different.

"Counting on that," he said, "try to bring them down to accepting half of what you owe them, and you will leave with half of your effects."

"In that case you shall have fifty louis, and in the meanwhile here are six."

"I accept them. Rely on my friendship. Everyone in Stuttgart is aware that your creditors are scoundrels; and the Duke knows them; but he thinks it proper to pretend he is unaware of their machinations."

After these two successes I breathed again. Having five days before me, I must use them to make sure of escaping with all of my possessions except my carriage. It was difficult, but not as difficult as escaping from the Leads. So I must not be found wanting either in boldness or in plans. I sent word to La Toscani, Balletti, and the dancer Binetti, inviting them to supper. I needed to discuss the thing with people who had nothing to fear from the wrath of my three persecutors.

After a good supper I give my three friends a full account of my situation and tell them my decision to escape without losing any of my belongings.

Binetti speaks first. He says that if I can get out of the inn and go to his house I can get out through one of the windows, that I shall then be in the open country a hundred paces from the highroad, whence I can travel by post beyond the Duke's State. Balletti looks out the window of my room, which gave onto the street, and decides that I cannot get out by it because of the wooden roof of a shop. I agree with him, and I say I will find some other way to get out of the inn and that what troubles me is my luggage. La Toscani says I must abandon my trunks and send everything I have to her, and that she will undertake to send me everything wherever I decide to stop.

"I will carry it all away," she says, "little by little, under my petticoats."

Balletti tells her his wife will help her, and we finish laying our plan. I promise Binetti that I will be at his house at midnight on Sunday, even if I have to kill the sentry who was always at the door of my room except at night. The sentry locked me in, went off to bed, and came back the next morning. Balletti vouches for a faithful servant of his and undertakes to have him on the highroad in a post carriage which will be waiting for me. La Toscani adds that all my possessions can be loaded onto the same carriage in other trunks. She at once began carrying off two suits, putting them under her skirt. During the following days three women helped me to such effect that by midnight on Saturday my trunks were empty and so was my strongbox, everything valuable in which I put into my pockets.

On Sunday La Toscani brought me the keys to two trunks into which she had put all my clothes, and Balletti came to assure me for the first time that a post carriage would be on the highroad at my orders under the care of his servant. Unquestionably certain of all this, I contrived my escape from the inn as follows:

The soldier who walked back and forth at the door of my room was in the habit of leaving as soon as he saw that I was in bed. He wished me good night, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and went. He returned in the morning, but he did not open my door until I called. Then my valet came in.

The soldier on duty was also in the habit of eating what I sent him from my own supper on a small table outside. So these are the instructions I gave my Spaniard:

"After supping," I said, "instead of going to bed I will make ready to leave my room, and I will leave it as soon as I see no more light outside. Once out of the room I will go down the stairs and I shall have no trouble leaving the inn. I will go straight to Binetti's and from there I will get out of the city and I will go to Fürstenberg[19] and wait for you there. Nobody can keep you from leaving tomorrow or the next day. So as soon as you see that I am ready in my room, you must put out the candle which will be on the table where the sentry will be eating supper; you can easily put it out as you snuff it. You will take it to my room to light it again; and I will seize the moment of darkness to leave. When you have lit the candle again you will go back to the soldier and finish the bottle of wine. When you tell him

I have gone to bed he will come to bid me good night as usual, he will lock me in, and leave with you. There is no likelihood that he will come in and speak to me when he sees me in bed."

To deceive the soldier I put a wig-block in a nightcap on the bolster and propped up the covers in such a way that anyone would be deceived. And it all went off very well, as I learned from Leduc three days later, in full detail.

While Leduc was drinking with the sentry I stood with my pelisse over my naked body, a hunting knife in my belt because I no longer had a sword, and two pistols in my pockets.

As soon as the darkness outside assured me that the candle had been extinguished, I left the room, went downstairs, and left by the inn door without meeting anyone. It was a quarter before midnight. I hurry along to Binetti's house; by the moonlight I see his wife waiting for me at a window. She comes and opens the door for me, I go upstairs with her, and, not losing an instant, she takes me to the window by which I am to get out; Balletti's wife was there to help let me down, and her husband was in mud up to his knees to catch me. I began by throwing my pelisse down to him.

The two charming women put a rope around my chest under the arms and, holding its two ends, gradually let them out in time with my very smooth, easy, and completely safe descent. Never was man better served. Balletti caught me in his arms, gave me my pelisse, then told me to follow him.

Defying sloughs into which we sank up to our knees and making our way through holes worn by dogs wherever hedges obstructed our path or over stiles to keep cattle out, we reached the highroad very tired, though it was only three or four hundred paces from the rampart. We covered the same distance to reach the carriage, which stood waiting for me at an isolated pothouse. Balletti's manservant was sitting in it. He got out at once, saying that the postilion had just gone into the pothouse and would come back when he had drunk a mug of beer. I at once took his place, and after tipping him well I told his master to go back with him and leave me to deal with all the rest.

It was April 2nd [20] in the year 1760, my birthday, which all my life has been noteworthy for some incident.

Two minutes later the postilion comes out of the pothouse and asks me if we shall have long to wait, believing that he is speaking to the same person with whom he had set out from Cannstatt. I do not enlighten him, I tell him to go to Tübingen without stopping to change horses at Waldenbuch,[21] and he obeys me; but I laughed to see the face he made when he saw me at Tübingen. Balletti's valet was very young and decidedly short; when he told me I was not the person with whom he had set off, I replied that he must be drunk, and, satisfied with the two florins I tipped him, he did not retort. I left at once, and I did not stop until I reached Fürstenberg, where I was safe.

After supping well and sleeping even better, I wrote the same letter to each of the three officers. I challenged all three of them to a duel, telling them bluntly that if they did not come I would never utter their names again without adding that they were the lowest of the low. I promised to wait for them for three days from the time I was writing, hoping to kill all three of them and thus become famous throughout Europe. I also wrote to La Toscani, to Balletti, and to La Binetti, asking them to look after my valet.

The officers did not come, but during the three days the innkeeper's daughters made the time pass as pleasantly as I could wish.

On the fourth day at noon I saw Leduc ride up at full gallop with his portmanteau roped to his saddle. The first thing he said was that I ought to go to Switzerland, for the whole city of Stuttgart knew I was there and I had reason to fear that the three officers might take their revenge by having me murdered. After I let him know that I did not want his advice, he told me the whole story of what happened after my escape. Here it is, just as he related it.

"After you left," he said, "I went to bed. The next morning at nine o'clock the sentry came to walk up and down by your door, and at ten the three officers arrived. When I told them you were still asleep they left, telling me to fetch them from the coffeehouse as soon as your room was unlocked; but not seeing me they came back about noon and ordered the sentry to open your door. I enjoyed the next scene.

"They think they see you asleep, they wish you good morning, go to your bed, shake you, the straw gives way, the wig-block falls, and seeing them dumfounded I cannot hold back my laughter. 'So you're laughing, you dog. You shall tell us where your master has gone.'

"The words being accompanied by a cut from a cane I reply with a curse that they have only to ask the sentry. The sentry says you can only have got out through the window, but the corporal is summoned, and the innocent soldier is arrested just the same. The innkeeper comes up at the noise, he opens the trunks, and, seeing they are empty, he says your post chaise will pay him; and ignores the officer who protests that you had given it to him.

"Another officer appears and, after hearing the story, he decides you can only have got out through the window, so he orders the soldier released; for me, however, they had only the foulest injustice. As I went on saying that I did not know where you had gone and that I couldn't help having laughed, they saw fit to put me in prison.

They said I would be kept there until I told where you were, or, if not you, at least your possessions.

"The next day one of the officers came and told me I would be sent to the galleys if I persisted in holding my tongue. I replied that, on the word of a Spaniard, I knew nothing about it; but that even if I did know I would never tell, for in honor I could not become a spy on my own master. At that the gentleman ordered a turnkey to give me a lashing, and after the ceremony I was set free. I went to bed at the inn, and the next morning all Stuttgart knew that you were here, where you had challenged the officers to come and fight. They are not such fools, people say, as to do that; but Madame Binetti ordered me to tell you to leave here, because they might have you murdered. The innkeeper sold your post chaise and your trunks to the Viennese Envoy, who, they say, arranged for you to get out by the windows of the apartment which he rents to La Binetti. I took the post without anyone trying to stop me, and here I am."

Three hours after he arrived I took the post to Schaffhausen and from there I went to Zurich with hired horses, because in Switzerland there is no post.[22] I put up very comfortably at the "Sword."[23]

Alone after supper in the wealthiest city in Switzerland, into which I had, as it were, dropped from the clouds, for I was there without the least premeditation, I give myself up to reflections on my present situation and my past life. I recall the good and the bad which has befallen me and I examine my conduct. I find that I have drawn upon myself all the evils from which I have suffered and that I have abused all the favors Fortune had done me. Still under the impression of the disaster which I have just barely avoided, I shudder and decide to stop being Fortune's plaything and put myself beyond her reach. Being possessed of a hundred[24] thousand écus, I determine to invest it in a way to secure me a permanent income subject to no fluctuation. Perfect peace is the greatest good of all.

Thus deliberating I go to bed, and pleasant dreams make me happy in peaceful solitudes, in abundance, and in tranquillity. I seemed, in a beautiful countryside which belonged to me, to enjoy a freedom which is sought in vain in society. I was dreaming, but even while I dreamed I told myself that I was not dreaming. A sudden awakening at daybreak gives me the lie; I feel angry, and, determined to realize my dream, I get up, I dress, and get out, not caring where I am going.

An hour after leaving the city I am among a number of mountains; I should have thought I had lost my way if I had not continued to see ruts which assured me that the road would lead me to some hospitable place. Every quarter of an hour I came upon peasants; but I took pleasure in not asking them for any directions. After walking slowly for six hours I suddenly found myself in a great plain between four mountains. To my left I have a beautiful distant view of a large church attached to a building of symmetrical design which invites passing travelers to direct their steps thither. As I approach I see that it can only be a convent or a monastery, and I feel glad that I am in a Catholic canton.

I enter the church, I see that it is resplendent with marble and altar ornaments, and after hearing the last mass I go into the sacristy, where I see Benedictine monks. One of them, whom I judged by the cross he wore to be the Abbot, asks me if I wish to see all the things worth seeing in the sanctuary, which I can do without going outside the altar rail; I reply that it will be an honor and a pleasure, and he comes himself, with two other monks, to show me extremely rich ornaments, chasubles covered with large pearls, and sacred vessels covered with diamonds and other precious stones.

Having a very poor knowledge of German and none at all of the Swiss dialect, which is to German as Genoese is to Italian, I ask the Abbot in Latin if the church has been long built, and he tells me its history in detail, ending by informing me that it is the only church[25] which was consecrated by Jesus Christ in person. He notices my astonishment, and to convince me that he has told the pure and simple truth he takes me into the church and shows me on the surface of the marble five concavities which the fingers of Jesus Christ had left in it when he consecrated the church. He had left these impressions[26] so that unbelievers could not doubt the miracle and to save the Father Superior the trouble of sending for the diocesan Bishop to consecrate it. The same Father Superior had learned the aforesaid truth by divine revelation in a dream which told him distinctly to think no more of it because the church was *divinitus consecrata* (''consecrated by God''), in proof of which he would see the five concavities in such and such a place in the church. The Father Superior went there, saw them, and thanked God.

CHAPTER IV

I resolve to become a monk. I make my confession. Delay of two weeks. Giustiniani, the apostate Capuchin. I change my mind; what leads me to do so. Escapade at the inn. Dinner with the Abbot.

THE ABBOT, delighted by the obedient attention with which I had listened to his nonsense, asked me where I was lodging, and I replied "Nowhere," because when I had arrived from Zurich on foot I had simply entered his church. He then joins his hands and lifts them to heaven, as if to thank God for so touching my heart that I have gone on a pilgrimage to carry my sins there, for, to tell the truth, I have always looked like a great sinner. He said that, it being noon, he would consider it an honor if I would go and dine with him, and I accepted. I did not yet know where I was, and I did not want to ask, well satisfied to let it be believed I had come there on a pilgrimage expressly to expiate my crimes. On the way he said that his monks were fasting but that I could eat meat with him since he had obtained a dispensation from Benedict XIV which allowed him to eat meat every day with three guests. I replied that I should be glad to share the privilege. As soon as we entered his apartment he showed me the dispensation, framed under glass and hanging on the tapestried wall opposite the table, where it could be read by the curious and the scrupulous. Since there were only two places, a servant in livery quickly set another. He immediately introduced me to the third at table, saying that he was his Chancellor.[1]

"I am obliged," he said with the greatest modesty, "to have a chancellery, since, as Abbot of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, I am also a prince[2] of the Holy Roman Empire."

I breathed again. At last I knew where I was, and I felt very glad, for I had both read and heard of Our Lady of the Hermits. It was the cisalpine Loreto.[3] At table the Prince-Abbot took it upon himself to ask me from what country I came, if I was married, and if I intended to make a tour of Switzerland, offering me letters of introduction for wherever I wished to go. I replied that I was Venetian and unmarried and that I would accept the letters with which he was so kind as to honor me when I had told him who I was in a conference I hoped to have with him, in which I would acquaint him with all matters which concerned my conscience.

It was thus that I bound myself to confess to him, without the idea having entered my head the moment before. It was my foible. I thought I was simply doing what God willed whenever I carried out some unpremeditated idea which came into my head from nowhere. After I had thus to all intents and purposes told him that he was to be my confessor, he treated me to discourses full of unction, which did not bore me during a very choice dinner, including, among other things, woodcock and snipe.

"What, most reverend Father! Game of this sort at this season?"[4]

"It is a secret, Monsieur, which I will be glad to tell you. I keep it for six months in such a way that the air cannot spoil it."

The Prince-Abbot was an accomplished epicure as well as a fine judge of wine, though he affected sobriety. His Rhine wine was exquisite. A salmon trout was served, he smiled, he told me in Ciceronian Latin that there would be pride in refusing to eat it because it was fish, and he supported his sophism with great skill. He watched me attentively; his examination of my dress relieved him of any fear that I would ask him for money, and I saw that it gave him confidence. After dinner he dismissed the Chancellor, showed me all over the monastery, and finally took me to the library, where I saw a portrait of the Elector of Cologne[5] as Elector-Bishop. I said it was a good likeness except that the painter had made him less handsome than he was, and I immediately showed him his portrait in my fine snuffbox, which I had never taken from my pocket during our dinner. He laughingly praised His Electoral Highness's whim of having himself painted as Grand Master and admired the beauty of the snuffbox, meanwhile conceiving a higher and higher idea of me. But the library[6] would have made me protest aloud if I had been alone. It consisted entirely of folios. The most modern among them were a century old, and all these bulky books treated of nothing but religion: Bibles, commentators, the Fathers, several legists[7] in German, annals, and Hoffmann's great dictionary.[8]

"But your monks," I said, "must have books on the physical sciences, history, and travel in their rooms."

"No," he said, "they are honest fellows whose only concern is to do their duty and live in peace."

It was then that I first felt a desire to become a monk, but I did not tell him so. I simply asked him to take me to his study, where I would make him a general confession of my manifold sins, so that on the next day, absolved from all my crimes, I could receive the Holy Eucharist from him, and he at once conducted me to a small pavilion, where he would not let me kneel. He made me sit down facing him, and in less than three hours I told him a quantity of stories which were scandalous enough but devoid of literary grace since I had to use the style of a penitent, though when I recounted my follies I could not find it in my heart to condemn them. Nevertheless he at least did not doubt my attrition;[9] he said that contrition would come when, by a regular course of conduct, I had regained grace; for according to him, and even more according to me, without grace it was impossible to feel contrition. So, after uttering the words which have power to absolve the whole human race, he advised me to retire to a room which he appointed for me, to spend the rest of the day in prayer, and to go to bed early after supping, if it was my habit to sup. He said that I should communicate the next day at the first mass, and we parted.

Alone in my room, I pursued the idea which had come to me before I confessed. I thought I saw that I was really in the place where I could live happily until my final hour, escaping once and for all from the sway of Fortune. I believed it depended only upon me, for I felt certain that the Abbot would not refuse me the habit of his order, provided I gave him, for example, ten thousand écus to furnish me an income which would go to the monastery after my death. To be happy I thought I needed only a library, and I was sure I should be allowed to make it of what books I pleased, provided I presented it to the monastery, only reserving to myself free use of it during my lifetime. As for the society of the monks, the discord and the petty spites which I knew to be inseparable from their nature, I was sure that I would not be troubled in that way, since, wanting nothing and having no ambition which could arouse their jealousy, I had nothing to fear. I foresaw that I might repent, and I shuddered with horror; but I was pleased to think I could circumvent even that. When I asked for the habit of St. Benedict I would ask for a delay of ten years before I decided to make my profession. In any case I was resolved not to aspire to any office or any monastic dignity; I wanted only to enjoy my peace and all the decent freedom which I could claim without giving rise to the slightest scandal. To induce the Abbot to grant me the ten years' novitiate I intended to ask of him, I would make it a condition that I would forfeit the ten thousand écus I would have given him in advance if I decided to renounce the habit. I put my whole plan in writing, I slept on it, and the next morning after receiving the Holy Sacrament I presented it to the Abbot, who was expecting me to take a cup of chocolate with him.

He read it before we breakfasted, he said nothing, and, having read it again while walking up and down, he said he would answer me in the afternoon.

After dinner the worthy Abbot told me that his carriage was ready to take me to Zurich, where he asked me to wait two weeks for his answer. He promised to bring it to me himself and gave me two sealed letters, begging me not to fail to deliver them in person.

"Most reverend Father, I am infinitely obliged to Your Highness, I will deliver your letters, I will wait for you at the 'Sword,' and I hope you will grant my dearest wish."

I took his hand, which he modestly allowed me to kiss.

When my Spaniard saw me he gave a laugh which told me what he was thinking.

"What are you laughing at?"

"I am laughing at your having found something to amuse you for two days when you have scarcely arrived."

"Tell the innkeeper that I want a carriage at my disposal every day for two weeks and a good hire manservant."

The innkeeper, whose name was Ott[10] and who had the title of Captain, came in person to tell me that in Zurich there were only open carriages; I made the best of it, and he vouched to me for the honesty of the hire manservant. The next day I took my letters to their addresses; they were to Monsieur Orelli[11] and Monsieur Pestalozzi,[12] neither of whom was at home. They both came to call on me in the afternoon, they invited me to dinner, each fixing a day, and asked me at once to go with them to the municipal concert, since it was the only entertainment in the city, though restricted to subscribing citizens and to foreigners who paid an écu, but they said I must go as a citizen and they outdid each other in praise of the Abbot of Einsiedeln.

The concert, which was only instrumental, bored me. The men were all on one side, where I sat between my two sponsors; the women were all on the other, which annoyed me, for despite my recent conversion I saw three or four whom I thought attractive, who kept looking at me, and with whom I would gladly have flirted. At the end of the concert the departure of the audience broke up the division, and the two citizens introduced their wives and daughters to me; the two daughters were actually the most charming girls in Zurich. The ceremonies in the street were very short, so, after thanking the gentlemen, I went back to my inn. The next day I ate family dinner with Monsieur Orelli, where I duly praised his daughter's merits but without indicating by the slightest of the usual little liberties that I might have taken a fancy to her. The next day at Monsieur Pestalozzi's I played exactly the same role, despite the fact that the young lady could very easily have inspired me to gallantry. To my great astonishment I was perfectly discreet, and within four days everyone in Zurich knew that my behavior was exemplary. I noticed in the public promenades that people looked at me with respect, which was something entirely new to me. I became more and more persuaded that my idea of becoming a monk was a genuine vocation. I felt bored, but I saw that such a sudden change in my way of life could not but produce that effect. My boredom would vanish when I had become accustomed to being good. I spent three hours each morning with a language teacher who instructed me in German; he was Italian, a native of Genoa, his name was Giustiniani,[13] he had been a Capuchin, and despair had driven him to apostasy. The poor man, to whom I gave an écu of six francs[14] every day, considered me an angel, an instrument of Providence, and in the folly of my supposed vocation I took him for a devil straight from Hell, for he seized every moment when I interrupted his interminable lesson to denigrate all religious communities to me, and the ones which presented the best appearance were, according to him, the most corrupting since they were the most attractive. He solemnly termed all monks the vilest scum of the human race.

"But," I said to him one day, "Our Lady of Einsiedeln, for example? You will admit—"

"What! It is a gang of eighty lazy, ignorant, vicious hypocrites, real swine who—"

"But His Most Reverend Highness the Abbot?"

"An upstart peasant, who plays the prince and is conceited enough to think he is one."

"But so he is."

"Nonsense—it is a mask; I consider him nothing but a clown."

"What has he done to you?"

"Nothing. He is a monk."

"He is my friend."

"If that is so, forgive me for what I said."

Yet Giustiniani was undermining me. At six in the afternoon on the fourteenth day of my supposed conversion, the day before that on which the Abbot had promised to visit me, I was at my window which gave on the bridge and from which I saw both the people passing by and everyone who arrived at my inn by carriage. I see a four-horse carriage arrive at a fast trot, it stops at the entrance, the waiter goes to open the carriage door, for there was no footman up behind, and I see four well-dressed women get out. I see nothing unusual in the first three, but the fourth, who was dressed *en amazone*[15] as the expression went, strikes me. A young brunette, with very large, black, prominent eyes under two fearless brows, with a lily complexion and cheeks of roses, wearing a blue satin bonnet from which dangled a silver tassel which hung over one ear—she is a talisman which stupefies me. I lean over the window sill to gain ten inches, and she raises her charming head as if I had called to her. My strange posture makes her look at me attentively for half a minute—too much for a modest woman. She enters, I run to the window of my anteroom, which gave on the corridor, and I see her coming quickly up to overtake her companions, who had already gone by. When she is opposite my window she happens to turn her head, and, seeing me standing there, she falls back half a step, crying out as if she had seen a ghost, but she recovers in an instant, bursts out laughing, and runs into the room in which her three friends were.

Defend yourselves, mortals, against such an encounter, if you have the strength. Persist, if you can, fanatics, in the mad idea of burying yourselves in a monastery after seeing what I saw then in Zurich on the twenty-third day of April. I sank onto my bed to calm myself. Five or six minutes later I go back to the window on the corridor, and seeing the waiter leaving the room of the new arrivals I tell him I will sup downstairs at the common table.

"If you want to sup there to see those ladies, it is no use. They will sup in their room at eight o'clock so that they can leave tomorrow at daybreak."

"Where are they going?"

"To Einsiedeln to perform their devotions. They are all Catholics."

"Where are they from?"

"From Soleure."

"What are their names?"

"I have no idea."

I lie down on my bed again, I consider going to Einsiedeln. But what will I do there? They are going to confess, to receive communion, to talk with God, with the saints, with the monks; what sort of figure shall I cut? Then, too, I may meet the Abbot on the road, in which case, no matter what the cost, I shall have to retrace my steps. I dismiss the idea; but I see that if I had such a friend as I wished I had, I would set up an ambuscade and carry off the Amazon, than which nothing would have been easier for they were unaccompanied. I consider going and boldly asking them for supper, but I am afraid the other pious pilgrims will refuse me; I thought the Amazon could only be pious for form's sake, since her physiognomy was eloquent, and it had been long since any woman's physiognomy had been able to deceive me.

But suddenly the happiest idea comes into my agitated mind. I go to my window on the corridor and stay there until the waiter passes; I call him into my room, give him a louis, and tell him he must instantly lend me a green apron like his own, for I want to serve the ladies at table.

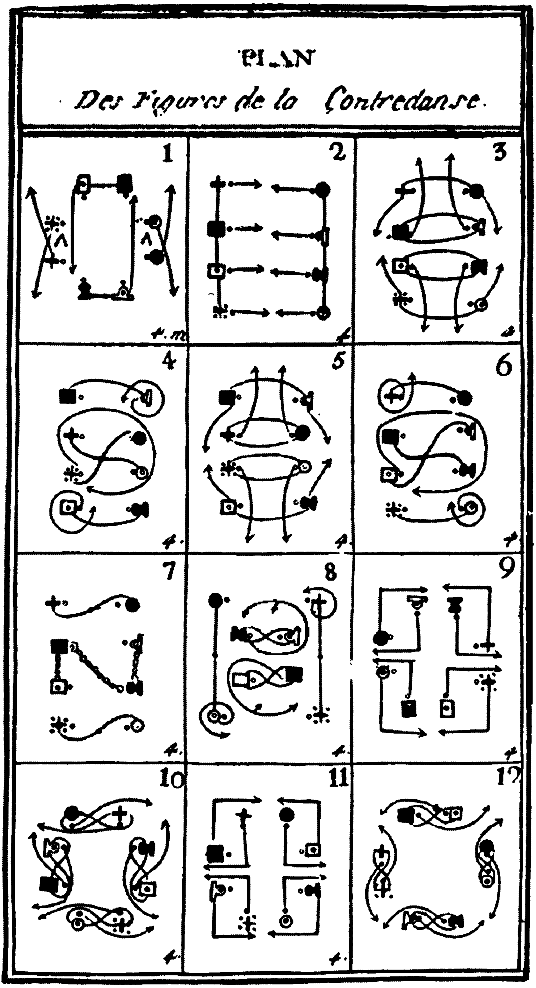
"What are you laughing at?"

"I am laughing at your notion. I will fetch you the apron. The prettiest of the ladies asked me who you are."

"Possibly, for she saw me as she went by, but she will not recognize me. What did you tell her?"

"Only that you are an Italian."

"Remember to hold your tongue."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Figures of Contradance "La nouvelle de Lille"

"I asked your Spaniard to come and serve at supper, for I am all alone and I have the table downstairs."

"He is not to come into the room while I am playing my role, for the idiot couldn't help laughing, and everything would be ruined. Call him. He shall take care of going to the kitchen and bringing me the dishes outside."

The waiter comes back up with the apron and Leduc. I tell him perfectly gravely what I want him to do; he laughs like an idiot but promises he will obey me. So I have them bring me the carving knife, I do up my hair in a cadogan,[16] I put the apron over a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, I examine myself in the mirror, and I find I have the look of baseness and false modesty demanded by the part I am to play. I am in raptures. They come from Soleure. They speak French.[17] Leduc comes to tell me that the waiter is ready to bring up the supper. I enter their room and, looking at the table, say:

"You will be served at once, Mesdames."

"Then be quick about it," said the ugliest, "we have to get up before daylight."

I arrange the chairs, and out of the corner of my eye I see the beauty, who has not moved, I give her a lightning glance, I see that she is startled. I go to meet the waiter, I help him set the dish on the table, and the waiter leaves, saying:

"*Stay here, you,* I have to serve downstairs."

I take a plate and set it before the one who has wounded me; I did not look at her, but I saw her perfectly, in fact I saw nothing else. She was astonished; the others did not even notice me. I hurry to change her plate, then I quickly change the others; they all help themselves to the soup, and in the meanwhile I carve a capon *au gros sel* [18] in their presence with marvelous skill.

"That," said my charmer, "is a waiter who serves well. Have you been long in service here, my lad?"

"Only a few weeks, Madame. You are too kind."

I had hidden my cuffs, which were of needlepoint, under the sleeves of my vest and had buttoned it at the wrists; but, the frill beginning to show a little at the opening, she said to me:

"Wait, wait."

"What do you wish, Madame?"

"Let me look. This is magnificent lace."

"Yes, Madame, so I have been told; but it is old. An Italian nobleman who stopped here gave it to me."

So saying, I let her pull out the whole cuff; which she did slowly and not looking at me, yet putting me very much at my ease so that I could enjoy her charming face to the full. What a delicious moment! I knew she had recognized me, and, seeing that she was keeping my secret, how I grieved at the thought that I could only carry my masquerade just so far. One of her friends finally made her stop examining my cuff by saying:

"What curiosity! One would think you had never seen lace."

My heroine blushed. Supper over, they each went into a corner to undress while I cleared the table; but the beauty sat down to write. I was very nearly conceited enough to think she was writing to me. After carrying everything away, I remained at the door.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked me.

"You are wearing boots, Madame. Unless you mean to go to bed with them on."

"Right you are. I am sorry I have to put you to so much trouble."

"Isn't that what I'm for, Madame?"

I having gone down on my knees, she surrendered her legs to me and went on writing; I unlaced her boots, I took them off, then I unbuckled the kneeband of her breeches so that I could take off her stockings and have the pleasure of seeing and touching her calves, but she stopped writing and said:

"That's enough, that's enough, I wasn't aware you were going to so much trouble. We shall see each other again tomorrow evening."

"Then you will be supping here, Mesdames?"

"Certainly."

I left, taking her boots with me and asking her if she wanted me to lock the room or to leave the key inside.

"Leave it inside, my lad, I will lock the door myself."

I went away, and she immediately locked herself in. My Spaniard at once relieved me of the boots and, laughing like a maniac, says she has caught me.

"What do you mean?"

"I saw everything. You played your part like an angel, and I'm sure that tomorrow morning she'll tip you a louis, but if you don't give it to me I will tell everything."

"There, you scoundrel, take it in advance, and bring me supper."

Such were the pleasures of my life, which I can no longer obtain; but I have the pleasure of enjoying them again by recalling them. Yet there are monsters who preach repentance, and stupid philosophers who say they are only vanities.

I slept with the Amazon in imagination, a factitious satisfaction but unalloyed; and I was at her door the next morning, carrying her cleaned boots, just when the coachman came to tell them to get up. I asked them for form's sake if they wanted breakfast, and they laughed and said they had no appetite. I went out to let them dress; but the door being open, my eyes breakfasted on an alabaster breast. She summoned me and asked where her boots were, and I begged her to let me lace them. As she already had her stockings on and was wearing velvet breeches, she acted as if she were a man—and besides, what is a waiter? So much the worse for him if he dares to hope that anything substantial will follow some trifle he is granted. He will be punished, for he will never be bold enough to press on. Today in my old age I have some privileges of that sort, and I enjoy them, despising myself but also despising the women who grant them to me.

After she left I went back to bed, and on waking I learned that the Abbot was in Zurich. Monsieur Ott told me an hour later that he would dine with me alone in my room. I said that it was my part to pay and that he was to treat us like princes.

The worthy prelate entered my room at noon and congratulated me on the good reputation I had gained in Zurich, from which he concluded that my vocation was still in force.

"Here," he said, "is a distich which you shall put over the door of your apartment:

> *Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valete;*
> *Nil mihi vobiscum est: ludite nunc alios."*

> ("I have reached port. Hope and Fortune, farewell; I have nothing to do with you: henceforth make others your playthings.")[19]

"It is a translation," I said, "of two lines of Greek by Euripides;[20] but they can serve some other time, for since yesterday I have changed my mind."

He congratulated me, saying that he hoped all my desires would be fulfilled and assuring me confidentially that it was easier to earn salvation by remaining in the world than by retiring to a monastery. This language did not seem to me that of a hypocrite but that of an honest and sensible man. After dinner I expressed all possible gratitude to him, I accompanied him to the door of his carriage, and I saw him set off well content. I at once went to the window of my room which overlooked the bridge, there to wait for the angel who had come from Soleure expressly to deliver me from the temptation of becoming a monk. The most beautiful of castles in Spain delighted me until the arrival of her carriage. It arrives at six o'clock, I hide, but in a position to watch the ladies alight. I see them, and I am annoyed that all four of them look at the window at which the beauty had seen me on the previous day. Their curiosity, which could not exist unless the beauty had revealed the whole secret, showed me that she had told all, and I was nonplused. I was stripped not only of the hope of carrying the charming adventure further but also of my confidence that I could play my role well; I foresaw that I might well lose my stage presence, become annoyed, and be hissed; these ideas spoiled everything; I was instantly determined not to play a farce for them in which I could only laugh out of the wrong side of my mouth. If I had interested the Amazon as she had interested me, she would not have given the game away; she had told them all; so she did not intend to carry the thing further, or else she lacked the intelligence to see that her indiscretion stopped me in my tracks, for two of the three others actually repelled me, and if a woman whom I find pleasing sets me up a woman whom I find repulsive pulls me down. Foreseeing all sorts of tiresome consequences if I did not appear at the table, I went out. I ran into Giustiniani, and when I told him I felt very much like spending a couple of hours with some young and mercenary beauty, he took me to a door where he said I would find what I wanted on the third floor if I whispered his name to the old woman I would see there. He did not dare come with me, because someone might find it out and cause him trouble in a city where the police were very strict in that department. He even told me I ought not to enter the house until I was sure I would not be seen, and I waited until dusk. I went there; I ate poorly but had a sufficiently amusing time with two young working girls until midnight. My generosity, which was a thing unknown in that country, won me the friendship of the old woman, who promised me treasures of the same sort if I continued to come to her house, taking every care not to be seen.

Upon my return Leduc told me I had done well to slip away, for the whole inn had learned of my masquerade, and everyone, including Monsieur Ott, would have had great sport lurking outside of the room to see me play the role of waiter, which, as I could not but have noticed them, would have made me very angry.

"It was I," he said, "who took your place. The lady's name is V. . . .[21] I never saw anything so appetizing."

"Did she ask where the other waiter was?"

"No. But the others asked me, several times."

"And Madame de V . . . never said anything?"

"Not once. She was gloomy, even to the point of pretending not to be interested in you when I told her that the waiter who had served them yesterday had not come because he was ill."

"Why did you say I was ill?"

"I had to say something."

"Did you unlace her boots?"

"She wouldn't let me."

"Who told you her name?"

"Their coachman. She's just been married[22] to an old man."

I retired to bed, and early the next morning I went to the window to watch them get into their carriage; but I stayed behind the curtain. Madame was the last, and, for an excuse to look up, she asked if it was raining and took off her satin bonnet. I quickly took off my nightcap, and she saluted me with a most gracious smile.

CHAPTER V

I leave Zurich. Comic incident at Baden. Soleure. Monsieur de Chavigny. Monsieur and Madame . . . . I act in a play. I feign illness to forward my good fortune.

MONSIEUR OTT came to my room to introduce his two young sons[1] to me; they were with their tutor, who brought them up like princes. In Switzerland an innkeeper is often a man who keeps a fine house and presides over a table at which he thinks it no disgrace to take money from those who come there to dine. He is right; he sits at the head of it only to see that each of his guests is properly served. If he has a son he does not let him sit at the table but makes him serve at it. In Schaffhausen the son of the innkeeper, a captain in the Imperial army, stood behind my chair to change my plate while his father dined with all the guests. He would not have done it elsewhere; but in his father's house he considered it an honor; and he was right. Such is the opinion of the Swiss, which some superficial minds see fit to ridicule. However, it is true that the Swiss, like the Dutch, fleece foreigners when they can; but the fools who let themselves be fleeced deserve it; terms must be settled in advance. It was thus that, in Basel, I protected myself against Imhof[2] who was notorious for fleecing his patrons at the "Three Kings."

My host congratulated me on my waiter's disguise; he said he was sorry he could not have seen me, and he praised me for not having repeated the masquerade at the second supper. After thanking me for the honor I had done his establishment he asked me also to grant him that of dining at his table at least once before I left. I promised I would dine at it that very day.

Determined to go to Soleure to court the beautiful Amazon, I obtained a letter of credit on Geneva. I wrote Madame d'Urfé to send me a strong letter for Monsieur de Chavigny,[3] the French Ambassador, whose countenance I told her I greatly needed for the interests of our Order,[4] and to dispatch it to me as quickly as possible in care of the post at Soleure. I wrote several other letters, among them one to the Duke of Württemberg which must have left a bitter taste in his mouth.

At my host's table at the inn I found staff officers, good fare, and a magnificent dessert of confectionery. After dinner I lost a hundred louis at *passe-dix,*[5] and the same sum the next day at the house of a rather wealthy young man who invited me to dinner. His name was Escher.[6]

On four ot my days in Zurich I amused myself at the house of the woman to whom Giustiniani had sent me—but not at all successfully, for the girls she got for me only spoke a thick Swiss dialect. Without words the pleasure of love is lessened by at least two thirds. In Switzerland I made the same odd observation which I made in Genoa. Both the Swiss and the Genoese, who speak very badly, write very well.

I had scarcely left Zurich before I had to stop at Baden[7] to get a carriage I had bought repaired. It is the city in which the deputies from the cantons hold their general assembly. I put off my departure in order to dine with a Polish lady who was going to Einsiedeln, but after dinner I had an amusing adventure. At her own urging I danced with the innkeeper's daughter; it was a Sunday. The innkeeper comes out, his daughter runs away, and the scoundrel declares I must pay a fine of one louis; and he shows me a placard which I cannot read. I refuse to pay; I appeal to the judge of the place, he goes off, acquiescing. A quarter of an hour later he summons me to a room in his inn, where I see him with a wig and a gavel; he tells me he is the judge. He writes, he confirms my sentence, and I have to give him another écu because he has written. I said that if his daughter had not tempted me into it I would not have danced, whereupon he pays a louis for his daughter. I had to laugh. I left the next morning very early.

At Lucerne I saw the Papal Nuncio,[8] who invited me to dinner, and at Fribourg[9] Count d'Affry's wife,[10] who was young and giddy; but now for what I saw eight or ten leagues before arriving at Soleure.

At nightfall I was taking a walk with the surgeon of the village. A hundred paces from me I see a man climbing up the outside of a house, reaching a window, and going in.[11] I point him out to the surgeon, he laughs and tells me it is a peasant lad going to spend the night alone with his fiancée.

"He spends the whole night with her," he said, "and he leaves in the morning more in love than ever because she has not granted him the final favors. If she did, he might not marry her, and she would find it very hard to get a new lover."

At the post station in Soleure[12] I found a letter from Madame d'Urfé enclosing one from the Duke of Choiseul addressed to Monsieur de Chavigny, Ambassador. It was sealed, but the name of the minister who had written it was on the outside. I hire a carriage by the day, I dress as I would for Versailles, I go to the door of the Ambassador's residence, he is not receiving, and I leave the letter for him. It was a feast day, I go to the last mass, where I do not see the beautiful lady, and after taking a little stroll I return to my inn. An officer was waiting for me with an invitation from the Ambassador to dine "at the Court."[13]

Madame d'Urfé wrote me in her letter that she had gone straight to Versailles and that she was sure the Duchess of Gramont[14] had persuaded the minister to write a most efficacious letter for me. I was very glad, for I intended to play the role of an important personage. The Marquis de Chavigny had been the French Ambassador in Venice thirty years[15] before this time; I knew a great deal about him and I could scarcely wait to make his acquaintance.

I go at the appointed hour, I am not announced, as soon as the double doors are opened for me I see the handsome old man come to meet me, and I hear him address me in the most obliging and courtly terms. He introduces all his entourage to me; then, pretending to have misread my name, he takes from his pocket the Duke of Choiseul's letter and reads aloud the passage in which he asks him to show me every consideration. He makes me sit down at his right on a sofa, and he asks me only such questions as oblige me to say that I am traveling simply for pleasure, that the Swiss nation is in several respects superior to all others, and that this moment is the happiest of my life since it has procured me the honor of his acquaintance.

Dinner is served, and His Excellency gives me the place beside him and on his right. There were fifteen or sixteen places at the table, and each guest was served by a footman in the Ambassador's livery. The conversation turning that way, I said to him that he was still spoken of in Venice with the fondest admiration.

"I shall always remember," he said, "the kindnesses which were shown me during my whole term as Ambassador; but be so good as to name those who still speak of me. They must be very old."

It was just what I wanted. Signor Malipiero had informed me of events during the Regency[16] which had gained him great credit; and Signor Bragadin had told me about his love affair with the celebrated Stringhetta.[17]

His cook was excellent; but the pleasure of talking to him led me to neglect that of eating. I saw him redden in his delight; he said to me as we rose from the table that he had never dined with greater pleasure at Soleure and that my recalling his Venetian gallantries to him had made him young again. He embraced me and asked me to spend all my time at his house, day and night, as long as I remained in Soleure. In his turn he talked much of Venice; after praising its system of government he said there was not a city in the world where one could eat better fare, even on fast days, only provided one made sure to procure good oil and foreign wine. About five o'clock he invited me to take a drive with him in a vis-à-vis,[18] getting into it first so that I should have to take the forward-facing seat.

We got out at a pretty country house, where we were served ices. On the way back to the city he said that he entertained a large company every evening, both men and women, and he hoped that, so far as it lay in his power, I would not be bored. I could scarcely wait to see the company; I thought it impossible that I should not see Madame . . . among them.

People began to arrive. Many of the women were ugly, some passable, and none pretty. Card games were arranged, and I was put at a table with a young blonde and an ancient dame who pretended to wit. Bored and not once opening my mouth, I lost five or six hundred counters. When the time came to pay, the old hand told me they came to three louis.

"Three louis?" I said.

"Yes, Monsieur. Two sous a counter. Did you think we were playing for coppers?"[19]

"On the contrary, Madame. I thought it was for twenty sous,[20] since I never play for less."

She left my boast unanswered, but she blushed.

After walking around the room and not seeing the beauty I hoped to find, I prepared to leave. The Ambassador had retired. I see two ladies talking together and looking at me; I recognize them as the ones I had seen at Zurich with Madame . . . ; I avoid them, and leave.

The next morning one of the Ambassador's household officials comes to tell me that His Excellency is coming and has sent me word so that he will be certain to find me. I said I would wait for him. I tried to think how I could get information about Madame . . . from him, but he saved me the trouble.

A quarter of an hour later I receive the worthy nobleman as it becomes me to do. After some desultory talk he smiled and said he was about to tell me the most unlikely thing imaginable, but he informed me in advance that he did not believe a word of it. After this preamble he said that two ladies who had seen me at the reception, and whose names he told me, had come to his room after I left to warn him to beware, because I was the waiter at the inn at Zurich.

"You waited on them at table ten days ago when they were on their way to perform their devotions at Our Lady of the Hermits—they are sure of it; and they say that yesterday, on the other side of the Aar, they met your fellow waiter, who had apparently run away with you, God knows why. They said that as soon as you realized last evening that they recognized you, you slipped away. I laughed and answered that I would be sure they were mistaken even if you had not brought me a letter from the Duke of Choiseul, and that I would have them to dinner with you today. I said that you might well have disguised yourself as a waiter in the hope of obtaining the favors of one of their party. They said the supposition was ridiculous, that you were nothing but a potboy with a knack for carving a capon and a deft hand at changing everyone's plate; and that they are ready to compliment you on your talents if I will permit it. I replied that they would make you laugh and me too. If there is any truth in this tale be so good as to tell me all the circumstances."

"Every one, and gladly. But we must observe a certain discretion, for it is a comedy which might be injurious to a person whom I would rather die than harm."

"So the story is true? You make me most curious."

"True and not true. I hope that Your Excellency does not believe I am the waiter at the 'Sword.' "

"No. I should never believe that. You played the part."

"Precisely. Did they tell you there were four of them?"

"I know that. There was the beauty too; and now I see the whole thing. You are quite right, discretion is essential, for her reputation is spotless."

"That I did not know. What happened is perfectly innocent, but it might be told with additions which could injure the honor of that charming woman, whose merits filled me with admiration."

I then told him the whole story, ending by saying that I had come to Soleure only to make her acquaintance and, if possible, to court her.

"If it is not possible," I said, "I will leave in three or four days, but not before seeing the two blabbers covered with ridicule, for they must know very well that the waiter was only a mask. They cannot pretend not to know it, except for the express purpose of putting an affront on me and injuring Madame, who was very ill advised to let them into the secret."

"Softly, softly! So many things at once! Let me embrace you. Your story really delights me. Leave it to me. You shall not go away, my dear friend; you shall court Madame. Permit me to laugh. I have been young, and a pair of beautiful eyes has often made me disguise myself too. Today at table with those two mischief-makers you shall prick their bubble, but good-naturedly. The thing is so innocent that even Monsieur . . . will laugh over it. His wife cannot but know that you love her, I presume?''

''She must have seen into my soul even though I did no more than take off her boots.''

''Funnier and funnier.''

He went away laughing, and at the door of his carriage he embraced me for the third time. Certain, as I could not but be, that Madame . . . had told her three companions everything she knew before returning to Zurich, the . . . joke[21] with which the two harridans had gone to the Ambassador struck me as both malicious and perfidious; but my heart's interests obliged me to let their calumny pass as wit.

At half past one I enter the Embassy and after making my most humble bow to the Ambassador I see the two ladies. I ask the one who looked the more malicious, who limped, and whose name was F., if she recognizes me.

''Then you admit you are the waiter at the inn in Zurich.''

''Yes, Madame. I was for an hour, to have the honor of seeing you close by; and you punished me by never addressing a word to me; I hope I shall not be so unfortunate here, and that you will permit me to pay court to you.''

''This is amazing. You played the waiter so well that no one could have guessed you were playing a part. We shall now see if you play your present role as skillfully; and if you will come to call on me I shall be honored.''

After this compliment the whole company learned the story; and just then Madame . . . arrives with her husband. She sees me and instantly says to him:

"There's the waiter at Zurich."

The worthy man thanks me most politely for having done his wife the honor of taking off her boots. I see that she has told him everything and I am glad. Monsieur de Chavigny seated her on his right, and my place at the table proved to be between the two women who had calumniated me.

Though they both repelled me, I flirted with them, having the firmness scarcely ever to look at Madame . . . , who was even more beautiful than she had been in riding clothes. Her husband did not seem either jealous or as old as I had supposed. The Ambassador invited them both to his ball, and he asked her to play the heroine in *L'Écossaise*[22] again, so that I could tell the Duke of Choiseul I had been well entertained at Soleure. She replied that there were two actors missing; he offered to play Lord Monrose and I instantly said I would play Murray. The arrangement infuriating my table companion F., for it left her to play the hateful role of Lady Alton, she let fly a shaft at me.

"Why isn't there a waiter's part in the play?" she said. "You would act it wonderfully well."

"But you," I replied, "will teach me to act the part of Murray still better."

The Ambassador settled on a day five or six days later, and the next morning I was sent my short part. The ball having been announced as in my honor, I returned to my inn for another suit, and I reappeared in the ballroom dressed with the utmost elegance.

I opened the ball, dancing the minuet with a woman who must have had precedence over all the others, then I danced with them all; but the wily Ambassador arranged for me to dance the contradances with Madame . . . , and no one could object. He said that Lord Murray must dance with no one but Lindane.

At the first pause in the contradance I told her that I had come to Soleure only for her, that but for her I should never have been seen as a waiter, and that hence I hoped she would permit me to pay court to her. She said that there were reasons which forbade her to receive visits from me, but that opportunities to see each other could not fail to arise if I did not leave at once and would refrain from showing her certain attentions which must give rise to talk. Love, readiness, and prudence together could not have made me a more satisfying answer. I promised her all the discretion she could ask. On the instant my love became of heroic mold and thoroughly determined to make secrecy its law.

Having declared that I was a novice in the art of the theater, I asked Madame F. to instruct me. I went to her in the morning, but she thought it was only an excuse. By going, I was paying court to Madame . . . , who was perfectly aware of my motive for acting as I did. She[23] was a widow between thirty and forty years of age, with a malicious temperament, a yellowish complexion, and an awkward walk, because she tried to conceal the fact that she was lame. She was forever talking, and, since she tried to display a wit which she did not possess, she bored me. Nevertheless I had to pretend I was in love with her. She made me laugh one day when she said she would never have thought I was timid by nature after seeing me play the role of waiter so well at Zurich. I asked her what made her suppose me timid, and she did not answer. I had made up my mind to break with her after we had acted *L'Écossaise.*

Our first performance was attended by all the best people in the city. Madame F. was delighted to inspire loathing in her role, being sure that her own person had no part in producing the effect. Monsieur de Chavigny drew tears. People said he had played his part better than Voltaire[24] did. But my blood froze when in the third scene of the fifth act Lindane said to me: "What! You! You dare to love me!"[25] She uttered the seven words so strangely, in a tone of such deliberate scorn, even stepping momentarily out of her part, that the whole audience applauded wildly. The applause nettled and disconcerted me, for I thought her manner had trespassed on my honor. When silence was restored and I, as my role prescribed, had to answer her with, "Yes, I adore you, and I must,"[26] I brought out the words in a tone so moving that the applause redoubled: *Bis, bis* from four hundred voices forced me to repeat them.

But despite the applause we decided at supper that we did not know our parts well enough. Monsieur de Chavigny said that the second performance would be put off until the next day but one and that on the morrow we would hold a private rehearsal at his country house, where we would dine. We congratulated each other on our acting. Madame F. said that I had played my role well, but that I had done even better as the waiter, and the laugh was on her side; but I had it on mine when I replied that she had played Lady Alton excellently, but that it could hardly be otherwise since it required no effort on her part.

Monsieur de Chavigny told Madame . . . that those in the audience who had applauded her for the passage in which she expressed amazement that I should love her had been wrong, since by putting scorn into the words she had stepped out of her part, for Lindane could not but have a high regard for Murray.

The Ambassador came next day to fetch me in his carriage, saying that there was no need for me to use mine. All the actors were assembled at his country house. He at once said to Monsieur . . . that he believed he had settled his business and that they would talk about it after they had dined and rehearsed the play. We sat down at table; and afterward we got through the whole rehearsal without once needing to be prompted. Toward nightfall he told the company that he expected them all for supper at Soleure, and everyone left except Monsieur . . . , with whom he had business to discuss. I had no carriage. At the moment of departure I had a most pleasant surprise:

"Ride in my carriage with me," said the Ambassador to Monsieur . . . , "and we will discuss our business. Monsieur de Seingalt[27] will have the honor of escorting your lady in yours."

I at once give my hand to that miracle of nature, who gets in with an air of the greatest indifference, warmly pressing my hand. So there we are, sitting face to face.

A half hour went by like a minute; but we did not waste it talking. Our mouths joined and did not separate until we were ten paces from the door of the Embassy. She got out first. Her flushed face terrifies me. It not being her natural color, we would reveal our crime to every eye in the room. Her honor did not permit me to expose her in such a state to the scrutiny of Madame F., who would have felt even more triumphant than humiliated by a discovery of such consequence.

It was Love who made me think of a unique expedient, and Fortune, who often favored me, who saw to it that I had in my pocket a small box containing a sternutative.[28] I urged her to take a pinch of it at once, and I did the same. The excessive dose began to produce its effect halfway up the stairs, and we continued to sneeze for a good quarter of an hour; the blame for her tattletale redness was put entirely on her sneezes. When they stopped she said she no longer had a headache but that in future she would beware of taking such a violent remedy. I saw Madame F. lost in thought, but she dared say nothing.

This foretaste of my good fortune decided me to stay in Soleure for as long as it might take me to crown my happiness. I immediately determined to rent a country house. Any man in my situation and endowed with a heart would have made the same resolve. I saw before me a perfect beauty whom I adored, whose heart I was certain I possessed, and whom I had barely touched; I had money, and I was my own master. I thought it far more reasonable than my notion of becoming a monk at Einsiedeln. I was so full of my happiness, present and to come, that I dismissed all thought of "what people would say." I left everyone at the table and sought out the Ambassador a minute after he withdrew. As a man of the world, I could not conscientiously deny the lovable old man his right to a confidence which he had so signally deserved.

As soon as we were alone he asked me if I had profited by the favor he had done me. After kissing his noble countenance several times I told him all in these five words: "I can hope for everything." But when he heard the story of the sternutative the compliments he lavished on me were endless, for the lady's greatly changed physiognomy could have raised the suspicion of a struggle. After my narrative, which made him laugh heartily, I told him that, being under the necessity of crowning my happiness and at the same time sparing the lady's honor, and having nothing better to do, I wanted to rent a country house in which I would calmly wait for Fortune to favor me. I said that I looked to his good offices to obtain me a furnished house, a carriage at my disposal, two manservants, a good cook, and a housekeeper-chambermaid who would attend to my linen. He said that he would look into it. The next day our play went very well, and on the day after he imparted his plan to me as follows:

"I see, my dear friend, that in this intrigue your happiness depends upon your satisfying your passion without in any way injuring Madame . . .'s good name. I am even sure you will leave at once without having obtained anything if your departure is necessary to her peace of mind. This will show you that I am just the man to advise you. If you really want not to be found out, you must refrain from the taking of the least step which could make anyone who does not believe that there is such a thing as an action without meaning suspect the truth. Even the most speculative mind cannot take the brief interview which I arranged for you yesterday to be anything but the effect of the purest chance, and the incident of the sternutative foils the deductions of the most penetrating malice, for a lover who wants to make the most of an occasion favorable to his passion does not begin by bringing on convulsions in his beauty's head when a fortunate chance has placed her in his power, and no one can guess that a sternutative was used to hide a reddened face, for it is not often that consummation produces that effect and that a lover foresees it to the point of carrying such a stimulant in his pocket. So what has already happened is not enough to reveal your secret. Monsieur . . . himself, who, though he does not want to show jealousy, is nevertheless jealous of his wife, cannot have seen anything out of the way in my having him drive back to Soleure with me, for it is beyond all likelihood that I should wish to be your Mercury, while naturally and in accordance with the rules of the most ordinary politeness, which he has never refused to honor, his dear wife was the person who, on the return journey here, should occupy the place in my vis-à-vis which I kindly let him occupy himself, because of the interest I took in his important business.

"After this long exordium, which I have delivered in the style of a secretary of state speaking in council, let us come to the conclusion. Two things are necessary to set you on the road to fruition. The first, which concerns you, is to contrive to make Monsieur . . . your friend without ever giving him cause to suspect that you have designs on his wife. The second, which concerns the lady, is to do nothing which can be observed without making the reason for it known to everyone. So I say to you that you shall not take this country house until, between us, we have hit upon a perfectly plausible reason of a nature to throw dust in the eyes of speculation. I thought of such a reason yesterday when I was considering your case.

"You must pretend to be ill, and think of an illness of which what you say to him will leave the doctor in no doubt. Fortunately I know a doctor whose passion is prescribing country air, with baths of his own composition, for almost every disease. He is to come here one of these days to take my pulse. You shall summon him to your inn for a consultation and give him two louis; I am certain he will at least prescribe the country for you and will tell the whole town that he will surely cure you. Such is Herrenschwandt's[29] way, though he is a learned man."

"What! Is he here? He is a friend of mine. I met him in Paris at Madame du Rumain's."

"This is his brother.[30] Think up an illness which is fashionable and won't disgrace you. We will find the house afterward, and I will give you a young man who will cook excellent dishes for you."

Choosing an illness cost me some thought. I gave Madame . . . an outline of my plan in the wings, and she approved of it. I begged her to find some way by which we could write to each other, and she said she would try. She said that her husband had the highest opinion of me, and that he had seen nothing wrong in my having been in her coupé with her. She asked me if Monsieur de Chavigny had taken her husband with him because it had happened that way or on purpose, and I answered: "On purpose." She raised her beautiful eyes to heaven and bit her lip.

"Are you sorry, my charmer?"

"Alas! . . . no."

Three or four days later the doctor came to see the last performance of *L'Écossaise* and dine at the Ambassador's. He having complimented me at dessert on my look of good health, I said that looks were deceptive and I asked him for a consultation. Delighted that he had been mistaken, he promised me an hour the next day at my inn. He came, and I told him what God put into my mouth.

"I suffer every night," I said, "from amorous dreams which wear me out."

"I know the complaint, Monsieur, and I will cure you of it by two remedies. The first, which you may not much like, is to go and spend six weeks in the country, where you will not see objects which, by stimulating the seventh pair of nerves, bring on the lumbar discharge which must also make you very melancholy when you wake."

"So it does."

"Oh, I know that! The second remedy consists in cold baths, which will keep you amused."

"Are they far from here?"

"They are wherever you please, because I will write you a prescription for them at once. The apothecary will make them up for you."

After writing his prescription and accepting my two louis he left, and before noon the whole town had heard of my illness and my decision to make a stay in the country. Monsieur de Chavigny joked about it at table, telling Herrenschwandt he should forbid me to receive calls from ladies. Monsieur F.[31] said I should be forbidden certain miniatures of which my jewel box was full. Monsieur . . . , who was an anatomist, pronounced the doctor's reasoning splendid. I publicly asked the Ambassador to be so good as to find me a country house, and a cook because I liked to eat well.

Tired of playing a false role which I considered no longer necessary, I stopped calling on Madame F. She took it upon herself to reproach me in no uncertain terms for my inconstancy, saying that I had hoodwinked her. She said she knew all, and she threatened vengeance. I replied that she had nothing to avenge herself for, since I had never wronged her, but that if she was planning to have me murdered I would demand guards. She replied that she was not Italian.

Delighted to have got rid of the viper, I could now turn all my thoughts to Madame . . . . Monsieur de Chavigny, active as ever on my behalf, made Monsieur . . . believe that I was just the person to persuade the Duke of Choiseul, Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards,[32] to pardon a cousin[33] of his who had killed his man in a duel at La Muette.[34] He had told him I could do anything through the Duchess of Gramont; and, informing me of all this, he asked me if I would undertake to apply for the pardon and if I thought I might be successful. It was the sure way to gain Monsieur . . .'s entire friendship. I replied that I could not be certain I would succeed, but that I would gladly undertake it.

He then arranged to have the whole case explained to me in his presence by Monsieur M . . . , who brought all the documents stating the circumstances of the *factum,* which was perfectly simple, to my inn.

I spent most of the night writing a letter intended to persuade first the Duchess of Gramont and then the Duke her father;[35] and I wrote to Madame d'Urfé that the well-being of the Rosicrucian Order depended upon the King's pardoning the officer, who had been obliged to leave the kingdom because of the duel.

The next morning I took the Ambassador the letter which was to be seen by the Duke. He judged it excellent and told me to go and show it to Monsieur . . . , whom I found in his nightcap. Full of gratitude for the interest I was taking in his concerns, he thanked me effusively. He said that his wife was still in bed and asked me to wait and breakfast with her, but I asked him to make her my excuses, for since the post left at noon I had little time.

So I went back to my inn, where I sealed my letters and sent them to the post; then I went and dined alone with the Ambassador, who was expecting me.

After praising my prudence in refusing to wait until Madame . . . was up and assuring me that her husband must have become my bosom friend, he showed me a letter from Voltaire thanking him for having played the role of Monrose in *L'Écossaise,* and another from the Marquis de Chauvelin,[36] who was then staying with Voltaire at "Les Délices."[37] He promised to visit him before leaving for Turin, where he was to be Ambassador.

After dinner I went back to my room to dress, for there was to be a reception and supper at "the Court" that day. Such was the name given to the residence of the French Ambassador in Switzerland.

CHAPTER VI

My country house. Madame Dubois. Base trick which the lame harridan plays on me. My grievous misfortunes.

AS I enter the drawing room I see Madame . . . in a corner, poring over a letter. I go to her and apologize for not having waited to breakfast with her; she replies that I did right and adds that if I have not yet taken the country house I need I can do her a favor by deciding on the one her husband will propose to me, probably during supper that evening.

She could say no more, for she was summoned to take a hand at quadrille.[1] I excused myself from playing. At table everyone talked to me about my health and the baths I was to take in a country house I intended to rent. As his wife had forewarned me, Monsieur . . . told me about one near the Aar which was charming.

"But," he said, "it has to be rented for at least six months."

I replied that, provided I liked it and should be free to leave when I pleased, I would pay for the six months in advance.

"It has a reception room than which there is none finer in the whole canton."

"So much the better; I'll give a ball in it. Let us go to see it tomorrow morning at the latest. I will come to your house for you at eight o'clock."

"I look forward to it."

Before going to bed I ordered a four-horse berlin, and at eight o'clock I found Monsieur . . . ready. He said that he had tried to persuade his wife to come with us, but that she was a slug-a-bed. In less than an hour we reached the fine house,[2] and I thought it marvelous. There were master's rooms enough to lodge twenty. In addition to the reception room, which I admired, there was a retiring room hung with choice engravings. A large garden, a fine orchard, waterworks and fountains, and excellent facilities for baths in the main building. After approving of everything we went back to Soleure. I asked Monsieur . . . to make all the arrangements so that I could move in the next day. I saw his wife, who appeared delighted when her husband told her I had liked the house. I said I hoped they would often do me the honor of dining there, and Monsieur . . . gave me his word for it. After paying him the hundred louis which were the rent for six months, I embraced him and went, as always, to dine with the Ambassador.

I at once said that in deference to the suggestion his wife had made to me beforehand I had rented the house Monsieur . . . had proposed, and he thought well of it.

"But," he said, "do you really mean to give a ball there?"

"Certainly I do, provided my money can buy me everything I need."

"You'll have no difficulty about that, for you can turn to me for anything your money won't buy you. I see you want to be lavish. In the meanwhile you shall have two menservants, the housekeeper, and the cook; my major-domo will pay them and you can reimburse him; he is honest. I'll come to eat with you from time to time, and I shall listen with pleasure to the delightful story of your current intrigue. I think most highly of the young woman; her conduct is beyond her years, and the proofs of love she gives you must make you respect her. Does she know that I know everything?"

"She knows no more than that Your Excellency knows we love each other, and she takes no exception to that, for she is certain of your discretion."

"She is a charming woman."

An apothecary to whom the doctor sent me left the same day to compound the baths which were to cure me of a disease I did not have; and two days later I went myself, after ordering Leduc to follow with all my luggage. But I was not a little surprised when, on entering the apartment I was to occupy, I saw a young woman, or perhaps a girl, with an extremely pretty face approach me and start to kiss my hand. I draw it back, and my astonished look makes her blush.

"Do you belong to the household, Mademoiselle?"

"His Excellency the Ambassador's major-domo engaged me to serve you as housekeeper."

"Pardon my surprise. Let us go to my bedroom."

As soon as I am alone I tell her to sit down beside me on the couch. She replies in the gentlest and most modest fashion that she could not accept such an honor.

"As you will; but I hope you will make no objection to eating with me when I ask you to, for it bores me to eat alone."

"I will obey you."

"Where is your room?"

"There. It was the major-domo who showed it to me; but it is for you to give what orders you please."

The room was behind the alcove which contained my bed. I go into it with her, and I see dresses on a sofa; next to it a boudoir with all the usual array of petticoats, bonnets, shoes, and slippers, and a fine open trunk in which I see an abundance of linen. I look at her, I try to penetrate her serious manner, I approve of her reserve, but I think I had better subject her to some close questioning, for she was too interesting and too well dressed to be a mere chambermaid. I presume it is a trick Monsieur de Chavigny has played on me, for such a girl, whose age could not be more than twenty-four or twenty-six and who possessed the wardrobe I saw, seemed to me more fit to be the mistress of a man like myself than his housekeeper. I ask her if she knows the Ambassador and what wages she is to have, and she answers that she knows the Ambassador only by sight and that the majordomo had told her she would be paid two louis a month besides meals in her room. She said she was from Lyons, a widow, and that her name was Dubois.

I leave her, unable to decide what will happen, for the more I looked at her and talked with her, the more interesting I found her. I go to the kitchen, and I see a young man kneading dough. His name was Durosier. I had known his brother when he was in the service of the French Ambassador[3] in Venice. He said my supper would be ready at nine o'clock.

"I never eat alone."

"I know that."

"How much are you paid a month?"

"Four louis."

I see two likely-looking, well-dressed menservants. One of them says he will bring me what wine I order. I go to the small bathhouse, where I find the apothecary's apprentice preparing the bath I am to take on the morrow and every day.

After spending an hour in the garden I go to the caretaker's, where I see a numerous family, among them some not unpromising daughters. I spend two hours talking with them, delighted that everyone speaks French. As I wanted to see the whole of my house, the caretaker's wife took me everywhere. I returned to my apartment, where I found Leduc unpacking my luggage. After telling him to give my linen to Madame Dubois, I went to write. It was a pretty study, facing north, with one window. A ravishing view semed made to inspire the soul of a poet with the most felicitous ideas engendered by the freshness of the air and the palpable silence which soothes the ear in a smiling countryside. I felt that, to enjoy the simplicity of certain pleasures, a man must be in love and fortunate in love. I congratulated myself.

I hear a knock. I see my beautiful housekeeper, who, with a smile quite unlike the one worn by a person who is about to complain, asks me to tell my valet to treat her politely.

"How has he been rude to you?"

"Perhaps not at all by his lights. He wanted to kiss me, I refused, and he, thinking it was his right, became a trifle insolent."

"In what way?"

"He laughed at me. Excuse me, Monsieur, if I resented it. I don't like being sneered at."

"You are right, my dear helpmate. Sneering always comes from either stupidity or malice. Leduc shall be told at once that he is to respect you. You shall sup with me."

Leduc coming to ask me some question half an hour later, I told him he must treat Madame Dubois with respect.

"She's a prude—she wouldn't let me kiss her."

"As for you, you're a blackguard."

"Is she your chambermaid or your mistress?"

"Perhaps she is my wife."

"Well and good. I will go and amuse myself at the caretaker's."

I was well satisfied with my little supper and with an excellent Neuchâtel[4] wine. My housekeeper was accustomed to wine from "La Côte,"[5] which was delicious too. In short, I was well pleased with the cook, with my housekeeper's modesty, and with my Spaniard, who changed her plate for her without putting on airs. After ordering my bath for six o'clock in the morning I told my servants to retire. Thus left alone at table with the too beautiful woman, I asked her to tell me her story.

"My story is very short. I was born in Lyons. My father and mother brought me to Lausanne with them, or so they have told me, for I do not remember it myself. I know I was fourteen when my father, who was coachman to Madame d'Hermenches,[6] died. The lady took me into her household, and three or four years later I entered the service of Lady Montagu[7] as a chambermaid, and her old footman Dubois married me. Three years later I was left a widow at Windsor, where he died. The air of England threatening me with consumption, I asked my generous mistress to let me leave her service, which she granted me, paying for my traveling expenses and giving me some valuable presents. I went back to my mother's house in Lausanne, where I entered the service of an English lady who was very fond of me and who would have taken me to Italy if she had not become suspicious of the young Duke of Roxburghe,[8] who showed signs of being in love with me. She loved him, and she thought I was secretly her rival. She was wrong. She gave me a quantity of presents and sent me back to my mother's, where I have lived for two years by the work of my hands. Monsieur Lebel,[9] major-domo to the Ambassador, asked me four days ago if I wished to enter the service of an Italian nobleman as housekeeper and told me the conditions. I accepted, since I have always had a great desire to see Italy; that desire was the reason for my folly; and here I am."

"What folly?"

"Coming to you without knowing you beforehand."

"Then you would not have come if you had known me beforehand?"

"Certainly not, for I shall no longer be able to find service with a woman. Do you think you are the kind of man to have a housekeeper like me without people's saying that you have me for something else?"

"I expect as much, for you are very pretty and I scarcely look a milksop; but I do not care."

"I wouldn't care either, if my station in life allowed me to defy certain prejudices."

"Which is to say, my beauty, that you would like to go back to Lausanne."

"Not now, for that would be unjust to you. People might believe you had offended me by being too free, and you yourself might reach a wrong conclusion about me."

"What conclusion, if you please?"

"You would conclude that I want to make an impression on you."

"That might be, for your sudden and unreasonable departure would annoy me greatly. Even so, I am sorry for you. Thinking as you do, you can neither want to stay with me nor leave. Yet you must decide one way or the other."

"I have already decided. I shall stay, and I am almost certain that I shall not regret it."

"I like your hope; but there is one difficulty."

"Will you be so good as to explain?"

"I must, my dear Dubois. I cannot abide either melancholy or certain scruples."

"You will never find me melancholy; but please let us come to an understanding on the article of scruples. What do you mean by scruples?"

"I like that. In common usage the word 'scruple' means a superstitious malice which sees vice in an act which may be innocent."

"If an act leaves me in doubt I am not inclined to put a bad construction on it. My duty only bids me watch over myself."

"You have read a good deal, I should think."

"It's the one thing I do, really, for otherwise I'd be bored."

"Then you have books?"

"Many. Do you understand English?"

"Not a word."

"I'm sorry, for they would entertain you."

"I don't like romances."

"No more do I. I like that. What, may I ask, made you decide so quickly that I am romantic?"

"And I like that! Your outburst delights me, and I am glad I have got you to laugh at last."

"Excuse me if I laugh, because—"

"Because me no becauses. Laugh in season and out of season; you'll never find a better way to handle me. I should say you've hired yourself out to me too cheaply."

"I have to laugh again, for it lies with you to increase my wages."

I rose from the table very much surprised by this young woman, who seemed in a fair way to find the chink in my armor. She could reason; and in this first dialogue she had already drained my resources. Young, beautiful, elegantly dressed, and intelligent—where she would lead me I could not guess. I was eager to talk with Monsieur Lebel, who had procured me such a piece of household furniture.

After clearing the table and taking everything into her room, she came to ask me if I used curl papers under my nightcap. It was Leduc's province; but I gladly gave her the preference. She managed it very well.

"I foresee," I said, "that you will serve me as you did Lady Montagu."

"Not quite; but since you do not like melancholy, I must ask you a favor."

"Ask it, my dear."

"I would rather not wait on you in your bath."

"May I die if the thought has entered my head. It would be a scandal. Leduc shall do it."

"Then pray forgive me, and I make bold to ask you another favor."

"Tell me freely whatever it is you want."

"May I have one of the caretaker's daughters sleep with me?"

"If it had ever occurred to me I swear I would have asked you to do just that. Is she in your room?"

"No."

"Go and fetch her."

"I'll do it tomorrow, for if I went now people would start inventing reasons. Thank you."

"You are prudent, my dear. And be sure I will never stand in the way of your being so."

She helped me to undress, and she must have found me perfectly modest; but thinking of my behavior before I fell asleep I saw that it did not spring from virtue. My heart was Madame . . .'s, and the widow Dubois had rather overawed me; perhaps I was her dupe, but I did not dwell on the thought.

In the morning I rang for Leduc, who told me he had not expected to have the honor. I called him a fool. After taking a cold bath I went back to bed, ordering him to bring two cups of chocolate. My helpmate entered, in a very fetching dishabille and all smiles.

"You are in good spirits, my beautiful housekeeper."

"In good spirits because I am very glad to be with you, I slept well, I've been for a walk, and in my room there's a very pretty girl, who will sleep with me."

"Call her in."

I laughed when I saw a girl as ugly as she seemed to be shy. I told her she would drink chocolate with me every morning, and she showed that she was pleased, saying that she liked it very much. In the afternoon Monsieur de Chavigny came and spent three hours with me, and he was satisfied with the whole house but greatly surprised by the housekeeper Lebel had provided for me. He had said nothing to him about her. He thought it was the perfect cure for the love which Madame . . . had inspired in me. I assured him that he was wrong. He addressed her with the utmost politeness.

No later than the next day, just as I was about to sit down at table with my helpmate, a carriage enters my courtyard and I see Madame F. get out of it. I am surprised and annoyed, but I could not avoid going to meet her.

"I did not expect you would honor me with a visit, Madame."

"I came to ask you to do me a favor, after we have dined."

"Then come at once, for the soup is on the table. Permit me to present Madame Dubois. Madame de F.," I say to the latter, "will dine with us."

My helpmate did the honors of the table, playing the role of hostess like an angel, and Madame F., despite her pride, put on no airs. I did not speak twenty words during the whole dinner nor bestow any attentions on the madwoman, for I was impatient to learn what kind of favor she wanted to ask of me.

As soon as the widow Dubois left us, she told me bluntly that she had come to ask me to let her have two rooms for three or four weeks. Greatly surprised by her effrontery, I reply that I cannot grant her the favor.

"You will grant it, for the whole town knows that I have come here to ask it."

"And the whole town will know that I have refused you. I want to be alone and entirely free; any company at all would be burdensome."

"I will not burden you in any way; you need not even know that I am in your house. I shall not consider it impolite if you do not inquire after my health, and I will not inquire after yours even if you fall ill. I will have my maid cook for me in the small kitchen, and I will not walk in the garden when I know you are there. The apartment for which I ask you is the two last rooms on the second floor, which I can enter and leave by the small stairway without being seen and without seeing anyone. Now tell me if, in strict politeness, you can refuse me the favor."

"If you knew even the rudiments of politeness you would not ask it of me, and you would not insist after hearing me refuse you."

She does not answer, and I stride up and down the room like a maniac. I consider having her put out the door. I think I have the right to treat her as insane, then I reflect that she has relatives, and that she herself, treated without any consideration, will become my enemy and perhaps take some horrible revenge. Finally I think that Madame . . . would disapprove any violent means I might resolve upon to get rid of the viper.

"Very well, Madame," I say, "you shall have the apartment, and an hour after you enter it I will go back to Soleure."

"Then I accept the apartment, and I will move into it day after tomorrow, and I do not believe you will be so foolish as to go back to Soleure on that account. You would set the whole town laughing."

So saying, she rose and left. I let her go without stirring from where I was; but a moment later I repented of having yielded, for her errand and her effrontery were equally beyond all bounds. I called myself stupid, a coward, a fool. I ought not to have taken the thing seriously, I should have laughed at it, made a mock of her, told her clearly that she was mad and forced her to leave, calling in the caretaker's whole family and my servants as witnesses. When I told the widow Dubois what had happened she was amazed. She said behavior of that sort was incredible, and that my giving in to such high-handed proceedings was equally so, unless I had very strong reasons for what I had done.

Seeing that her reasoning was sound, and not wanting to tell her anything, I took the course of saying no more to her on the subject. I went for a walk until suppertime, and I remained at table with her until midnight, finding her ever pleasanter company, full of intelligence and most amusing in all the little stories she told me about herself. Her mind was extremely unprejudiced, but she maintained that if she did not follow the principles of what are called prudence and honor she would be made unhappy. So her good behavior resulted rather from her philosophy than from her virtue; but if she had not been virtuous she would not have had the firmness to practice her philosophy.

I considered my encounter with the F. woman so extraordinary that I could not keep from going the next morning early to regale Monsieur de Chavigny with it. I told my helpmate that she might dine without waiting for me if she did not see me back by the usual hour.

The Ambassador had been informed that Madame F. was coming to see me, but he burst out laughing when I told him how she had succeeded.

"Your Excellency finds it comic, but not I."

"So I see; but, believe me, you must pretend to laugh at it too. Act at all times as if you did not know she was in your house, and she will be sufficiently punished. People will say she is in love with you and that you will have none of her. I advise you to go and tell the whole story to Monsieur . . . and invite yourself to stay for dinner with him. I have talked with Lebel about your beautiful housekeeper. He meant no harm. Having gone to Lausanne an hour after I charged him to find you a respectable chambermaid, he remembered it, spoke of you to La Dubois, and the thing was done. It is a lucky find for you, because when you fall in love she won't keep you languishing."

"I don't know, for she has principles."

"I am sure you will not be taken in by them. I will come to you for dinner tomorrow and will enjoy hearing her talk."

"Your Excellency will afford me the greatest pleasure."

Monsieur . . . greeted me warmly and at once congratulated me on the admirable conquest[10] which was sure to make my stay in the country a pleasure. Though she suspected the truth, his wife congratulated me too; but I saw that they were both astounded when I told them the whole story in detail. Monsieur . . . said that if the woman really became a burden to me I need only ask the government to serve her with an immediate order never to set foot in my house again. I replied that I did not want to employ that resource, since, in addition to being dishonorable to her, it would prove me a weakling, for everyone must know that I was master in my own house and that she could never come to lodge there without my consent. His wife said thoughtfully that I had done well to let her have the apartment and that she would go to call on her, for she had herself told her she would have an apartment in my house the next day. I said no more about it, and, invited to take potluck with them for dinner, I stayed. Since I had shown Madame . . . nothing but ordinary politeness, her husband could have no suspicion that we were in communication. She seized an opportunity to tell me that I had done well to let the spiteful woman have the apartment and that I could invite her husband to come and spend two or three days with me after Monsieur de Chauvelin, who was expected, had gone. She also said that the wife of the caretaker of my house was her nurse, and that she would write me through her when the need arose.

After calling on two Italian Jesuits who were passing through Soleure and inviting them to dinner the next day, I went home. My helpmate kept me entertained until midnight with philosophical problems. She was devoted to Locke.[11] She said that the faculty of thought was not a proof of the spirituality of our soul, since God could give the property of thought to matter. I laughed heartily when she said there was a difference between thinking and reasoning.

"I think," I said, "that you would be reasoning well if you let yourself be persuaded to go to bed with me, and you think you are reasoning very well in refusing."

"Believe me," she answered, "that between a man's reason and a woman's there is the same difference that there is between the two sexes."

We were drinking our chocolate at nine o'clock the next morning when Madame F. arrived. I did not even go to the window. She dismissed her carriage and went to her apartment with her chambermaid. Having sent Leduc to Soleure to wait for letters for me, I asked my helpmate to dress my hair, saying that we should have the Ambassador and two Italian Jesuits for dinner. I had already told my cook to prepare good fast-day and meat dishes, it being a Friday. I saw that she was delighted, and she dressed my hair perfectly. After shaving, I offered her my first salutation of the day, and she accepted it with good grace, though she refused me her beautiful lips. It was the first time I kissed her cheeks. Such was the footing on which we lived together. We loved each other, and we were virtuous; but she must have suffered less than I did because of the coquetry which is only too natural to the fair sex and often stronger than love.

Monsieur de Chavigny arrived at eleven o'clock. I had not invited the Jesuits to dinner before consulting him, and I had sent my carriage for them; while waiting we went for a stroll. He asked my housekeeper to join us as soon as she had seen to all her domestic duties. He was one of those men whom France, when she was a monarchy, kept to send, at the proper time and as circumstances demanded, to win over the powers she wished to have embrace her interests. Such was Monsieur de l'Hospital,[12] who was able to gain the heart of Elisabeth Petrovna,[13] such the[14] Duke of Nivernais,[15] who did as he pleased with the Court of St. James's[16] in 1762, such were a number of others whom I knew. Walking in my garden, the Marquis de Chavigny found in my housekeeper all the qualities necessary to make a young man happy; and she enchanted him completely at table, where she overwhelmed the two Jesuits with sallies informed by a humor which was never unkind. After spending the whole day with the greatest enjoyment, he went back to Soleure, asking me to dine with him as soon as he sent me word that Monsieur de Chauvelin had arrived.

That agreeable man, whose acquaintance I had made at the Duke of Choiseul's in Versailles,[17] arrived two days later. He at once recognized me and introduced his charming wife,[18] who did not know me. Since chance put me at the table beside Madame . . . , I was in such high spirits that I said most amusing things. Monsieur de Chauvelin said that he knew some very pleasant stories about me.

"But," replied Monsieur de Chavigny, "you do not know the Zurich story"; and he told it to him.

Monsieur de Chauvelin said to Madame . . . that, to have the honor of serving her, he would have turned coachman, but Monsieur . . . replied that I was far more squeamish, for the lady who had made such an impression on me was staying as my guest in a house I had rented in the country.

"We will pay you a visit," Monsieur de Chauvelin said to me.

"Yes," Monsieur de Chavigny answered, "we will all go together."

And he instantly asks me to lend him my beautiful reception room to give a ball in no later than the following Sunday.

It was thus that the old courtier kept me from undertaking to give the ball myself. It was a piece of braggadocio which would have done me harm. I should have infringed on the right, which was the Ambassador's alone, to entertain these illustrious foreigners during the five or six days they were planning to spend in Soleure; and, besides being a blunder, it would have let me in for a great deal of expense.

In connection with the plays which were acted at Monsieur Voltaire's, the conversation turned to *L'Écossaise,* and my table companion was praised, and blushed, and became as beautiful as a star. The Ambassador invited us all to his ball the next day. I returned home madly in love with the charming woman whom Heaven had destined from birth to cause me the greatest grief I have ever suffered in my life. I leave my reader to judge.

My helpmate had gone to bed when I returned, and I was glad of it, for Madame . . .'s eyes had not left me a grain of reason. She found me sad the next morning, and she rallied me on it with wit tempered by kindness. While we are breakfasting Madame F.'s chambermaid suddenly appears and hands me a note. I tell her I will send an answer. I unseal it and I find:

"The Ambassador has sent me an invitation to his ball. I have replied that I did not feel well, but that if I felt better by evening I would go. I think that since I am in your house, I should go with you or not at all. So if you do not wish to do me the favor of escorting me, I beg you to do me that of saying I am ill. Excuse me if I have thought I might break our agreement in this one instance, for it is a case of at least making a show of good manners in public.''

Furious, I take a pen and write:

''You have seized, Madame, on a good subterfuge. It will be announced that you are ill, for I beg to forgo the honor of escorting you, on the principle of enjoying complete freedom.''

My housekeeper laughed at the note the lady had written me and declared that she had deserved my reply. I sealed it and sent it to her. I spent a very pleasant night at the ball, for I talked a great deal with the object of my passion. She laughed at my answer to Madame F.'s note, but she disapproved of it— ''for,'' she said, ''the poison of anger will circulate through her veins, and God knows what ravages it will make when it bursts out.''

I spent the next two days at home, and very early on Sunday the Ambassador's servants came to bring everything needed for the ball and the supper, and to make all the arrangements for the orchestra and for lighting the whole house. The major-domo came to make his bow to me while I was at table. I had him sit down, and I thanked him for the fine present he had made me by giving me such a pleasant housekeeper. He was a handsome man, no longer young, honest, witty, and with his trade at his fingertips.

''Which of you two,'' he asked us, ''is the worse fooled?''

''Neither of us,'' said the widow Dubois, ''for we are equally satisfied with each other.''

The first to arrive, about nightfall, was Madame . . . , with her husband. She spoke very politely to my helpmate, without showing the least surprise when I said she was my housekeeper. She said it was my bounden duty to take her to see Madame F., and I had to obey. She received us with every appearance of good will, and she went out for a stroll with us, escorted by Monsieur . . . . After a turn around the garden Madame . . . told me to take her to her nurse.

"But who is your nurse?"

"The caretaker's wife," Monsieur . . . answered; "we will wait for you in Madame's apartment."

"Tell me something," she said on the way. "Your housekeeper certainly sleeps with you."

"No, I swear it. I can love no one but you."

"If that is the case you ought not to keep her, for no one can believe it."

"I do not care, so long as it is not you who believes me to be in love with her."

"I will believe nothing but what you tell me. She is very pretty."

We call on the caretaker's wife, who, addressing her as "daughter," gives her countless caresses; then she goes off to make us a lemonade. Left alone with her, I could do no more than give her fiery kisses, which rivaled hers. She had on only a very light petticoat under a taffeta dress. God, what charms! I am sure that her excellent nurse would not have come back so soon if she could have guessed how much we needed her to delay. But not a bit of it. Never were two glasses so quickly filled with lemonade!

"It was all made, was it?"

"No, Monseigneur; but I am quick."

The innocence of the question and the answer made my beautiful angel burst out laughing. On the way back to Madame F.'s she said that since time was always against us we must wait to seize it until her husband decided to spend three or four days with me. I had already invited him, and he had promised to come.

Madame F. set preserves before us and praised them, especially a quince marmalade which she begged us to taste. We excused ourselves, and Madame . . . trod on my foot. She told me afterward that she was suspected of having poisoned her husband.

The ball was magnificent, as was the supper at two tables, each laid for thirty, in addition to the buffet at which more than a hundred people ate. I danced only one minuet with Madame de Chauvelin, having spent almost the whole night talking with her husband, who was highly intelligent. I presented him with my translation of his short poem on the Seven Deadly Sins,[19] which greatly pleased him. When I promised to visit him in Turin he asked me if I would bring my housekeeper with me, and, on my answering no, he said I was making a mistake. Everyone thought her charming. She was urged to dance, but in vain; she told me afterward that if she had accepted, all the women would have hated her. She danced very well.

Monsieur de Chauvelin left on Tuesday, and at the end of the week I received a letter from Madame d'Urfé telling me she had spent two days at Versailles pursuing the matter in which I was interested. She sent me a copy of the pardon signed by the King in favor of Monsieur . . .'s cousin. She said that the minister had already sent it to his regiment, thus restoring the culprit to the rank he had held before the duel.

Scarcely have I received her letter before I order my horses harnessed to take me to Monsieur de Chavigny with the news. My soul was flooded with joy, and I did not hide it from the Ambassador, who congratulated me in the most flattering terms, for through my intervention Monsieur . . . had obtained, without spending a copper, what he would have paid very dearly for if he had been obliged to buy it. To make the thing appear even more important, I asked the Ambassador to tell the news to Monsieur . . . himself. He instantly sent him a note asking him to come at once.

The Ambassador received him by handing him a copy of the pardon, at the same time saying that he was indebted for it entirely to me. The worthy man, beside himself with contentment, asked me how much he owed me.

"Nothing except your friendship; but if you wish to give me a token of it, come and spend a few days with me, for I am dying of boredom. The thing you asked me to do for you must have been very easy, for you see how quickly you have been satisfied."

"Very easy? I have been working for a year, moving heaven and earth, and not succeeding; and in two weeks you have accomplished everything. My life is at your disposal."

"Embrace me, and come to see me. I consider myself the happiest of mortals when I can oblige such men as you."

"I must be off now to tell my wife, who will jump for joy."

"Yes, go to her," said the Ambassador, "and come to dinner tomorrow with just the four of us."

The Marquis de Chavigny, an old courtier and a man of intelligence, made some reflections on the court of a monarch, where nothing was easy or difficult in itself, for the one was constantly becoming the other. He knew Madame d'Urfé from having courted her when the Regent loved her in secret. It was he who had nicknamed her Égérie[20] because she said she learned everything from a Genius who was with her every night she slept alone. He then talked to me of Monsieur . . . , who must have conceived the greatest friendship for me. He was persuaded that the sure way to reach a woman who had a jealous husband was to conquer the husband, because friendship by its very nature excluded jealousy.

The next day at the dinner for four, Madame . . . , in her husband's presence, showed me a friendliness equal to his, and they promised to come and spend three days with me during the following week.

I saw them arrive one afternoon without having sent me word. When I saw her chambermaid get out of the carriage too, my heart leaped for joy; however, its transports were moderated by two unpleasant announcements: the first, conveyed to me by Monsieur . . . , was that he must return to Soleure on the fourth day; the second, conveyed by Madame . . . , was that Madame F. must constantly be of the company. I at once took them to the apartment which I had chosen for them and which was the most suitable for my plans. It was on the ground floor on the opposite side of the house from mine. The bedroom had an alcove with two beds separated by a partition in which there was a communicating door. It was entered through two anterooms, the door to the first of which gave on the garden. I had the key for all these doors. The chambermaid was to sleep in the room above their bedroom.

Obedient to my goddess's decree, we called on Madame F., who received us very cordially, but who, on the excuse of leaving us free, declined to spend all of the three days in our company. However, she saw fit to yield when I told her that our agreement should be in force only when I was alone. My housekeeper supped in her room without my having had to tell her to do so, and the ladies did not ask about her. After supper I escorted Madame and Monsieur to their apartment, after which I could not avoid escorting Madame F. to hers; but I excused myself from being present at her evening toilet, despite her urging. When I wished her good night she said with a knowing look that after I had behaved so well I deserved to attain what I desired. I made no answer.

The next day toward nightfall I told Madame . . .

that, having all the keys, I could enter her room and her bed at any hour. She replied that she expected to have her husband with her, for he had treated her to the flatteries he always bestowed on her when he had that in mind; but that it could be the next night, for he had never yet wanted to amuse himself two days in succession.

Toward noon we saw Monsieur de Chavigny arrive. A fifth place was quickly laid; but he protested loudly when he learned that my housekeeper was to dine alone in her room. The ladies said he was right, and we all went to make her lay by her needlework. She was the soul of our dinner; she kept us wonderfully entertained with amusing stories about Lady Montagu. When no one was within earshot Madame . . . told me it was impossible that I did not love her. After saying that I would show her otherwise I asked her to confirm her permission for me to spend two hours in her arms.

"No, my dear, for he told me this morning that the moon changes today at noon."

"Then he has to have permission from the moon to discharge his duty to you?"

"Exactly. According to his astrology, it is the way to preserve his health and to have a boy by the will of Heaven, for if Heaven does not take a hand I see no likelihood of it."

I could only laugh and resign myself to waiting for the next day. When we were taking our stroll she said that the sacrifice to the moon had been made, and that to be perfectly safe and free from any fear she would persuade him to make an extra one, after which he would fall asleep. So, she added, I could come an hour after midnight.

Sure that my happiness was imminent, I surrender to the joy which such a certainty inspires in a lover who has long been in a state of desire. It was the only night in which I could hope, for Monsieur . . . had decided to sleep in Soleure the next day; I could not expect a second night which might have been more animated than the first.

After supper I escort the ladies to their apartments, then retire to my room and tell my helpmate to go to bed, since I have much writing to do.

Five minutes before one o'clock I leave my room, and, the night being dark, I grope my way around half the house. I go to open the door of the apartment in which my angel was; but I find it open, and it does not occur to me to ask why. I open the door of the second antechamber, and I feel a grip. The hand she puts over my mouth tells me I must not speak. We let ourselves fall on the wide couch, and I instantly attain the height of my desires. It was the summer solstice. Having but two hours before me, I did not lose a minute; I used them in giving reiterated proofs of the fire which was devouring me to the divine woman I was sure I held in my arms. I thought that her decision not to wait for me in her bed had been supremely farsighted, since the sound of our kisses might have waked her husband. Her furies, which seemed to exceed mine, raised my soul to heaven, and I felt certain that of all my conquests this was the first in which I could rightly take pride.

The clock tells me I must leave; I get up after giving her the sweetest of kisses, and I return to my room, where I surrender to sleep in perfect contentment. I wake at nine o'clock, and I see Monsieur . . . , who with the greatest satisfaction shows me a letter he had just received from his cousin, telling him his good news. He asks me to come and take chocolate in his room, since his wife is still at her toilet. I quickly put on a dressing gown, and, just as I am starting off with Monsieur . . . , in comes Madame F., who thanks me in a tone of great glee and tells me she is going back to her house in Soleure.

"Wait a quarter of an hour, we are to breakfast with Madame . . . ."

"No, I have just wished her good morning, and I am off. Good-by."

"Good-by, Madame."

No sooner has she left than Monsieur . . . asks me if she has gone mad. There was reason to think so, for, having been treated with perfect politeness, she ought at least to have waited until evening and left with Monsieur and Madame.

We went to take breakfast and indulge in commentaries on her sudden departure. Then we set out to stroll in the garden, where we found my housekeeper, whom Monsieur . . . approached. I thought Madame seemed a trifle depressed, so I ask her if she slept well.

"I did not go to sleep until four o'clock, after sitting up waiting for you in vain. What mishap kept you from coming?"

This question, which I could not possibly expect, freezes my blood. I look at her, I do not answer, I cannot shake off my surprise. It leaves me only when I am horror-struck, guessing that the woman I had held in my arms was F. I instantly withdraw behind the hedge to recover from an agitation which no one can rightly conceive. I felt that I was dying. To keep from falling I leaned my head against a tree. The first idea which came to me, but which I instantly dismissed, was that Madame . . . meant to disavow our meeting; any woman who gives herself to a man in a dark place has the right to deny it, and it may be impossible to convict her of lying; but I knew Madame . . . too well to suppose her capable of such perfidy, of a baseness inconceivable to any woman on earth except those veritable monsters who are the horror and shame of the human race. At the same moment I saw that if she had told me she had waited in vain merely to enjoy my surprise, she would have been lacking in delicacy, for in a matter of this sort the slightest doubt is already a degradation. So I saw the truth. F. had supplanted her. How had she managed it? How had she known? It was something to be reasoned out, and reasoning does not follow from an idea which oppresses the mind until the oppression has lost the greater part of its power. So I am left with the horrible certainty that I have spent two hours in the company of a monster from hell, and the thought which kills me is that I cannot deny having felt happy. That is what I cannot forgive myself, for the difference between the one woman and the other was immense and subject to the infallible tribunal of all my senses; however, sight and hearing could not enter in. But that is not enough for me to forgive myself. Touch alone should have sufficed me. I cursed Love, Nature, and my own cowardly weakness in consenting to receive into my house the monster who had dishonored my angel and made me despise myself. At that moment I sentenced myself to death, but fully determined, before I ceased to live, to tear to pieces with my own hands the Megaera[21] who had made me the most wretched of men.

While I am plunged in this Styx[22] Monsieur . . . appears, asking me if I feel ill, and is horrified to see my pallor; he says that his wife had been uneasy over it; I reply that I had left her because of a slight attack of dizziness, and that I already felt well again. We rejoin them. My helpmate gives me *eau des Carmes*[23] and says playfully that what had affected me so strongly was Madame F.'s departure.

When I was again with Madame . . . and at a distance from her husband, who was talking with the widow Dubois, I said that what had troubled me was that what she had said was certainly a joke.

"I was not joking, my dear; so tell me why you did not come last night."

At this answer I thought I should drop dead. I could not bring myself to tell her the reality, and I did not know what I should invent to justify myself for not having gone to her bed as we had agreed. Somber and speechless, I was in this state of irresolution when Dubois's little maid came to give her a letter which Madame F. had sent by express messenger. She opens it and gives me the enclosure, which was addressed to me. I put it in my pocket, saying that I will read it at my convenience, they do not urge me, they laugh. Monsieur . . . says it is love; I let him chatter on, I gain control of myself; dinner is announced, we go; I cannot eat, but it is laid to my indisposition. I could not wait to read the letter, but I had to find the time. After we get up from table I say that I feel better, and I take coffee.

Instead of getting up the usual game of piquet, Madame . . . says that it is cool in the covered walk and we should take advantage of it. I give her my arm, her husband gives his to the widow Dubois, and we go.

As soon as she was certain they could not hear what she had to tell me, she began as follows:

"I am sure you spent the night with that evil woman, and I may, though I don't know how, be compromised. Tell me all, my dear, this is my first intrigue; but if I am to learn from it I must know everything. I am sure that you loved me; alas, do not leave me now to believe that you have become my enemy!"

"Good heavens! I your enemy!"

"Then tell me the whole truth, and above all before you read the letter you have received. I implore you in Love's name to hide nothing from me."

"Here is the whole story in a few words. I enter your apartment at midnight, and in the second anteroom I feel a grip, a hand over my mouth tells me not to speak, I clasp you in my arms, and we fall on the couch together. Do you understand that I must be certain it is you, that I cannot possibly doubt it? So, never saying a word to you, and never hearing you speak to me, I spent the two most delicious hours I have spent in all my life; accursed two hours, the memory of which will make this world hell to me until my last breath. At a quarter past three o'clock I left you. You know all the rest."

"Who can have told the monster that you would come to my room at one o'clock?"

"I have no idea."

"Admit that, among the three of us, I am the most to be pitied and perhaps the only one who is unhappy."

"In God's name never believe that, for I am planning to go and stab her and then kill myself."

"And in the scandal which will follow, to leave me the most unfortunate of all women. Let us be calm. Give me the letter she wrote you. I will read it among the trees, you shall read it afterward. If they saw us reading it we should have to let them read it too."

I give it to her, and return to Monsieur . . . , whom my helpmate was convulsing with laughter. After our dialogue I felt a little more sane. The assurance with which she had insisted on my giving her the monster's letter had pleased me. I was curious about it, yet I felt loath to read it. It could only enrage me, and I feared the effects of a righteous anger.

Madame . . . rejoined us, and after we had separated again she handed me the letter, telling me to read it alone and in a calm frame of mind. She asked me to give her my word of honor that I would do nothing in the matter without first consulting her, sending her word of all my ideas through the caretaker's wife. She said we need not fear that F. would tell what had happened, since she would be the first to publish her own shame, and that our best course was to dissimulate. She made me still more curious to read the letter by saying that the harpy gave me a warning which I must not ignore.

What pierced my soul during my angel's very sensible discourse was her tears, which streamed from her eyes without any distortion of her beautiful face. She tried to moderate my all too visible distress by mingling smiles with her tears; but I saw only too well what was taking place in her noble and generous soul not to understand the pitiable state of her heart from her certainty that the vile F. knew beyond peradventure that there was an illicit understanding between us. It was this which made my despair unbounded.

She left at seven o'clock with her husband, whom I thanked in words so unfeigned that he could not doubt that they sprang from the purest friendship, and really I was not deceiving him. What natural sentiment can prevent a man who loves a woman from feeling the most sincere and affectionate friendship for her husband, if she has one? Many laws only serve to increase prejudices. I embraced him, and when I started to kiss Madame's hand he generously asked me to do her the same honor. I went to my room impatient to read the letter from the harpy who had made me the most wretched of men. Here it is, in a faithful copy, except for a few expressions which I have corrected:

"I left your house, Monsieur, sufficiently content, not because I had spent two hours with you, for you are not different from other men and in any case my whim was only something to amuse me, but because I have avenged myself for the public marks of contempt which you have shown me, for I have forgiven you the private ones. I have avenged myself on your scheming by unmasking your designs and the hypocrisy of your . . . , who in future can no longer look down on me with the show of superiority which she borrowed from her pretended virtue. I have avenged myself by making her wait up for you all last night, as she must have done, and by the comic dialogue between you this morning in which you must have let her know that I had appropriated what was intended for her, and by your no longer being able to believe her a miracle of nature, for if you took me for her I cannot be in any way different from her, and hence you must be cured of the mad passion which possessed you and made you adore her in preference to all other women. If I have opened your eyes you are indebted to me for a good deed; but I dispense you from any gratitude, and I even permit you to hate me, provided your hatred leaves me in peace, for if in future I consider your behavior insulting I am capable of coming out with the whole story, having nothing to fear on my account, for I am a widow, my own mistress, and in a position to laugh at what anyone may say about me. I need no one. Your . . . , on the other hand, is obliged to keep up a front. But here is a warning I give you, to convince you that I am kind.

"Know, Monsieur, that for ten years I have had a slight indisposition which I have never been able to cure. You did enough last night to contract it; I advise you to take remedies at once. I warn you, so that you will be careful not to transmit it to your beauty, who in her ignorance might give it to her husband, and to others, which would make her miserable, and I should be sorry, for she has never harmed me or wronged me. Since I thought it impossible that the two of you would not cuckold the dear man, I came to stay in your house only to convince myself by clear evidence that my conclusion was not unfounded. I carried out my plan without needing anyone's help. After spending two whole nights in vain on the couch which you well know, I resolved to spend a third there too, and it crowned my enterprise with success. No one in the house ever saw me, and my chambermaid herself does not know the purpose of my nocturnal wanderings. Hence it lies with you to bury the episode in silence, and I advise you to do so.

"P.S.—If you need a doctor, impress discretion upon him, for it is known in Soleure that I suffer from this little ailment, and people might say you got it from me. That would be insulting."

The calculated insolence of this letter struck me as so out of all proportion that it almost made me laugh. I knew perfectly well that F. could only hate me, after the way in which I had treated her; but I should never have believed that she could carry her revenge to such lengths. She had given me her disease; I could not yet see the symptoms, but I had no doubt of it; the misery of having to cure it already possessed me. I had to give up my love affair, and even go away to be cured to avoid the gossip of malicious tongues. The prudent decision I reached in two hours of dark meditation was to say nothing, but with the firm determination to have my revenge the moment an opportunity arose.

Having eaten nothing at dinner, I really needed to sup well and get a sound sleep. I sat down at table with my helpmate, whom, in the sorrow of my soul, I never once looked in the face all through supper.

CHAPTER VII

The preceding chapter continued. I leave Soleure.

BUT AS soon as the servants had gone and we were left sitting face to face, the young widow, who was beginning to love me because I made her happy, took it upon herself to make me talk.

"Your sadness," she said, "is not like you, and it frightens me. It might relieve you to confide your concerns to me. I ask it only because you interest me; I might be able to help you. Be sure of my discretion. To encourage you to speak freely and to have some confidence in me, I can tell you everything I now know about you without having made any inquiries or used any of the other means by which an indiscreet curiosity could pry into what it is not for me to know."

"Very well, my dear. Your frankness pleases me; I see that you are my friend, and I am grateful to you for it. So begin by telling me frankly all that you know about the things which are troubling me at this moment."

"Gladly. You and Madame . . . are lovers. Madame F., who was here, and whom you treated very badly, played some spiteful trick on you, which, I think, very nearly resulted in a misunderstanding between you and Madame . . . ; then she left your house with a rudeness which nothing can condone. This upsets you. You fear there will be further consequences; you are painfully aware that you must decide on a course; your heart and your mind are at odds, passion and sentiment war in you. I'm not sure. I am only guessing. What I am sure of is that yesterday you looked happy, and today I feel you are to be pitied, and I feel it because the friendship you have inspired in me could not be greater. I outdid myself today keeping Monsieur . . . amused, I tried my best to entertain him, so that he would leave you free to talk with his wife, who seems to me well worthy to possess your heart."

"All that you have said is true; your friendship is precious to me, and I value your intelligence. Madame F. is a monster who has made me wretched in order to avenge herself for my scorn; and I cannot take any revenge on her. Honor forbids me to tell you more; besides, neither you nor anyone else can possibly give me advice which could lift the burden of my grief from me. I may well die of it, my dear; but meanwhile I beg you to remain my friend and always to talk to me with the same sincerity. I will always listen to you attentively. This is the way in which you can be useful to me, and I shall be grateful to you for it."

I spent a cruel night, which has always been a most unusual thing for a man of my temperament. Righteous anger alone, mother of the desire for revenge, has always sufficed to keep me awake, and sometimes, too, the announcement of a great happiness which I did not expect. Intense satisfaction deprives me of the comfort of sleep, and of appetite as well. Otherwise, even in the greatest anguish of mind, I have always eaten well and slept still better; in consequence, I have always extricated myself from situations to which, but for that, I should have succumbed. I rang for Leduc very early; the little girl came to tell me Leduc was ill and that Madame Dubois would bring me my chocolate.

.She came, and she said I looked like a corpse and that I had done well to forgo my baths. No sooner had I drunk my chocolate than I vomited it up, for the first time in my life. It was my helpmate who had made it for me; otherwise I should have believed that F. had poisoned me. A minute later I vomited all that I had eaten for supper and, with great effort, a bitter, green, viscous phlegm which convinced me that the poison I had vomited had been administered by black rage, which, when it is strong enough, kills the man who denies it the revenge it demands. It was demanding F.'s life, and, but for the chocolate which drove it out, it would have killed me. Exhausted by my efforts, I saw my helpmate crying.

"Why are you crying?"

"I don't know what you may think."

"Be easy, my dear. I think that my condition is gaining me the continuance of your friendship. Leave me, for now I hope to sleep."

And in fact I woke restored to life. I was happy to find that I had slept for seven hours. I ring, my helpmate comes in and tells me that the surgeon from the next village wants to speak with me. She had come in very sad; suddenly I see her become cheerful, I ask her the reason, and she says that she sees me brought back to life. I tell her we will dine after I have heard what the surgeon has to say. He comes in and, after looking all around the room, whispers in my ear that my valet has the pox. I burst out laughing, for I expected something terrible.

"My dear friend, take care of him and spare no expense; I will recompense you generously; but next time don't put such a long face on your confidences. How old are you?"

"Eighty in a few days."

"God preserve you!"

As I feared that I was in the same condition, I felt sorry for my poor Spaniard, who, after all, was having the accursed plague for the first time, whereas I was at something like my twentieth.[1] It is true that I was fourteen years older than he.

My helpmate, coming back to dress me, asks me to tell her what the old fellow had said to make me laugh so hard.

"Gladly; but first tell me if you know the meaning of the word 'pox.'"

"I do. One of Lady Montagu's couriers died of it."

"Excellent; but pretend you don't know. Leduc has it."

"Poor fellow! And is that what made you laugh?"

"It was because the surgeon made such a mystery of it."

After combing my hair she said that she, too, had a great confidence to make to me, after which I must either forgive her or dismiss her on the spot.

"More trouble! What the devil have you done? Out with it!"

"I robbed you."

"What! When? How? Can you give it back? I didn't think you were a thief. I never forgive thieves, or liars either."

"How hasty you are! Yet I am sure you will forgive me, for I robbed you only half an hour ago, and I will restore it to you this minute."

"If it was only half an hour ago, you deserve a plenary indulgence, my dear; now give me back what you have no right to keep."

"Here it is."

"F.'s letter? Have you read it?"

"Of course. That was my theft."

"Then you have stolen my secret, and the theft is of the gravest because you can't restore what you took. O my dear Dubois, you have committed a great crime."

"I know it. Such a theft cannot be made good; but I can assure you that what I took shall remain in me as if I had utterly forgotten it. You must forgive me, quickly, quickly."

"Quickly, quickly! You are a strange creature. Quickly, quickly, then, I forgive you, and I embrace you; but in future refrain not only from reading but even from touching my papers. I have secrets[2] which I am not free to divulge. So forget the horrors you have read."

"Listen, please. Permit me not to forget them, and you may be the gainer. Let us discuss this terrible business. It made my hair stand on end. The monster has dealt your soul a mortal blow and your body another, and the foul creature has got Madame . . .'s honor in her keeping. This, my dear master, I think her greatest crime; for, despite the affront, your love will survive, and the disease the harridan has given you will go away; but Madame . . .'s honor, if the foul creature does what she threatens to do, is lost forever. So do not order me to forget, but on the contrary let us discuss the situation and try to find a remedy. Believe me, I am worthy of your trust and I am sure that before long I shall win all your esteem."

I thought I was dreaming when I heard a young woman of her station in life talk to me more sensibly than Minerva did to Telemachus.[3] It took no more than what she had just said to gain her not only the esteem for which she hoped but my respect as well.

"Yes, my dear friend," I said, "let us consider how to deliver Madame . . . from the danger which threatens her, and I am grateful to you for believing that it is not impossible. Let us think of it and talk of it day and night. Continue to love her, and forgive her for her first misstep, guard her honor, and pity my state; be my true friend, cease to use the odious title of 'master,' and replace it by that of 'friend'; I shall be that to you so long as I live, I swear it. Your wise words have won my heart; come to my arms."

"No, no, there's no need for that; we are young and we could only too easily be led into offending. To be happy I want only your friendship, but I do not want it for nothing. I want to deserve it by convincing proofs which I shall give you of mine. I will go and order dinner served, and I hope you will feel perfectly well after it."

So much discretion astonished me. It might be assumed; for after all to counterfeit it the widow Dubois had only to know its principles; but that was not what troubled me. I foresaw that I should fall in love with her and risk becoming the dupe of her morality, which her self-esteem would never let her abandon even if she fell in love with me in the full sense of the word. So I decided to leave my budding love unfed. Leaving it forever in infancy could not but make it die of boredom. Boredom kills the young. At least such was my hope. I forgot that it is impossible to feel nothing but friendship for a woman whom one thinks pretty, whom one sees constantly, and whom one suspects of being in love. Friendship at its apogee becomes love, and, relieving itself by the same sweet mechanism which love needs to make itself happy, it rejoices to have become stronger after the fond act. This is what befell the fond Anacreon[4] with Smerdis, Cleobulus, and Bathyllus.[5] A Platonist [6] who maintains that one can be merely the friend of a pleasing young woman with whom one lives is a visionary. My housekeeper was too attractive and too intelligent; it was impossible that I should not fall in love with her.

We did not begin to talk until we had eaten a good dinner, for there is nothing more imprudent and dangerous than talking in the presence of servants, who are always malicious or ignorant, who misunderstand, who add and subtract, and who think they are privileged to reveal their masters' secrets without being taken to task for it because they know them without having been entrusted with them.

My helpmate began by asking me if I was sufficiently convinced of Leduc's loyalty.

"He is, my dear, a rascal at times, a great libertine, brave, even daring, quick-witted and ignorant, a brazen liar whom no one but myself can shake. With all his faults the scoundrel has one great good quality—whatever orders I give him he carries out blindly, braving any danger to which his obedience may expose him; he defies not only the cudgel but even the gallows if he sees it only in the distance. When I am traveling and it becomes necessary to know if I can risk fording a river in my carriage, he undresses without a word from me and sounds the bottom swimming."

"That will do. He is all you need. I announce to you, my dear friend—for so you will have me call you—that Madame . . . has nothing more to fear. Do as I tell you, and if Madame F. will not behave herself she will be the only one to be dishonored. But without Leduc we can do nothing. However, we must first learn the whole story of his pox, for there are several things which could thwart my plan. So go at once and find out from him yourself, and above all learn if he has told the servants about his misfortune. After you have learned everything, order him to keep the strictest silence concerning your interest in his illness."

Not racking my brains to guess her plan, I immediately go up to Leduc's quarters. I find him alone and in bed, I sit quietly down beside him and promise to get him cured provided he will tell me, without deviating from truth in anything, every least circumstance of the disease he had caught. He said that on the day he had gone to Soleure to fetch my letters he had dismounted halfway along the road to drink a glass of milk at a dairy where he had found an accommodating peasant girl who in only a quarter of an hour had bestowed on him what he instantly showed me. What was keeping him in bed was a great swelling of one testicle.

"Have you confessed this to anyone?"

"To no one, for I should be laughed at. Only the surgeon knows of my illness; but he doesn't know whom I caught it from. He told me he would rid me of the swelling at once, and that I can wait on you at table tomorrow."

"Very good. Continue to say nothing."

As soon as I repeated all this to my Minerva, she asked me these questions:

"Tell me if Madame F. can really swear that she spent those two hours on the couch with you."

"No, for she neither saw me nor heard me speak."

"Good. Then answer her infamous letter at once, saying that she has lied because you never left your room, and that you are going to make all necessary inquiries in your household to learn who the poor wretch is whom she infected without knowing him. Write, and send her the letter this instant; and in an hour and a half you shall send her a second letter, which I will now write and you shall copy."

"My charming friend, I see your ingenious plan; but I gave Madame . . . my word of honor that I would take no steps in the matter without telling her beforehand."

"Then there's nothing for it but to break your word of honor. It is love which keeps you from going as far as I do; but everything hinges on speed and on the time between the first letter and the second. Do it, my dear friend, and you shall know the rest when you read the letter I am going to write. Write the first one now.''

What made me act was nothing short of an enchantment, which I cherished. Here is a copy of the letter I wrote in the firm persuasion that my helpmate's plan was unparalleled:

''The shamelessness of your letter is as surprising as the three nights you spent convincing yourself that your vile suspicion had a foundation. Know, monster from hell, that I did not leave my room, so you spent the two hours with God alone knows whom; but I may find out, and I will inform you. Give thanks to Heaven that I did not unseal your infamous letter until Monsieur and Madame . . . had gone. I received it in their presence, but scorning the hand which had written it I put it in my pocket, and neither of them asked about it. If they had read it I would certainly have pursued you and killed you with my own hands, woman unworthy of life. I am perfectly well, but I have no intention of convincing you of it to prove that it was not I who enjoyed your carcass.''

After showing it to the widow Dubois, who approved of it, I sent it to the wretch who had made me wretched. An hour and a half later I sent her this one, which I simply copied without adding a word to it:

''A quarter of an hour after I wrote to you the surgeon came to tell me that my valet needed his services because of a discharge he had recently contracted and symptoms which showed that he had absorbed the venomous poison of the pox. I ordered him to take care of him; and later I went alone to see the patient, who, not without some reluctance, confessed to me that it was from you he had received the fine gift. He told me that, having seen you enter Madame . . .'s apartment alone and in the dark after he put me to bed, he became curious to see what you were doing there, for if you had wished to call on the lady herself, who at that hour must be in bed, you would not have gone in by the door onto the garden. After waiting an hour to see if you would come out, he decided to go in too when he saw that you had left the door ajar. He swore to me that he did not go in with any idea of enjoying your charms, which I had no difficulty in believing, but to see if it was not some other man on whom that good fortune was being bestowed. He assured me that he nearly shouted for help when you seized him, putting one hand over his mouth, but that he changed his mind when he found himself pulled down on the couch and covered with kisses. He said that, feeling certain that you took him for someone else, he had done his duty by you for two hours on end in a manner which should have earned him a very different reward from the one you gave him, whose dismal symptoms he saw the next day. He left you, still without having spoken, at the first ray of dawn, fearing he would be recognized. Nothing could be easier than that you should have taken him for me, and I congratulate you on having enjoyed in imagination a pleasure which, being what you are, you would certainly never have obtained in reality. I warn you that the poor fellow is determined to pay you a visit, and that I cannot stop him; so be gentle with him, for he might tell the story, and you must realize the consequences of that. He will himself acquaint you with his demands, and I advise you to grant them.''

I sent it to her, and an hour later I received her answer to the first letter, which, having contained only ten or twelve lines, was not long. She said that my scheme was ingenious, but that it would get me nothing, since she was sure of the facts. She defied me to visit her within a few days to convince her that the state of my health was different from hers.

At supper my helpmate told me stories meant to cheer me up, but I was too gloomy to respond to them. We were now to take the third step which was to crown our work and drive the shameless F. to the wall; and since I had written the two letters in obedience to her instructions, I saw that I must obey her to the end. It was she who told me what orders I was to give Leduc when I summoned him to my room in the morning. She wanted to have the satisfaction of hiding in the alcove behind the curtains so that she could herself hear me tell him what to do.

So, having summoned him, I asked him if he was fit to ride to Soleure on an errand which was of the utmost importance to me.

"Yes, Monsieur; but the surgeon insists that I begin taking baths tomorrow."

"So you may. You will leave at once for Madame F.'s in Soleure, you will not have yourself announced as coming from me because she must not know that I have sent you to her. Say that you need to speak with her. If she will not receive you, wait in the street; but I think she will receive you, and even without witnesses. You will tell her that she has given you the pox without your asking her for it, and that you insist on her giving you the money you need to regain your health. You will tell her that she kept you at work for two hours in the dark without recognizing you, and that but for the nasty present she gave you, you would never have spoken; but that, finding yourself in the state which you will show her, she should not blame you for having come to her. If she resists, threaten to take her to court. That is all. You will come back without losing a minute to tell me what she answers you."

"But if she has me thrown out of the window, I shan't be back very soon."

"You need have no fear of that; I give you my word for it."

"It is a strange errand."

"You are the only person in the world who can carry it off."

"I am ready; but there are a few questions I need to ask. Has the lady really got the pox?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry for her. But how am I to tell her she gave it to me when I've never talked with her?"

"Talking isn't the way it's given, you nincompoop. You spent two hours with her in the dark and without talking; she will learn that she gave it to you when she thought she was giving it to someone else."

"Now I begin to see it. But if we were in the dark, how can I know it was she I was with?"

"You saw her go in; but you can be sure she will not ask you any questions."

"I will be off at once. I'm more curious than you are to hear what she'll answer me. But here is something else I need to know. She may try to haggle over the money she is to give me for a cure; and in that case please tell me if I shall be content with a hundred écus."

"That's too much in Switzerland; fifty are enough."

"It's not much for two hours' work."

"I'll give you another fifty."

"That sounds more like it; I am off, and I think I understand everything. I won't say so, but I'll wager it's you to whom she gave the present, that you are ashamed of it and want to deny it."

"Possibly. Keep your mouth shut and go."

"Do you know, my friend, that he is a clown in a thousand?" said my helpmate, coming out of the alcove. "I almost burst out laughing when he told you he wouldn't be back soon if she had him thrown out of the window. I am sure he will do the thing marvelously well, and by the time he gets to Soleure she will already have sent off her answer to the second letter. I'm very curious to see it."

"You are the author of this farce, my dear; it is sublime, plotted in masterly fashion. One would not attribute it to a young woman with no experience in intrigues."

"Yet it is my first, and I hope it will succeed."

"If only she doesn't challenge me to show her that I am well."

"But you feel well so far, I think."

"Very well."

"It would be a good joke, if it weren't true that she must at least have the whites."[7]

"In that case I should have no fears for my health; but what would happen to Leduc? I cannot wait to see the end of the play, for the peace of my mind."

"You shall write it, and send it to Madame . . . ."

"There's no doubt of that. You understand I must say I am the author; but I will not cheat you out of the reward your work deserves."

"The reward I want is for you to have no more secrets from me."

"That's odd. How can you be so interested in my concerns? I cannot see you as naturally curious."

"That is an ugly fault. You will only make me curious when I see that you are sad. Your considerate behavior toward me is the reason I am fond of you."

"I am really touched, my dear. In future I promise I will confide to you anything that can keep you from being uneasy."

"Oh, how happy I shall be!"

An hour after Leduc left, a man arrived on foot and gave me a letter from F. and a package, saying that he was to wait for the answer. I told him to wait outside. My helpmate being present, I asked her to read the letter and myself went to the window. My heart was pounding. She called me when she had read it and said that all was well. Here is the letter:

"Whether all that you tell me is true or is an invention of your scheming mind—of which, unfortunately for you, all Europe is informed—I accept as true what I cannot deny has the appearance of truth. I am in despair that I have harmed an innocent person, and I willingly pay the penalty. I beg you to give him the twenty-five louis which I send you; but will you be generous enough to use all your authority as his master to bind him to the strictest silence? I hope so, for, knowing me as you do, you must fear my vengeance. Consider that if the story of this farce comes out I can easily put it in a light which will cause you distress and open the eyes of the honest man whom you are deceiving; for I will never let it drop. As it is my wish that we do not meet again, I have found an excuse to visit my relatives in Lucerne tomorrow. Write me if you receive this letter."

"I am sorry," I said to my helpmate, "that I made Leduc go, for she is a violent woman and something regrettable may happen."

"Nothing will happen. Send back her money at once. She will give it to him in person, and your revenge will be complete. She can have no more doubts. You will know all when he comes back in two or three hours. Everything has gone perfectly, and the honor of the charming and noble woman whom you love is completely safe. You have now only the unpleasant certainty that you bear the wretched creature's disease in your blood; but I think it is no great matter and can easily be cured, for persistent whites cannot be called the pox, and indeed it is not often, as I learned in London, that the whites are transmitted. We can also be very glad that she leaves tomorrow for Lucerne. Laugh, my dear friend, I beg you, for our play is still a comedy."

"Alas, it is a tragedy. I know the human heart; Madame . . . can no longer love me."

"It is true that some change—but this is not the time to think of that. Quick, answer her in a few lines and send her back the twenty-five louis."

Here is my brief answer:

"Your base suspicion, your horrible plan for revenge, and the shameless letter you wrote me are the reasons for your present repentance. Our messengers crossed, and it is not my fault. I send back your twenty-five louis. I could not stop Leduc from going to see you; but you can easily appease him. I wish you a good journey, and I promise to avoid any chance of seeing you. Learn, wicked woman, that the world is not entirely peopled by monsters who set traps for the honor of those who hold honor dear. If at Lucerne you see the Papal Nuncio,[8] mention me to him and you will learn what opinion Europe holds of my mind. I can assure you that my valet has told no one the story of his present indisposition, and that he will continue not to tell it if you have received him well. Good-by, Madame."

After having the widow Dubois read my letter, of which she approved, I sent it off with the money.

"The play is not yet over; we still have three scenes: the Spaniard's return, the appearance of your painful symptoms, and Madame . . .'s astonishment when she learns the whole story."

But two hours pass, then three and four, then the whole day, and Leduc does not appear, and I am thrown into real anxiety, although the widow Dubois, never yielding an inch, kept saying he could only be so late because he had not found F. at home. There are characters incapable of foreseeing disaster. Such was I until the age of thirty when I was imprisoned under the Leads. Now that I am entering my dotage everything I foresee is black. I see it in a wedding to which I am invited, and at the coronation[9] of Leopold II, I said: *Nolo coronari* ("I do not want to be crowned"). Accursed old age, fit to inhabit hell, where others have already placed it: *tristisque senectus* ("wretched old age").[10]

At half past nine, by the light of the moon, my helpmate saw Leduc riding up at a walk. I had no candle, she stationed herself in the alcove. He came in, saying that he was dying of hunger.

"I waited for her," he said, "until half past six, and, when she saw me at the foot of the stairs, she said she had nothing to say to me. I replied that it was I who had something to say to her, and she stopped to read a letter which I saw was in your handwriting, and she put a package in her pocket. I followed her into her room, where, finding no one present, I told her she had given me the pox and that I asked her to pay the doctor for me. I was getting ready to show her proof, but, looking away, she asked me if I had been waiting for her long; and when I replied that I had been in her courtyard from eleven o'clock, she went out, and, having learned from the servant whom it seems she sent here the hour at which he had got back, she returned and, closing the door, gave me this package, saying that I would find twenty-five louis in it to cure me if I was sick and adding that if I loved my life I must refrain from talking to anyone at all on the subject. I left, and here I am. Is the package mine?"

"Yes. Go to bed."

My helpmate then came out in triumph, and we embraced. The next morning I saw the first symptom of my wretched disease; but three or four days later I saw that it amounted to very little. A week later, after taking only *eau de nitre,*[11] I was entirely rid of it—quite unlike Leduc, who was in a very bad state.

I spent the whole morning of the next day writing to Madame . . . , telling her in great detail all that I had done despite the promise I had made her. I sent her copies of all the letters, and everything necessary to prove to her that F. had left for Lucerne convinced that her revenge had been entirely imaginary. I ended my twelve-page letter by confessing that I had just found I was ill but assuring her that in two or three weeks I should be completely well. I gave my letter to the caretaker's wife with the greatest secrecy, and on the next day but one I received eight or ten lines from her telling me that I would see her during the week with her husband and Monsieur de Chavigny.

Alas for me! I had to renounce any idea of love; but the widow Dubois, my only companion, who, Leduc being ill, spent every hour of the day with me, was beginning to preoccupy me too greatly. The more I abstained from attempting anything, the more I fell in love with her, and it was in vain I told myself that by dint of seeing her constantly and letting nothing come of it I should at last become indifferent to her. I had presented her with a ring, saying that I would give her a hundred louis for it if she ever wanted to sell it, and she assured me that she would not dream of selling it until she was in need after I had dismissed her. The idea of dismissing her seemed nonsense. She was unspoiled, sincere, amusing, with a natural intelligence which enabled her to reason in the soundest manner. She had never loved, and she had married an old man only to please Lady Montagu.

She wrote to no one but her mother, and I read her letters to please her. Having asked her one day to show me the replies, I could not help laughing when she said she did not answer her because she had never learned to write.

"I thought she was dead," she said, "when I came back from England, and it made me very happy when I reached Lausanne and found her in perfect health."

"Who escorted you?"

"No one."

"It is unbelievable. Young, with the figure you have, well dressed, thrown in the company of so many different kinds of people, young men, libertines, for they are everywhere—how were you able to defend yourself?"

"Defend myself? I never needed to. The great secret is never to look at anyone, to pretend not to hear, not to answer, and to lodge alone in a room, or with the hostess when one happens on a decent inn."

She had not had an adventure in all her life, she had never strayed from her duty. She had never had the misfortune—so she put it—to fall in love. She kept me amused from morning to night without a sign of prudery, and we often addressed each other as *"tu."* She talked to me admiringly of Madame . . .'s charms, and she listened with the utmost interest when I recounted my vicissitudes in love, and when I came to certain descriptions and she saw that I was concealing some too piquant circumstances, she urged me to tell her everything plainly with a charm so potent that I had to satisfy her. When my overfaithful descriptions were too much for her, she burst out laughing, got up, and after putting her hand over my mouth to keep me from going on, she ran away to her room, where she locked herself in to prevent me, she said, from coming to ask her for what at those moments she was only too desirous of granting me; but she did not tell me all this till we were in Bern. Our great friendship had reached its most dangerous period just when F. tainted me.

After supper on the day preceding the one on which Monsieur de Chavigny unexpectedly came to dine at my house with Madame . . . and her husband,[12] my helpmate asked me if I had been in love in Holland. I thereupon told her what had happened to me with Esther; but when I came to my examining her *labia minora* to find the little mark which she alone knew, my charming housekeeper ran to me to stop my mouth, shaking with laughter and falling into my arms. At that I could not refrain from searching her so-and-so for some mark, and in her spasms of laughter she could offer me very little resistance. Not being able to proceed to the great conclusion because of my health, I begged her to help me to a crisis which had become a necessity for me, at the same time doing her the same sweet service. It lasted scarcely a minute, and our curious eyes took their amorous but inactive share in it. After it was over she said, laughing but at the same time serious:

"My dear friend, we love each other, and if we are not careful we shall not long confine ourselves to mere trifling."

So saying, she rose, gave a sigh, and after wishing me good night went off to sleep with the little girl. It was the first time that we let our senses carry us away. I went to bed knowing that I was in love and foreseeing all that was bound to happen to me with this young woman, who had already gained a very strong hold on my heart.

We were pleasantly surprised the next morning to see Monsieur de Chavigny with Monsieur and Madame . . . . We strolled until dinnertime, then sat down at table with my dear Dubois, by whom I thought my two male guests were enchanted. Strolling after dinner, they never left her side; and for my part I had all the time I needed to repeat to Madame . . . the whole story I had written her, though I did not tell her it was Dubois who deserved the credit, for it would have mortified her to learn that her weakness was known to her.

Madame . . . told me that she had taken the greatest pleasure in reading the whole account simply because F. could no longer believe she had spent the two hours with me.

"But how," she asked, "were you able to spend two hours in that woman's company without knowing, even despite the dark, that it was not I? I am humiliated that the difference between her and me had no effect on you. She is shorter than I am, much thinner, and what amazes me is that her breath is foul. Yet you were deprived only of sight, and everything escaped you. It is unbelievable."

"I was intoxicated with love, my dear; then, too, the eyes of my soul saw only you."

"I understand the power of imagination, but imagination should have lost all its power in the absence of one thing which you knew beforehand you would find in me."

"You are right; it is your beautiful bosom, and when I think today that all I had in my hands was two flabby bladders I want to kill myself."

"You were aware of it, and it did not disgust you?"

"Sure that I was in your arms, how could I find anything in you disgusting? Even the roughness of the skin and the too commodious retiring room did not have the power to make me doubt or to lessen my ardor."

"What are you saying! Loathsome woman! Foul, stinking sewer! I cannot get over it. Could you forgive all that in me?"

"Since I believed I was with you, everything could not but seem divine."

"Not at all. Finding me such, you should have thrown me on the floor, even beaten me."

"Ah, my love! How unjust you are now!"

"That may well be, my dear, I am so angry with the monster that I do not know what I am saying. But now that she has given herself to a servant, and after the mortifying visit she could not refuse, she must be dying of shame and anger. What amazes me is her believing him, for he is four inches shorter than you; and can she really believe that a valet could do the thing as you must have done it to her? I am sure that she is in love with him even now. Twenty-five louis! It's obvious. He would have been satisfied with ten. How lucky that the fellow was so conveniently ill! But did you have to tell him everything?"

"How can you think so! I let him suppose she had arranged to meet me in the anteroom and that I really spent two hours with her. Reasoning from what I ordered him to do, he saw that, in my disgust at knowing I was infected, and being in a position to deny the whole thing, I had hit on a plan which would punish her, avenge me, and keep her from ever boasting that she had possessed me."

"It's a delightful comedy. The fellow's impudence is astonishing and his boldness even more so, for F. could have lied about being ill, and then you see what a risk he took."

"It occurred to me, and it gave me some qualms, for I was perfectly well."

"But now you are under treatment, and I am the cause of it. I am in despair."

"My illness, my angel, is trifling. It is a discharge resembling the one called the whites. I drink nothing but *eau de nitre;* I shall be well in a week or ten days, and I hope—"

"Ah, my dear!"

"What?"

"Let us think of it no more, I implore you."

"That is a revulsion which may be very natural when love is not strong. Alas for me!"

"No—I love you, and you would be unjust if you ceased to love me. Let us be fond friends and no longer think of giving each other proofs of it which might be fatal to us."

"Accursed and infamous F.!"

"She has gone, and in two weeks we, too, will leave for Basel, where we shall remain until the end of November."

"The die is cast, and I see that I must submit to your decision, or rather, to my destiny, for everything that has happened to me since I came to Switzerland has been disastrous. What consoles me is that I have been able to save your honor."

"You have won my husband's esteem, we shall always be true friends."

"If you must leave I see that I had better leave before you. That will make the horrible F. even more convinced that our friendship was not illicit."

"You think like an angel, and convince me more and more that you love me. Where will you go?"

"To Italy, but first I shall stop in Bern and then in Geneva."

"So you will not come to Basel, and I am glad, because people would talk. But, if you can, look happy during the few days you are to be here, for sadness does not become you."

We rejoined the Ambassador and Monsieur . . . , whom the widow Dubois's talk had not left time to think of us. I reproached her for being so chary of her wit when she was with me, and Monsieur de Chavigny told us he thought we were in love; whereupon she took him up, and I continued to walk with Madame . . . .

"That woman," she said, "is a masterpiece. Tell me the truth, and before you leave I will show you my gratitude in a way which will please you."

"What do you wish to know?"

"You love her and she loves you."

"I think so, but until now—"

"I do not want to know more, for if it is not yet done it will be done, and that comes to the same thing. If you had told me you did not love each other I should not have believed you, because it is impossible for a man of your age to live with such a woman and not love her. Extremely pretty, very intelligent, gay, with a ready tongue—she has everything to enchant, and I am sure you will find it hard to part from her. Lebel has done her a bad turn, for her reputation was excellent; but now she will not find employment with decent people."

"I shall take her to Bern with me."

"An excellent idea."

Just as they were leaving I said that I would come to Soleure to bid them good-by, since I had decided to leave for Bern in a few days. Reduced to giving up all thought of Madame . . . , I went to bed without supping, and my helpmate felt she should respect my grief.

Two or three days later I received a note from Madame . . . telling me to come to her house at ten the next day and ask to stay for dinner. I obeyed her exactly. Monsieur . . . said he would be delighted, but that he had to go to the country and could not be sure he would be back until one o'clock. He added that if I wished I could keep his wife company until he returned, and as she was at her embroidery frame with a girl I accepted on condition that she would not let me interrupt her work.

But toward noon the girl went away, and, left alone, we went to enjoy the fresh air on a terrace adjoining the house where there was an arbor from which, sitting at the back of it, we could see all the carriages that entered the street.

"Why," I instantly said, "did you not procure me this happiness when I was in perfect health?"

"Because then my husband believed you had only played the waiter for my sake and that I must dislike you; but your behavior has made him perfectly easy, to say nothing of your housekeeper, with whom he believes you are in love and whom he loves so much himself that I think he would gladly change places with you for a few days at least. Would you consent to the exchange?"

Having only an hour before me, and it no doubt the last in which I could convince her of the constancy of my love, I threw myself at her feet, and she put no obstacles in the way of my desires, which to my great regret had to be held in check, never going beyond the limits prescribed by the consideration I owed her blooming health. In what she allowed me to do, her greatest pleasure must certainly have consisted in convincing me how wrong I had been to be happy with F.

We ran to the other end of the arbor and into the open when we saw Monsieur . . .'s carriage enter the street. It was there that the worthy man found us, excusing himself for having been gone so long.

At table he talked to me almost constantly about the widow Dubois, and he did not seem satisfied until I told him I intended to take her to her mother's arms in Lausanne. I bade them farewell at five o'clock in order to call on Monsieur de Chavigny, to whom I told the whole story of my cruel adventure. I should have thought it a crime not to tell the lovable old man the whole of the charming comedy which he had done so much to set in motion.

Admiring the widow Dubois's quick intelligence—for I concealed nothing from him—he assured me that, old as he was, he would consider himself happy if he could have such a woman with him. He was very much pleased when I confided to him that I was in love with her. He said that without going from house to house I could take my leave of all the good society in Soleure by attending his evening assembly, not even staying for supper if I did not want to get home too late; and that is what I did. I saw my beauty, expecting that in all probability it would be for the last time; but I was mistaken. I saw her ten years later; and in the proper place my reader shall learn where, how, and on what occasion. I accompanied the Ambassador to his room, thanking him as he deserved and asking him for a letter to Bern, where I planned to spend some two weeks, and at the same time I asked him to send me his major-domo so that I could settle our accounts. He promised to have him bring me a letter for Monsieur de Muralt,[13] Avoyer of Thun.

Back at my lodging and sad at my imminent departure from a city where I had enjoyed only trifling gains in comparison with the real losses I had suffered there, I quietly thanked my helpmate for her kindness in waiting up for me, and I bade her good night, informing her that we would leave for Bern in three days and asking her to pack my trunks.

"Then you are taking me with you?" she said.

"Yes—that is, if you are interested enough in me to be glad you are coming."

"I am very glad; and the more so because I see that you are sad and in a way ill, whereas you were healthy and very gay when I entered your service. If I had to leave you I think the only thing that would make up to me for it would be to see you happy."

Just then the old surgeon came to tell me that Leduc was so ill that he could not get out of bed.

"I will have him treated at Bern. Tell him we shall leave day after tomorrow in time to dine there."

"Though it is only seven leagues he cannot make the journey, for he has lost the use of all his limbs."

I go to see him, and, as the surgeon had said, I find him unable to move. He had the use of nothing but his lips to speak and his eyes to see.

"Otherwise I feel perfectly well," he said.

"I believe you; but I want to dine at Bern tomorrow, and you cannot move."

"Have me carried, and find someone to cure me there."

"Very well; I will have you carried in a litter on two poles."

I ordered a manservant to look after him and to arrange everything necessary to get him to Bern at the "Falcon" inn,[14] hiring the two horses needed to carry the litter.

At noon I saw Lebel, who gave me the letter to Monsieur de Muralt which the Ambassador had written for me. He presented his account already receipted, and I paid him with the greatest pleasure, having found him honest in everything. I had him dine with me and the widow Dubois, and I was glad I had done so, for he amused us greatly. She held his attention from the beginning to the end of dinner; he told me that it was only now that he could say he had become acquainted with her, for at Lausanne he had spoken with her only two or three times, and formally. Getting up from table, he asked me to allow him to write to her, and it was she who gave him no time to retract and held him to his promise.

Lebel was a pleasant man, not yet fifty, and with a thoroughly honest face. When he left he embraced her in the French fashion, without asking my permission, and she submitted with good grace.

She said after he left that since his acquaintance could only be useful to her she was delighted that they were to correspond.

We spent the next day getting everything ready for our short journey. I saw Leduc set off in the litter to spend the night four leagues from Soleure. The next day at four o'clock in the morning, after liberally tipping the caretaker's family, the cook, and the lackey I was leaving behind, I set off in my carriage with my dear helpmate, and at eleven o'clock I arrived in Bern, putting up at the "Falcon," where Leduc had arrived two hours before me. After coming to an agreement with the host—for I knew very well what sort of men Swiss innkeepers were—I ordered the manservant I had kept, and who was from Bern, to take good care of Leduc and put him in the hands of the best-known doctor for the pox in the city. After dining with my helpmate in her room--for I had a room of my own—I delivered my letter to Monsieur de Muralt's porter, then went for a walk wherever chance should direct me.

CHAPTER VIII

Bern. La Matte. Madame de la Saône. Sara. My departure. Arrival at Basel.

ARRIVED AT a high point in the city from which I saw the wide countryside and a small river,[1] I went down at least a hundred steps and stopped upon seeing thirty or forty cabins which could only be booths for people wanting to take baths.[2] An honest-looking man asked me if I wished to bathe, and I having answered that I did he opened a cabin, and any quantity of bath girls came running up to me. The man said that each of them hoped for the honor of attending me in the bath, and that I was free to choose the one I wanted. He said that a petit écu would pay for the bath, the girl, and my breakfast as well. Like the Grand Turk, I throw my handkerchief to the one who most attracts me, and I go in.

She fastens the door inside, she changes my shoes for slippers, and, frowning and never looking me in the face, she puts a cotton cap on my front hair and my pigtail, and she undresses me: when she sees I am in the bath she undresses too and gets in, without asking my leave; and she begins rubbing me everywhere except on the place which, seeing that I kept my hand over it, she guessed I did not want her to touch. When I felt I had been rubbed enough I ask her for coffee. She gets out of the bath, rings, and opens the door. Then she gets back into the bath, as free in her movements as if she had been dressed.

A minute later an old woman brings us coffee, then leaves, and my bath girl gets out again to fasten the door, then returns to where she was.

I had already seen, though without letting my eyes linger on her, that the girl had all the beauties which an ardent lover imagines the object of his passion to possess. True enough, I felt that her hands were not soft, so contact might well prove her skin not to be so either, nor did I see on her face the look of distinction which we term nobility, or the smile with which good breeding prophesies sweetness, or the subtle glances which suggest things unspoken, or the pleasing expressions of reserve, respect, timidity, and modesty. Except for all that, my Swiss girl at the age of eighteen had everything to delight a man who was in good health and no enemy to nature; nevertheless she did not tempt me.

"What is this?" I said to myself. "The girl is beautiful, her eyes are large, her teeth white, the rose of her complexion bespeaks her good health, and she affects me not at all? I see her stark naked, and she does not arouse the slightest emotion in me? Why? It can only be because she has nothing of what coquetry borrows to inspire love. It follows that we love the false and the artificial, and the true no longer seduces us unless it is heralded by a vain show. If in our acquired habit of going clothed and not stark naked the face which one shows to everyone is what matters least, why should we make the face the most important thing of all? Why is it what makes us fall in love? Why do we decide upon its sole testimony if a woman is beautiful or not, and why are we even able to forgive her if the parts she does not show us are the very opposite of what her pretty face has led us to assume? Would it not be more natural and reasonable, would it not be better, to go always with the face covered and the rest stark naked, and fall in love with an object in that way, asking nothing else to crown our flame but a countenance corresponding to the charms which would already have made us fall in love? It would certainly be better, for then we would fall in love only with perfect beauty, and we could easily forgive it when, the mask removed, we found an ugly face where we had imagined a beautiful one. It would follow that only ugly women could never resolve to uncover their faces, and that the only ones who would consent would be the beauties; but the ugly ones at least would not make us sigh for fruition; they would grant us everything to avoid being forced to unmask, and they would only bring themselves to that when, by the enjoyment of their real charms, they had convinced us that we could easily do without the beauty of a face. Besides, it is obvious and indisputable that inconstancy in love exists only because of the diversity of faces. If faces were not seen, a man would always remain the constant lover of the first woman who had pleased him.''

Getting out of the bath, I handed her the towels, and when I was sufficiently dried I sat down and she put on my shirt, then, just as she was, dressed my hair. Meanwhile I put on my nether garments, and, after buckling my shoes, she dressed in a minute, the air having already dried her. As I left I gave her a petit écu and then six francs for herself; but she returns them with a scornful look and leaves. This gesture sent me back to my inn mortified, for she was not a girl to be slighted, and she thought I had slighted her.

After supper I could not refrain from telling my helpmate the whole story, to which she listened with great attention, adding her own commentary. She said she certainly was not pretty, for I could not have resisted the desires she would have inspired in me, and that she would very much like to see her. I offered to take her there, and she said she would enjoy it, but that she would have to dress as a man. So saying, she rises, and a quarter of an hour later I see her before me, wearing a well-fitting coat of Leduc's but without breeches, for she had not been able to put them on. I told her to take her choice among mine; and we put off the expedition until the next morning.

At six o'clock I saw her before me completely dressed and with a blue redingote which disguised her perfectly. I dressed quickly and, not bothering to eat breakfast, we went to La Matte. This is the name of the place. Animated by her pleasure in the outing, my good housekeeper was radiant. It was impossible that anyone should see her and not know that her clothing was not that of her sex, so she kept herself as closely wrapped in her redingote as she could.

We had scarcely got down the steps when the same man appears and asks us if we want a bath for four, and we enter the cabin. The girls appear, I show my helpmate the pretty one who had not seduced me, and she takes her; I take another, tall and well built and with a proud look, and we lock the door. I quickly let my girl put a cap over my hair, I undress and get into the bath, and my new attendant does likewise. My helpmate was taking her time; the newness of the thing astonished her, she seemed to regret having undertaken it, she laughed to see me there in the hands of the big Swiss girl, who was rubbing me all over, and she could not bring herself to take off her shift; but finally one shame prevailed over the other, and she got into the bath, as if only the force of circumstances had compelled her to show me all her beauties; but she had to let me wait on her, though without excusing the other girl from coming in and doing her duty.

The two girls, who had more than once taken part in similar diversions, prepared to entertain us with a spectacle which I knew very well but which was completely new to my helpmate. They began doing to each other the same thing they saw me doing with the widow Dubois. She watched them, in great astonishment at the fury with which the girl I had taken played the man's role to the other. I was somewhat surprised myself, despite the furies which M. M. and C. C. had displayed before my eyes six years earlier, and than which it was impossible to imagine anything finer. I should never have believed that anything could distract me when I was for the first time holding in my arms a woman I loved and who possessed to perfection everything which could engage my senses; but the strange combat in which the two young Maenads were embroiled occupied her too. She told me that the supposed girl I had taken was a boy despite her bosom, and that she had just seen it. I turn, and the girl herself, seeing my interest, displays a clitoris, but enormous and stiff. I tell my amazed helpmate what it is, she replies that it cannot possibly be that, I make her touch and examine it, and she has to give in. It looked like a thick, nailless finger, but it was flexible; the wench, who coveted my beautiful housekeeper, told her that it was stiff enough for her to put it into her if she would permit, but she refused, and it would not have amused me. We told her to continue her endeavors with her friend, and we laughed a great deal, for the congress of the two young girls, though comic, yet excited us to the height of voluptuousness. It was too much for my helpmate, she surrendered completely to nature, even anticipating me in all that I could desire. It was a celebration which continued for two hours and which sent us back to our inn thoroughly satisfied. I gave the girls, who had entertained us very well, two louis; but not with any intention of going back there. We had no need of that to go on exchanging proofs of our love. My helpmate became my mistress, and a perfect mistress she was, making me completely happy, even as I made her, during all the time I spent in Bern. Since I was already completely cured, no unfortunate consequences marred our mutual satisfaction. If pleasures are transitory, so too are pains, and when, in a season of enjoyment, we remember the pains which preceded it, we love them, *et haec aliquando meminisse juvabit* (''and one day it will be pleasant to remember even these things'').[3]

At ten o'clock the Avoyer of Thun was announced. Dressed in black and in the French fashion, grave, gentle, mannerly, and well on in years, he pleased me. He was one of the wise heads in the government. He insisted on reading me the letter Monsieur de Chavigny had written him; I said that if it had been unsealed I would not have delivered it. He invited me to dinner the next day in mixed company and to a stag supper on the day after. I left with him, and we went to the library,[4] where I met Monsieur Felix,[5] an unfrocked monk, who was rather facile than erudite, and a promising young scholar named Schmid,[6] already well known in the republic of letters. A man learned in natural history[7] who had the names of ten thousand different shells by heart bored me because I knew nothing of his science. Among other things he told me that the Aar, the famous river of the canton, had gold in its sands; I said that all large rivers had it, and he seemed not to agree with me.

I dined at Monsieur de Muralt's with the four or five Bernese women who enjoyed the highest reputation, and I thought they deserved it, especially a Madame de Sacconay,[8] who was most agreeable and very well educated. I would have paid court to her if I had stayed longer in the capital of Switzerland—if Switzerland could have a capital.

The Bernese ladies dress well, though not elaborately, since luxury is forbidden by law; their manner is easy, and they speak excellent French.[9] They enjoy the greatest freedom, and they do not abuse it, despite the gallantry which is the life of social occasions, for decency is everywhere observed. I noticed that husbands are not jealous there, but they insist that their wives shall always be at home by nine o'clock for family supper. During the three weeks[10] I spent in the city a woman eighty-five years of age interested me by her knowledge of chemistry. She had been the intimate friend of the famous Boerhaave.[11] She showed me a sheet of gold which he had made in her presence and which before being transmuted was copper. She assured me that he possessed the stone,[12] but she said it had the power to prolong life only a few years beyond a century. According to her, Boerhaave had not known how to use it. He had died of a cancer between the heart and the lungs before reaching the perfect maturity which Hippocrates[13] sets at the age of seventy. The four millions which he left his daughter showed that he possessed the art of making gold. She said he had given her a manuscript which contained the whole process, but that she found it obscure.

"Publish it."

"God forfend!"

"Then burn it."

"I haven't the heart."

About six o'clock Monsieur de Muralt came to take me to see some military maneuvers which the citizens of Bern, all of whom are soldiers, were performing outside the city. I asked him the meaning of a bear[14] at the gate, and he said that in German Bern meant "bear," and so it was the symbol of the canton, which was second[15] in rank though the largest if not the richest. It was a peninsula formed by the Aar, whose source was near that of the Rhine.[16] He talked to me about the power of his canton, its lordships and bailiwicks, and he explained what an Avoyer was; then he launched into political institutions, describing the different systems of government which made up the Helvetian body politic.

"I can well understand," I said, "that since the cantons number thirteen, each of them can have a different government."

"There is even a canton," he said, "which has four."[17]

But what I greatly enjoyed was the supper with fourteen or fifteen men, all of them senators. No high spirits, no frivolous talk, no literature; but civil law, the interests of the State, commerce, economy, speculation, love of country, and the duty to value liberty above life. But toward the end of supper all these rigid aristocrats began to expand, *sollicitam explicuere frontem* ("to smooth the care-wrinkled brow"),[18] an inevitable effect of drink. They pitied me. They praised sobriety, but they thought I carried mine too far. However, they did not force me to drink, as the Russians and the Swedes do, and often the Poles.

At midnight the gathering broke up. It was an unheard-of hour in Switzerland. They thanked me and sincerely asked me to count on their friendship. One of them who, before he had become tipsy, had condemned the Republic of Venice for banishing the Grisons[19] became sufficiently enlightened by wine to ask me to excuse him. He said that every government could not but understand its own interests better than all the foreigners who criticized what it did.

Entering my room, I found my helpmate in my bed; I was delighted. I gave her countless caresses which must have convinced her of my affection and my gratitude. Why should we restrain ourselves? We were bound to consider ourselves husband and wife, and I could not foresee that the day would come on which we would part. When people love each other, that seems impossible.

I received a letter from Madame d'Urfé, asking me to offer my services to Madame de la Saône,[20] the wife of a Lieutenant-General of her acquaintance, who had left for Bern in the hope of curing a skin disease which disfigured her. The lady had already arrived with strong recommendations to all the leading families in the city. She gave a supper every day, having an excellent cook, and invited only men. She had announced that she would return no one's visits. I went at once to make my bow to her; but what a sad sight!

I see a woman dressed with the utmost elegance, who, when I appear, rises from the sofa on which she was voluptuously seated and, after dropping me a pretty curtsy, resumes her place, asking me to sit down beside her. She sees my surprise and confusion; but, pretending to notice nothing, she treats me to the usual amiabilities. This is how she looked:

She was very well dressed, and her hands and her arms, which she displayed to just above the elbow, could not be more beautiful. Under a transparent fichu one saw a white, youthful bosom down to its rosy buds. Her face was frightful; it aroused pity only after it had inspired horror. It was a blackish crust, as dreadful as it was disgusting—a hundred thousand pimples making up a mask which extended from the top of her neck to the top of her forehead and from ear to ear. Her nose was invisible. In short, all that one saw of her face was two fine eyes and a lipless mouth which she kept half open to show two incomparable rows of teeth and to talk in a delightful style seasoned with witticisms and jests in the best taste. She could not laugh, for the pain caused by the contraction of the muscles would have made her cry; but she seemed content to see her listeners laugh.

Despite her pitiful condition her mind was vivacious and well furnished, her bearing and her manners those of the Parisian nobility. She was thirty[21] years of age, and she had left three young and very pretty children behind in Paris. Her house was in the Rue Neuve des Petits-Champs,[22] and her husband was a very handsome man; he adored her and had never left her bed. All the soldiers in the world could not have had his courage; but he must certainly have refrained from kissing her, for the mere thought of it made one shudder. An overflow of milk had reduced her to this appalling condition after her first childbed [23] ten years earlier. The Paris Faculty[24] had labored in vain to rid her face of the monstrous infection, and she had come to Bern to put herself in the hands of a famous doctor who had undertaken to cure her and whom she was not to pay until he had kept his promise. This is the language of all empirical physicians, and it has no meaning except what the guilelessness of the patient gives it. Sometimes they cure him; but even if they do not, they manage to make him pay by the simple process of proving to him that if he was not cured it was his own fault.

But at the height of my conversation with her, in comes the doctor. She had begun taking his remedy. It was drops he compounded from a preparation of mercury. She told him that the itching which tormented her and which forced her to scratch seemed to have grown worse; he said that she would not be rid of it until the end of the cure, which would take three months.

"As long as I scratch," she replied, "I shall be in the same state, and the cure will be endless."

He beat about the bush. I left, and she invited me to supper every day. I went that evening, and I saw her eat everything with appetite and drink good wine. The doctor had forbidden her nothing. I foresaw—and I was right—that she would never be cured. She was in high spirits, and her talk kept the whole company amused. I understood very well that one could become accustomed to seeing her and not feel repelled. When I told my helpmate the whole story she said that despite her ugliness the lady might make men fall in love with her by her character, and I could only admit it.

Three or four days after this supper a handsome youth of eighteen or twenty, in a bookseller's shop to which I had gone to read the gazette, politely told me that Madame de la Saône was sorry not to have had the pleasure of seeing me again since I had supped with her.

"So you know the lady?

"Did you not see me at supper there?"

"Yes, now I recall you."

"I keep her supplied with books, for I am a bookseller, I sup there every evening, and what is more I breakfast alone with her every morning before she gets out of bed."

"I congratulate you. I would wager that you are in love with her."

"You mean that for a jest. The lady is more worthy of love than you suppose."

"I am not jesting. I agree with you; even so, I would wager you would not be brave enough to enjoy her final favors if she offered them to you."

"You would lose."

"Very well, let us wager; but how will you convince me?"

"Let us wager a louis; but be discreet. Come to supper there this evening. I will tell you something."

"You shall see me there, and the wager stands."

When I told my helpmate of my wager she became very curious to know what the upshot would be and how the young man would go about convincing me, and she begged me to tell her after he had done so. I promised her I would.

That evening Madame de la Saône reproached me most politely, and I found her supper as pleasant as the one before. The young man was present; but since Madame never once addressed him no one paid any attention to him.

After supper he saw me to the "Falcon," and on the way he told me I had only to say the word and I could see him in amorous combat with the lady if I would go there at eight o'clock the next morning.

"Her chambermaid," he said, "will tell you that she is receiving no one; but she will not stop you from going into the anteroom when you say you will wait. The anteroom has a door, glazed to the top from half way up, through which one would see the lady in bed if a curtain over the glass on the inside did not prevent it. I will draw the curtain back, leaving a small space uncovered, so that you will see everything. When I have done my business I will leave; she will ring, and then you can have yourself announced. At noon, if you will allow me, I will come to the 'Falcon' with books for you, and if your conscience tells you that you have lost the wager, you shall pay me."

I said I would not fail to be there, and I ordered the books he was to bring me.

Curious to see a feat so extraordinary—though I did not consider it impossible—I go at the appointed hour, the lady is not receiving, but the chambermaid makes no objection to my waiting until she is up. I enter the anteroom, I see the small piece of uncurtained glass, I put my eye to it, and I see the indiscreet young man at the side of the bed, holding his conquest in his arms. A bonnet covered her head so that no part of her lamentable face could be seen.

As soon as the hero became aware that I was where I could see him he did not keep me waiting. He rose and exposed to my sight not only his beauty's treasures but his own. Short, but of gigantic proportions where the lady wanted it, he seemed to be displaying the fact to arouse my jealousy and humiliate me, and perhaps to conquer me too. As for his victim, he showed her to me in front view, back view, and every possible profile in five or six different postures, which he employed with herculean vigor in the act of love, the disfigured woman responding with all her strength. I saw a body than which Phidias[25] could not have carved one more beautiful and a whiteness more perfect than that of the finest marble from Paros.[26] I was so excited by them that I fled. I went to the "Falcon," where, if my helpmate had not hastened to give me the palliative which I needed, I should instantly have had to go to La Matte for it. After I told her the whole story she became even more curious to make the acquaintance of its hero.

He came at noon, bringing the books I had ordered, for which I paid him, giving him an extra louis, which he took with a laugh and a look which said that I should be very glad to have paid the wager. He was right. After looking at him with great attention, my helpmate asked him if he knew her, and he said no.

"I saw you as a child," she said; "you are the son of Monsieur Mingard,[27] the minister of the Gospel. You must have been about ten years old when I saw you in Lausanne."

"It is possible, Madame."

"So you did not want to become a minister?"

"No, Madame. I felt too strongly drawn to love to choose that profession."

"You were right, for ministers must be discreet, and discretion is a hindrance."

At this thrust, which my housekeeper launched at him in pure high spirits, the poor fool blushed, but we did not let him lose heart. I asked him to dine with us, and though he never mentioned Madame de la Saône, he told us not only many of his own successes in love but also all the amorous adventures which gossip ascribed to the ladies of Bern or slander invented for them.

After he left, my helpmate, who had come to the same conclusion as myself, said that a young man of his character was worth seeing only once. I saw to it that he did not call on us again. I was later told that Madame de la Saône sent him to Paris and made him rich. I shall say no more of him or of the lady, to whose house I did not go again, except once to bid her good-by when I left Bern.

I lived happily with my dear mistress, who kept telling me that she was happy. No fear, no concern for the future troubled her fair soul; she was sure, as I was, that we would never part, and she constantly told me that she would forgive me all my infidelities provided I never failed to confess them to her frankly. She had the character I needed in a woman to live at peace and content; but I was not born to enjoy so great a happiness.

After two or three weeks of our stay in Bern my helpmate received a letter from Soleure. It was from Lebel. Having seen her read it carefully, I asked her what news it contained. At that she tells me to read it, and sits down in front of me to see into my soul.

The major-domo, wasting no words, asked her if she would become his wife. He said that he had put off proposing it to her until he had set his affairs in order and made sure that he could marry her even if the Ambassador should refuse his permission. He said that he had enough to live well on in B. without having to remain in service, but that he would not have needed to take these precautions since he had just talked with the Ambassador and had received his full consent. So he asked her to answer him at once, telling him, first, if she accepted him and, second, if she would prefer going to live with him in B., where she would be absolute mistress in her own house, or would rather remain in Soleure at the Ambassador's as his wife, which could only increase their capital. He ended by saying that whatever she brought him would be hers, and that he would guarantee the whole of it to her, up to a hundred thousand francs. That would be the amount of her dowry. He did not say a word about me.

"It is for you, my dear, to do whatever you wish; but I cannot imagine your leaving me and not making me the unhappiest of men."

"And I shall be the unhappiest of women the instant I am not with you, for, provided you love me, I do not care at all if you make me your wife."

"Very good. So what will you answer him?"

"You shall see my letter tomorrow. I will tell him politely but frankly that I am in love with you and happy, and, since that is the case, I cannot possibly accept the excellent match which Fortune offers me in him. I will even say that if I were wise I see I could not refuse his hand, but that, being madly in love, I can only obey the God of Love."

"I think your letter is excellently put, for to refuse such an offer you can have no other valid reason than the one you give him; besides, it would be absurd to try to make anyone believe we are not in love with each other, for it is only too obviously true. Nevertheless, my angel, his letter saddens me."

"But why, my dear friend?"

"Because I haven't a hundred thousand francs ready to give you this instant."

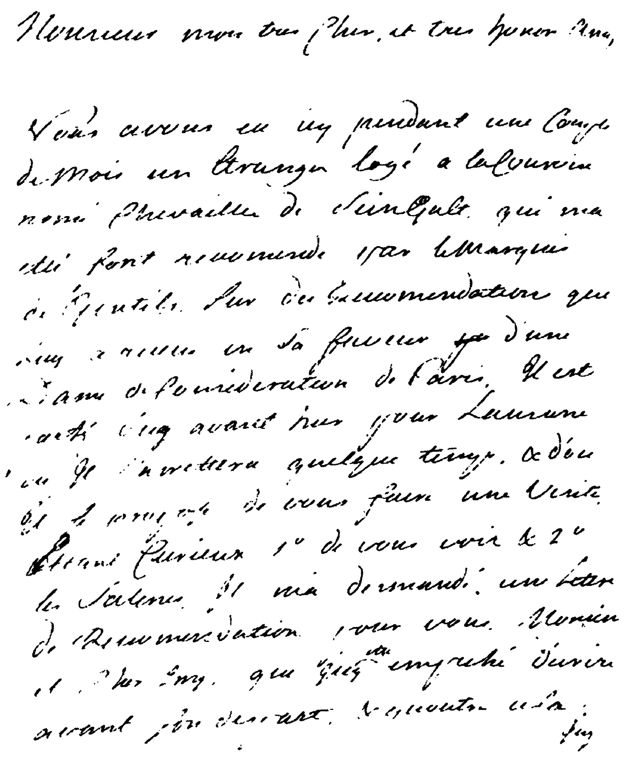
"Oh, my friend! I care nothing for that. You are certainly not a man to become poor; but even if you did, I feel that you would make me happy by sharing your poverty with me."

At this point we exchanged the usual tokens of love which happy lovers give each other in such situations, but in the effusion of our feeling a tinge of sorrow darkened our souls. Languishing love seems to double in strength, but this is not true. Love is a little wanton which wants to be fed on smiles and play; a different diet sends it into a consumption.

The next day she wrote to Lebel as she had instantly decided to do upon receiving the too serious news; and at the same time I thought it my part to write Monsieur de Chavigny a letter into which love, sentiment, and philosophy entered in equal measure. I asked him to give me his best advice on the matter, not hiding it from him that I was in love but that, being at the same time a man of honor, I found it as painful to resolve to tear out my own heart as to raise an obstacle to the widow Dubois's permanent happiness.

My letter pleased her greatly, for she would be glad to know what the Ambassador thought about the matter. Having received letters of introduction for Lausanne—from Madame d'Urfé to the Marquis Gentil de Langallerie,[28] and from the Baron de Bavois,[29] then colonel and proprietor of the Bala Regiment, to his uncle and aunt—I decided to spend two weeks there. My helpmate was delighted at the prospect. When one loves, one believes that the object of one's love is worthy of it, and that everyone must be jealous of the happiness he sees in another.

A Monsieur de M. F.,[30] a member of the Council of Two Hundred,[31] whom I had met at one of Madame de la Saône's suppers, had become my friend. He having come to see me, I had introduced my helpmate to him, he treated her as if she were my wife, he had introduced his own wife to her on the promenade, and he had come to supper with us, bringing her and their elder daughter, whose name was Sara,[32] who was thirteen years old, dark and decidedly pretty, and who, having a very keen mind, made us laugh with guileless remarks of whose effect she was perfectly conscious. In short, her great art lay entirely in making people believe she was ingenuous, and her father and mother really believed she was.



Monsieur mon tres Cher, et tres honoré Ami,

Vous avez eu icy pendant une Couple
de Mois un Etranger logé a la Couronne
nommé Chevallier de Seingalt qui m'a
été fort recommandé par le Marquis
de Gentils. Sur cette Recommendation que
j'ay receue en sa faveur d'une
Dame de Consideration de Paris, Il est
parti d'icy avant hier pour Lausanne
où Il s'arretera quelque temps. & dont
il a le projet de vous faire une Visite
Etant Curieux 1° de vous voir & 2°
les Salines. Il m'a demandé une Lettre
de Recommendation pour vous. Monsieur
et Cher Amy, que j'ay empeché d'écrire
avant son depart. [illegible]
j'ay

Holograph of a Letter from Bernard de Muralt
to Albrecht von Haller

The girl had announced that she was in love with my helpmate; she lavished all sorts of caresses on her; she often came to us in the morning asking for breakfast, and when she found us in bed she called my helpmate her wife, and made her laugh by putting her hand under the covers, tickling her, and saying, with kisses, that she was her little husband and she wanted to give her a child. My helpmate laughed.

One morning, joining in the laughter, I said that she made me jealous, that I thought she was really a little man, and that I wanted to see if I was wrong. So saying, I lay hold of her; and the sly minx, protesting that I was wrong but offering very little resistance, left my hand perfectly free to convince me that she was a little girl. I then let her go, aware that she had trapped me, for such an investigation on my part was exactly what she wanted, and my helpmate told me so; but as I did not care one way or the other I did not believe her.

The next time, coming in just as I was getting up, and still pretending to be in love with my helpmate, she said that, since I had assured myself she was not a man, I could not object to her lying down in my place. My helpmate, who was in the mood for a laugh, tells her it is an excellent idea, and little Sara, jumping for joy, takes off her dress, unlaces her petticoat, and springs on top of her. At this point the spectacle began to interest me. I went and locked the door. My helpmate letting her do as she wished, the little jade, who was stark naked and who had uncovered all the other's beauties, took so many positions to accomplish her purpose that I began to feel a desire to show her how the thing was done. She looked on with rapt attention until the end, evincing great surprise.

"Do it to her again," she said.

"I can't," I replied, "for, as you see, I am dead."

Pretending innocence, she undertakes to bring me back to life, and she succeeds; whereupon my helpmate told her that since the credit for having revived me was hers, it was for her to do what would make me die again. She said she was very willing, but that she didn't have room enough to lodge me, and, so saying, she took a position which showed me she was speaking the truth and that it would not be her fault if I could not do it to her.

Assuming in my turn the innocent and serious air of a man who is willing to grant a favor, I contented the minx, who showed no sign from which we could swear she had not done the thing before. No exhibition of pain, no blood to indicate a rupture; but I had sufficient reason to assure my helpmate that Sara had never known another man.

Her expressions of gratitude made us laugh, together with her adjurations to say nothing to Mamma or Papa, for they would scold her just as they had scolded her the year before when she had got her ears pierced without their permission.

Sara knew that we were not taken in by her feigned naïveté, but she pretended not to know it in order to gain her ends. Then who had taught her the art? No one. Natural intelligence, less rare in childhood than in youth, but always rare. Her mother said that her naïveté was the dawning of intelligence, but her father took it for stupidity. If she had been stupid, our laughter would have disconcerted her and she would not have gone on. I never saw her so happy as when her father deplored her stupidity; she pretended to be astonished, and, to repair one deliberate blunder, she came out with a worse one. She plied us in turn with questions to which, since we could not answer them, we were reduced to replying only with laughter, for they always arose from the most logical reasoning. Sara could have pursued the argument and proved to us that the stupidity was on our side, but that would have betrayed her duplicity.

Lebel did not answer the widow Dubois, but the Ambassador wrote me a four-page letter in which, like the wise man he was, he showed me that if I were as old as he, and also in a position to make my housekeeper happy after my death, I should never let her go, especially since she was of the same mind as I, but that being young, and not intending to marry her, I should not only consent to a marriage which would undoubtedly make her happy but do my best to persuade her to enter into it, and the more so because, with the experience I had, I must foresee that I would one day repent of having let the present opportunity escape, for, in his view, it was impossible that, with the lapse of time, my love would not become pure friendship; in which case he left me to see for myself that, when I should need new loves, the widow Dubois, as merely my friend, could not but restrict my freedom and hence condemn me to repentance, which always makes a man unhappy. As if for form's sake he said that when Lebel had told him of his plan, far from withholding his consent he had encouraged him, for my housekeeper, in the four or five times he had seen her, had completely gained his good will, hence he would be very glad to see her so well situated in his house, where, without in the least offending against propriety, he could enjoy the charms of her intelligence without having any designs on those others of which, at his age, he could not think. He ended his eloquent letter by saying that Lebel had not fallen in love with Madame Dubois like a young man but after due reflection and that hence he would not hurry her. She would learn this from the answer he was now writing her. A marriage should never be entered into except composedly.

My helpmate, after reading his letter attentively, handed it back to me with an air of indifference.

"So what do you think now, my dear?"

"That I should do as the Ambassador says. If he considers that we need be in no hurry, that is all we want. So let us think no more of it and love each other. His letter is wisdom itself; yet I must tell you I cannot imagine our becoming indifferent to each other, though I know it can happen.''

''Not indifferent, you are wrong there.''

''I mean good friends.''

''But friendship, my dear, is never indifferent. All that is true is that love may cease to play any part. We know that, because it has been so ever since the human race has existed. So the Ambassador is right. Repentance may come to torture our souls when we no longer love each other. So let us get married tomorrow, and thus punish the vices of human nature.''

''We will get married too, but by the same token let us not be in a hurry.''

My helpmate received Lebel's letter on the next day but one. She thought it as reasonable as the Ambassador's; but we had already decided to give the matter no more thought. We resolved to leave Bern for Lausanne, where the people to whom I had letters of introduction were expecting me, and which offered much more in the way of amusements than Bern.

In bed and in each other's arms, my helpmate and I made an arrangement which we agreed was very promising and very wise. Lausanne was a small city, where she was sure I would be made much of and where for at least two weeks I would have only time to pay calls and attend the dinners and suppers which would be given for me every day. All the nobility knew her, and the Duke of Roxburghe,[33] who had been in love with her, was still there. Her appearance with me would be the daily gossip of every gathering, which in the end would be extremely annoying to us both. In addition, there was her mother, who would certainly not find fault with her but who in her heart would not be too happy to see her serving as housekeeper to a man whose mistress common sense alone would show everyone she must be.

After all these reflections we decided that she would go to her mother's at Lausanne by herself, and that two or three days later I would go to stay there, also alone, for as long as I pleased, though of course I could see her every day at her mother's. As soon as I left Lausanne and arrived in Geneva she would join me, and from there we would travel together wherever I wished so long as we loved each other.

It was on the next day but one after we made this arrangement that she set out, in fairly good spirits, for, being sure of my constancy, she was congratulating herself on doing a very wise thing; but she left me sad. Farewell visits occupied me for two days; and since I wanted to make the acquaintance of the celebrated Haller[34] before I left Switzerland, Monsieur de Muralt, the Avoyer, gave me a letter for him, to my great satisfaction. He was Bailiff of Roche.[35]

When I went to take leave of Madame de la Saône I found her in bed and was obliged to spend a quarter of an hour alone with her. Talking, as was to be expected, of nothing but her ailment, she brought the conversation around to the point where morality and propriety allowed her to show me that the sacred fire[36] which disfigured her face respected her entire body. I was no longer in such admiration of Mingard's bravery, for she would have found me prepared to do as much to her. Nothing could possibly be prettier, and it was easy to look only there. Exhibiting herself so readily, the poor woman avenged herself for the wrong nature did her by making her face hideous, and at the same time her sense of politeness may have made her think it her duty thus to reward a man well-bred enough to summon the strength to converse with her. I am sure that if she had had a pretty face she would have been very chary of all the rest of herself.

On the last day I dined at M. F.'s, where the charming Sara took me to task for having sent my "wife" off ahead of me. We shall see how I met her again in London three years later.

Leduc was still taking the cure and very weak; but I insisted on his leaving with me, for I had a great deal of luggage and I could trust no one else.

It was thus that I departed from Bern, which left so happy an impression on my memory that I am cheered every time I recollect it.

Having to consult the physician Herrenschwandt[37] on behalf of Madame d'Urfé, I stopped at Murten where he lived. He kept me for dinner to convince me of the excellence of the fish from the lake there; but on returning to the inn[38] I decided to spend the night because of a curiosity which my reader will kindly forgive me.

Dr. Herrenschwandt, after accepting two bright louis for his consultation on the tapeworm, putting it in writing for me, invited me to take a walk with him along the highroad to Avenches[39] as far as a chapel filled with bones of the dead.

"The bones," he told me, "are those of a party of Burgundians whom the Swiss killed in the famous battle." [40]

I read the Latin inscription, I laugh, and then I tell him in all seriousness that since it contained an insulting jest it became farcical and that the gravity of an inscription did not permit a wise nation to set those who read it laughing. The Swiss doctor would not agree. Here is the inscription: *Deo. Opt. Max. Caroli inclyti, et fortissimi Burgundiae ducis exercitus Muratum obsidens, ab Helvetiis caesus, hoc sui monumentum reliquit anno 1476* ("To All-Good and Omnipotent God. The army of the famous and most valiant Charles, Duke of Burgundy, which, besieging Murten, was massacred by the Swiss, left this monument to itself in the year 1476").[41]

My notion of Murten until that moment was exalted. Its fame for seven centuries, three great sieges[42] sustained and repulsed—I expected to see something, and I saw nothing.

"Murten, I take it," said I to the physician, "must have been razed, destroyed, for—"

"Not at all, it is just what it has always been."

The man who wishes to be well informed will be wise to read, and then to travel to correct what he has learned. To know wrongly is worse than to know nothing. Montaigne[43] says that one must know rightly. But now for my adventure at the inn.

A girl in the household who spoke Romansh[44] struck me as something very much out of the ordinary, she looked like the stocking-seller[45] I had had in Little Poland; she made a great impression on me. Her name was Raton. I offer her six francs for her favors; but she refuses, saying that she is a decent girl. I order horses put to my carriage. When she sees me ready to leave she says, in a manner at once smiling and shy, that she needs two louis, and that if I will give them to her and not leave until the next day she will come and spend the night in my bed.

"I will stay, but remember to be kind."

"You will be satisfied."

When everyone had gone to bed she came with a trace of perturbation which was just the thing to increase my ardor. Having a call of nature, I ask her where the place is, and she points it out to me at the edge of the lake. I take the candle, go there, and, doing my business, read the nonsense which one always sees in such places, to right and left. Here is what I read to my right: "August 10, 1760. A week ago Raton gave me a ropy clap which is killing me."

I do not suppose there are two Ratons; I thank God, I am tempted to believe in miracles. I return to my room in seeming good humor, and I find Raton already in bed. So much the better. Thanking her for having taken off her shift, which she had thrown between the bed and the wall, I pick it up, and she takes fright. She tells me it is soiled by something perfectly natural; but I see how the case really stands. I reproach her, she does not answer, she dresses, weeping, and makes off.

Thus did I escape. But for a call of nature and the scribbled "to whom it may concern," I should have been doomed, for I would never have thought of examining a girl whose complexion was all lilies and roses.

The next day I went to Roche, to make the acquaintance of the celebrated Haller.

CHAPTER IX

Monsieur Haller. My stay in Lausanne. Lord Roxburghe. Mademoiselle de Sacconay. Dissertation on beauty. A girl theologian.

I SAW a stout man six feet tall, with a fine face, who, after reading Monsieur de Muralt's letter, did me all the honors of his house and opened his precious store of knowledge in the sciences to me, answering my questions accurately and above all with a modesty which could not but strike me as exaggerated, for even as he taught me he did his best to seem a schoolboy; by the same token, when he asked me scientific questions I found in them all that I needed in order not to answer them wrongly. He was a great physiologist, a doctor, an anatomist who, like Morgagni,[1] whom he called his master, had made new discoveries in the microcosm. During the time I stayed in his house he showed me a great many letters from him and from Pontedera,[2] who was professor of botany in the same university, for Haller was also a very learned botanist. Hearing me speak of these great men, whose milk I had sucked,[3] he mildly complained of Pontedera, whose letters were almost indecipherable,[4] besides being composed in very obscure Latin. A member of the Berlin Academy wrote him that the King of Prussia, after reading his letter, had given up the idea of suppressing the Latin language entirely. "A sovereign," Haller wrote him in his letter, "who should succeed in proscribing the tongue of Cicero and Horace from the republic of letters would raise an imperishable monument to his own ignorance. If men of letters should have a common language in which to communicate their knowledge to one another, the most suitable of all the dead languages is certainly Latin, for the reigns of Greek and Arabic have ended."

Haller was a great Pindaric[5] poet and a competent statesman who deserved well of his country; he told me that the only way to give precepts was to prove their validity by example. Being a good citizen, he could not fail to be an excellent husband and father; and such I saw that he was. He had a wife whom he had married some time after losing his first[6] and whose beautiful countenance testified to her sound intelligence, and a pretty daughter[7] eighteen years of age, who scarcely spoke at table except sometimes in low tones to a young man who was seated beside her. After dinner, when I was alone with my host, I asked him who the young man was whom I had seen seated beside his daughter.

"He is her tutor."

"Such a tutor and such a pupil might well fall in love with each other."

"Yes, please God."

This Socratic answer showed me the stupid impertinence of my remark. I open an octavo volume of his works[8] and I read: *Ultrum memoria post mortem dubito* ("I doubt if memory subsists after death").

"Then you do not believe," I said, "that the memory is an essential part of the soul?"

The philosopher was forced to tergiversate, for he had reasons not to render his orthodoxy open to doubt. At table I asked him if Monsieur de Voltaire often came to visit him. He smiled and repeated these lines from the great poet of reason: *Vetabo qui Cereris sacrum vulgarit arcanae sub iisdem sit trabibus* ("I will deny my roof to him who has revealed the rites of mystic Ceres").[9] After this answer I did not again mention religion to him during the three days I spent in his house. When I told him that I was eagerly looking forward to making the acquaintance of the famous Voltaire he replied without a trace of bitterness that I was justified in wanting to make his acquaintance but that a number of people had found him, despite the law of physics, "greater at a distance than nearby." *

I found Monsieur Haller's table very well supplied, but himself very abstemious. He drank only water and at dessert a small glass of liqueur drowned in a large glass of water. He talked to me at length of Boerhaave, whose favorite pupil [11] he had been. He said that, after Hippocrates, Boerhaave had been the greatest of all physicians and a greater chemist than Hippocrates and than all those who had existed after him.

"Then why did he not reach a ripe age?"

"Because *contra vim mortis nullum est medicamen in hortis* ('against the power of death there is no medicine in herb gardens');[12] but if Boerhaave had not been a born doctor he would have died before the age of fourteen from a malignant ulcer which no doctor could cure. He cured it by rubbing himself with his own urine in which he dissolved common salt."

"Madame[13] told me that he had the philosopher's stone." [14]

"So it is said, but I do not believe it."

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* *De loin c'est quelque chose, et de près ce n'est rien* (La Fontaine).[10] (C.'s note.)

"Do you think it is possible to make the stone?"

"I have been working for thirty years to show that it is impossible, and I cannot convince myself of it. One cannot be a good chemist and not admit that the Great Work is a possibility within the laws of physics."

When I took my leave he asked me to write him my opinion of the great Voltaire, and this was the beginning of our correspondence in French. I have twenty-two letters[15] from him, the last of them dated six months before he, too, died prematurely.[16] The older I grow, the more I regret my papers. They are the real treasure which attaches me to life and makes me hate death.

At Bern I had read J. J. Rousseau's *Hêloïse*,[17] and I wanted to hear what Monsieur Haller would say about it. He told me that the little he had read of the novel, to satisfy his friend, had been enough for him to judge the whole work.

"It is," he said, "the worst of all novels because it is the most eloquent. You will see the Pays de Vaud.[18] It is beautiful country, but do not expect to see the originals of the brilliant portrayals Rousseau paints for you. Rousseau believed that it is permissible to lie in a novel. Your Petrarch[19] did not lie. I have his Latin works, which no one reads any more because his Latinity is awkward, but their neglect is unjustified. Petrarch was a man of learning, and no impostor in his love of his noble Laura,[20] whom he loved just as any other man loves a woman with whom he is enamored. If Laura had not made Petrarch happy, he would not have sung her praises."

It was thus that Monsieur Haller talked to me of Petrarch, dismissing the subject of Rousseau, even whose eloquence he disliked because he made it brilliant only by the use of antithesis and paradox. The stout Swiss was a learned man of the highest order, but in the most unostentatious way possible, showing it neither in the bosom of his family nor when he was with people who can find entertainment without recourse to scientific discussions. He accommodated himself to whatever company he was in, he was pleasant, and he offended no one. But what did he have to make everyone like him? I do not know. It is easier to say what he did not have than what he had. He did not have any of the faults to which wits, as they are called, and men of learning are prone.

His virtues were austere, but he took care not to display their austerity. He certainly despised the ignorant who, instead of remaining within the limits which their intellectual poverty prescribes, rattle on about everything under the sun and even try to turn the laugh against those who know something; but his contempt for them was never shown. He knew too well that ignorance scorned turns to hatred; and he did not want to be hated. Monsieur Haller was a learned man who did not leave his intelligence to be guessed at, for he showed it, but who did not want to take advantage of the reputation he enjoyed; he spoke well, he said things worth hearing without preventing anyone in the company from doing likewise. He never talked of his works, and when someone mentioned them to him he changed the subject; and when he was of a different opinion he contradicted his opponent only with reluctance.

No sooner had I reached Lausanne than, thinking I could preserve my incognito, I naturally gave the preference to my heart. I went to see the widow Dubois, without having to ask anyone where she lived, so well had she described for me the streets through which I had to pass to reach her house. I found her with her mother; but my surprise was extreme when I saw Lebel. She did not leave me time to show it. After giving a cry she sprang into my arms, and her mother welcomed me as politeness prescribed. I asked Lebel how the Ambassador was and how long he had been in Lausanne.

Assuming a cordial tone, the worthy man replied that the Ambassador was very well and that he himself had arrived in Lausanne that morning on business and, coming to see Madame Dubois's mother after dining, he had been very much surprised to find her daughter here.

"You know," he said to me, "what my intentions are; I must leave tomorrow; and when you have made up your mind, if you will write to me I will come for her and take her to Soleure, where I will marry her."

To this no less clear than honorable avowal I replied that I would never oppose the will of my dear helpmate; and she on her side said that she would never make up her mind to leave me until I dismissed her. Finding our answers too vague, he frankly told me that he must have a definite and final answer, whereupon, intending to reject his proposal in its entirety, I said I would write to him fully in ten or twelve days. He left for Soleure the next morning.

After he was gone my dear one's mother, whose native shrewdness served her for intelligence, talked sense to us in the style our state of mind compelled her to use, for, in love as we were, we could not resolve to part. Meanwhile, I settled it with my helpmate that she would wait for me every day until midnight, and that we would come to a decision, as I had promised Lebel we would do. She had her own room and a very comfortable bed, and she gave me a good enough supper. In the morning we were very much in love and not at all inclined to think about Lebel's proposal. However, we had a little discussion.

My reader may remember that my helpmate had promised to forgive me all my infidelities on condition that I would confess them to her frankly. I had none to confess, but at supper I told her the story of Raton.

"We must both consider ourselves very fortunate," she said, "because if you hadn't by chance needed to go to the place where you found the salutary warning, you would have lost your health, and since the disease would not have declared itself at once, you would have infected me with it."

"It is possible, and I should be in despair."

"I know that; and all the sadder because I would not complain of it."

"I see only one way to avoid such a misfortune. When I have been unfaithful to you I will punish myself by abstaining from giving you proofs of my love."

"That would be to punish *me*. If you really loved me you would find a better remedy, I think."

"What remedy?"

"Not being unfaithful to me."

"You are right. Please forgive me, and I will use it in future."

"I think you will find it hard."

The author of such dialogues is Love; but Love gains nothing by composing them.

The next morning at my inn, when I had dressed and was preparing to take my letters to the persons to whom they were addressed, I saw the Baron de Bercher, uncle of my friend Bavois.[21]

"I know," he said, "that my nephew owes his good fortune to you, that he is esteemed, that he will be made a general at the next promotion, and my whole family will be most happy, as I am, to make your acquaintance. I come to offer you my services, and I invite you to dine at my house today and after that to come there when you have nothing better to do; but at the same time I beg you to say nothing to anyone about the reprehensible step he took in becoming a Catholic, for it is a thing which, in the view of this country, is dishonorable to him, and the dishonor is of a kind which reflects on all his relatives."

I promised never to mention this episode in his life when I talked of him, and to go and eat family dinner with him at once. All the persons to whom I had letters impressed me as respectable, well-bred, most polite, and very talented. I thought Madame Gentil de Langallerie the most attractive among the ladies; but I did not have time to pay more particular court to one than to another. Dinners, suppers, and balls every day, at all of which politeness demanded my attendance, were a restraint on me almost beyond endurance. I spent two weeks in that small city, where I was never free precisely because all its inhabitants make a great point of enjoying freedom. I could not go to spend the night with my helpmate except once; I could not wait to be off with her to Geneva, where everyone wanted to give me letters to Monsieur de Voltaire; who nevertheless, I was told, was detested there because of his caustic turn of mind.

"What, Mesdames! Is not Monsieur de Voltaire good-natured, amiable, cheerful, and affable with you, who were kind enough to act in his plays[22] with him?"

"No, Monsieur. When he had us rehearse our parts he scolded us; we never said anything as he wanted it, we did not pronounce one word correctly; he criticized our voices, our manner, and it was even worse when we performed the play. What an uproar over an added or omitted syllable which had ruined one of his lines! He terrified us. One of us had laughed in the wrong place; another, in *Alzire*,[23] had only pretended to cry."

"Did he want you to cry in good earnest?"

"In good earnest; he wanted us to shed real tears; he maintained that an actor could not make his audience cry unless he really cried himself."

"There I think he was right; but a sensible author knows better than to be so strict with amateurs. Such things can only be demanded of professional actors; but every author has the same failing. He never thinks the actor has given his words the force needed to convey their real meaning."

“One day, thoroughly sick of his outbursts, I said it was not my fault if his words did not have the force they ought to have.”

“I am certain he only laughed.”

“Laugh? Say sneer! He is insolent, cruel, and, in short, unbearable.”

“But you overlooked all his faults, I am sure.”

“Don't be too sure of that, for we drove him away.”

“Drove him away?”

“Precisely; he suddenly gave up the houses[24] he had rented and went to live where you will find him, and he never comes here any more, even when he is invited, for after all we admire his genius and we only made him angry in order to avenge ourselves and teach him to behave. Get him to talk about Lausanne, and you'll hear what he'll say about us, though laughingly, for that is his way.”

I several times encountered Lord Roxburghe,[25] who had vainly loved my helpmate. He was a handsome young man, whose equal for taciturnity I have never met. I was immediately told that he was witty, well educated, and did not suffer from melancholy; in society, at assemblies and balls and dinners, his manners consisted only in bows; when he was addressed he replied very laconically in good French, but with a shyness which showed that questions made him uncomfortable. Dining at his house, I asked him something concerning his country which required five or six sentences, and he answered very well, but blushing. The famous Fox,[26] who was also at the dinner and who was then twenty years of age, made him laugh, but speaking to him in English. I saw the Duke again at Turin eight months later, in love with Madame Martin,[27] the wife of a banker, who knew how to loosen his tongue.

In the same city[28] I saw a girl eleven or twelve years old [29] whose beauty struck me. She was the daughter of

Madame de Sacconay, whose acquaintance I had made in Bern. I do not know what destiny had in store for the girl, who made the strongest impression on me to no purpose.

Nothing on earth has ever had such domination over me as a beautiful woman's face, even if she is only a child. Beauty, I have been told, has that power. I agree, for what attracts me certainly seems to me beautiful; but is it really beautiful? I must doubt it, because what seems to me beautiful does not always have the general consensus in its favor. Hence perfect beauty does not exist or does not have such power in itself. All those who have discussed beauty have tergiversated; they should have kept to the name the Greeks and Romans gave it: Form. Hence beauty is nothing but form par excellence. What is not beautiful does not possess a form; and this *deformis* was the opposite of *pulchrum* or *formosum*. We do well to seek the definition of things, but when we have it in their names why need we look for it elsewhere? If the word "form," *forma,* is Latin, let us look at its accepted meaning in Latin, not in French—which, however, often says *déforme*[30] instead of *laid* ("ugly"), apparently unaware that its opposite must be a word which indicates the existence of form, which can only be beauty. We should note that *informe* in French as well as Latin means "without shape." It is a body which has no definite appearance.

So what has always exercised an absolute sway over me is the living beauty of a woman, but that beauty as it exists in her face. That is where the spell resides, and this is so true that the Sphinxes we see at Rome and Versailles almost make us fall in love with their bodies though they are deformed in the fullest sense of the word. Looking at their faces, we come to consider their deformity beautiful. But what is this beauty? We simply do not know; and when we try to reduce it to laws, or to state those laws, we tergiversate like Socrates.[31] All that I know is that the surface which enchants me, which transports me, which makes me fall in love, is what is called beauty. It is an object of sight, for which I speak. If my sight could speak it would speak of beauty to better purpose than I.

No painter outdid Raphael in the beauty of the figures produced by his brush; but if someone had asked Raphael what that beauty was, whose laws he knew so well, he would have replied that he had no idea, that he knew it by heart and believed that he had produced it when he saw it before his eyes. "This figures pleases me," he must have said, "hence it is beautiful." He must have thanked God for having been born with an admirable sense of beauty. But *omne pulchrum difficile* ("whatever is beautiful is difficult"). The only admired painters were those who excelled in the beautiful; their number is small. If we are willing to dispense a painter from giving his works the quality of beauty any man can become a painter, for nothing is easier than to produce ugliness. The painter who is not ordained to be such by God himself cannot but produce it. We may note how rare it is to find a good painter among those who have devoted themselves to portrait painting. It is the most material branch of their art. They are of three kinds. There are those who make ugly likenesses; if you ask me, they should be paid with cudgels, for they are impertinent and they never admit that they have made the sitter uglier, or less beautiful. The second kind, who must be allowed a certain merit, are those whose likenesses are perfect and even astonishing, for the portrait seems to speak.

But few, indeed very few, are those who catch likenesses perfectly and at the same time add an imperceptible touch of beauty to the faces they have portrayed on their canvases. Painters of this kind deserve the fortunes they have made. Such was Nattier,[32] of Paris, whom I knew at the age of eighty[33] in the fiftieth year of this century. He painted the portrait of an ugly woman; she perfectly resembled the face Nattier had given her on his canvas, nevertheless in the portrait everyone thought her beautiful. Yet, examining the portrait, it was impossible to find anything changed. All that had been added or taken away was imperceptible.

"What is the source of this magic?" I asked Nattier one day when he had just painted the ugly Mesdames de France[34] and made them as beautiful as stars.

"It proves the divinity of beauty, which everyone adores, though no one knows in what it consists; and it also shows how imperceptible is the difference between the beauty and the ugliness of a countenance, which nevertheless seems so great to those who have no knowledge of our art."

The Greek painters were pleased to make Venus, the goddess of beauty, squint. The commentators may say what they like. The painters were wrong. Two squinting eyes can be beautiful; but if they squint I am sorry for it and I find them less beautiful.

On the ninth day of my stay in Lausanne I supped and spent the night with my helpmate, and in the morning, drinking coffee with her and her mother, I told her that it would soon be time to say good-by. Her mother said that, in all honesty, I ought to undeceive Lebel before I left, and she showed me a letter from the worthy man which she had received the day before. He asked her to urge it upon me that if I could not make up my mind to resign her daughter to him before I left Lausanne I would find it even harder to do so when I had gone elsewhere and she had perhaps given me a living pledge of her affection which would increase my attachment to its mother. He said that he certainly had no idea of going back on his word, but that he would consider himself all the happier if he could say he had received the woman he had married from the hands of her mother.

The good mother left us, weeping, and I remained with my dear mistress, discussing this most important matter. It was she who had the courage to tell me that I must instantly write Lebel either to stop thinking about her or to come and take her away at once.

"If I write him to stop thinking about you, I must marry you."

"No."

After uttering which "no," she left me alone. Only a quarter of an hour's thought was enough to make me write Lebel a short letter in which I told him that the widow Dubois, being her own mistress, had decided to give him her hand, and that I could only consent and congratulate him on his good fortune. In consequence I asked him to set out from Soleure at once in order to receive her from her mother's hands in my presence.

I then went to her mother's room, handing the letter to her daughter and saying that if she approved of it she had only to add her signature to mine. After reading and rereading it, her mother weeping all the while, she fixed her beautiful eyes on my face for a moment, then signed. At that I told the mother to find a trustworthy man to take the letter to Soleure at once. The man came and at once set off with my letter.

"We shall see each other again," I said to my helpmate, embracing her, "as soon as Lebel arrives."

I returned to my inn and, to wrestle with my grief, I shut myself in my room, giving orders to say that I was indisposed.

Toward evening four days later Lebel appeared before me and, after embracing me, left, saying that he would wait for me at his fiancée's. I begged him to excuse me, saying that I would dine with him at her house the next day. I made all my arrangements for leaving after dinner, and the next morning said good-by to everyone. Toward noon Lebel came for me.

Our dinner was not melancholy, but neither was it cheerful. When I was about to leave I asked my ex-helpmate to give me back the ring I had let her have in exchange for a hundred louis, as we had agreed; and she took them very sadly.

"I wouldn't have given it back," she said, "for I am not in need of money."

"In that case," I said, "I give it back to you, but promise me you will never sell it, and keep the hundred louis as well, an inadequate recompense for the services you have rendered me."

She gave me the gold wedding ring from her first marriage, and she left me, unable to hold back her tears. After wiping mine away:

"You are," I said to Lebel, "about to take possession of a treasure which I cannot commend to you too highly. It will not be long before you know all its value. She will love you alone; she will take care of your household; she will never have a secret from you; she will amuse you with her wit and easily drive away the slightest shadow of ill humor which may visit you."

When I went to her mother's room with him to take a final leave, she asked me to put off my departure until I had supped with her once again, and I replied that, the horses being harnessed and at my door, the delay would cause talk; but I promised to wait for her, with her husband and her mother, at an inn which was two leagues[35] away on the road to Geneva, where we could stay as long as we pleased, and Lebel was delighted with the little excursion.

Everything being ready when I got back to the inn, I set out at once and stopped at the appointed place, where I immediately ordered supper for four. I saw them arrive an hour later. The unconstrained and happy air of the new bride surprised me, and especially the composure with which she came and embraced me. She made me feel awkward, she had better sense than I had. However, I had the strength to fall in with her frame of mind; it seemed impossible that she had loved me and that she could thus change in one jump from love to pure friendship; nevertheless I make up my mind to imitate her and I do not refuse to exchange the outward marks which are permitted to friendship and which are supposed not to arouse sensations which go beyond its limits.

During supper I thought I saw that Lebel was more delighted by his luck in obtaining such a woman than by the right he had acquired to possess her in order to satisfy a strong passion he had conceived for her beforehand. I could not be jealous of a man whose sentiments were such. I also saw that my helpmate's high spirits came only from her wish to communicate them to me and thus make her future husband certain that she would not fail him in anything. She must also have felt very well satisfied to have attained a regular and stable position in life, safe from the whims of Fortune.

These reflections at the end of supper, which lasted two hours, put me in the same frame of mind as my late helpmate. I was content to regard her as a treasure which had belonged to me and which, after making me happy, was going to make another man so with my full consent. I felt that I was giving my helpmate the reward she deserved, as a generous Mussulman gives freedom to a cherished slave in recompense for loyalty. I looked at her, I laughed at her jokes, and the memory of the pleasures I had enjoyed in her company stood me in stead of their present reality, without any bitterness and without any regret that I had deprived myself of the right to renew them. I even thought I felt sorry when, looking at Lebel, he did not seem to me a man to replace me. She, divining my thought, told me with her eyes that she did not care.

After supper, Lebel having said that they must really go back to Lausanne so that he could be at Soleure on the next day but one, I embraced him, asking him to remain my friend until death. While he was preparing to enter the carriage with her mother, my helpmate, going down the stairs with me, told me with her usual frankness that she would not be happy until the wound was entirely healed.

"Lebel," she said, "can gain no more than my esteem and my friendship, but that will not prevent me from being his alone. Be certain that I have loved no one but you, and that you are the only man who has taught me the power of the senses and the impossibility of resisting it when nothing stands in its way. When we meet again, as you lead me to hope, we shall be ready to be perfect friends and very glad that we decided on the step we have just taken; and as for you, I am sure that in a short time a new object, whether more or less worthy to fill my place, will end your grief. I do not know if I am pregnant, but if I am you will be satisfied with the care I will give your child, whom you shall take from my custody when you please. Yesterday we made an arrangement in that respect which will leave us in no doubt when I am brought to bed. We agreed that we will marry as soon as we reach Soleure; but we will not consummate the marriage until two months from then; thus we will be sure that my child is yours if I bear it before April; and we will gladly let the world believe that it is the legitimate fruit of our marriage. It is he who conceived this wise plan, which will bring peace to our house and free my husband's mind from the least doubt in the more than perplexed question of the power of the blood, in which he believes no more than I do; but my husband will love our child as if he were its father, and if you write to me I will answer, sending you news of my pregnancy and our household. If I have the happiness to give you a child, whether a girl or a boy, it will be a memento which I will cherish far more dearly than your ring. But we are in tears, and Lebel is looking at us and laughing."

I could only answer by clasping her in my arms, and I consigned her to her husband's in the carriage, he saying that our long conversation had given him the greatest pleasure. They set off, and the chambermaids, thoroughly tired of standing there with candles in their hands, were very glad of it. I went off to bed.

The next morning when I got up, a pastor of the Geneva church having asked me if I would be so good as to give him a seat in my carriage, I granted his request. We had only ten leagues to travel, but since I wanted to eat something at noon I let him make the arrangements.

A man of eloquence and a professional theologian, he kept me amused all the way to Geneva by the ease with which he answered every question, even the thorniest, which I could put to him on the subject of religion. There were no mysteries for him, everything was reason; I never encountered a priest to whom Christianity came as easily as it did to this worthy man, whose life, as I learned at Geneva, was of the purest; but I came to the conclusion that his way of being a Christian was not peculiar to him, his doctrine being that of his entire church. When I undertook to convince him that he was a Calvinist only in name since he did not believe that Jesus Christ was of the same substance as God the Father, he replied that Calvin[36] had never claimed to be infallible, like our Pope; I said that neither did we believe the Pope infallible except when he laid down the law *ex cathedra*, and, quoting the Gospels, I struck him dumb. I made him blush when I reproached him with Calvin's having believed that the Pope was the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. He replied that the error could not be eradicated in Geneva unless the government ordered the effacement of an inscription on the church, which everyone read and in which the head of the Roman Church was so designated.[37] He said that the populace was ignorant and stupid everywhere, but that he had a niece who, at the age of twenty, did not think like the populace.

"I hope," he said, "to make you acquainted with her. She is a theologian and pretty."

"I shall see her with pleasure, Monsieur, but God keep me from arguing with her."

"She will force you to argue, and you will be very glad of it, I promise you."

I asked him for his address, but instead of giving it to me he said he would come to my inn himself to take me to his house. I put up at the "Scales," [38] and was very well lodged. It was August 20, 1760.[39]

Going to the window, I happen to look at the panes and I see, written with the point of a diamond: "You will forget Henriette too." Instantly remembering the moment when she had written the words for me thirteen years[40] earlier, I felt my hair stand on end. We had stayed in that very room when she parted from me to return to France. I flung myself into a chair to indulge in all my reflections. Ah, my dear Henriette! Noble and fond Henriette whom I had so greatly loved, where are you? I had never heard or asked news of her from anyone. Comparing myself with myself, I decided that I was less worthy to possess her than I had been then. I could still love, but I found in myself neither the delicacy which was then mine, nor the exalted feelings which justify the errors of the senses, nor considerateness, nor a certain probity; and, what horrified me, I did not have the same vigor. Yet it seemed that the mere memory of Henriette restored it to me completely. Abandoned by my helpmate, as I had just been, I felt a rush of such strong enthusiasm that I would have gone to see her[41] on the instant if I had known where to find her, though her prohibitions were still in my memory.

Early the next morning I went to the banker Tronchin, who had all my money. After showing me my account he gave me, at my request, a letter of credit on Marseilles, Genoa, Florence, and Rome. In cash I took only twelve thousand francs. I had fifty thousand French écus[42] at my disposal. After taking my letters to their addresses I returned to the "Scales," impatient to see Monsieur de Voltaire.

I found the pastor in my room. He invited me to dinner, saying that I would find Monsieur Villars Chandieu[43] there, who after dinner would take me to Monsieur de Voltaire's, where I had been expected for several days. So after making a brief toilet I went to the pastor's house, where I found the whole company interesting, but especially his young niece,[44] the theologian, whom her uncle did not bring into the conversation until dessert:

"How did you entertain yourself this morning, my dear niece?"

"I read St. Augustine, but finding that I disagreed with him in the sixteenth section I dropped him; and I believe I have refuted him in a few words."

"On what point?"

"He says that the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus through the ears.[45] This is absurd for three reasons. First, because God, not being matter, did not need an opening to enter the body of the Virgin. Second, because the aural passages have no connection with the womb. Third, because, having conceived through the ears, she ought also to have given birth through the same channel; and in that case you," she said, looking at me, "would be right to believe her a virgin during and after her childbearing."

The surprise of all the guests was equal to mine, but we had to forbear. The divine spirit of theology can rise above any carnal sensation, at least it must be credited with possessing that great privilege. The erudite niece did not think she was abusing it, and in any case she was sure of forgiveness. It was to me that she turned for an answer.

"I should be of your opinion, Mademoiselle, if I were a theologian and, as such, allowed myself to examine miracles in the light of reason; but since I am not, allow me, at the same time that I admire you, to condemn St. Augustine for having tried to analyze the power of the Annunciation. What seems to me certain is that if the Virgin had been deaf the incarnation could not have taken place. It is also true anatomically that since the three pairs of nerves which actuate the sense of hearing do not send any branch to the womb it is impossible to conceive how the thing can have been accomplished; but it is a miracle."

She answered me very charmingly that it was I who had spoken like a great theologian, and her uncle thanked me for having given his niece a good lesson. The company made her talk on various subjects, but she did not shine. Her forte was the New Testament. I shall have occasion to speak of her when I go back to Geneva.

We went to Monsieur de Voltaire's, who was just getting up from table. He was surrounded by gentlemen and ladies, so my presentation became a solemn occasion. This solemnity was very far from predisposing Voltaire and the company in my favor.

CHAPTER X

Monsieur de Voltaire; my discussions with the great man. A scene at his house in connection with Ariosto. The Duke of Villars. The Syndic and his three beautiful girls. Argument at Voltaire's. Aix-en-Savoie. The Marquis Desarmoises.

"THIS," I said to him, "is the happiest moment of my life. At last I see my master; it is twenty years, Monsieur, since I became your pupil."

"Honor me with another twenty, and then promise to bring me my wages."

"I promise; but, on your side, promise to wait for me."

"I give you my word for it, and only death—not I—will break my word."

A general laugh greeted this first Voltairean sally. It was in the nature of things. The function of such laughter is to encourage one disputant, always at the expense of the other; and he to whom the laughers give their suffrage is always sure to win; they constitute a claque which operates in good society too. I expected as much, but I hoped that my turn would come to let fly at him.

Two newly arrived Englishmen are introduced. He rises, saying:

"These gentlemen are English. I wish I were."

A poor compliment, for it forced them to answer that they wished they were French, and perhaps they did not want to lie, or they should be ashamed to tell the truth. A man of honor, I think, has the right to put his own country above all others.

No sooner has he sat down again than he returns to me, saying politely, but still with a laugh, that as a Venetian I must certainly know Count Algarotti.[1]

"I know him, but not by virtue of being a Venetian, for seven eighths of my dear fellow countrymen are unaware that he exists."

"I should have said 'as a man of letters.' "

"I know him from having spent two months with him at Padua[2] seven years ago; and I admired him principally because I discovered that he admired you."

"We are good friends; but to deserve the esteem of all who know him he does not need to admire anyone."

"If he had not begun by admiring, he would not have achieved fame. Admiring Newton, he succeeded in making it possible for ladies[3] to talk about light."

"Did he really succeed?"

"Not as well as Monsieur de Fontenelle in his *Pluralité des mondes*;[4] but he can be said to have succeeded."

"That is true. If you see him in Bologna, be so good as to tell him that I am awaiting his letters on Russia.[5] He can send them to me in care of the banker Bianchi in Milan. I am told that Italians do not like his Italian."

"I can well believe it: his style, in all his Italian writings, is his alone; it is infected with gallicisms; we think it pitiful."

"But do not French turns of expression make your language more beautiful?"

"They make it intolerable, just as a French stuffed with Italian expressions would be, even if it were written by you."

"You are right, one must write purely. Livy has been taken to task; his Latin has been said to be tainted with Patavinity." [6]

"The Abate Lazzarini[7] told me, when I was beginning to write, that he preferred Livy to Sallust." [8]

"The Abate Lazzarini, author of the tragedy *Ulisse il giovane*? [9] You must have been very young, and I wish I had known him; but I knew the Abate Conti,[10] who had been Newton's friend and whose four tragedies cover the whole of Roman history."

"I, too, knew and admired him. When I was with those great men, I congratulated myself on being young; to-day, here with you, I feel as if I dated from day before yesterday, but it does not humiliate me; I wish I were the youngest member of the human family."

"You would be better off than if you were the oldest. May I ask to what branch of literature you have devoted yourself?"

"To none; but perhaps the time will come. In the meanwhile I read as much as I can, and I indulge myself in studying humanity by traveling."

"That is the way to know it, but the book is too big. The easier method is to read history."

"History lies; one is not certain of the facts; it is boring; and studying the world on the run amuses me. Horace, whom I know by heart, is my guidebook, and I find him everywhere."

"Algarotti knows all of him by heart too. You are certainly fond of poetry?"

"It is my passion."

"Have you written many sonnets?"

"Ten or twelve which I like, and two or three thousand which I may not even have reread."

"The Italians are mad about sonnets."

"Yes—provided one can call it madness to wish to bestow on a given thought a harmonious measure capable of putting it in the best light. The sonnet is difficult, Monsieur de Voltaire, for we may neither extend the thought for the sake of the fourteen lines nor shorten it."

"It is the bed of the tyrant Procrustes.[11] That is why you have so few good ones. We have not one,[12] but that is the fault of our language."

"And of the French genius, too, I believe, which supposes that expanding a thought makes it lose all its brilliance and force."

"And you are not of that opinion?"

"I beg your pardon, it is a matter of the nature of the thought. A witticism, for example, is not enough for a sonnet."

"Which Italian poet do you love best?"

"Ariosto; and I cannot say that I love him better than the rest, for he is the only one I love. Yet I have read them all. When, fifteen years ago, I read your strictures on him,[13] I at once said that you would retract when you had read him."

"I am grateful to you for thinking I had not read him. I had read him; but, being young, having an inadequate knowledge of your language, and being prejudiced by the Italian writers who worship your Tasso, I unfortunately published an opinion which I sincerely thought was my own. It was not. I worship your Ariosto."

"I breathe again. So have an excommunication pronounced on the book in which you ridiculed him."

"All my books are excommunicated already; but I will now give you good proof of my retraction."

It was then that Voltaire astonished me. He recited by heart the two great passages in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth cantos of the divine poet in which he tells of Astolpho's conversation with St. John the Apostle,[14] never skipping a line, never pronouncing a word except in accordance with strict prosody; he pointed out their beauties to me, with reflections which only a truly great man could make. One could have expected nothing more from the greatest of all the Italian commentators. I listened to him without breathing, without once blinking my eyes, hoping in vain to catch him in a mistake; turning to the company, I said that I was overwhelmed with astonishment, and that I would inform all Italy of my wonder and the reason for it.

"All Europe," he replied, "shall be informed by me of the most humble amends which I owe to the greatest genius she has produced."

Insatiable for praise, the next day he gave me his translation of Ariosto's stanza: *Quindi avvien che tra principi e signori.*[15] Here it is:

> *Les papes, les césars apaisant leur querelle*
> *Jurent sur l'Évangile une paix éternelle;*
> *Vous les voyez demain l'un de l'autre ennemis;*
> *C'était pour se tromper qu'ils s'étaient réunis:*
> *Nul serment n'est gardé, nul accord n'est sincère;*
> *Quand la bouche a parlé, le coeur dit le contraire.*
> *Du ciel qu'ils attestaient ils bravaient le courroux,*
> *L'intérêt est le dieu qui les gouverne tous.*
>
> ("Popes and monarchs, ending their division, swear eternal peace on the Gospels; tomorrow you see them enemies; it was to deceive each other that they had assembled: no oath is kept, no agreement is sincere; when the mouth has spoken, the heart says the opposite. They dared the wrath of the heaven which they called to witness; interest is the god which governs them all.")

At the end of Monsieur de Voltaire's recitation, which brought him the applause of all present, though not one of them understood Italian, Madame Denis,[16] his niece, asked me if the famous passage her uncle had declaimed was one of the finest in the great poet.

"Yes, Madame, but not the very finest."

"Then judgment has been handed down as to the very finest?"

"Certainly—otherwise Signor Lodovico would not have received his apotheosis."

"I did not know he had been beatified."

At that all the laughers, with Voltaire at their head, were on Madame Denis's side—I alone excepted, who remained perfectly serious. Voltaire, nettled by my gravity:

"I know," he said, "why you do not laugh. You claim that it is by virtue of a superhuman passage that he was called 'divine.'"

"Precisely."

"What passage is it?"

"The last thirty-six stanzas of the twenty-third canto, which give a technical description of the way Orlando went mad. Since the beginning of the world no one has known how a person goes mad except Ariosto, who was able to write it, and who toward the end of his life went mad too.[17] Those stanzas, I am certain, have made you shudder; they inspire horror."

"I remember them; they make love terrible. I cannot wait to read them again."

"Perhaps Monsieur will be so kind as to recite them to us," said Madame Denis, with a sly glance at her uncle.

"Why not, Madame, if you will have the goodness to listen."

"Then you have taken the trouble to learn them by heart?"

"As I have read Ariosto through two or three times a year ever since I was fifteen years old, he has fixed himself in my memory from beginning to end with no effort on my part and, as it were, despite me, except for his genealogies and his historical passages, which tire the mind without touching the heart. Only Horace has remained imprinted entire in my soul, despite the often too prosaic verses in his Epistles."

"We can allow you Horace," added Voltaire; "but Ariosto is a great deal, for it is a matter of forty-six long cantos."

"Say fifty-one." [18]

Voltaire remained silent.

"Come, come," said Madame Denis, "let us have the thirty-six stanzas which make one shudder and which earned their author the appellation of 'divine.' "

I thereupon recited them, but not in the style of declamation which we use in Italy. To please, Ariosto has no need to be thrown into relief by a monotonous singsong on the part of the person who delivers him. The French are right in finding this singsong intolerable. I recited them as if they were prose, animating them by voice, eyes, and the varying intonation necessary to express feeling. My audience saw and felt feeling expressed. They saw and felt the effort I made to hold back my tears, and they wept; but when I came to the stanza:

> *Poichè allargare il freno al dolor puote*
> *Che resta solo senza altrui rispetto*
> *Giù dagli occhi rigando per le gote*
> *Sparge un fiume di lacrime sul petto*
>
> ("Because he who is alone, with no one to consider, may give the reins to his grief, from his eyes he pours a stream of tears which flow down his cheeks to his breast"),[19]

my tears burst from my eyes so impetuously and abundantly that everyone present shed tears too, Madame Denis shuddered, and Voltaire ran to embrace me; but he could not interrupt me, for Orlando, to go completely mad, had to discover that he was in the same bed as that in which Angelica had lately lain in the arms of the too fortunate Medoro,[20] which happened in the following stanza. My plaintive and mournful tone gave place to the tone of terror inspired by the madness whose prodigious force drove him to ravages such as only an earthquake or lightning could cause. At the end of my recitation I somberly received the congratulations of the entire company. Voltaire exclaimed:

"It is what I have always said: to draw tears, one must weep oneself; but to weep, one must feel, and then the tears come from the soul."

He embraced me, he thanked me, and he promised to recite the same stanzas to me the next day and to weep as I had done. He kept his word.

Pursuing the subject of Ariosto, Madame Denis said it was astonishing that Rome had not put him on the Index. Voltaire replied that, on the contrary, Leo X[21] had issued a bull excommunicating all who dared to condemn him. The two great families of Este and Medici[22] found it to their interest to support him:

"But for that," he added, "the one line on Constantine's donation of Rome[23] to Sylvester,[24] which says that it *puzza forte* ('stinks strongly'),[25] would have been enough to bring an interdict on the poem."

I said that, begging his pardon, the line which had caused even more of an outcry was the one in which Ariosto throws doubt on the resurrection of the whole human race at the end of the world.

"Speaking of the hermit who tried to prevent Rodomonte from capturing Isabella, Zerbino's[26] widow," I said, "Ariosto describes the African as tiring of his preaching, seizing him, and throwing him so far that he breaks him to pieces against a rock, where he is instantly killed and remains in a sleep such

Che al novissimo dí forse fia desto.

('That he perhaps may wake on the
last day.')

"That *forse* ('perhaps'), which the poet inserted only as a rhetorical ornament, caused an outcry which would have made the poet laugh heartily."

"It is a pity," said Madame Denis, "that Ariosto did not abstain from his hyperboles."

"Be quiet, my niece; they are all deliberate and all of the greatest beauty."

We talked on other subjects, all of them literary, and the conversation finally turned to *L'Écossaise,* which had been acted at Soleure. The whole story was known. Voltaire told me that if I would act in his house he would write Monsieur de Chavigny to persuade Madame . . . to come and act Lindane and that he would take the part of Monrose. I declined, telling him that Madame . . . was at Basel and that in any case I had to leave the following day. At that he protested vehemently, roused the whole company against me, and maintained that my visit became an insult if I did not stay for at least a week. I replied that, having come to Geneva only for him, I had nothing else to do there.

"Did you come here to talk to me or to hear me talk?"

"Principally to hear you talk."

"Then stay here three days at least, come to dine with me every day, and we will talk."

I said I would do so, and then took my leave to go to my inn, for I had a great deal of writing to do.

A Syndic[27] of the city, whom I will not name and who had spent the day at Voltaire's, came a quarter of an hour later, asking me to let him sup with me.

"I was present," he said, "at your argument with the great man, though I said nothing. I hope I may have you to myself for an hour."

I embraced him and, asking him to excuse me for receiving him in my nightcap, said that he could spend the whole night with me if he wished.

The amiable man spent two hours with me, never speaking of literature, but he had no need of that to please me. He was a great disciple of Epicurus and Socrates; capping anecdotes, outdoing each other in laughter, and talk about every kind of pleasure to be procured in Geneva kept us occupied until midnight. When he left, he invited me to sup with him the following evening, assuring me that our supper would be amusing. I promised to wait for him at my inn. He asked me not to mention our engagement to anyone.

The next morning young Fox came to my room with the two Englishmen whom I had seen at Monsieur de Voltaire's. They proposed a game of quinze[28] with stakes of two louis, and, having lost fifty louis in less than an hour, I stopped. We made a tour of Geneva and at dinnertime went to "Les Délices."[29] The Duke of Villars[30] had just arrived there to consult Tronchin,[31] who had kept him alive by his art for ten years.

During dinner I said nothing; but afterward Voltaire made me talk about the Venetian government, knowing that I must bear it a grudge. I disappointed his expectation; I attempted to prove that there is no country on earth in which one can enjoy greater freedom. Seeing that the subject was not to my liking, he took me out to his garden, which he told me he had created. The principal walk ended at a stream; he said it was the Rhone, which he was sending to France. He made me admire the fine view of Geneva and the Dent Blanche,[32] which is the highest of the Alps.

Deliberately turning the conversation to Italian literature, he began talking away on the subject with great wit and erudition, but always ending with an erroneous judgment. I did not contradict him. He spoke of Homer, Dante, and Petrarch, and everyone knows what he thought of those great geniuses. His inability to refrain from writing what he thought harmed him. I only said that if these authors had not deserved the esteem of all who studied them they would not have been given the high place they held.

The Duke of Villars and the famous physician Tronchin joined us. Tronchin—tall, well built, handsome, polished, eloquent though not talkative, a learned natural scientist, a wit, a physician, favorite pupil [33] of Boerhaave, and without either the jargon or the charlatanism of the pillars of the Faculty—captivated me. His principal medicine was only diet; but to prescribe it he had to be a great philosopher. It was he who cured a consumptive of venereal disease by the mercury which he gave him in the milk of a she-ass which he had subjected to thirty rubbings by the strong arms of three or four porters. I write this because I have been told it, but I find it hard to believe.

The person of the Duke of Villars caught all my attention. Examining his bearing and his face, I thought I saw a woman of seventy[34] dressed as a man, thin, emaciated, weak, but who in her youth might have been beautiful. His blotched cheeks were covered with rouge, his lips with carmine, his eyebrows were blackened, his teeth were false, as was the hair which was glued to his head by quantities of pomade scented with ambergris, and in his top buttonhole was a large bouquet which came up to his chin. He affected grace in his gestures, and he spoke in a soft voice which made it difficult to understand what he said. Withal he was very polite, affable, and mannered in the style of the Regency.[35] I have been told that when he was young he loved women, but that in his old age he assumed the modest role of wife to three or four handsome minions, each of whom in turn enjoyed the honor of sleeping with him. The Duke was the Governor of Provence. His whole back was gangrened, and according to the laws of nature he should have died ten years earlier; but Tronchin kept him alive by diet, feeding the sores, which if they had not been fed would have died and taken the Duke with them. This is truly to live by art.

I went with Voltaire to his bedroom, where he changed his wig and the bonnet he wore over it to keep from catching cold. On a large table I saw the *Summa*[36] of St. Thomas and some Italian poets, among them the *Secchia rapita* of Tassoni.[37]

"It is," he said, "the only tragicomic poem which Italy possesses. Tassoni was a monk, a wit, and a learned genius as a poet."

"The rest perhaps—but not learned, for, ridiculing the Copernican system, he says that, following it, one could not arrive at the theory either of lunations or of eclipses."

"Where does he say anything so stupid?"

"In his *discorsi academici.*"[38]

"I haven't them, but I will get them."

He wrote down the title.

"But Tassoni," he went on, "criticized your Petrarch[39] very well."

"And thereby disgraced his taste and his reading, as did Muratori."[40]

"Here he is. Admit that his erudition is immense."

"*Est ubi peccat*" ("He is sometimes wrong").[41]

He opened a door, and I saw an archive of nearly a hundred bulky packages.

"That," he said, "is my correspondence. You see nearly fifty thousand [42] letters, which I have answered."

"Have you copies of your answers?"

"Of most of them. It is the duty of a valet whom I keep for no other purpose."

"I know printers who would give a great deal of money to possess themselves of this treasure."

"Beware of printers when you are ready to give something to the public, if you have not already begun."

"I will begin when I am old."

And in this connection I quoted a macaronic verse of Merlin Cocai.[43]

"What is that?"

"It is a verse from a famous poem[44] in twenty-four cantos."

"Famous?"

"And what is more, worthy to be; but to appreciate it one must know the Mantuan dialect."

"I shall understand it. Have it sent me."

"I will present it to you tomorrow."

"I shall be obliged to you."

We were fetched from there, and we spent two hours in conversation with the company, in which the great, brilliant poet kept everyone amused, always applauded though satirical and often caustic, but always laughing and never failing to raise a laugh. He maintained a princely establishment, and only at his house did one find choice fare. He was then sixty-six years of age and had an income of a hundred and twenty thousand livres. They who said and say that he became rich only by cheating the booksellers are mistaken. On the contrary, the booksellers cheated him badly, except the Cramers,[45] whose fortune he made. He gave them all his works for nothing, and thus it was that they circulated so widely. At the time I was there he gave them *La Princesse de Babylone*,[46] a charming tale which he wrote in three days.

My Epicurean Syndic came to the "Scales" for me as he had promised. He took me to a house on the right-hand side of the next street, which runs uphill. He presented me to three young ladies,[47] two of them sisters, and all made for love though one could not call them beautiful. An easy and gracious welcome, intelligent faces, and a promise of gaiety which was not disappointed. The half hour before supper was spent in decent but unrestrained conversation; during supper, however, the Syndic having set the tone, I foresaw what would happen after supper.

The day being hot, on the pretext of cooling ourselves, and being sure that no one would come to interrupt us, we were soon very nearly in the state of nature. I should have given offense if I had not followed the example of the four others. What an orgy! We rose to such a pitch of gaiety that, having recited Grécourt's[48] *Y grec,* I took it upon myself to demonstrate to the three girls in turn why the decree *Gaudeant bene nati* ("Let the well-born rejoice") had been promulgated. I saw the Syndic pluming himself on the present of my person which he had made to the three girls, who, from what I saw, must have fared very poorly with him, whose concupiscence affected only his head. It was their sense of obligation which an hour after midnight made them give me an ejaculation I really needed. I repeatedly kissed the six fair hands which humbled themselves to the task, which is always humiliating to any woman made for love, but which could not be so in the farce we had played, for having had the kindness to spare them, I had, with the help of the voluptuous Syndic, done them the same service. They thanked me endlessly, and I saw that they were in raptures when the Syndic invited me for the next day.

But it was I who thanked him again and again when he saw me to my inn. He told me that he alone had been responsible for bringing up the three girls, and that I was the first man whose acquaintance he had allowed them. He begged me to continue to be on my guard against making them pregnant, for it would be a fatal misfortune for them in a city as captiously strict on the point as Geneva.

The next day I wrote Monsieur de Voltaire an epistle in blank verse, which cost me more trouble than if I had rhymed it. I sent it to him with Teofilo Folengo's[49] poem; and I made a great mistake in sending it, for I should have known he would not like it. I then went to Mr. Fox's, where the two Englishmen offered me my revenge. I lost a hundred louis. After dinner they left for Lausanne.

Having learned from the Syndic himself that his three girls were not rich, I went to a jeweler to have six doblones de a ocho[50] melted, ordering him to make me three balls of two ounces each immediately. I knew how I could go about giving them to the girls without humiliating them.

At noon I went to Monsieur de Voltaire's, who was not visible, but Madame Denis made up to me for it. She had a sound intelligence, excellent taste, learning without pretension, and a great dislike for the King of Prussia. She asked me for news of my beautiful housekeeper, and she was very glad to hear that the Ambassador's major-domo had married her. She asked me to tell her how I had escaped from the Leads, and I promised to satisfy her request some other day.

Monsieur de Voltaire did not come to the table. He did not appear until about five o'clock, carrying a letter.

"Do you know," he asked me, "the Marchese Albergati Capacelli,[51] Senator of Bologna, and Count Paradisi?"[52]

"I do not know Paradisi, but I know Signor Albergati by sight and reputation; he is not a Senator but a 'Forty,'[53] born in Bologna, where the Forty are fifty."

"Heaven preserve us! What a riddle!"

"Do you know him?"

"No; but he sends me Goldoni's[54] plays, Bologna sausages, the translation of my *Tancrède,*[55] and he is coming to see me."

"He will not come, he is not so foolish."

"What do you mean by that? Though it is true that coming to see me is foolish."

"I am talking about Albergati. He knows he would be the loser by it, for he enjoys the idea you may have of him. He is sure that if he comes to visit you, you will see his nothingness or his whole bag of tricks, and good-by illusion! In other respects he is a worthy gentleman with an income of six thousand zecchini and theatromania.[56] He is a good actor and the author[57] of prose comedies which are not funny."

"You paint a pretty picture of him. But how can he be both forty and fifty?"

"As noon at Basel is eleven o'clock."[58]

"I understand—just as your Council of Ten numbers seventeen."[59]

"Even so. But the accursed Forty of Bologna are another matter."

"Why accursed?"

"Because they are not answerable to the Exchequer, and so they commit all the crimes they please and go to reside outside the State, where they still live on their revenues."

"That's a blessing, not a curse; but let us continue. No doubt the Marchese Albergati is a man of letters."

"He writes well, for he knows his language; but he bores his reader because he enjoys the sound of his own voice and he is diffuse. And he has nothing in his head."

"He is an actor, you said."

"Excellent when he plays something of his own, especially in the part of the lover."

"Is he handsome?"

"On the stage, but not in ordinary life. His face has no expression."

"But his plays are liked?"

"Not at all. They would be booed if people understood them."

"And what do you say of Goldoni?"

"He is our Molière."

"Why does he call himself poet to the Duke of Parma?"[60]

"To give himself a title, for the Duke knows nothing about it. He also calls himself an advocate,[61] but he is one only *in posse*. He is a good writer of comedies, and that is all. I am his friend, and everyone in Venice knows it. In society he does not shine, he is as insipid and sweet as marshmallow.''

''So someone wrote me. He is poor, and he wants to leave Venice. The owners of the theaters where his plays are performed must not like that.''

''There was talk of giving him a pension; but the decision went against it. It was thought that if he had a pension he would stop working.''

''Cuma[62] refused Homer a pension for fear that all blind people would demand one.''

We spent the day very pleasantly. He thanked me for the *Macaronicon*[63] and promised to read it. He introduced a Jesuit[64] whom he had in his service, saying that his name was Adam but that he was not the first of men; and I was told that, amusing himself playing backgammon with him, when he lost he often threw the dice and the dicebox in his face.

I was scarcely back at my inn in the evening before I received my three gold balls, and a moment later I saw my dear Syndic, who took me to his orgy.

On the way he discussed the sense of modesty which prevents our displaying the parts which from childhood we have been taught to keep covered. He said that modesty of this kind could often derive from a virtue; but that the virtue was weaker than the force of education, since it could not resist an attack when the aggressor knew what he was about. The easiest strategy, in his opinion, was not to admit its existence, to show that one had no regard for it and ridicule it; the thing to do was to surprise it by setting the example, leaping the barriers of shame, and victory was certain; the boldness of the attacker made the modesty of the person attacked vanish instantly.

"Clement of Alexandria," [65] he said, "a man of learning and a philosopher, said that the modesty which seems so firmly rooted in women's minds was really only in their underclothes, because as soon as they were persuaded to take those off not a shadow of it remained."

We found the three young ladies, lightly clad in linen dresses, sitting on a large sofa, and we sat down in front of them on armless chairs. The half hour before supper was devoted to charming badinage like that of the evening before and to quantities of kisses. It was after supper that the combat began.

As soon as we were sure that the maid would not come to interrupt us again, we made ourselves comfortable. The Syndic began by taking from his pocket a package of English coveralls, praising that admirable defense against a misfortune which could give rise to dread repentance. They knew of it, and they seemed satisfied, laughing at the shape which the inflated instrument took before their eyes, when I said that I certainly loved their honor even more than their beauty, but that I could never consent to seek happiness with them by wrapping myself in a piece of dead skin.

"Here," I say, taking from my pocket the three gold balls, "is what will safeguard you against any untoward consequences. After fifteen years' experience I am in a position to assure you that with these balls you have nothing to fear and that in future you will not need these miserable sheaths. Honor me with your complete confidence in this respect, and accept this small present from a Venetian who adores you."

"We are grateful to you," says the elder of the sisters; "but how does one use this pretty ball to avert a disastrous big belly?"

"All that is necessary is for the ball to be in the cabinet of love during the combat. It is an antipathic virtue in the metal which prevents pregnancy."

"But," remarks the cousin,[66] "the little ball may easily slip out of the place before the action is over."

"Not at all, when one knows how to go about it. There is a posture which will prevent the ball from coming out by its own weight."

"Show us," says the Syndic, taking up a candle to light me when I put the ball in place.

The charming cousin had said too much to withdraw and refuse the proof which her cousins wanted. I placed her at the foot of the bed in such a way that it was impossible for the ball, which I inserted, to fall out; but it fell out after the act, and she saw that I had cheated her, but she pretended not to notice it. She picked up the ball, and she challenged the two sisters to do as much. They underwent the operation with every sign of interest.

The Syndic, having no faith in the virtue of the ball, would not trust it. He limited his pleasure to looking on, and he had no reason to complain. After half an hour's respite I began the ceremonies again without the balls, assuring them that they ran no risk, and I kept my word.

When I left, I saw the three girls overwhelmed; they felt they had contracted obligations to me and had given me nothing. Bestowing countless caresses on the Syndic, they asked him how he had guessed that I was the man who deserved to be let into their great secret.

As we were leaving, the Syndic urged the three girls to ask me to stay another day in Geneva for their sake, and I assented. He was to be occupied the next day. For my part I really needed a day's rest. He saw me to my inn, treating me to the most flattering compliments.

After sleeping soundly for ten hours I felt fit to go and enjoy Monsieur de Voltaire's charming company; but the great man was pleased on that day to indulge in raillery, ill-humored jests, and sarcasm. He knew that I was to leave the next day.

He began at table by saying that he thanked me for my present of Merlin Cocai, certainly made with good intentions, but that he did not thank me for the praise I had bestowed on the poem, since I had been the cause of his wasting four hours reading nonsense. My hair stood on end, but I controlled myself. I replied quite calmly that on another occasion he might find it worthy of the greater praise which he himself could bestow. I cited several examples of the inadequacy of a first reading.

"True enough—but as for your Merlin, I leave him to you. I have put him beside Chapelain's[67] *La Pucelle.*"

"Which pleases all competent critics, despite its versification. It is a good poem, and Chapelain was a poet; his genius has not escaped me."

My statement could not but offend him, and I should have known it after he told me that he would put the *Macaronicon* I had given him beside *La Pucelle.* I knew, too, that a filthy poem by the same name, which was widely circulated, was supposed to be by him; but since he disavowed it[68] I thought he would conceal the pain which my frankness must have caused him; but not a bit of it—he contradicted me sharply and I became no less sharp. I told him that Chapelain had the merit of making his subject agreeable without currying the favor of his readers by filth and impiety.

"Such," I said, "is the opinion of my master Monsieur de Crébillon." [69]

"You cite a great judge. But in what is my confrère Crébillon your master?"

"He taught me to speak French in less than two years. To show him my gratitude I translated his *Rhadamiste*[70] into Italian Alexandrine verse. I am the first Italian who dared to adapt that meter to our language."

"The first, if you will pardon me, was my friend Pier Jacopo Martelli." [71]

"Pardon *me.*"

"Why, I have his works,[72] printed at Bologna, in my room."

"You can only have read verses of fourteen syllables[73] without alternating masculine and feminine rhyme. Yet he believed he was imitating Alexandrines, and his preface made me laugh. Perhaps you did not read it."

"Monsieur, I have a passion for reading prefaces. Martelli proves that to Italian ears his verses sound the same as Alexandrines do to the French."

"He is egregiously wrong, and I ask you to be the judge. Your masculine verse has only twelve syllables and your feminine thirteen; all Martelli's verses have fourteen, except those which end in a long syllable, which at the end of a verse always counts as two. Observe that Martelli's first hemistich is always and forever of seven syllables, whereas in the French Alexandrine it is forever and always of six. Either your friend Pier Jacopo was deaf or he had a bad ear."

"Then in the theory of your verse you follow all our rules?"

"All of them, despite the difficulty; for nearly all our words end in a short syllable."

"And how was your new meter received?"

"It was not liked, because no one knew the way to recite my verses; but when I delivered them myself in our literary circles I triumphed."

"Do you remember a passage from your *Rhadamiste*?"

"As many as you please."

I then recited to him the same scene which I had recited to Crébillon in blank verse ten years earlier, and he seemed impressed. He said that the difficulty was not perceptible, and it was the greatest compliment he could pay me. In his turn he recited a passage from his *Tancrède,* which I believe he had not then published and which was later rightly judged a masterpiece.

We should have ended on good terms, but a line of Horace which I quoted to applaud one of his ideas led him to say that Horace was a great master of the drama because of his precepts, which would never grow stale.

"You break only one of them," I said, "but you break it like a great man."

"Which one?"

"You do not write *contentus paucis lectoribus* ('satisfied with a few readers')." [74]

"If Horace had had to fight superstition he would have written for everyone, as I do."

"You might, it seems to me, spare yourself the trouble of fighting it, for you will never succeed in destroying it, and even if you did, pray tell me with what you would fill its place."

"I like that! When I deliver the human race from a ferocious monster which devours it, can I be asked what I will put in its place?"

"It does not devour it; on the contrary, it is necessary to its existence."

"Loving the human race, I should wish to see it happy as I am, free; and superstition cannot be combined with freedom. What makes you think that servitude can make a people happy?"

"Then you would wish to see sovereignty in the people?"

"God forbid! One alone must govern."

"Then superstition is necessary, for without it the people will never obey the monarch."

"No monarch—for the name makes me see despotism, which I must hate as I do servitude."

"Then what would you have? If you want the ruler to be one man, I can only consider him a monarch."

"I want him to command a free people, then he will be its leader, and he cannot be called a monarch, for he can never be arbitrary."

"Addison[75] tells you that such a monarch, such a leader, is not among possible beings. I am for Hobbes.[76] Between two evils, one must choose the lesser. A people without superstition would be philosophical and philosophers will never obey. The people can be happy only if they are cursed, downtrodden, kept in chains."

"If you have read me you will have found the proofs by which I demonstrate that superstition is the enemy of kings."

"If I have read you! I have read and reread you—and especially when I am not of your opinion. Your first passion is love of humanity. *Est ubi peccas* ('You are sometimes wrong').[77] That love blinds you. Love humanity, but you can only love it as it is. It is incapable of the benefits you would lavish upon it; and, giving them, you would only make it more unhappy and more wicked. Leave it the monster which devours it; the monster is dear to it. I never laughed so much as when I saw Don Quixote[78] having a very hard time defending himself from the galley slaves to whom he had just magnanimously given their freedom."

"Are you Venetians free?"

"As free as it is possible to be under an aristocratic government. The freedom we have is not as great as that which the English enjoy, but we are content. My imprisonment, for example, was an outright act of despotism; but knowing that I had myself abused my freedom, at certain moments I considered that they had been right to imprison me without the usual formalities."

"At that rate no one is free in Venice."

"Possibly; but grant that, to be free, it is enough to believe that one is so."

"I will not so easily grant it. Even the aristocrats who are members of the government are not free—for example, they cannot travel without permission."

"It is a law to which they deliberately subjected themselves in order to preserve their power. Would you say that a Bernese is not free because he is subject to the sumptuary laws?[79] It is he himself who is the lawmaker."

It was to change the subject that he asked me where I had come from.

"From Roche. I should have been very sorry to leave Switzerland without seeing the famous Haller. I am paying homage to my learned contemporaries—and you will be the savory at the end of the feast."

"You must have enjoyed Monsieur Haller."

"I spent three excellent days with him."

"I congratulate you. One should go down on one's knees to that great man."

"I think so too; you do him justice, and for his sake I regret that he is not so fair to you."

"So! Then possibly we are both mistaken."

At this answer, whose whole merit is in its quickness, all the company applauded.

There was no more talk of literature, and I played a silent part until, Monsieur de Voltaire having withdrawn, I went up to Madame Denis and asked her if she had any commissions for me in Rome.

I left rather well pleased that on this last day I had reduced the gladiator to reason. But I was left with a grudge against him which for ten years made me criticize everything I read, old or new, which the great man had given or was giving the public. I repent of it now, despite the fact that when I read what I published against him[80] I find that my censures were based on sound reasoning. I should have kept quiet, respected him, and doubted my own judgments. I should have reflected that but for the raillery with which he offended me on the third day I should have thought him sublime in everything. This reflection alone should have kept me silent, but an angry man always believes he is right. Reading me, posterity will number me among the Zoiluses,[81] and the very humble amends I make him today will perhaps not be read.

I spent part of the night and the next day writing down the three conversations I had with him, which I have now copied in abridged form. Toward nightfall the Syndic came for me, and we went to sup with his three young ladies.

In the five hours we spent there we indulged in all the extravagances I could invent. When I left, I promised to see them again on my return from Rome, and I kept my word. I departed from Geneva the next day after dining with my dear Syndic, who went with me as far as Annecy,[82] where I spent the night. The next day I dined at Aix-en-Savoie,[83] intending to spend the night at Chambéry;[84] but fate was against it.

Aix-en-Savoie is an ugly place where there are mineral waters and, at the end of summer, some people of fashion. I did not know it. I was dining quietly and in haste, intending to leave at once for Chambéry, when I see a company of gay and fashionable-looking people, both men and women, come in and prepare to sit down at the table. I watch them from where I sit, acknowledging their salutations with a bow. From their conversation I learn that they are all there to take the waters. A man of imposing appearance approaches me politely and asks if I am going to Turin; I reply that I am going to Marseilles.

Dinner is served, and they all sit down. I see attractive women and men of a stamp to be their husbands or their lovers. I decide that the place offers possibilities for amusement. They were all speaking French or Piedmontese, and they seemed to be people who did not stand on formality. I foresee that if I am asked I shall easily be persuaded to spend the night there.

Having finished dinner when they had not yet come to the roast, and my coachman not being able to leave for an hour, I go up to a pretty woman and congratulate her on the good which the waters of Aix must be doing her, since the appetite with which she was eating aroused it in anyone who watched her. She imperiously challenges me to prove that I am speaking the truth by sitting down beside her, and at the same time she offers me the slice of roast which she had been served. The chair being empty, I accept her challenge, and I eat as if I had not dined.

I then hear a voice saying: "It is the Abbé's place," and another voice answers: "He left half an hour ago." "Why did he go?" asks a third person; "he was to be here a week longer." Voices are lowered, the conversation is continued in whispers, but the departure of some abbé being of no interest to me I continue to eat, confining my attention to the lady, who serves me the best bits. I tell Leduc, who was behind my chair, to have champagne brought for me; the lady is fond of it and drinks with me; and the whole table orders champagne. I see that she is animated, I flirt with her; and I ask her if she is always so strict in holding all the men who offer her homage to their word. She replies that not all of them are worth the trouble. Pretty and witty—I try to think of a pretext for putting off my departure, and chance gives it to me.

"For once," says a lady to the beauty who was drinking with me, "an empty place proves to be just the thing."

"Very much so, for my neighbor was boring me."

"Did he have no appetite?" I ask her.

"Bah! gamesters have none except for money."

"Usually; but you have unusual powers, for I have never in my life dined twice."

"It was because you were challenged. I am sure you will not sup."

"Let us wager that I sup."

"We will wager the supper, but I want to see it."

"Done."

The whole table applauds; the lady blushes with pleasure, and I order Leduc to tell the coachman that I will not leave until the next day.

"It is my part," says the lady, "to order the supper."

"Yes, for it is you who will pay for it. My duty, in a wager of this kind, is to keep up with you. If I eat as much as you do, I have won."

At the end of dinner the man of imposing appearance called for cards and made a small bank at faro. I expected as much. He spread before him twenty-five Piedmontese pistoles,[85] and some silver money to amuse the ladies. The bank amounted to about forty louis. Remaining simply a spectator for the first deal, I saw that the banker was playing in a manner to do him credit.

While he was shuffling for the second deal the beautiful lady asked me why I was not playing. I whispered to her that she had made me lose my appetite for money; she smiled. Thinking that after this declaration I was bound to play, I took forty louis from my purse and lost them in two deals. I got up, answering the banker's condolences by saying that I never risked more than the amount in the bank. One of the company then asked me if I knew an Abbé Gilbert;[86] I answered that I had known a man of that name in Paris who came from Lyons and who owed me his ears, so I would cut them off wherever I met him. The questioner did not reply, and the company remained silent, pretending to notice nothing. I saw that the Abbé Gilbert must be the man whose place I had occupied. Having seen me arrive, he had taken flight. At my house in Little Poland I had entrusted him with a ring which had cost me five thousand florins in Holland, and he had decamped the next day.

Everyone having left the room, I ask Leduc if I am well lodged. He takes me to see a large unfurnished room in an old house a hundred paces from the inn, all the other rooms in which were occupied. The innkeeper told me he had no other room and that he would have a bed, chairs, and tables brought at once. I had to make the best of it. I told Leduc that he would sleep in my room, and to have all my luggage taken there immediately.

"What do you make of the Abbé Gilbert?" he said. "I did not recognize him till just as he was setting out, and I thought for a moment of taking him by the collar."

"It is a thought which you should have executed."

"Some other time."

Leaving the room, I see a man approaching me who congratulates himself on being my neighbor and offers to accompany me if I am going to see the fountain.[87] I thank him and accept. He was a tall, thin, blond man who at the age of fifty still had his hair, who must once have been handsome, and whose excessive affability should have made me suspect him; but I needed someone to chat with. On our way to the fountain he gave me an account of the people with whom I had dined. He began by telling me that the waters of Aix were good, but that no one in the company I had seen was there to take them.

"I am the only one," he said, "who is obliged to take them, for I am consumptive; I grow thinner every day, and if I do not find an effectual remedy I cannot live long."

"Then all these gentlemen have come here only to amuse themselves?"

"To gamble. They are all Piedmontese or Savoyards. As I come from Lorraine, I am the only Frenchman. My father, who is eighty years of age, is the Marquis Desarmoises.[88] He lives to infuriate me, for because of a marriage I contracted without his consent he disinherited me; but since I am the only son I shall have everything when he dies, if I outlive him. I have a house in Lyons; but I never never go there because of my elder daughter, with whom I have the misfortune to be in love. My wife prevents me from making her listen to reason."

"That is odd. Otherwise you think she would take pity on her amorous father?"

"She might, for she is a good, obedient girl."

CHAPTER XI

My adventures at Aix-en-Savoie. My second M. M. Madame Z.

WALKING TOWARD the fountain in the company of a man who, having no acquaintance with me, was telling me these things in perfect good faith and with not the slightest fear of horrifying me and making me think him a criminal of the deepest dye, I reflected that, supposing me to be the same sort of person as himself, he could only think he was doing me great honor. But, wanting to know him still better:

"Despite the Marquis your father's severity," I said, "you no doubt live very well."

"Very badly. I have a pension from the Department of Foreign Affairs as a retired courier. I let my wife have it to live on, and for my part I manage by traveling. I play backgammon very well, and all gambling games; by winning more than I lose, I live."

"Is what you have just told me known to all the company here?"

"To them all. Why should I hide it? I am a man of honor and I have a dangerous sword."

"I do not doubt it. Do you allow Mademoiselle Desarmoises to have a lover? If she is pretty—"

"Extremely pretty; I should not object; but my wife is pious. If you go to Lyons I will give you a letter to her."

"Thank you, but I am going to Italy. May I ask you who the gentleman is who made bank?"

"He is the famous Pancalieri, Marquis de Prié[1] since the death of his father, whom, since you are a Venetian, you must have known as Ambassador. The gentleman who asked you if you knew the Abbé Gilbert is the Chevalier *Z*,[2] husband of the lady with whom you are to sup. The others are all Piedmontese or Savoyard Counts or Marquises; two or three are sons of merchants, and the women are all related to one another or mistresses of some man in the company. They are all professional gamesters and very sharp; when a stranger passes through here, if he plays he can hardly escape them, for they are all in it together. They think they have you hooked; beware."

Toward nightfall we returned to the inn, where we found all the gamesters at various gambling games. My new friend played draughts with a Count Scarnafigi.[3] Since I had refused all invitations to play, the husband of my beauty offered to play faro with me, each dealing in turn, for forty zecchini. I had just lost that amount when supper was served. The lady found me no less gay on that account, and she paid the wager very honorably. During supper her glances, the source of which I knew, showed me only too clearly that she intended to dupe me, so I thought I was out of danger on the article of love; but I should have feared Fortune, who always favors bankers at faro and who had already given me a scratch. I should have left, but I did not have the strength of mind. All I could do was to promise myself I would be extremely careful, and since I had plenty of money at my disposal in good paper, and a sufficiency in cash, I should not have found a course of prudent play difficult.

Immediately after supper the Marquis de Prié made a bank which, adding up the gold and the silver, might be worth three hundred zecchini. This contemptible sum showed me that I could lose much and win little, for it was obvious that he would have made me a bank of a thousand zecchini if he had them. So I placed fifty lisbonini[4] before me, modestly saying that when I had lost them I would go to bed. Halfway through the third deal I broke the bank. The Marquis said he would put up another two hundred louis; I replied that I wanted to leave at dawn, and I withdrew.

Just as I was getting into bed Desarmoises came and asked me to let him have twelve louis, assuring me that he would repay them. I give them to him instantly and, after embracing me warmly, he said that Madame *Z* had undertaken to keep me in Aix for at least another day. I laughed. I ask Leduc if the coachman has been notified, and he replies that he will be at my door at five o'clock in the morning. Desarmoises leaves, saying that he would wager I will not leave. I go to bed, scoffing at his idea, and fall asleep.

The next day at dawn the coachman comes to tell me that, one of his horses being sick, he cannot leave. I see that Desarmoises has spoken the truth, but I laugh. I order the coachman out of my room, and I send Leduc to ask the innkeeper for post horses. The innkeeper comes and tells me he has no horses, and that to procure some would take all morning. The Marquis de Prié, having left an hour after midnight, had emptied his stable. So I tell him I will dine at Aix, but that I count on his promise and so will leave at two o'clock.

I go out to visit the fountain and, stopping at the stable, I see one of my coachman's horses lying down and the man himself crying. I believe there is no trickery, and I console him by paying him, saying that I have no further need for him. I go to the fountain. And now, my dear reader, for something straight out of a romance, but which is nevertheless true. If you think it fictitious, you are wrong.

Twenty paces before I reach the waters I see two nuns coming from that direction, both veiled, one whose figure leads me to conclude that she is young, the other obviously old. The thing which strikes me is their habit, for it is the same as that of my dear M. M., whom I had last seen on July 24, 1755. That had been five years ago. Their sudden appearance did not suffice to make me believe the nun I saw was M. M., but it was enough to make me curious. They were walking toward the fields, I turn back to intercept them, to see them face to face, and to show myself. But I tremble when I see the younger one, who was walking ahead of the older, raise her veil; I see M. M. I could not possibly doubt it, I had too much cause to know her. I walk toward her, she quickly lowers her veil, and she takes another path, obviously to avoid me. I instantly fall in with whatever reasons she may have, and I turn back, but without losing sight of her; I follow her at a distance to see where she will stop. Five hundred paces farther on I see her enter a solitary peasant's house. It is enough. I go back to the fountain to learn what I can.

"The charming and unfortunate M. M.," I said to myself on the way, "has fled from her convent, desperate, perhaps mad, for why did she not discard the habit of her order? Perhaps she has come to take the waters here with permission from Rome, and that is why she has a nun with her and must wear her habit. But such a long journey can only have been made on some false pretext. Can she have yielded to some inclination, of which the fatal result has been pregnancy? She may be in difficulties, and now she is glad to have found me. She will have found me ready to do anything for her she may want, and my constant friendship will convince her that I was not unworthy to possess her heart."

So musing, I come to the waters, where I see the whole company from the inn. They all say they are delighted that I have not gone. I ask the Chevalier *Z* after his wife, he replies that she is fond of lying in bed, and that I would do well to go and make her get up. I take leave of them to go to her, and the local doctor comes up to me and says the waters of Aix will make me twice as healthy. I ask him point-blank if he is the doctor of a pretty nun I had seen. He replies that she takes the waters but talks to no one.

"Where is she from?"

"Nobody knows; she is lodging in a peasant's house."

I leave the doctor, and nothing can stop me from going to talk with the peasant who is lodging her; but when I am a hundred paces from the house I see a peasant woman coming to meet me. She says that her ladyship the nun asks me to come back at nine o'clock, that the lay sister will be asleep then, and she can talk with me. I assure her that I will not fail to come, and I give her a louis.

I go back to the inn, certain that I will talk with the adorable M. M. at nine o'clock. I ask where Madame *Z*'s room is, and, entering without knocking, I say that her husband has sent me to make her get up.

"I thought you had left."

"I shall leave at two o'clock."

I find the young woman even more appetizing in bed than at the table. I help her put on a corset, and I become ardent; but she overawes me. I sit down at her feet, I talk to her of the sudden blow which her beauty has dealt my soul, and of my unhappiness at having to leave without giving her adequate proof of my ardor; she laughs and answers that I am my own master and can stay if I will.

"Encourage me to hope for your favors, and I will put off leaving until tomorrow."

"You are in too much of a hurry, and I beg you to calm yourself."

Making the best of the little she let me do, though pretending, of course, to yield to force, I had to put myself to rights on the appearance of her husband, who, however, made some noise before coming in. It was she who told him that she had persuaded me to defer my departure until the next day. He congratulated her, and, saying that he owes me a revenge, he produces cards and sits down on the other side of his wife, making her serve as our table. I stop when a servant comes to announce dinner. Madame says that, not having time to dress, she will dine in bed; her husband says we will dine with her, and I agree. He goes to order dinner, and, on the strength of having lost another eighteen or twenty louis, I tell her clearly that I will leave after dinner if she will not promise to be kind to me in the course of the day. She replies that she will expect me for breakfast the next morning at nine, and that we will be alone. She gives me a more than trifling down payment, and I promise to stay.

We dine with her, sitting beside her bed; I send Leduc to tell the innkeeper that I will not leave until the next day after dinner, and I see both husband and wife well pleased. Madame wishes to get up, I leave her, promising to return in an hour to play hundred-point piquet with her. I go to my room for money, and I find Desarmoises, who assures me that the coachman had been paid two louis to substitute a sick horse for his own. I laugh and say that I cannot win on one side without losing on the other, that I am in love with Madame *Z*, and that I will put off my departure until she has satisfied me.

I went back to her room and played piquet at a louis a hundred with her until eight o'clock. I then excused myself on the pretext of a bad headache, paying her ten or twelve louis and reminding her that she was to wait for me in bed and give me breakfast at nine o'clock. I left her surrounded by people.

By the light of the moon I walked alone to the house where I was to talk with M. M., impatient to know the outcome of my visit, on which my destiny might depend. Suspecting the possibility of a trap, I had a pair of unfailing pistols in my pocket and my sword under my arm. At twenty paces from the house I see the peasant woman, who says that, since the nun cannot come downstairs, I must be prepared to climb up to her room, entering through the window. She takes me behind the house and shows me a ladder leaning against the window by which I am to go in. Seeing no light, I would have decided not to go; but hearing "Come and fear nothing" spoken to me by M. M. herself from the window, which in any case was not too high, I have no more doubts, I climb up, I enter, and I clasp her in my arms, covering her face with kisses. I ask her in Venetian why she has no candle, and I beg her to satisfy my impatience at once by telling me the whole story of what seemed to me a miracle.

But never in my life have I been so surprised as when I heard a voice which was not M. M.'s reply, not in Venetian but in French, that I did not need a candle to tell her what Monsieur de Cou. . .[5] had decided to do to extricate her from her fatal situation.

"I do not know Monsieur de Cou. . .; you are not the nun I saw this morning. You are not a Venetian."

"Alas for me! I have made a mistake; but I am the nun you saw this morning. I am French; I implore you in God's name to be discreet, and to go, for I have nothing to say to you. Speak in a whisper, for if my lay sister, who is asleep, should wake up I am ruined."

"Have no doubt of my discretion. What deceived me was a striking resemblance. If you had not shown me your face I should not have come here; forgive me the audacious caresses my love bestowed on you, thinking you another."

"You have amazed me. Would that I were the nun in whom you are interested! I am in the most terrible of quandaries."

"If ten louis, Madame, can be of service to you I beg you to accept them."

"Thank you, but I have no need of money. Permit me also to return the louis you sent me."

"I gave it to the peasant woman, and you surprise me more and more. What is your calamity, which money cannot cure?"

"It may be that God has sent you to help me. Perhaps you will give me good advice. So listen to me, just for a quarter of an hour."

"Yes, and with the greatest interest. Let us sit down."

"Alas, there is neither chair nor bed here."

"Then speak."

"I am from Grenoble. I was forced to take the veil at Chambéry. Two years later Monsieur de Cou. . . so far led me astray that I received him in my arms in the convent garden, which he entered by climbing the wall. Finding that I was pregnant, I told him so. The idea that I should bear the child in my convent being horrible, for they would have locked me in a cell to die, he thought of getting me out by the order of a doctor, who would threaten me with death if I did not come here to take these incomparable waters to cure me of the disease which the same doctor would say I have. The doctor was found, and Princess XXX,[6] who is always at Chambéry, let into the secret, persuaded the Bishop[7] to grant me three months' leave and to obtain the Abbess's consent to it. Having made my arrangements, I thought I should be leaving at the end of my seventh month; but apparently I was mistaken, for the three months are almost over and I am still pregnant. I absolutely must go back to the convent, and you will understand that I cannot bring myself to it. The lay sister whom the Abbess put to watch over me is the cruelest of women. She has orders not to let me speak to anyone and to keep me from showing myself. It was she who ordered me to turn back when she saw you change your direction to meet me. I raised my veil to let you see that I was she whom I believed you were seeking; luckily she did not notice it. The viper wants me to go back to the convent in three days on the ground that my sickness, which she believes to be dropsy, is incurable. She would not let me talk with the doctor, whom I might have won over by telling him the truth. I long for death. I am twenty-one years old."

"Do not weep so. But how could you have given birth here without your lay sister being aware of it?"

"The peasant woman who lets me this lodging, and in whom I confided, assured me that as soon as I felt the first pains a soporific which she bought in Annecy would put her to sleep. It is from the effect of the same drug that she is asleep now in the room under this garret."

"Why was I not let in by the door?"

"To hide you from the peasant woman's brother; he is malicious too."

"But what reason did you have to believe Monsieur de Cou. . . had sent me?"

"Because ten or twelve days ago I wrote him and described my distress so vividly that I think it impossible he will not find some way to rescue me. I thought he had sent you."

"Are you sure your letter reached him?"

"The peasant woman herself put it in the post at Annecy."

"You should have written to the Princess."

"I did not dare."

"I will go to the Princess myself, or to Monsieur de Cou. . . , or anywhere, even to the Bishop to get you an extension, for you cannot go back to the convent in your present condition. Decide, for I can do nothing without your consent. Do you want to come with me? I will bring you clothes tomorrow and take you to Italy, and I will look after you as long as you live."

Instead of an answer I hear only the sad sound of her sobs. Not knowing what more to say, I promised I would come back the next day to learn what decision she had taken, for she had to decide on one course or another. I went down by the same ladder, and, giving the peasant woman another louis, I told her I would come back the next day but that she must arrange to let me in by the door and must double the dose of opium she had given the lay sister.

I went home to bed, all in all very glad that I had been wrong in my idea that the nun might be my dear M. M.; but having seen such a likeness I was extremely curious to see her more closely. I was sure she would grant me the favor the next day. I laughed over the kisses I had given her. An unspoken presentiment told me that I would be of use to her. I felt that, when the worst came to the worst, I could not abandon her; and I congratulated myself when I saw that, to do a good deed, I did not need to be led into it by my senses, for as soon as I learned that it was not on M. M. that I had lavished my kisses I felt that they had been thrown away. It did not even occur to me to embrace her when I left.

Desarmoises told me in the morning that, not seeing me at supper, the whole company had racked their brains trying to guess where I might be. Madame *Z* had praised me in the highest terms, heroically withstanding the raillery of the two other ladies and boasting that she could keep me in Aix as long as she should stay there.

I had really become curious about her, and I should have been sorry to leave the place without having had her in due form at least once.

I enter her room at nine o'clock and find her dressed. I protest, she says it should make no difference to me, I sulk, and I take chocolate with her in silence. She offers me my revenge at hundred-point piquet, but I decline and get up to leave. She asks me to escort her to the fountain, and I reply that if she takes me for a child she is wrong, that I do not care to pretend I am pleased with her when I am not, and that she can get anyone she likes to escort her to the fountain.

"Good-by, Madame."

So saying, I went downstairs, not listening to what she was saying to keep me with her. At the inn door I told the innkeeper I would leave without fail at three o'clock, and, being at her window, she heard me. I went straight to the fountain, where the Chevalier *Z* asked me how his wife was; I told him I had left her in her room in good health. We saw her arrive a half hour later with a stranger who had just arrived and whom a Monsieur de Saint-Maurice greeted warmly. Madame *Z* calmly left him and took my arm. After complaining of my behavior she said that she had wanted to put me to a test and that if I loved her I should defer my departure again and come to breakfast with her the next morning at eight o'clock. I replied, quietly but seriously, that I would think it over. I maintained the same attitude all through dinner, having said two or three times that I would certainly leave at three o'clock; but needing to find some excuse for not leaving, since I had promised to visit the nun, I let myself be persuaded to make a bank at faro.

So I went to fetch all the gold I had, and I saw the whole company as surprised as they were pleased when I placed before me some four hundred louis in Spanish and French gold coins and fifteen or twenty in silver. I announced that I would stop at eight o'clock. The new arrival laughed and said that perhaps the bank might not last that long. It was three o'clock. I asked Desarmoises to serve as my croupier; and I began dealing, with all the slowness demanded by the presence of eighteen or twenty punters and my knowledge that they were all professional gamblers. At each deal I opened a fresh pack of cards.

About five o'clock, my bank being the loser, a carriage arrives. We are told that it is three Englishmen coming from Geneva and changing horses to go on to Chambéry. A moment later I see them enter and I greet them. It was Mr. Fox and his two friends who had played quinze with me. My croupier gives them each a *livret,*[8] they accept with pleasure, and room is made for them. Each of them punts at ten louis, stakes on two and three cards, makes *paroli, sept et le va,* and the *quinze*[9] as well; I saw that my bank was in danger of being broken, and, putting a good face[10] on it, I encouraged them. God being neutral, they could only lose; and he was neutral. At the third deal all their purses were empty. Their horses were harnessed.

While I was shuffling, the youngest of them takes a bill of exchange from his portfolio and, after showing it to his two friends, asks me if I will accept it on a card without knowing how much it is for.

"Yes," I replied, "if you will tell me on whom it is drawn and provided that the amount is not more than my bank."

After thinking for a little and looking at the bank, he said that his bill of exchange was not as much as my bank and that it was a sight bill on Zappata at Turin. I accept. He cuts, and puts his bill on the ace. The two others say they are in for a half share. The ace never turning up, I am left with twelve cards, and I calmly tell the Englishman that he is at liberty to withdraw. He refuses. I deal two hands; the ace does not appear; I had eight cards; there were four aces, and my last card was not an ace.

"My Lord," I said, "the odds are two to one that the ace is here; I am willing to let you off, withdraw."

"You are too generous," he answered; "deal."

The ace appeared and not in a doublet; I at once put the bill of exchange in my pocket without unfolding it, and the Englishmen left, laughing and thanking me. A minute later Fox came back and, roaring with laughter, asked me to lend him fifty louis. I instantly gave them to him with the greatest pleasure. He returned them to me in London three years later.

The whole company was curious to know the value of the bill of exchange, but I wanted to have the pleasure of satisfying no one's curiosity. Being curious myself, I found when I was alone that it was for eight thousand Piedmontese lire.[11]

After the Englishmen departed, Fortune decided to favor my bank. I stopped about eight o'clock, there being no one left except the ladies, who had won. All the men had lost. I won over a thousand louis, and Desarmoises received twenty-five, for which he was grateful. After stopping in my room to lock up my money, I went to see the nun.

The good peasant woman let me in by the door, saying that everyone was asleep and that she had not needed to double the dose to put the lay sister to sleep for she had never waked. What was this! I go up to the garret, and by the light of a candle I see my nun with her face covered by a veil. The peasant woman had put a long sack filled with straw against the wall; it served us as a seat, and a bottle on the floor served as the candlestick for the candle which gave us light.

"What decision have you reached, Madame?"

"None, for something has happened which has us in despair. My lay sister has been asleep for twenty-eight hours."

"She will die in convulsions or of apoplexy tonight, if you do not call a doctor who can perhaps summon her back to life with castoreum." [12]

"We have thought of that, but we do not dare. You see what the consequences would be. Whether he cures her or not, he will say we gave her the poison."

"God in heaven! I pity you. Even if you call the doctor now, I fear it is too late and you would call him to no purpose. Considering everything, you must bow to the decrees of Providence and let her die. The harm is done, and I know no remedy for it."

"We must at least think of her salvation and call a priest."

"A priest is certain to be ignorant and, wanting to appear the opposite, will tell everything. No priest, Madame; you shall have him sent for when she is dead; you will give him something to drink, and he, far from thinking that you could have poisoned her, will be concerned only to soothe your tears."

"Then must we let her die?"

"No. We must leave her to nature."

"If she dies I will send a messenger to the Abbess, who will send me another lay sister."

"And you will gain at least a week; and meanwhile you will perhaps bear your child; so you see that your happiness may depend on this misfortune. Do not weep, Madame; let us bow to the will of God; permit the peasant woman to come here, for I must impress the importance of silence on her and the absolute need for the utmost prudence in the matter, which may be the ruin of us all, for if it were discovered that I came here I should be thought the poisoner."

Summoned, the peasant woman comes up, and she understands everything. She realizes her own danger and promises me that she will not go for the priest until she sees that the lay sister is dead. I make her accept ten louis, to use as she sees best in the atrocious situation in which we all found ourselves. Seeing herself rich, she kisses my hands, she weeps, she kneels and promises to do whatever I tell her. She goes downstairs again.

The nun, sinking into somber reflections, weeps all the more; and, considering herself guilty of the murder, she thinks she sees Hell open, anguish chokes her, and she falls in a faint at the other end of the sack. Not knowing what to do for her, I run to the stairs and call the peasant woman, who comes up, then goes down again for vinegar. Having no alcoholic essence, I raise her veil and put a pinch of errhine into her nose, and I laugh, remembering how seasonably I had given a pinch of it to Madame . . . at Soleure.[13] The peasant woman comes back with vinegar, and, the errhine beginning to act, the nun sneezes; but I am as if petrified when, turning, she lets me see her face. I see M. M.'s, and such a perfect likeness that I cannot think I am deceived. I stand there motionless, letting the woman take off her coif to rub her temples with the vinegar she has brought. What recalls me from my amazement is her black hair and, a moment later, her eyes of the same color, which the strong sternutative had made her open. I am then convinced that she is not M. M., whose eyes were blue, but I fall madly in love with her. I take her in my arms, and the woman, seeing that she has revived, departs. I cover her with kisses, and she cannot defend herself because of her sneezing. She begs me in Jesus' name to respect her and let her put on her veil again, saying that otherwise she will incur excommunication, but her fear of excommunication at such a moment makes me laugh. She assures me that the Abbess had threatened her with it if she let a man see her.

I then left her to the peasant woman's ministrations, fearing that the effort of sneezing might bring on her delivery. I promised to see her again the next day at the same hour, and she implored me not to abandon her.

Such as I am, it was impossible for me to abandon her; but it was no longer to my credit; I had fallen in love with this new, black-eyed M. M. I was determined to do everything for her, and certainly not to let her go back to the convent in her condition. I felt that in saving her I was carrying out a command from God. God had willed that I should take her for M. M. God had made me win a great deal of money. God had provided Madame *Z* so that the curious could not guess the real reason for my deferred departure. What have I not attributed to God in the course of my life! Yet the rabble of philosophers have always accused me of atheism.

The next morning about eight o'clock I found Madame *Z* in bed and still asleep. Her chambermaid asked me to go in on tiptoe, and shut the door. Twenty years had passed since a Venetian woman whose sleep I had respected had laughed at me when she woke and would have nothing more to do with me. Madame *Z* tried to pretend she was a very sound sleeper, but she had to show me unmistakable signs of life when she felt too filled with it herself, and laughter succeeded the act. She said that her husband had gone to Geneva to buy her a repeating watch[14] and that he would not be back until the next day.

"You can," she said, "spend the night with me."

"Night, Madame, is for sleep. If you are not expecting anyone I will spend the whole morning with you."

"Very well. No one will come here."

She then put my hair in a cap of her husband's, and we were instantly in each other's arms. I found her as amorous as I could wish, and she was convinced that I was her match in every respect. We spent four splendid hours, often cheating each other but only to give us something to laugh at. After the last combat she asked me, in recompense for her love, to spend three more days at Aix.

"I promise, my beautiful *Z*, to remain here as long as you will give me such proofs of friendship as you have given me this morning."

"Then let us get up and go downstairs for dinner."

"Downstairs? If you could see your eyes!"

"Let them guess. The two Countesses will die of mortification. I want everyone to be certain that you are staying on only for my sake."

"I am not worth the trouble, my angel, but I will be glad to oblige you, even if I lose all my money in these three days."

"I should be sorry for that; but if you do not punt you will not lose, even though you let the ladies rob you."

"Believe me, I let myself be robbed only by ladies. You, too, took me for some *parolis de campagne.*" [15]

"True, but not as often as the Countesses; and I regret it, for they may think you love them. After you left, the Marquis de Saint-Maurice said you should never have offered to let the Englishman withdraw on eight cards, for if he had won he might have thought you knew it."

"Tell Monsieur de Saint-Maurice that a man of honor is incapable of harboring such a suspicion, and that in any case, since I knew the young nobleman's character, I was morally certain that he would not accept my offer."

When we went down to dinner everyone applauded. The beautiful *Z* acted as if I were at her beck and call, and I assumed the utmost modesty. After dinner no one dared invite me to make a bank; they were all out of money. They got up a game of trente et quarante,[16] which went on all day. I lost only some twenty louis. Toward dusk I slipped away, and, after going up to tell Leduc that he was never to leave my room while I was in Aix, I started toward the house where the unfortunate nun must be impatient to see me appear; but despite the darkness I think I see that I am being followed. I stop, the people behind me overtake me and go on. Two minutes later I start off again, and I see the same pair, whom I would never have overtaken if they had not slowed their pace. Since it could still be natural, I leave the road, though not so as to lose my way, sure that I can return to it when I no longer have reason to think I am followed. But my suspicion becomes certainty when at some distance I see two phantoms; I stop under a tree and fire one of my pistols into the air. A minute later, seeing no one, I proceed to the peasant's house, after returning to the fountain to make sure I should not miss the road.

I go up to the usual place, and by the light of two candles on a small table I see the nun in bed.

"Are you ill, Madame?"

"I am well, thank God, after giving birth to a boy at two o'clock this morning, whom my kind hostess has taken God knows where. The Holy Virgin has answered my prayers. I had only one violent pain, and a quarter of an hour later I was sneezing again. Tell me if you are a man or an angel, for I fear to sin by worshiping you."

"You give me news which fills me with joy. And your lay sister?"

"She is still breathing, but we have no hope that she can escape death. Her face is distorted. We have committed a great crime."

"God will forgive you. Adore Eternal Providence."

"The peasant woman is sure you are an angel. It is your powder which brought on my confinement. I shall never forget you, even though I do not know who you are."

The woman comes up, and, after congratulating her on ministering so well to the nun in childbed, I again exhort her to make much of the priest she will summon when the lay sister has breathed her last, to prevent him from suspecting the cause of her death. She assures me that all will be well, that no one knew either that the lay sister had been ill or why Madame had stayed in bed. She said that she had herself taken the infant to Annecy, and that she had bought everything which could be needed in her house as things now stood. She said that her brother had gone away the night before and would not be back for a week, and so we had nothing more to fear. I gave her another ten louis, asking her to buy a few pieces of furniture and to have something ready for me to eat the next day; she said she still had a good deal of money, but when she heard me reply that all the money she had left was for her I thought she would go mad with gratitude. Seeing that my presence embarrassed the new mother, I left, promising that I would come to see her the next day.

I could not wait to be well out of this perilous situation, but I could not cry victory until the lay sister was buried. I trembled, for the priest, unless he was an idiot, must see beyond doubt that the dead woman had died from poison.

The next morning I found the Chevalier *Z* in his room with his wife, both engaged in examining the handsome watch he had bought for her. He congratulated her in my presence on having been able to keep me in Aix. He was one of those men who would rather be known as a cuckold than as a fool. I left him in order to accompany his wife to the waters, and on the way she told me she would be alone the next morning and that she would not again be curious about my eight o'clock walk.

"So it was you who had me followed?"

"Yes, I, just as a joke, for there are nothing but mountains in that direction; but I did not think you were so ill-natured. Luckily your shot missed."

"My dear, I fired into the air, for fear is enough to teach curiosity a lesson."

"So they won't follow you another time."

"And if they do, I may let them, for my walk is innocent. I am always back in my room by ten o'clock."

We were still at table when we saw a berlin drawn by six horses arrive, bringing the Marquis de Prié, a Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis,[17] and two charming ladies, one of whom, Madame *Z* told me, was the Marquis's mistress. Four places are immediately laid, everyone sits down again, and while waiting to be served the Marquis is told the whole story of the bank I had made and the arrival of the Englishmen. The Marquis congratulates me, saying he would never have expected to find me still at Aix, and Madame *Z* says that I would have left if she had not prevented me. Accustomed to her tactlessness, I admit it. He says he will make a small bank for me after dinner, and I answer that I will play against it. He made it a hundred louis, and I played, losing that amount in two deals, after which I rose and went to my room to answer several letters. At nightfall I went to see the nun.

"The lay sister is dead, Monsieur; she will be buried tomorrow, the day we were to return to our convent. Here is the letter I am writing the Abbess. She will send me another lay sister, unless she orders me to return to the convent with this peasant woman."

"What did the priest say?"

"He said she died of a lethargy arising from her brain which had liquefied, which must have brought on an apoplectic stroke. I would like to have fifteen masses said for her—may I?"

"You shall do as you wish."

I at once instructed the peasant woman to have them said at Annecy and to tell the priest only that he was to offer them according to the intention of the person who sent him the payment for them. She promised she would do so. She said that the dead woman was hideous, and that she had put two guards to watch her so that the witches would not come in the form of cats and steal one of her limbs.

"Tell me from whom you bought the laudanum."

"The woman who sold it to me is a very respectable midwife. We needed it to put poor Madame to sleep when the birth pangs took her."

"When you left the child at the hospital did anyone recognize you?"

"Have no fear. I put it in the wheel [18] when nobody saw me, with a note saying that it had not been baptized. The burial costs six francs, which the priest will be glad to pay, for, God forgive her, we found two louis on her. Madame said to let the priest keep the rest to say masses for her."

"Couldn't she have two louis with a clear conscience?"

"Madame says not."

She then told me that they had only two Savoyan soldi[19] a day, and that they could not have a copper without the Abbess's knowledge, on pain of excommunication.

"But now," she said, "I live like a princess, as you shall see at supper. Though this good woman knows that the money you gave her is hers, she keeps lavishing it on me. I can't stop her."

At that I encourage her to spend, giving her another ten louis. She said that she would buy some cows, and that I had made the fortune of her house.

Left alone with her, and her charming face, which reminded me only too much of M. M.'s, making me ardent, I talked to her about her seducer, saying that I was astonished he had not given her the help she needed in the cruel situation to which he had brought her. She replied that she could not have accepted even the smallest sum of money because of her vows of poverty and obedience, and that she would give the Abbess a louis she had left from the charity the Bishop had procured for her, and that as for her forsaken condition at the fatal moment when she had met me, she could only conclude that he had certainly not received her letter.

"Is he rich and handsome?"

"Rich, but extremely ugly, a hunchback and fifty years old."

"Then how could you fall in love with him?"

"I was not in love. He roused my pity. He wanted to kill himself. I was afraid. I went to the garden on the night he swore he would be there, only to beg him to leave it; and he left, but after having satisfied his wanton desire."

"So he forced you?"

"No, he could not have done that. He wept, and he begged me so hard that I let him on condition that he would not come to the garden again."

"Weren't you afraid of becoming pregnant?"

"I don't understand it at all, since I have always believed that for a girl to become pregnant she had to do it with a man at least three times."

"Unlucky ignorance! So he did not keep asking you for further meetings in the garden?"

"I refused, because our confessor made me promise, if I wanted absolution, that I would not see him again."

"Did you tell your confessor who your seducer was?"

"Of course not. That would have been to commit another sin."

"Did you tell your confessor that you were pregnant?"

"Not that either, but he must have supposed it. He is a saint, who may have prayed to God for me; and my meeting you is perhaps the fruit of his prayers."

I remained silent for a quarter of an hour, absorbed in deep reflection. All the girl's misfortunes had come from her candor, her innocence, and a mistaken feeling of pity which led her to grant a monster who was in love with her something which she regarded very lightly because she had never been in love. She was religious, but, her religion being merely a habit, it was very weak. With her, religion was a matter of calculation. She loathed sin because she had to purge herself of it by confession on pain of eternal damnation, and she did not want to be damned. She had plenty of common sense, and too little intelligence because she had never been taught by experience. Considering all this, I foresaw that she would be very reluctant to grant me what she had freely given to Monsieur de Cou. . . ; she had repented too sorely to run the same risk with another man.

The peasant woman came up, laid two places on a small table, and brought us supper. Everything was new—linen, plates, glasses, knives, spoons—and everything very clean. The wines were very good and the dishes exquisite because nothing was elaborate. Game, roast, delicious fish, and excellent cheeses. I spent an hour and a half eating, drinking, and talking. The nun ate almost nothing, but that did not keep me from emptying two bottles. I was on fire. The peasant woman, delighted with my praise, promises me the same sort of fare every night, she clears everything away, and goes downstairs. Again alone with a woman whose face was an enchantment and who filled me with desires which, after the appetizing supper, I could not restrain, I talk to her of her health and of the discomfort from which she must be suffering after childbirth. She said that she felt perfectly well and that she could go to Chambéry on foot.

"The only thing," she said, "which troubles me a little is my breasts; but the peasant woman assures me that by day after tomorrow the milk will recede and they will return to their natural condition."

"Will you allow me to examine them?"

"Look."

Naked in her bed, she pulls down her shift, and, thinking she is only being obedient and polite, even afraid that she is committing the sin of pride or is wronging me by supposing that my thoughts are anything but decent, she lets me look at the whole of her charming bosom and touch it all over and all round. Taking care not to alarm her candor, I control myself, I ask her without any show of excitement how she feels a little lower down, and, as I put the question, I extend one hand, but she stops it from reaching its goal, saying that she still feels a little uncomfortable. I beg her pardon; I tell her I hope to find her perfectly well the next day; I say that the beauty of her bosom only increases the interest she has inspired in me, and I give her a tender kiss, which she thinks it her duty to meet with one of her own. I feel carried away, and, convinced that I must either risk losing all her confidence or go at once, I leave her, calling her by the sweet name of "my dear daughter."

I arrived at my inn soaking wet, for it was raining. The next morning I rose late. I put in my pocket the two portraits I had of M. M. in her habit and stark naked, intending to astonish the nun. I went to Madame *Z*'s room, and, not finding her there, went on to the fountain, where she reproached me. After dinner the Marquis de Prié made the bank; however, finding only a hundred louis in it, I saw that he hoped to win much but was willing to risk only a little. Nevertheless I took a hundred louis from my purse. He said that, if I wanted amusement, I should not stake on only one card. I replied that I would put a louis on each of the thirteen. He laughed and said I would lose.

But as it turned out, in less than three hours I won eighty louis. At every deal I won a *quinze et le va* and sometimes two. I left, as I did every day, at nightfall, and I found the invalid charming. She said she had a slight fever which, according to the peasant woman, she was bound to have, and that she would be well the next day and would get up. When I put out my hand to raise her coverlet she kissed it, saying that she was very glad to give me that token of her daughterly fondness. She was twenty-one years of age and I thirty-five. My affection for her was much stronger than a father's. I said that the confidence she showed me by receiving me undressed in her bed increased the fatherly fondness I felt for her, and that she would see me melancholy if on the next day I found her wearing her habit.

"Then you will find me in bed," she replied, "and willingly, for in the hot weather we are having my woolen habit stifles me. I thought that being all dressed, as decency demands, I might please you better; but I am content if you do not mind."

The peasant woman came up and gave her a letter from the Abbess which her nephew had that moment brought for her from Chambéry. She told her that she would send her two lay sisters who would bring her back to the convent and that, since she had recovered her health, she could make the short journey on foot and thus save the money for a better use; but she added that since the Bishop was in the country and she needed his permission the lay sisters could not set out for a week or ten days. She ordered her, on pain of excommunication, never to leave her room in the meanwhile and to speak to no man, not even to the owner of the house in which she was staying, who must have a wife. She ended by saying that she would have a mass sung for the repose of the deceased lay sister's soul.

The peasant woman asked me to face the window, since Madame needed to do something. After that I sat down close beside her on her bed again.

"Tell me, Madame," I said, "if during this week or ten days I may come to pay you my respects without offending your conscience, for I am a man. I have stayed here only for you, who have inspired the greatest interest in me; but if you are reluctant to receive me because of this strange excommunication, speak, and I will leave tomorrow."

"Monsieur, it is an excommunication which I have already incurred; but I hope that God will not confirm it, since instead of making me wretched it has made me happy, and I tell you frankly that your visits are now the joy of my life, and I consider myself doubly happy if you like coming to see me. But I wish you to tell me, if you can do so without indiscretion, for whom you took me the first time you came to me in the dark, for you cannot imagine my surprise nor the fear I felt. I had no notion of kisses like those with which you covered my face, but which could not make my excommunication worse because I did not consent to them; and you have told me yourself that you thought you were giving them to another woman."

"Madame, I will satisfy your curiosity. I can do so now I know you are aware that we are human, that the flesh is weak, and that it drives the strongest souls to commit sins despite reason. You shall now hear all the vicissitudes which marked the two years of a love affair with the most beautiful and most intelligent, if not the most prudent, of all the nuns in my country."

"Monsieur, tell me all; having fallen into the same fault, I should be unjust and inhuman if I were scandalized by any detail, for you certainly could not have done more with the nun than Cou. . . did with me."

"No, Madame. I was lucky. I did not give her a child; but if I had I would have carried her off and taken her to Rome where the Holy Father, seeing us at his feet, would have released her from her vows; and my dear M. M. would now be my wife."

"Good God! M. M. is my name."

This coincidence, which was really nothing, amazed us both. Strange, fickle chance, which nevertheless acts powerfully on predisposed minds and produces important consequences! After remaining silent for a few minutes I told her all that had befallen me with M. M., concealing nothing. At my vivid descriptions of our amorous combats I saw that she was often excited, and when at the end of my story I heard her ask if she really was so much like her that I took her for M. M., I drew her portrait as a nun from my portfolio and placed it in her hands.

"It is my portrait," she said, "except for the eyes and the eyebrows. It is my habit! It is wonderful. What a combination of circumstances! I owe all my happiness to this likeness. Thank God you do not love me as you loved this dear sister who has my face and even my name. Here are the two M. M.s. Inscrutable Divine Providence! All thy ways are adorable. We are but weak, ignorant, proud mortals."

The peasant woman came to serve us a supper even more appetizing than the one of the previous evening, but the invalid ate only a bowl of soup. She promised me she would sup heartily the next night.

An hour which I spent with her after the peasant woman had cleared away made her certain that I felt for her only a father's fondness. Of her own free will she showed me her bosom, which had not yet returned to its normal state, and let me touch it all over, never even thinking that it could arouse the slightest emotion in me, and she took all the kisses which I bestowed on her beautiful lips and her beautiful eyes for demonstrations of the most innocent friendship. She laughed and said she thanked God her eyes were not blue. When I reached the point at which I could no longer control myself I left her and went back to my room to go to bed. Leduc gave me a note from Madame *Z* in which she said we would see each other at the fountain because she had been invited to breakfast with the Marquis's mistress.

At the fountain she told me that the whole company maintained that, staking on thirteen cards, I was bound to lose, for it was false that in each deal there was a card which won four times, but that the Marquis had said that, even so, he would no longer allow me to stake in that way and that his mistress had undertaken to make me play as usual. I thanked her.

Back at my inn I lost fifty louis playing quinze with the Marquis before dinner, and afterward I let myself be persuaded to make a bank. So I went to my room for five hundred louis; then I install myself at the big table, prepared to defy Fortune. I took Desarmoises as my croupier, announcing that I would honor only cards on which money had been placed, and that I would stop at half past seven o'clock. As it happens, I am seated between the two most beautiful of the ladies, and in addition to the five hundred louis which I take from my purse I call for a hundred écus de six francs to amuse the ladies. But now for what happened.

Seeing only opened packs of cards before me, I demand fresh ones. The major-domo tells me he has sent a man to Chambéry to buy a hundred packs and that he must be back soon.

"Meanwhile," he says, "you can deal with these packs. They are as good as new."

"I don't want them as good as new, but new. I have principles, my friend, which all Hell cannot make me abandon. While I wait for your man I will simply look on. I am sorry I must wait to offer my services to these beautiful ladies."

No one dared say a word to me. I left my seat and gathered up my money. The Marquis de Prié made the bank, and played in a way to do him credit. I remained beside Madame *Z*, who made me her partner and the next day gave me five or six louis. The man who was to come back from Chambéry did not arrive until midnight. I considered I had escaped by the skin of my teeth, for in that part of the world there are people with amazingly sharp eyes. I went and put my money back in my strongbox, then went to see the nun, who was in bed.

"How are you, Madame?"

"Say 'my daughter,' for I wish you were my father so that I could embrace you without any fear."

"Well then, my dear daughter, fear nothing and open your arms to me."

"Yes, let us embrace."

"My infants are prettier than they were yesterday. Let them feed me."

"What madness! Dear Papa, I believe you are drinking your poor daughter's milk."

"It is sweet, my dear friend, and the little I have swallowed is balm to my soul. You cannot be sorry you have granted me this pleasure, for nothing is more innocent."

"No, of course I'm not sorry, for you gave me pleasure too. Instead of calling you Papa I'll call you my baby."

"How I love the good humor I find you in tonight!"

"It's because you have made me happy. I have no more fears. Peace has returned to my soul. The peasant woman told me that in a few days I'll be just as I was before I knew Cou. . . ."

"Not quite, my angel, for your belly, for example—"

"Be still. There's nothing to tell by, I'm amazed myself."

"Let me look."

"Oh, no, please, please! But you may touch it. Is it true?"

"Quite true."

"Oh, my friend! Don't touch that."

"Why not? You can't be different from my old M. M., who cannot be more than thirty now. I will show you a full-length portrait of her, she is stark naked."

"Have you it here? I'd like to see it."

I thereupon take it from my portfolio, and I see that she is in raptures. She kisses it. She asks me if it was all painted from nature, and she sees her own likeness more strikingly in the portrait of my M. M. nude than in the one where she had on her habit.

"But," she said, "it was you who ordered the painter to give her such long hair."

"Certainly not. In our country nuns are only obliged not to let men see their long hair."

"In our country too. They cut it, and then we let it grow again."

"Then you have long hair?"

"As long as hers; but you won't like it because it is black."

"What are you saying? I prefer dark hair to blond. In God's name, let me see it."

"You ask me in God's name to commit a sin, for I incur another excommunication; but I can refuse you nothing. I will show it to you after supper, for I don't want to scandalize the peasant woman."

"You are right. I think you are the most lovable of all beings, and I shall die of grief when you leave this happy cottage to return to your prison."

"I must go there to do penance for all my sins."

How happy I was! I felt sure that I would obtain everything after supper. When the woman appeared I gave her another ten louis. From her amazement I saw that she might think I was out of my mind. I told her I was very rich and that I wanted to convince her I did not think myself rich enough to reward her properly for her motherly care of the nun. She wept for gratitude. She gave us an exquisite supper, at which the invalid thought she could be guided by her appetite; but my state of contentment prevented me from following her example; I could not wait to see the beautiful black hair of this victim of her own goodness of heart. At that moment it was this appetite which dominated me and which left no room for another.

As soon as the woman left us alone together, she took off her coif, and at that I really believed I was seeing M. M. with black hair. She amused herself making it fall over her shoulders like the hair in the portrait I showed her, and she enjoyed hearing me say what was incontestable truth: the contrast provided by her hair and her black eyes made her appear whiter than M. M. It was not true. They were two whites which were equally dazzling but which differed in their tint; it was a difference perceptible only to the eyes of a lover. However, the living object triumphed over the painted image.

"You are whiter," I said, "more beautiful, and more dazzling because of the contrast between black and white; but I think my first M. M. was more loving."

"She may have been so, but not more tender-hearted."

"Her amorous desires must have been more intense than yours."

"I can believe it, for I have never loved."

"That is surprising. But nature and the impulse of the senses—"

"That is an inclination, my dear friend, which we easily satisfy in the convent; we accuse ourselves to our confessor, for we know it is a sin; but he treats it as childish trifling, for he absolves us without giving us any penance; he is a wise old priest, learned and austere in his life; we shall be very sorry when he dies."

"But when you are dallying with another nun like yourself do you not feel that you would love her better if at that moment she could become a man?"

"You make me laugh. It is true that if my little friend became a man I should not be sorry; but you may be sure that we really do not spend our time hoping for such a miracle."

"It can only be because of a lack in your temperament. M. M. was your superior in that way; she preferred me to C. C.; but you would not prefer me to your little friend at the convent."

"Certainly not, for with you I should be breaking my vow, and I should risk consequences which even now make me tremble every time I think of them."

"Then you do not love me?"

"How dare you say that! I love you so much that I am sorry you are not a woman."

"I love you too, but your wish makes me laugh. I would not become a woman to please you, and the more so because, as a woman, I am sure I should not think you so beautiful. Sit up, my accommodating friend, and let me see how your beautiful hair covers half of your beautiful body."

"Gladly. Must I take down my shift?"

"Of course. How beautiful you are! Let me suck the last sweet drops of your milk."

After granting me this delight, gazing at me with a look of the most perfect willingness and letting me clasp her in my arms, unaware, or pretending to be unaware, of the intensity of the pleasure I must be feeling, she said that if friendship was permitted such satisfactions it was preferable to love, for never in her life had her soul known a purer joy than I had given her by clinging to her breasts, as I had done.

"Let me," she said, "do the same to you."

"Here I am, my angel, but I have nothing there."

"Never mind. We'll do it for fun."

After she had satisfied herself we spent a quarter of an hour exchanging kisses. I could bear no more.

"Tell me the truth," I said. "In the fury of these kisses, in these transports which we are pleased to call childish, do you not feel a much greater desire?"

"I will confess that I feel it, but it is sinful; and certain as I am that you feel it too, we must end this dangerous trifling. Our friendship, my dear baby, has become love. Has it not?"

"Yes, love, and love which cannot be conquered. Let us yield to it."

"On the contrary, my dear friend, let us stop now. In future let us be prudent and not again risk becoming its victims. If you love me, you must think as I do."

So saying, she gathered up her hair, and, after putting it under her cap, I helped her to pull up her shift, the coarse linen of which struck me as unworthy of her soft skin; I told her so, and she replied that she was used to it, so it did not hurt her at all. My soul was in the greatest consternation, for the pain my restraint caused me seemed infinitely greater than the pleasure I should have gained from complete fruition; but I had to be certain I should not find the slightest resistance, and I was not certain of it. A folded rose petal spoiled the pleasure of the famous Smindyrides,[20] who loved a soft bed. So I preferred to bear my pain and leave, rather than risk finding the rose petal which troubled the voluptuous Sybarite. I left irretrievably in love. I returned to my lodging at two o'clock in the morning, and I slept until noon.

Leduc gave me a note he should have given me before I went to bed. He had forgotten it. Madame *Z* said that she would expect me at nine o'clock and would be alone; that she was giving a supper, to which she was sure I would come, and that she would leave afterward; she hoped that I would leave too, or that I would at least accompany her as far as Chambéry.

Though I still loved her, all the three points she made in her letter set me laughing. It was too late for me to breakfast with her. I could not accept her invitation to supper because of my nun, whom at that moment I would not have left for the greatest conquest; nor could I undertake to accompany her as far as Chambéry, for it might well happen that I could not leave M. M.

I found her in her room a minute before she went down to dinner. She was furious. She had expected me for breakfast. I told her I had received her note an hour earlier; and she went down without giving me time to tell her I could not promise either to sup with her or to have the honor of escorting her to Chambéry. At table she was sulky with me, and after dinner the Marquis de Prié told me he had new cards and that the whole company wanted to see me deal. There were ladies and gentlemen who had arrived from Geneva that morning; I went for money and made them a bank of five hundred louis. At seven o'clock I had lost more than half that amount, but I stopped nevertheless, putting what was left in my pocket. After giving Madame *Z* a melancholy glance, I went to my room to put away my money, then went to the cottage, where I saw my angel in a big brand-new bed, and a pretty Roman bed[21] for me beside the big one. I laughed at the discrepancy between all this furniture and the dirty garret we were in. Instead of a compliment I gave the peasant woman fifty louis, saying that they were for the rest of the time M. M. would be staying with her, but that she must spend no more on furniture.

Such is, I believe, the character of most gamblers. I should perhaps not have given her such a sum if I had won a thousand louis. I had lost three hundred, and I felt as if I had won the two hundred which were left. I gave her the fifty as if I were paying them on a winning card. I have always loved to spend, but I have never known myself to throw away money except in the course of play. I took the greatest pleasure in giving money which cost me nothing to a person who would set the greatest store by it. My soul was flooded with joy when I saw gratitude and admiration on the noble countenance of my new M. M.

"You must," she said, "be immensely rich."

"Make no mistake. I love you very passionately, that is all. Unable to give you anything directly because of your vow, I lavish what I possess on this good woman so that she will have more and more reason to make you happy during the few days you are yet to stay in her house. But by indirection it will, I hope, make you love me more and more."

"I cannot love you more. I am never unhappy now except when I remember that I must return to the convent."

"You told me yesterday that the thought made you happy."

"And it is just since yesterday that I have become a different woman. I spent a most dreadful night. I could never fall asleep without finding myself in your arms, always waking with a start just as I was about to commit the greatest of sins."

"You did not struggle so hard before committing it with a man whom you did not love."

"That is true, but it is precisely because I was not in love with him that I did not think I was committing a sin. Can you understand that, my dear friend?"

"It is a metaphysics conceived by your pure, divine, and innocent soul, and I understand it perfectly."

"Thank you. You fill me with contentment and gratitude. I rejoice when I think that you are not in a state of mind like mine. I am now sure that I shall gain the victory."

"I will not oppose you, though it distresses me."

"Why?"

"Because you will believe you must refuse me caresses which, though of no consequence, made my life happy."

"I have thought of that."

"You are crying?"

"Yes, and what is more, I love these tears. I have two favors I must ask of you."

"Ask, and be sure they will be granted."

Volume Seven

CHAPTER I

Conclusion of my adventure with the nun from Chambéry. My flight from Aix.

"YESTERDAY," SHE said, "you left with me two portraits of my Venetian sister M. M. I beg you to make me a present of them."

"They are yours."

"I thank you. So much for that. The second favor I ask of you is to accept my portrait; such as it is, I will give it to you tomorrow."

"It will be, my dear friend, the most cherished of all my jewels; but I am surprised that you ask it of me as a favor, when in fact you are doing me one which I should never have dared ask of you. What can I possibly do to deserve your wanting my portrait?"

"Ah, my dear friend! It would be very precious to me; but God preserve me from having it at the convent."

"I will have myself painted in the dress of St. Aloysius Gonzaga,[1] or of St. Anthony of Padua."[2]

"It would damn me."

To my surprise she was wearing a dimity corset with pink ribbons and a cambric shift, on which, though politeness did not permit me to ask where they came from, I kept my eyes; but easily guessing my thought, she laughed and said they were a present the peasant woman had given her because she was fond of lying in bed.

"Finding herself rich," she said, "she tries to think of every way to convince her benefactor that she is grateful to him. Look at this great bed; she was certainly thinking of you; look at the fine sheets. This very fine shift, I must admit, pleases me. I shall sleep the better tonight, provided I can defend myself against the seductive dreams which set my soul on fire last night."

"Do you think this bed, these sheets, and such a shift can deliver your soul from the dreams which you fear?"

"On the contrary. Softness excites the senses to voluptuousness. I will leave her all these things, for what would they say at the convent if they saw me bedded in this fashion? But you seem sad. You were so gay last night."

"How could I be gay when I see myself constrained not to fondle you again because I am sure to give you pain?"

"Say instead 'sure to give me too much pleasure.'"

"Then consent to feel pleasure for the sake of the pleasure it lies with you to give me."

"But your pleasure is innocent, and mine is sinful."

"What would you do if mine were as sinful as yours?"

"You would have made me unhappy last evening, for I could have refused you nothing."

"Unhappy? Consider that you would not have had to fight against dreams and would have slept perfectly well. In short, by giving you this corset the peasant woman has given you a present which will make me unhappy all my life; for I should at least have seen my infants without fearing bad dreams."

"But you cannot be angry with the peasant woman on that account, for if she believes we love each other she must also know that nothing is easier than to unlace a corset. My dear friend, I do not want to see you sad. That is all that matters."

As she uttered these words her beautiful face became red as fire, and she let me cover it with kisses. The peasant woman came up to set a pretty, brand-new table, just as I was about to unlace her without seeing even a shadow of resistance on her face.

This favorable omen put me in a good humor; but, for her part, I saw M. M. become pensive. I took good care not to ask the reason, for I knew it, and I did not want to come to conditions which religion and honor would have made inviolable. I stimulated her appetite by setting her the example of mine, and she drank claret with as much relish as I did, untroubled by any apprehension that, not being accustomed to it, she might find it rousing her to a gaiety which is the inveterate enemy of continence, though favorable to the other virtues. She could not be aware of this, for her gaiety itself, by increasing the brilliance of her reason, made her think it all the more admirable and more firmly attached to pure sentiment than before supper.

As soon as we were alone I congratulated her on her high spirits, assuring her that it was all I needed to rid me of gloom and to make me pass whole hours with her as if they were minutes.

"Only be generous, my dear friend, of the same gifts you gave me last evening."

"I would rather damn myself, my dear friend, and die a hundred times, than risk seeming ungrateful to you. There."

With that, she pulled off her cap, let her hair fall, took off her corset, and, drawing her arms out of her shift, displayed herself to my amorous eyes even as we see the sirens in Correggio's[3] most beautiful canvas. But when

I saw her move over to make room for me, I understood that it was time to reason no more and that love demanded I should seize the moment.

I flung myself beside her rather than on her, and, clasping her in my arms, I pressed my lips to hers. A moment later she turned her head aside, and, since she closed her eyes, I thought she was going to sleep, so I moved a little away from her to contemplate the incalculable riches which fortune and love were offering me and of which I was to take possession. M. M. was asleep; she could not be pretending, she was asleep. But even if she had been pretending, could I hold her ruse against her? Be it real or feigned, her sleep tells the intelligent lover of an adored object that he is unworthy to enjoy her the moment he begins to wonder if he may or may not take advantage of it. If it is real, he risks nothing; if it is feigned, can he accord her a more inadequate or more dishonorable return than to doubt of her consent? But M. M. was incapable of feigning. The poppies of Morpheus made her face radiant. She muttered words which I could not understand; she was dreaming.

I decide to undress, though whether to court a sleep like hers, or to calm my ardor by taking possession of her, I do not know.

Having lain down beside her, I do not fear to wake her by clasping her in my arms; the movement she made to meet mine convinced me that she was continuing her dream, and that whatever I might do could only help to make it real. I finish drawing off her delicate shift, and she stirs like an infant which, feeling itself unswaddled, takes a deep breath. I consummated the sweet crime in her and with her; but before the climax she opened her beautiful eyes.

"Oh, God," she cried in a dying voice, "so it is true!"

After uttering these words she put her mouth against mine to receive my soul, giving me hers. But for that happy exchange we should both have perished. Four or five hours later, waking in the same position and seeing the faint light of dawn mingling with the pale light from the unsnuffed candles, we tranquilly and contentedly learned from each other all the links in our sweet story.

"But we will talk about it more this evening," she said; "let us dress quickly. We love each other, and we have crowned our love. I am freed at last from all my anxieties. We have followed our destiny, obeying the commands of imperious nature. Do you still love me?"

"Can you doubt it? I will answer you this evening."

I dressed again very quickly, and I left her in bed. I saw her laugh when she went to look for her shift, which she did not remember having taken off.

I reached my lodging in broad daylight. Leduc, who had not gone to bed, gave me a letter from Madame *Z*[4] which he had received at eleven o'clock. I had missed her supper and the honor of escorting her to Chambéry; but I had not even remembered either engagement. I was sorry, but I did not know what to do about it. I open her letter and see only six lines; but they said a great deal. She advised me never to go to Turin, for there she would find means to avenge herself for the cutting affront I had put on her. She reproached me for having publicly shown contempt for her by not going to her supper, saying that it dishonored her.

There was no possibility of my going there. I tore up her letter, I had my hair dressed, and I went to the fountain.

Everyone begins by chiding me for not having appeared at Madame *Z*'s supper; in my defense I allege my regimen, which did not allow me to sup; but they laugh at me and say that all is known, and the Marquis's[5] mistress, taking my arm, tells me in so many words that I have the reputation of being fickle; politeness demands my replying that I do not have that base fault, but that in any case no one could reproach me with it if I had the honor of serving a lady like herself; my compliment flatters her; and I at once repent of having paid it when, in the most gracious way, she asks me why I do not come to breakfast at the Marquis's sometimes. I reply that I supposed he had things to do; she answers that he has not and that he would consider it a pleasure, and she ends by making me promise to go there the next morning, saying, as if in passing, that he always breakfasted in her room.

The woman was the widow of a man of rank, fairly young, indubitably pretty, and perfectly versed in all the chatter of the wits; but she did not appeal to me. Having just had Madame *Z*, and having crowned my desires with the nun, I was not able at the time to think even passingly of a new object. Yet I had to pretend I considered myself very fortunate in the lady's giving me the preference over anyone else. She asked the Marquis if she might go back to the inn, and he answered that he had business to finish with the person with whom he was talking, and that I might escort her. On the way she said that if Madame *Z* had not left she would not have dared to take my arm. I could answer only equivocally, for I had absolutely no wish to enter into a relationship with her. Nevertheless I had to see her upstairs to her room, where I had to sit down and where, since I had slept very little during the previous night, I found myself yawning. I asked her a thousand pardons, swearing that I was ill; and she believed it. Indeed, I should have gone to sleep if I had not put a little errhine under my nose; by making me sneeze it forced me to stay awake.

The Marquis arrived and, saying that he was pleased to find me still with her, proposed a game of quinze. I asked him to excuse me, and Madame said with a laugh that if I went on sneezing so hard I really could not play. We went down to dinner, and I let them persuade me to make the bank, all the more easily because my losses of the night before still rankled.

I made it, as always, of five hundred louis, and about seven o'clock I announced the last deal to the company, despite the fact that my bank was diminished by two thirds. But the Marquis and two other heavy players having undertaken to break me, Fortune favored me to such effect that in the end I had recouped and was the winner by two or three hundred louis. I left, promising the company that I would make the same bank the next day. All the ladies had won, because Desarmoises[6] had orders to let them play as they pleased so long as he saw that their stakes were not high. After going to put my money away in my room and telling Leduc that I would spend the night elsewhere, I arrived at my new idol's lodging, soaked to the skin by a heavy rain which caught me halfway there.

I found my love dressed as a nun and lying on the Roman couch. When the peasant woman had left, after drying me as well as she could, I asked M. M. why she had not waited for me in bed.

"I never felt better, my dear friend, except for a slight discomfort which, according to what my midwife says, will remain with me for another five weeks. So I got up to have supper at the table. If you wish, we will go to bed afterward."

"But I hope you will wish it too."

"Alas, I am lost! I believe I shall die when the time arrives for me to leave you."

"Come with me to Rome, and leave everything to me. You will become my wife. We will make each other happy until death."

"I could never bring myself to that, and I beg you not to speak of it again."

Since I was certain that I should spend the night with her, we passed an hour in pleasant talk. At the end of our supper the peasant woman brought her a package and wished us good night. I asked her what the package contained, and she said that it was the present she had promised me, her portrait to the life, but that I was not to see it until she had gone to bed. Being both curious and impatient to see it, I said that it was a foolish whim, and she said that I would approve of it.

I insisted on undressing her myself and taking off her cap; and when she was in bed she opened the package and handed me a piece of parchment, on which I saw a very good likeness of her, stark naked and in the same pose as M. M. in the portrait which I had given her earlier. I praised the skillful painter who had made so good a copy, only changing the color of the eyes and the hair.

"It is not a copy at all," she said, "for he would not have had time. He only made her eyes black, her hair like mine, and her fleece thicker. So you can now say that you have in one portrait the image of the first M. M. and the second, who ought by rights to make you forget the first, who disappeared in the decent portrait too, for there I am dressed as a nun and with black eyes. In such a portrait I can let everyone see me."

"You cannot conceive how dear this gift is to me. Tell me, my angel, how you got your plan so well carried out."

"I told it yesterday to the peasant woman, who said she had a foster son at Annecy who was learning to paint miniatures, but that she would only commission him to take the two miniatures to the most skillful miniature painter in Geneva, who for four or five louis would make the metamorphosis on the spot in two or three hours. I entrusted the two portraits to her, and here they are, executed to perfection. It seems she did not receive them until you saw her bring them to me. Tomorrow morning you can learn more of our little story from her."

"Your peasant is a woman among women, and I must reimburse her. But tell me why you did not want to give me your portrait before you undressed. May I guess the reason?"

"Guess."

"So that I can at once put you in the same pose as that in which you are painted."

"Exactly."

"That charming idea comes from love, but now you must wait for me to undress too."

Both of us thus being in the divine costume of innocence, I placed M. M. as she appeared on the parchment, and she submitted. Divining what I was about to do, she opened her arms; but I told her to wait a moment, for I, too, had something in a package which should be precious to her.

I then take from my portfolio a little jacket of very fine, transparent skin, eight inches long and closed at one end, and which by way of a pouch string at its open end had a narrow pink ribbon. I display it to her, she looks at it, laughs, and says I had used just such jackets with her Venetian sister, and that she was curious about it.

"I will put it on you myself," she said, "and you cannot imagine how glad I am. Tell me why you did not use it last night? I think it impossible that I did not conceive. Alas for me! What shall I do four or five months from now when I can have no doubt of my second pregnancy?"

"My dear friend, we must make up our minds not to think about it, for if the harm is done there is no remedy. But what I can tell you is that experience and deductions from the known laws of nature can lead us to hope that what we did yesterday in the intoxication of our senses will not have the result we fear. It has been said, and indeed written, that one cannot fear it before a certain thing appears which I believe you have not yet seen."

"You are right, it has not."

"So let us dismiss this panic terror, which at the moment can only be fatal to us."

"You console me completely. But, arguing from what you have just said, I do not see why you fear today what did not need to be feared yesterday. I am in the same condition."

"The event, my angel, has often proved the wisest natural scientists wrong, despite their so-called experiential proofs. Nature is wiser than they; let us beware of defying her, and forgive ourselves if we defied her yesterday."

"I love to hear you talk so wisely. So be it. Let us be prudent. There you are, caparisoned by my hands. It is nearly the same thing; but despite the fineness and transparency of the skin, the little fellow pleases me less well in costume. It seems that this covering degrades him, or degrades me—one or the other."

"Both, my angel; but let us at this juncture turn a blind eye to certain speculative ideas which can only spoil our pleasure."

"We will very soon recover it in all its purity; for the moment let me enjoy my reason, to which I have never before in all my life dared to give the reins on this subject; it was Love who invented these little jackets, but he had to ally himself with Precaution; and it seems to me that the alliance must have been displeasing to him, for it belongs only to the dark realm of Policy."

"Alas, that is true! You astonish me. But, my dear friend, we will philosophize afterward."

"Wait another minute; for I have never seen a man, and I have never been so curious to see one as I am now. Ten months ago I should have said that it was the devil who invented these pouches, and today I say that their inventor was not so devilish, for if the hunchback Cou . . . had used one he would not have exposed me to losing my honor and my life. But tell me, I beg you, how the shameless artisans who make these pouches are allowed to live in peace, for they must be known and should be excommunicated a hundred times, or subjected to large fines and corporal punishment if they are Jews, as I believe. Look. The one who made this one for you measured you badly. Here it is too narrow, there too wide; it is almost an arc; it is made for a curved body. What a fool, ignorant of his trade! But what do I see!"

"You make me laugh. It is your fault. Feel, feel. It was bound to happen. I foresaw it."

"You couldn't wait another minute? And you're still at it; I'm sorry, my dear friend; but you are right. O God, what a pity!"

"Oh, there's no great harm done."

"No great harm done? Alas for me! He is dead? You laugh?"

"Let me laugh; for your fear delights me. In a minute you will see the little fellow revived, and so full of life that next time he will not die so easily."

"It is unbelievable."

I take it off, I put it aside, and I offer her another one, which pleases her better for she thinks it will fit me better, and she bursts out laughing when she sees that she can put it on me. M. M. was ignorant of these miracles of nature. Before she knew me, her mind, under strict restraint, had been unable to find its way to truth; no sooner was it free than its own inner elasticity had carried it beyond its barriers with all the swiftness which was its natural endowment, after which it proceeded more slowly. She said that if the jacket should break at its end during the act, the precaution would be useless. I convinced her of the difficulty of such an accident; I informed her that these little pouches were made in England,[7] that one bought them in whatever sizes they happened to come, and I told her where such skins were to be obtained. After all this talk we surrendered to love, then to sleep, then again to love, until it was time for me to go back to my lodging. The peasant woman told me that her foster son had spent only four louis and that she had made him a present of two. I gave her twelve.

I slept until noon, not appearing for breakfast at the Marquis de Prié's, but I sent him word. His mistress was sulky with me all through dinner, but she softened when I let her persuade me to make the bank; however, seeing that she was playing for high stakes, I did not let her go on; after being stopped two or three times she retired to her room; but her lover was winning, and I losing, when the taciturn Duke of Roxburghe arrived from Geneva with Schmit,[8] his tutor, and two other Englishmen. He came to the bank, saying nothing to me except "How do you do, Sir,"[9] and played, urging his two friends to do likewise. After the deal, seeing my bank on its last legs, I sent Leduc to my room to bring me my strongbox, from which I took five rolls of a hundred louis. The Marquis de Prié said coolly that he would be my partner on half shares, and I no less coolly asked him to give me leave not to accept his offer. He continued to punt, taking no offense at my refusal, and when I laid down the cards to end the game, he was ahead by nearly two hundred louis; but most of the others having lost, and especially one of the two Englishmen, I was left with over a thousand louis. The Marquis having asked me to invite him for chocolate in my room the next morning, I replied that it would be an honor. After taking Leduc back to my quarters with my strongbox, I went to my cottage, rather well satisfied with my day's work.

I found my new angel with a look of sadness on her pretty face.

"A nephew of my hostess," she said, "a peasant lad who she assures me is very discreet and who knows a lay sister at my convent, arrived from Chambéry an hour ago and said that the lay sister had told him that day after tomorrow two lay sisters would leave at daybreak to come here and take me back to the convent. That is the whole reason for my sadness and my tears."

"She was not to send them until a week or ten days hence."

"She acted sooner."

"We are unhappy even in our happiness. Make up your mind. Let us go to Rome."

"No. I have lived enough. Let me return to my tomb."

After our supper I told the peasant woman that she must send her nephew to Chambéry with orders to leave there and come back to her the moment the lay sisters set out; traveling quickly, he would reach us at least two hours before they did; I promised my angel I would stay with her until they arrived. I thus dispelled her sorrow; but I left her at midnight in order to be at my lodging in the morning, having promised to give the Marquis breakfast; he came, accompanied by his mistress and by two other ladies with their lovers.

Besides chocolate I gave them everything I could think of which might be supposed appropriate to a so-called breakfast; and after it I ordered Leduc to lock my door and tell everyone I was ill and busy writing in bed, so that I could see no one. I told him that I would be out all day, all night, and all the next day. In conclusion, I ordered him to wait for me until I returned, never leaving my room except when he could not help it. I went to dine with my passion, determined not to leave her until a half hour before the arrival of the lay sisters. When she saw me and heard that I would not leave her until half an hour before the two women the Abbess was sending for her arrived, she trembled with joy. We conceived the idea of not having dinner, supping choicely, and going to bed afterward, not to get up again until the peasant lad came to announce the arrival of the two nuns. We immediately informed the peasant woman, who declared our plan sublime.

We did not find the hours long. Two lovers are never at a loss for things to talk about, since they are themselves the subjects of their discourse. After a very choice supper we spent twelve hours in bed, now making love, now sleeping. The next day after dining we went back to bed, and at four o'clock the peasant woman came up to tell us that the lay sisters would arrive at six. We then took leave of each other in every way of which we were capable, and I sealed our last farewell with my blood. If the first M. M. had seen it, the second was entitled to see it too, and she was terrified, but I easily calmed her. I begged her to keep fifty louis for me, assuring her that I would come for them to her grating before two years had passed, and she was well aware of the reason which prevented her from refusing me the favor. She spent the last quarter of an hour shedding tears, and I held mine back only that they might not increase her grief. After promising the peasant woman that I would see her again the next evening, I returned to my lodging, where I went to bed, only to rise at daybreak and start out on the road to Chambéry. A quarter of a league from Aix I saw my angel, walking slowly, and the two lay sisters, who asked me for alms in God's name. I gave them a louis and wished them a good journey. M. M. did not look at me.

Retracing my steps, I went to the peasant woman's, who told me that M. M. had set out at daybreak, charging her only to tell me that she would expect me at the grating. After giving her nephew all the silver money I had, I went and ordered all my luggage tied onto my coach, and I should have left at once if I had had horses. I return to the inn and go upstairs to the Marquis's room to take my leave. I find his mistress alone. I tell her that I am to leave at two o'clock; she replies that I shall not leave, that I will do her the favor of staying on for two more days. I say that I am greatly flattered by her urgency, but that business of the utmost importance obliges me to leave. Still saying that I must stay, she rises, goes to a large mirror, and unlaces her corset, ostensibly in order to lace it better after readjusting her shift. In the course of the maneuver she shows me two globes capable of making all resistance vain, but I pretend not to see them. I saw a calculated plan, but I was determined to foil it. She puts one foot on the edge of the sofa on which I was sitting, and, on the pretext of fastening a garter below her knee, she lets me see a perfectly turned leg, then, shifting to the other, she gives me a glimpse of beauties which would have conquered me if the Marquis had not arrived. He proposes a game of quinze at small stakes, the lady wants to go halves with me, I feel ashamed to refuse her; she sits down beside me and deals to him. When dinner was announced I stopped, losing forty louis. Madame said she owed me twenty of them. At dessert Leduc announces that my carriage is at the door. I rise, Madame says she owes me twenty louis, she insists on paying them, and she makes me accompany her to her room.

No sooner are we there than she tells me earnestly that if I leave I will dishonor her, for the whole company knows she has undertaken to make me stay. She says she does not think herself a woman to be scorned, she pushes me down on the sofa, and she returns to the charge, again fastening her accursed garters in my sight. Unable to deny seeing what she sees that I see, I praise everything, I touch, I kiss, she lets herself fall on me, and she triumphs when she finds the inevitable sign of my sensibility; kissing me mouth to mouth, she promises to be wholly mine the next day. Not knowing how else to get rid of her, I signify that I will hold her to her promise; and I am just saying that I will have the horses unharnessed when the Marquis comes in. I go downstairs as if intending to come back, hearing him tell me that he will give me my revenge. I do not answer. I walk out of the inn, I get into my carriage, and I leave.

CHAPTER II

The caretaker's daughters. The horoscopes. Mademoiselle Roman.

I STOPPED at Chambéry only to change horses and arrived at Grenoble, where, intending to stay for a week but being poorly lodged, I did not have my trunks untied. At the post I found all the letters I expected, among them one from Madame d'Urfé, containing another addressed to a Lorrainese officer, the Baron de Valenglart.[1] She said that he was a man of learning and that he would introduce me at all the good houses in the town.

I at once go to this officer, who, after reading the letter, offers to do anything for me which lies in his power. He was a pleasant, rather elderly man who fifteen years earlier had been a friend of Madame d'Urfé and, much more intimately, of her daughter the Princess of Estouteville.[2] I begged him to find me a good lodging, for I was very uncomfortable at the inn. After thinking for a little he said that he could arrange for me to lodge in a splendid house outside of the city,[3] from which I should see the Isère.[4] The caretaker was a cook, and for the sake of serving me in that capacity he would lodge me gratis, for, the house being for sale, he was hoping to find someone who would fall in love with it and buy it. It belonged to the widow of some judge whose name I have forgotten. We go to see it; I take an apartment of three rooms, I order him to prepare supper for two, impressing it upon him that I am an epicure, a hearty eater, and not at all stingy. At the same time I ask Monsieur de Valenglart to be so good as to sup with me. The caretaker says that if I am not satisfied I must tell him so; he at once sent a man to the inn with a note from me in which I ordered Leduc to come to my new quarters with all my luggage; and so I am well lodged. On the ground floor I see three charming girls and the caretaker's wife, who curtsy to me. Monsieur de Valenglart takes me to the concert,[5] saying that he will introduce me to everyone. I begged him to introduce me to no one, on the understanding that, when I had seen the ladies, I would tell him which of them had inspired me with a wish to make their acquaintance.

The only one who struck me in the whole large company was a tall young lady of modest demeanor, dark haired, very well built, and dressed very simply. This extremely interesting girl, after giving me a single glance from her beautiful eyes, stubbornly refused to look at me again. My vanity at once made me think that it was only so that I should be at full liberty to study her impeccable beauty. It was on this girl that I instantly set my sights, as if all Europe were only a seraglio provided for my pleasures. I told Valenglart that I wanted to make her acquaintance; he replied that she was discreet, received no one, and was extremely poor.

"Those three qualities increase my interest."

"I assure you there is nothing to be done there."

"That is what I want."

"When we leave the concert I will introduce you to her aunt—there she is."

After doing me that honor he came to supper with me. I thought the caretaker-cook a man of exactly the same pattern as Lebel.[6] He had me served at table by his two daughters, who were as pretty as sweethearts, and I saw Valenglart delighted to see me satisfied; but I saw him put out when he saw fifteen dishes in five courses.

"This fellow," he said, "is making fools of you and me."

"The fellow," I said, "has divined my taste. Did you not find everything excellent?"

"True. But—"

"Fear nothing. I love to spend."

"Then excuse me. I want you to be satisfied."

He gave us exquisite wines and at dessert a ratafia[7] superior to the Turkish visnat[8] which I had drunk in Yusuf Ali's[9] house seventeen years earlier. When he came upstairs at the end of supper I told him in the presence of his daughters that he deserved to be first cook to Louis XV.

"Do as well every day, and even better if you can; but always let me have the account the next morning."

"You are right."

"Please always give me ices too, and put two more lights on the table. What I see there are tallow candles, if I am not mistaken; I do not want to see any more of them. I am a Venetian."[10]

"It is your valet's fault, Monsieur, because he said he was sick and went to bed, but after eating a hearty supper."

"He is an imaginary invalid."

"He asked my wife to make you the chocolate he gave her for tomorrow morning; but I will whip it myself."

Surprised and very pleased, Valenglart said that apparently Madame d'Urfé had been making fun of him when she had instructed him to keep my expenditures in check. We remained at table until eleven o'clock, talking and emptying a bottle of the divine liqueur of Grenoble. It is composed of brandy, sugar, cherries, and cinnamon. I thanked him as I saw him to my carriage, which took him home; I asked him to share my table with me night and morning, and he promised to do so except on the days he would be on guard duty. During supper I gave him my bill of exchange on Zappata,[11] which I endorsed in his presence with the name Seingalt, by which Madame d'Urfé had announced me. He assured me that he would have it negotiated the next day, and he kept his word. At nine o'clock a banker brought me four hundred louis. I had thirteen hundred in my strongbox. I always dreaded being a pinchpenny. I took the greatest pleasure in the thought that Valenglart would write all that he had seen and heard to the avaricious Madame d'Urfé, who had a mania for preaching economy to me. I laughed when, returning to my apartment, I saw the caretaker's two daughters.

Leduc did not wait for me to tell him that he must trump up some excuse for not serving me. He knew that when there were pretty girls in the houses in which I stayed I did not like to see him about.

Seeing the two girls, who appeared to be perfectly virtuous, eagerly serving me with an air of the greatest confidence, I took it into my head to convince them that I deserved it. They removed my shoes and stockings, arranged my hair for the night, and put me into my nightshirt with the greatest decency. When I was in bed I told them to lock my door and to bring me my chocolate at eight o'clock.

I could not refrain from examining myself and finding that I was happy. In perfect health and in the prime of life, with no duties, with no need to look ahead, amply provided with money, dependent upon no one, lucky at cards, and favorably received by the women who interested me, I had every justification for saying to myself: "*Saute, Marquis!*"[12]

I fell asleep thinking of the young lady who had made so strong an impression on me at the concert. Certain that I would make her acquaintance, I was curious to see what would come of it. She was discreet and poor, and I discreet and rich; so she should not scorn my friendship.

The next morning at eight o'clock I see my door open and one of the caretaker's two daughters bringing me my chocolate, saying that Leduc had been feverish and that her cousin would take him a bowl of broth in bed. I say that my chocolate is very well prepared, I ask her her name, she replies that she is named Rose and her sister Manon, whereupon Manon herself appears with my shirt, which she had ironed. I thank her and tell her she must not go to so much trouble except for shirts with lace. The charming Manon says, blushing, that she dresses her father's hair; and Rose laughs and says she shaves him.

"In that case," I replied, "you will both be so kind as to do the same for me until Leduc recovers."

Curious to see how the girl would shave me, I quickly get up, while she goes to fetch hot water. Manon sets out powder, pomade, and everything she needed on my toilet table. Rose comes back, and acquits herself most skillfully, whereupon I offer her my freshly washed and shaven face for the first salutation of the day—it could not have been cleaner. She does not understand me; I tell her seriously but gently that she will mortify me if she refuses me a kiss. She excuses herself with a sly smile, saying that it is not the custom in Grenoble; I insist, I say she shall not shave me again; her father comes in with the account, he hears the dispute, he says that it is the custom in Paris, that she kissed *him* after shaving him, and that she should be as polite to me. She thereupon kissed me with an air of sweet submission which made Manon laugh.

"Your turn will come," he told her, "when you have dressed his hair."

It was the best way to keep me from reducing his bill; but he need not have used it, for I found him honest and, when I deducted nothing, I saw him leave well content. I established a fixed price for the future, as I did not want to be bothered with going over an account every day.

Manon dressed my hair as skillfully as my late housekeeper, whom I always remembered with pleasure, and kissed me afterward, showing less hesitation than her sister. I foresaw the best from them both. They went downstairs when they saw the banker, who announced himself by saying that he had brought me four hundred louis.

The banker, who was a young man, said after paying me over the amount that, being lodged in this house, I must be happy

"Certainly," I said, "for the two sisters are charming."

"And their cousin is even prettier. They are virtuous."

"And I think they are well off, too."

"Their father has an income of two thousand livres; they will marry merchants, and they will be free to choose."

After he leaves, I go downstairs, curious to see the cousin. I see the caretaker, I ask him where Leduc's room is, and he shows me the door. I enter, and I see him in bed in a dressing gown, with a book in his hand and a countenance which did not look like an invalid's.

"What is the matter with you?"

"I'm having a good time. I fell sick yesterday the minute I saw those three princesses, who are quite the equals of the housekeeper at Soleure who would not let me kiss her. However, I am kept waiting a little too long for my broth."

"Monsieur Leduc, you are a scoundrel."

"Do you want me to recover?"

"I want to see the end of this comedy, for it bores me."

I see the broth arrive, brought by the cousin. I decide that the banker was right. I notice that, waiting on Leduc, she looked the mistress of the house, while my Spaniard looked nothing but what he was.

"I will dine in bed," he said to her.

"You shall be attended to."

She leaves.

"She puts on great airs," he said, "but I know better. You think her pretty, don't you?"

"I think you are insolent. You are up to your monkey tricks, and you disgust me. Get up and serve me at table. Afterward you will eat by yourself; you will be shown respect, but you will no longer lodge in this room. The caretaker will tell you where you will find your bed."

Meeting the cousin as I go out, I tell her I am jealous of the honor she has done my valet, so I beg her to spare herself the trouble in the future. After that I told the caretaker to lodge him in a closet where I could ring for him at night if I needed him. Then I went to write until Valenglart arrived.

I received him, embracing him and thanking him for having found me a lodging such as I wanted. He said that he had just called on the lady to whom he had introduced me. She was the wife of an advocate named Morin[13] and the aunt of the young lady who had interested me; he had told her so, and she had promised to send for her and keep her with her all day.

After eating very well we went to call on Madame Morin, who received me with Parisian ease. She was the mother of seven children, whom she introduced to me. Her eldest daughter, who was neither pretty nor ugly, was twelve years old; I took her for fourteen and said so. At that she fetched a little book in which she showed me the year, day, hour, and minute of her birth. Seeing such precision, I ask if her horoscope has been cast; she replies that she has found no one able to do her the favor. I answer that there is still time; and *God* made me add that it would be I who would cast it for her.

Just then Monsieur Morin comes in, she introduces him to me, and after the customary compliments she returns to the subject of the horoscope. The gentleman says, very sensibly, that judicial astrology[14] is a science which, if not false, is at least highly suspect, that he had dabbled in it for a time, but that he had finally given it up, contenting himself with the truths he learned from astronomy. Valenglart, who believed in astrology, argues with him; in the meanwhile I copy down the moment of Mademoiselle Morin's birth. Her father smiles and bows his head, and I see what he is thinking; but I have no idea of backing out. I made up my mind that day to become an astrologer.

But in comes the beautiful young lady, and her aunt introduces her to me by the name of Roman-Coupier,[15] daughter of her sister. She at once tells her of the ardent desire to make her acquaintance which she had inspired in me at the concert. She replies only by blushing, dropping me a pretty curtsy, and lowering two black eyes than which I did not remember having seen any more beautiful. She was seventeen years of age[16] and had very fair skin, black hair with very little powder, an excellent figure, splendid teeth, and on her lips the charming smile of modesty coupled with obligingness.

After a little polite conversation among the company, Monsieur Morin having gone about his business, I was invited to play quadrille,[17] at which I was considered incredibly unlucky when I had lost a louis. In Mademoiselle Roman I found a sound mind without artificiality or glitter or pretension; unfailing good spirits, an admirable skill in pretending not to hear a too flattering compliment or a jest to which she could not have responded without showing that she knew what she was supposed not to know. Dressed very neatly, she had about her none of those superfluities which indicate a certain wealth, no earrings, no ring, no watch; around her neck she had only a black ribbon from which hung a small black cross. Except for that, I should not have allowed myself to look at her beautiful bosom, which was faultlessly proportioned and of which fashion and education had accustomed her to display a third as innocently and openly as she displayed her cheeks, in which lilies were mingled with roses. Examining her bearing to see if I might hope, I could make nothing of it; she did not indulge in a gesture; she made no response which could give me the slightest hope; but neither did she give me the slightest reason to despair. One small incident, however, led me to hope a little. During supper, on the pretext of arranging her napkin I squeezed her thigh without seeing anything in her face to indicate that she disapproved of the liberty I had taken. I invited the whole company to dine and sup with me the next day, telling Madame Morin that I should not go out, and so she could have the use of my carriage, which would be at her door awaiting her convenience. After dropping Valenglart at his house, I went to my lodging, building castles in Spain concerning my conquest of Mademoiselle Roman.

I at once informed the caretaker that we would be six for dinner and supper the next day. Leduc put me to bed, saying that to punish him I had punished myself, and asking if he should dress my hair. I told him he might take a walk about Grenoble, coming back only in time to serve at table.

"I will go and catch the pox."

"I will have you cured in the hospital."

Impudent, insolent, sly, lecherous, but obedient, discreet, and loyal—I had to put up with him. The next morning Rose, coming to bring me my chocolate, said with a laugh that my valet had sent for a carriage and a hire manservant and, after dressing like a lord, with a sword at his side, had gone—or so he had told her—to pay visits. We laughed. A moment later in came Manon. I at once saw that the girls had made a compact never to be alone with me separately. I did not like it. Two or three minutes after I got up I see their cousin come in with a package under her arm.

"I am delighted to see you, my beautiful young lady, and to see you laughing, for yesterday I thought you too serious."

"That is because Monsieur Leduc is apparently a greater gentleman than you are, and you can imagine that I did not dare to laugh; but you would have seen me laugh half an hour ago when I saw him get into his carriage all dressed up."

"Did he see you laugh?"

"If he wasn't blind."

"He will be mortified."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"You are charming. What have you in that package?"

"Some samples of our handiwork. They are gloves[18] for men and women, made and embroidered by us."

"They look very fine. How much is the whole lot worth?"

"Do you haggle?"

"Always."

"It is well to know."

After talking with the other girls for a little the cousin takes pen in hand, counts the dozens, writes down the various prices, then adds and says that the lot would cost me two hundred and ten livres. I hand her nine louis[19] and tell her to give me back four livres.

"You told me you haggle."

"You shouldn't have believed me."

She blushed and gave me the four livres. After I had Rose shave me they accepted my first salutations of the day as a matter of course, and the cousin, who came last, let me feel a tongue dipped in nectar. I saw that she would be kind at the first opportunity. Rose asked me if they might make bold to serve me at table.

''Please do.''

''But we should like to know whom you are having to dine, for if it is officers from the garrison they are almost all such libertines that we wouldn't dare.''

Thereupon I told them that I had invited Madame Morin and Mademoiselle Roman, and they were delighted. The cousin told me that in all Grenoble there was not a prettier or more discreet girl than Mademoiselle Roman, but that she would have difficulty finding a husband because she had nothing; I replied that she would find a rich man who would value her beauty and discretion at a million. After dressing my hair Manon left with her cousin, and, Rose remaining behind to dress me, I attacked her a little; but when she defended herself only too well I begged her pardon, assuring her that it would not happen again. When I was dressed I shut myself up to cast the horoscope I had promised Madame Morin. I easily filled eight pages with pedantic charlatanry. Since I made a particular point of saying what must have happened to her daughter up to the age she had then reached, and since I hit on the truth, my predictions concerning the future raised no doubt. I risked nothing, for they were all buttressed with ''ifs.'' The ''ifs'' always constituted the whole science of astrologers, who have all been fools or knaves. Reading over the horoscope and finding it brilliant, I was not surprised. Being an accomplished cabalist, I must also be an accomplished astrologer.

At half past twelve the whole company arrived, and at one o'clock we sat down at table. I found that the caretaker was a man who needed rather to be discouraged than encouraged in his endeavors. Madame Morin was very gracious to the three girls, whom she knew very well, and Leduc stood behind her chair, waiting on her very attentively and wearing a coat finer than mine. When, at the end of the dinner, Mademoiselle Roman congratulated me on the three beauties who were at my service in this charming house, I spoke of their talent, and, after going for the gloves I had bought, when I saw them admired I managed to make her accept a dozen pairs, urged on by her aunt and her cousin, who did me the same honor. After that I gave Madame Morin her daughter's horoscope, which her husband read. Though he did not believe in it he could not help praising it, for everything was in accordance with the influence of the planets which together made up the astrological condition of the sky at the minute of his daughter's birth. After spending two hours discussing astrology and two more playing quadrille we went for a walk in the garden, where the company were polite enough to let me talk alone with the beautiful Mademoiselle Roman. Everything I said to her turned only on the passion she had inspired in me, her beauty, her discretion, the purity of my intentions, and my need to be loved if I was not to remain unhappy all the rest of my life. She replied that if it was God's will that she should marry, she would consider herself happy if her husband should be like me; I pressed my lips to her hand and, all on fire, I said that I hoped she would not make me wait in vain. She then turned, looking for her aunt. The day darkening, she feared what might very well happen to her.

We returned to the apartment, where I made a little bank at faro to amuse them. Madame Morin gave some money to the two young ladies, who did not have a copper, and Valenglart played for them so well that when I stopped dealing to go to supper I had the pleasure of seeing that everyone had won.

We remained at table until midnight. The wind, which was coming from the Alps, being too strong, I did not dare to insist on a walk in the garden. Madame Morin left, showering me with compliments, and I kissed, but with all due restraint.

Hearing someone singing in the kitchen, I go in, and I see that it is Leduc, so drunk that he could not stand. When he sees me he starts forward to beg my pardon; he falls, then vomits. He was carried off to bed. I thought the incident might prepare the way for the amusement which I very much wanted; and it might have done so if all the girls had not come in together. What is useful on one occasion is useless on another. The girls' character was such that I could never have had them except one at a time, without the knowledge of the two others. I must not risk failing in an attack which would later have denied me all hope of having them one by one. I saw Rose, openly jealous of her cousin, watching to see at which of them I looked. When I was in bed I dismissed them, and they left.

The next morning Rose came in alone, asking me for a stick of chocolate and saying that Leduc was ill in good earnest. She brings me my strongbox, and, giving her the stick of chocolate, I take her hand and make her feel that I love her, she pretends to be offended and leaves. Manon comes to my bed, showing me a cuff I had torn and asking if I wanted her to mend it. I take her hand, pretending to consider, and when she sees that I want to kiss it she bends down and lets me take the kiss which I see on her parted lips; I quickly take her hand again, and the thing was already begun when her cousin comes in. Manon draws away her hand and, holding the torn cuff, appears to be waiting for my answer. I say absently, and pretending not to see her cousin, that she will do me a favor if she will mend it when she has time, and she leaves.

Exasperated by these two disappointments, I think that her cousin will not leave me in the lurch, for she had given me an earnest the day before. I ask her for a handkerchief, she gives it to me, she does not resist my kiss, she lets me take her hand, and the thing would have been done if Rose had not come in with my chocolate. Both her cousin and I were easily able to regain our outward composure on the instant; but this third disappointment made me furious. I would gladly have killed Rose; however, I had to hide it, I sulked, but I had a right to do that because of the way she had repulsed me a quarter of an hour earlier. I declared the chocolate badly made; it was not true, but I said it. I got up, I would not let her shave me; but I let Manon dress my hair; the two others left, pretending to share a common indignation; but Rose was even more angry with her cousin than she was with Manon. Just then in comes Valenglart.

A man of punctilious honor and, despite his dabbling in the abstruse sciences, of great common sense, he said as we dined that he thought me a little melancholy and that if it sprang from some idea I might have conceived in regard to Mademoiselle Roman he advised me to think of it no more, unless I made up my mind to ask for her hand. I replied that I would be leaving in a few days. We found her at her aunt's.

She receives me in a friendly fashion which flatters me and encourages me to kiss her, making her sit down on my knee. Her aunt laughs, she blushes slightly, she hands me a slip of paper, and runs off. On it I read the year, day, hour, and minute of her birth; I understand perfectly. Her flight from my arms meant that I could expect no favors from her unless I cast her horoscope. Considering how to make the best use of the circumstance, I say that I will tell her if I can or cannot do her the favor at my apartment the next day if she will come there and stay for a ball I am giving. She looks at her aunt, and my proposal is accepted.

"The Russian" is announced. I see a man of my age, very well built but rather slight, and dressed in traveling clothes. He makes a good appearance, Madame Morin receives him graciously, he speaks well, he is gay with a tinge of melancholy, he scarcely looks at me, and he never says a word to Mademoiselle Roman. Toward nightfall Monsieur Morin arrives, and the Russian gives him a flask full of a white liquid; then he makes to leave, but he is asked to stay for supper.

At table the talk is of his miraculous liquid. Monsieur Morin tells me that in three minutes he had removed every trace of a contusion on the forehead of a young man who had been struck by a misdirected billiard ball which everyone thought had cracked his skull. The Russian gentleman had only rubbed it with his liquid. He said modestly that it was a trifle of his own invention, and he talked chemistry with Valenglart at great length. I had no thought for anything but my beauty, the hope of possessing her the next day having taken away my appetite. I saw Valenglart home to his barracks, he said that no one knew the Russian, yet he was received everywhere.

"Has he a carriage?"

"Nothing—no servants and no money; he has been here for two weeks, but he asks nothing of anyone. The innkeeper allows him credit; he is supposed to be waiting for his servants and carriage to arrive from somewhere."

"It would be simpler to suppose him a vagabond."

"He does not appear to be one, as you saw yourself; and he has buckles set with excellent stones. Anyone can see them."

"Anyone can be deceived. He would sell them."

Back at my apartment, it was Rose who came alone to dress my hair for the night, but she was still sulking. I urged her to be gay; but finding her recalcitrant I told her to let me sleep and to inform her father that I wanted to give a ball the next night, in the room on the ground floor giving on the garden, and a supper for eighteen or twenty. The next morning I confirmed the order to him, saying that I wanted his daughters to dance.

Just as he was going downstairs with Rose, Manon entered and came to my bedside to ask me what laces I wanted; but it was only an excuse: I found her gentle as a lamb and amorous as a pigeon, and we had it over with; but a moment later Rose would have caught us in the act. She came in with Leduc, who asked me for permission to dance, promising that he would behave himself properly and Rose vouching for him. I consented, telling him that he had Mademoiselle Rose to thank for it.

I received a note from Madame Morin asking me if she might invite two ladies of her acquaintance and their daughters to my ball, and I replied that she would be doing me a favor if she would also invite some men, since I had ordered supper for twenty.

She came to dinner with her niece and Valenglart, her daughter having to make a lengthy toilet and her husband being busy until evening; so we were only four at dinner; but she assured me that I would have a numerous company for supper.

Mademoiselle Roman had on the same dress and was wearing her hair as she did every day; but nothing could have made her look more beautiful to me. Standing before me where I sat and pressing her knees against mine, she asked me if I had thought about her horoscope. I replied, taking her by the hand and drawing her down to the seat beside me, that she should have it on the next day but one. In this position I repeatedly kissed the charming mouth of the heavenly being whose destiny I was born to determine. She was more surprised than frightened to see me shaking, but in defending herself against me she never altered the serenity of her countenance, she never turned her face away, she never took her eyes from mine. Yielding to her urgent request, I became calm, and she did not stir. I saw in her eyes the look of satisfaction which betokens a victory won by a generous enemy who returns his arms to his vanquished foe, saying, "Use them against me again if you have the courage." My silence applauded the noble Mademoiselle Roman's virtue.

Madame Morin came and sat down on my other knee to ask me to explain something in her daughter's horoscope. She said that to secure the attendance of four beauties at my ball she had had to write only two notes.

"I will have but one beauty," I exclaimed, looking at her niece.

"God knows," said Valenglart, "what all Grenoble will be finding to say about your ball tomorrow."

"They will say," Madame Morin said to her niece, "that they have been to your wedding ball."

"Yes. They will talk of my splendid dress, my laces and diamonds."

"Of your beauty," I said gravely, "of your intelligence, your discretion, which will make the man who possesses you happy."

There was a silence, for they all thought I meant myself. If I had known how to go about it I would certainly have offered her five hundred louis; but the difficulty would have lain in drawing up the contract, for I should not have wanted to spend them for nothing.

We went into my bedroom, and while Mademoiselle Roman amused herself examining the fine jewels I had on my toilet table, her aunt and Valenglart looked at the books on my bedside stand. I see the lady go to the window, absorbed in examining something she had in her hands. I remember that I had left M. M.'s portrait there. I hurry to her and beg her to give me back the indecent portrait. She replies that the indecency is of no consequence, but that what has surprised her is a resemblance.

I see it all, and I tremble at my involuntary indiscretion.

"Madame," I say, "it is the portrait of a Venetian lady whom I loved seven years ago."

"I believe you, but it is very strange. The two M.'s, these religious robes stripped off and sacrificed to love, it all conspires to increase my surprise."

"She is a nun, and her name is M. M."

"And a distant cousin of mine in Chambéry is also named M. M. and is a nun of the same order as yours. I will tell you more. She was at Aix, whence you have come, to cure an illness."

"I know nothing of all that."

"If you go back to Chambéry, call on her, saying I sent you, and you will be as surprised as I am."

"Madame, I promise I will go there when I return from Italy; but I will not show her this portrait, which I will now lock up."

"Show it to no one, I beg you."

At eight o'clock all the guests arrived, and I saw in my apartment all the prettiest women and the most eligible men to be found in Grenoble. The only thing which annoyed me a little was the fulsome compliments, of which all the French provinces are inclined to be lavish.

I opened the ball with the lady whom Valenglart pointed out to me; then, each in her turn, I danced with them all; but the contradances only with Mademoiselle Roman, who shone more brightly than all the other ladies precisely because she was so simply dressed.

After an energetic contradance I go up to my room to put on a lighter coat, and a minute later I see the cousin, who asks me if I need anything.

"Were you seen coming in here?"

"No, because I came from upstairs. My cousins are in the ballroom."

"My dear, you are beautiful as a star, and the moment has come for me to prove that I adore you."

"What are you doing? No, no! Someone might come in. Put out the candle."

I put it out, and, since I am full of Mademoiselle Roman, she finds me such as I should have been with her; but I needed no illusion, for she was charming. I might not have found Mademoiselle Roman so eager. She begged me to spare her, and just at the moment when it needed to be said; I wanted to begin over again, but she was afraid, and she left. I relit the candle and, after dressing, went downstairs.

We danced until the king of caretakers came to tell me that supper was served.

I saw a cold collation made up of the choicest dishes and covering the entire table; but what especially pleased the ladies was the great number of wax candles. My guests being thirty, I did not sit with them but at a smaller table, where the hardened trenchermen joined me with pleasure. They all urged me most cordially to spend the autumn in their city, and I am sure that they would have entertained me properly, for the nobility of Grenoble has every accomplishment. I said that if I could stay I should be delighted to make the acquaintance of the family of an illustrious man who had been a great friend of my father's.

"What family is that?" they all asked together.

"Bourchenu de Valbonnais."[20]

"He was my uncle. Alas, Monsieur! Come to our house. You danced with my daughter.[21] Be so good as to tell me what your father's name was."

This tale, which I invented on the spur of the moment, seemed to have the effect of a thunderbolt and made me an object of wonder. We all rose together and went to dance again.

After a contradance, seeing Madame Morin, her niece, and Valenglart go outside for a breath of air, I went out too, and, strolling in the moonlight, I took Mademoiselle Roman into a covered walk; but the seductive speeches with which I assailed her were all in vain. I held her in my arms in transports of the most ardent love, she could not escape the violence of my kisses, but her beautiful mouth did not return me one, and her beautiful hands, stronger than mine, always obstructed my attempts. When, a last effort taking her by surprise, I came within two or three inches of what I desired, she turned me to stone by saying in an angelic voice:

"Ah, Monsieur, be my friend and do not ruin me."

I begged her pardon on my knees, we rejoined her aunt; and we returned to the ballroom, but I was in a frenzy.

I go and sit in a corner, I see Rose, I ask her to bring me a lemonade. After bringing it she reproaches me for not having danced either with her or her sister or with their cousin. I reply that I am tired, but that if she will promise to be kind I will dance one more minuet, and with her.

"What must I do?" she replied.

"You must go and wait for me in my bedroom without a light, when your sister and your cousin are busy dancing a contradance."

"And afterwards you won't dance with anyone but me?"

"I give you my word."

"I will wait for you."

I went; I found her amorous, and my need was satisfied. I put off dancing the minuet with her until I was sure that it would be the last, for in common decency I could not have avoided dancing with the two others as well.

At daybreak the ladies began leaving without ceremony. Handing Madame Morin and her niece into my carriage, I said I would not see them that day, but that if they would visit me for the whole of the next I would give them the horoscope which they were so eager to have.

I went to the pantry to thank the excellent caretaker for having cast luster on me, and there I saw his three girls filling their pockets with sweetmeats; he said to them jokingly that in their master's presence they could steal with clear consciences. I told him I would dine at six o'clock, and I went off to bed.

But having slept only until noon, I worked on the horoscope in bed. I decided to predict that fortune awaited her in Paris, where she would become the mistress of her master; but that she must go there without losing any time, for if she let her eighteenth year end without going where the monarch could see her, her destiny would take another course. To give my prediction all the authority it needed, I said astonishing things about what had happened to her until she was seventeen, which was her age at the time. I had learned them in one way or another from herself or her aunt, pretending not to notice what they were saying. With the help of an ephemeris I had and a book on astrology, in six hours I cast and copied out the girl's horoscope, which was of a nature to astonish Morin and Valenglart and awaken fanatical belief in the women. I hoped I should myself be asked to escort the fair jewel to Paris; and I felt more than ready to undertake it; I flattered myself that I should be found indispensable to the maneuver, and that, if not love, at least gratitude would grant me all that I desired; I even thought I saw a prosperous issue for myself, for my enterprise might indirectly make my fortune. The monarch could not but fall in love with her as soon as he saw her; I had no doubt of that. Besides, what man in love does not imagine that the object he loves must delight all mankind? At the moment I was jealous of her; but, knowing myself, I knew that I should cease to be so very soon after I had enjoyed my treasure. I knew that Louis XV's attitude in such matters was not exactly that of a Turk. What gave my prophetic tirade an aura of divinity was the prediction of a son who was destined to be a blessing to France and who could come only from the blood royal and a predestined vessel, which, however, would produce nothing if the chances of human life did not send it to the capital.

The idea of becoming a famous astrologer in my century, in which reason had so thoroughly discredited astrology,[22] filled me with delight. I rejoiced in anticipation, seeing myself sought out by monarchs and wrapped in aloofness in my old age. If Mademoiselle Roman should have borne a daughter, I would simply have laughed. My horoscope would certainly be known only to her and her family, who could not but jealously keep the secret. After finishing, reading, and rereading my little masterpiece, I dined excellently with my three young ladies, though I refused to get out of bed. Being equally gracious to them severally, I could not but please them all, and in any case I needed an interval. I was sure that they must all be equally pleased, and not jealous, for each must have thought herself the favorite.

The next morning at nine o'clock I saw Valenglart, who said that everyone thought I was in love, not with Mademoiselle Roman, but with my caretaker's three girls. He asked me if he might write the whole story to Madame d'Urfé; and I answered that he would be doing me a favor.

The aunt and the niece came at noon with Monsieur Morin, and we spent the hour before dinner reading the horoscope. I find it hard to describe four different kinds of surprise. Mademoiselle Roman listening very seriously and, having no idea that she had a will of her own, not knowing what to say. Monsieur Morin, looking at me from time to time and, seeing me serious, not daring to laugh. Valenglart, with his countenance the mirror of his fanaticism; and Madame Morin, who, the reading finished, at once began drawing conclusions. Not letting the prediction surprise her in the least, she announced that her niece had more right than Madame de Maintenon[23] to become the King's wife or mistress.

"That woman," she said, "would never have been anything if she had not left America[24] and come to France; and if my niece does not go to Paris the horoscope cannot be proved wrong. So she must go. But how? Such a journey is next to impossible. The prediction of the birth of a boy is divine, and I know nothing about it; but she has better cause to become dear to the King than La Maintenon; my niece is young and virtuous, the other had passed her prime and had had lovers.[25] But the journey will never take place."

Valenglart said gravely that the journey would be made, because destiny must be fulfilled, and Monsieur Morin said that *Astra influunt non cogunt* ("The stars influence, they do not determine").[26] The young lady was lost in amazement, and I let them talk. We sat down to dinner.

At dessert we returned to the subject.

"According to the horoscope," Madame Morin resumed, "the King will fall in love with my niece during her eighteenth year:[27] she is in it now. What is to be done? Where find a hundred louis, the least that is necessary for such a journey? And when she gets to Paris is she to go and tell the King, 'Here I am, Sire'? And with whom shall she go? Not with me."

"With my aunt Roman," said the young lady, blushing to the ears at the indiscreet laughter which no one could restrain.

"Come to think of it," Madame Morin went on, "it could happen quite naturally, for Madame Varnier,[28] who lives in Rue de Richelieu above the Café de Foy,[29] is your aunt.[30] She maintains a good establishment and knows everyone in Paris."

"Do you see," said Valenglart, "the ways of destiny? You talk of a hundred louis. You need only twelve for a visit to Madame Varnier, who will put Mademoiselle up; and when she is there, leave it to chance to bring about the rest."

"If you go to Paris," I said to Mademoiselle Roman, "you must say nothing about the horoscope either to your aunt here in Grenoble or to Madame Varnier."

"I will say nothing about it to anyone; but, believe me, all this is only a rosy dream. I shall never see Paris, still less Louis XV."

"Wait a moment."

I go for a sealed roll in which I had fifty doblones de a ocho,[31] which amounted to more than a hundred and fifty louis, and I take it to Mademoiselle Roman, saying that it was sweetmeats. She finds the roll too heavy, she unseals it, and she sees the fifty coins, which she takes to be medals. Valenglart tells her they are gold, and Monsieur Morin adds that the goldsmith would give her a hundred and fifty louis for them. I ask her to keep them and to give me a note for that amount, payable at Paris when she becomes rich. She handed the roll back to me, expressing her gratitude. I was sure that she would refuse it; but I admired the strength of mind with which she managed to hold back her tears while never ceasing to smile.

We went to the garden, where, the subject of the horoscope being resumed by Madame Morin and Valenglart, I took the young lady by the hand and left them.

"Tell me, I beg you," she said, "if all this is only a joke."

"It is serious; but it all depends on an 'if'; if you do not go to Paris, it will all come to nothing."

"You must believe that, or you would not have tried to give me the fifty medals."

"You have drawn the wrong conclusion. Accept them secretly this moment."

"I thank you; but why should you give me such a large sum?"

"Hoping that you will allow me to love you."

"If you love me, why should I object? You do not need to buy my consent. Indeed, I am grateful to you. Reflection tells me that, to be happy, I do not need a

King of France. If you knew to what my desires are limited!"

"Speak. To what?"

"To having a kind husband well enough off for me not to go without anything I need."

"And if you did not love him?"

"If he is honorable and kind, how could I help loving him?"

"I see that you do not know love."

"That is true. I do not know the love which makes people lose their heads, and I thank God that I do not."

"You are right. God preserve you from it."

"You insist that at the mere sight of me the King will lose his head; and, to tell you the truth, that is what seems to me sheer fantasy, for he may well find me not ugly, but I do not believe he will be carried away."

"You do not believe it? Let us sit down. Imagine that the King is as much impressed by your merits as I am. The thing will be done."

"What do you find in me that you would not find in many girls of my age? Yet it is true that I may have made a strong impression on you; but that only proves that I was born to affect *you* in such a way, and not the King. Why bring in the King, if you love me yourself?"

"I cannot give you what you deserve."

"From all appearances, that is not true."

"You do not love me."

"As your wife, I should love you alone. Then I would return the kiss you have just given me, which my duty forbids my returning now."

"How grateful I am to you for not being offended by the pleasure I feel when I am with you!"

"On the contrary, I am very glad if I please you."

"Permit me to come to see you very early tomorrow and take coffee with you sitting close beside you on your bed."

"Oh, please do not think of it! I sleep with my aunt, and I always get up first. Oh, please withdraw that hand. Please, please! In God's name, end this!"

Alas! I ended only by obeying. But what made me happy in imagination was that my lapse from propriety had not brought any change in her sweetness of manner or in the smile which her face always wore. I looked like a man who begged to be forgiven and deserved it; her expression told me she was sorry she could not grant me what I wanted. I went to my bedroom, where I found Manon unbasting cuffs, and in no more than a minute she quenched my thirst, then ran away. I reflected that Mademoiselle Roman would never grant me more than I had obtained from her, and that it was useless to try to obtain more unless I was willing to enter into negotiations which were contrary to her horoscope.

Having gone back to the garden, I asked Madame Morin to take a stroll with me. What I said to the worthy lady to persuade her to accept a hundred louis from me so that she could send her niece to Paris is unbelievable. I swore that no one should ever know of it; but all my eloquence was wasted. She said that if it depended on nothing but the journey, her niece's destiny could be fulfilled, for she had already thought of a way to send her, if her husband consented. In any case, she thanked me most sincerely, and she said that her niece was fortunate to have pleased me so well. I replied that she pleased me so well that I would leave the next day, for the proposal I was tempted to make her would destroy the high fortune which destiny promised her.

"Otherwise I should believe that my happiness would lie in my asking you for her hand in marriage."

"Her happiness would perhaps have a more solid foundation. Explain yourself."

"I do not dare to oppose destiny."

"But you will not set off tomorrow?"

"Yes, Madame. I shall call on you at two o'clock to take my leave."

The announcement of my departure made our supper somewhat melancholy. Madame Morin, who may still be alive, was a woman of excellent character. At table she announced that, since my departure was certain and I would not be going out except to call on her, the honor I wished to do her would become an irksome ceremony, and so my farewells should be made then and there. I said that I would at least have the honor of conveying her to her door after supper. And so it turned out. Valenglart walked, and Mademoiselle Roman sat on my lap. I was bold; she was kind to such a degree that I regretted having taken my leave; but it was done. An overturned carriage at the door of an inn obliged my coachman to stop for some minutes. I was far from cursing the accident as he did. Wanting to see if I could read some reflection of my happiness in the expression on my angel's face, I escorted them as far as their apartment, and, all conceit on my part aside, I saw the grief of love. I gave Madame Morin the embrace which was her due as a member of the sister order of "Mops,"[32] and she was kind enough immediately to initiate her niece, who at last very voluptuously gave me the kiss which she had always held she must refuse me. I returned to my apartment full of love but in despair, and I was annoyed when I saw the three girls in my bedroom. I needed only one of them.

Putting on my nightcap, Rose heard my whispered request; but she said that since they all slept together in the same room she could not possibly slip away. I then decide to tell them that I shall leave the next day and that I will give them a present of six louis apiece if they will all three sleep in my room. After laughing heartily over my proposal they said very calmly that the thing was impossible. This convinced me that none of them knew anything about the other two, but that they were bitterly jealous of one another. I spent the night alone, holding the adorable Mademoiselle Roman in the embrace of my soul until I woke.

I rang rather late. It was the cousin who entered, saying that Rose was coming with my chocolate and at the same time announcing a Monsieur Charles Ivanov,[33] who wanted to speak to me. I at once guessed that it was "the Russian"; but since no one had introduced him to me I saw that I need not receive him.

"Tell the gentleman that the name is unknown to me."

She goes, and a moment later comes back to say that I knew him from having supped with him at Madame Morin's. Finding myself thus obliged to receive him, I have him shown in.

"I should be glad to have the honor," he said, "of a word in private with you."

"I cannot, Monsieur, order these young ladies to leave my room. So be good enough to wait outside while I get up, and I will come and place myself at your disposition."

"If I am inconveniencing you I will come back tomorrow."

"I leave this evening."

"In that case I will wait for you."

I hastily slip on my dressing gown and go to hear what he wants. He says that he must leave and that, having no money to pay the innkeeper, he has come to beg my help and that he does not dare turn to anyone in the city because his rank does not permit him to risk the insult of a refusal.

"Yet you are risking a refusal at this moment, and certainly I am incapable of insulting you."

"If you knew who I am, I am certain you would not refuse me some small assistance."

"If you are certain of it, tell me who you are, and be confident of my silence."

"I am Charles, second son of Ivan, Duke of Kurland,[34] who is living in exile in Siberia. I escaped."

"In Genoa," I replied, "you will no longer be in want; for the brother of your mother the Duchess cannot abandon you."

"He died in Silesia."

"When?"

"Two years ago, I believe."

"You have been misinformed. I saw him in Stuttgart six months ago. He is Baron Breyden."

I see beyond doubt that the fellow is an impostor, and I feel angry that he has chosen me to trick; I am determined not to become his dupe; otherwise I should have given him six louis, since it was not for me to be the avowed enemy of adventurers, who are all impostors in one degree or another.

I glance at his buckles, which people believed were genuine, and I see beyond doubt that they are of the artificial stones made in Venice which marvelously counterfeited rose-cut diamonds.

"I have been told that your buckles are of diamonds."

"So they are."

"Why do you not sell them?"

"I promised my mother I would never part with them."

"Your buckles, Monsieur, are damaging to you; you should carry them in your pocket. I will tell you that I do not believe they are genuine and that lies offend me."

"Monsieur, I am not lying."

"Very well. Show me that they are genuine, and I will make you a present of six louis. You will also have the pleasure of proving me wrong. Good-by, Monsieur."

He saw Valenglart coming up the stairs and he begged me to say nothing to him about our conversation. I promised that I would not mention it to anyone.

Valenglart had come to wish me a good journey before leaving to see Mademoiselle Roman[35] with Monsieur de Monteynard.[36] He urged me to correspond with him, and I promised that I would do so and indeed thanked him, for Mademoiselle Roman's fate was of the highest interest to me. He embraced me with tears.

CHAPTER III

I leave Grenoble. Avignon. The fountain of Vaucluse. The pretended Astrodi and the hunchback. Gaetano Costa. My arrival in Marseilles.

WHILE THE three girls were helping Leduc pack my valises, the caretaker comes in with the bill. I am satisfied, so is he; wishing to have the pleasure of dining on this last day with his girls, I order dinner for four and post horses at nightfall. Leduc tells him also to order a saddle horse for him to ride, he being above getting up behind the carriage. The cousin laughs at his boasting, and the coxcomb, offended, tells her he is better than she is.

"But you serve her at table," I say.

And he answers:

"As she serves you in bed."

At this piece of insolence I run for my cane; but he scrambles agilely onto the window sill and jumps out.

The girls and their father give a cry of terror, I run to the window, and we see him in the courtyard, jumping about like a monkey. Delighted that he is not injured, I tell him that I pardon him, he comes up again, and I give him a watch. Such was my Spaniard, whom I had to dismiss two years later and whom I have often regretted.

In the company of the three girls, whom I vainly did my best to make tipsy, I found the hours passing so quickly that I decided to put off leaving until the next day. Tired of subterfuge, I wanted to have them all together, and I saw that I might manage it during the course of the night. I told them that if they would spend the whole night in my room I would not leave until morning. While they were conjuring up objections the caretaker came up to tell me that I would be well advised to travel to Avignon by water,[1] in a comfortable boat on which I could also put my carriage and which would cost me much less. I said that I would agree if all three young ladies would spend the night in my room, and he replied with a laugh that it was for them to choose. At this dictum they made up their minds, and the caretaker sent to order the boat and a choice supper for midnight.

It was not until after the supper that, in the truth of the bottle, I made them admit that their scruples were ridiculous after they had all three granted me their favors. At this news they looked at one another with the indignation and surprise which my brazen declaration could not but cause them, but I did not leave them time to summon up the courage to say that it was a calumny. Manon was the first to admit the truth and surrender to my ardor, and the two others sensibly took the same course when their turns came. After four or five extremely lively hours nature was obliged to yield to sleep. In the morning I wanted to give them presents of jewels, but they said they would rather I ordered gloves from them, giving them the money in advance. I ordered thirty louis' worth of gloves, which I never went back to get. I left at seven o'clock, seeing the whole household crying and laughing. I went to sleep on the boat and was not waked until Avignon, where I was taken to the "Saint-

Omer'' inn[2] and where I chose to eat supper in my room, despite Leduc's glowing accounts of a beauty who was eating at the public table.

The next day I feel inclined to go to it. My Spaniard tells me that the charming beauty is lodging with her husband in the room next to ours. At the same time he hands me a playbill announcing an Italian comedy, played by some members of the Paris company, in which Mademoiselle Astrodi[3] is to sing and dance; I cry out in amazement. ''How can the charming Astrodi, famous for her villainies, be in Avignon? When she sees me she will be very much surprised!''

At the public table I find eighteen or twenty people, all genteel, and such an array of dishes that it seems impossible the charge is only forty sous[4] a head. But the beautiful foreign lady, who absorbed all the attention of the table, completely holds mine too. Foreign, very young, a perfect beauty, never speaking, looking only at her plate, how could she leave any of the guests indifferent? When she was addressed she answered only in monosyllables, just letting her large blue eyes glance for an instant at the face of the person who had spoken to her. She had a husband seated at the other end of the table, who talked and laughed immediately; fairly young, with an ignoble countenance, greedy, pock-marked, his manners were not above those of a servant. Sure that such a man had not learned to refuse, I send him a glass of champagne, and he empties it to my health. I ask him if I may make bold to offer one to Madame, and, with a loud laugh, he tells me to apply to her. She says, after a slight bow, that she never drinks champagne. At dessert she went back to her room and her husband followed her.

A foreigner, who, like myself, was there for the first time, asked who she was; a man dressed in black told him that her husband called himself the Chevalier Stuard,[5] that he had come from Lyons and was on his way to Marseilles, and that he had been in Avignon for a week without a servant and with very little luggage.

Having intended to stop in Avignon only long enough to see Vaucluse and the celebrated fountain, which is known as the "Cascade,"[6] I had not furnished myself with letters. An Italian who has read, understood, and enjoyed Petrarch cannot but be curious to see the place where that great man fell in love with Laura de Sade.[7]

I went to the theater,[8] where I saw the Vice-Legate,[9] Salviati,[10] women of fashion who were neither beautiful nor ugly, and a bad comic opera, in which I saw neither L'Astrodi nor any member of the Comédie Italienne in Paris.

"But where is L'Astrodi?" I said at the end of the performance to a man who was there. "I did not see her."

"I beg your pardon. She sang and danced."

"By God, I know her, and if she has become unrecognizable it is no longer she."

I leave, and two minutes later I am overtaken by the same man, who asks me to come back to Mademoiselle Astrodi's dressing room, for she had recognized me. I go, and I see an ugly wench who comes running to embrace me, who calls me by my name, and whom I could swear I have never seen; but she does not let me speak. I recognize a man who is there as the father of the beautiful Astrodi whom all Paris knew.[11] She had been the cause of the death of Count Egmont,[12] one of the most agreeable noblemen at the court of Louis XV. I imagine at first that the ugly wench might be her sister, I accept a chair, and I compliment her on her talents. She asks my permission to take off her costume, and she does so chatting, laughing, and removing her nether garments with a generosity in which she might not have indulged if what she showed me had been worth seeing. I was so fresh from Grenoble that she would have found it hard to tempt me even if she were pretty; she was thin, dark-skinned, and almost repulsive. I laughed to myself at her confidence in her poor little stock; she must have supposed I had the appetite of a devil; but wenches of her kind very often have recourse to lewdness for what they cannot hope from delicacy. She asked me, she implored me, to go to supper with her, but I finally put an end to that with a peremptory refusal. She then begs me to take four tickets from her for the next day's performance, which is for her benefit; and I breathe again. It was only a matter of four petits écus,[13] I quickly take sixteen, and I think I shall see her die with gratitude when I give her the two louis. I return to my inn, where I sup very well in my room.

Putting me to bed, Leduc tells me that before supper the innkeeper had gone to see the beautiful foreigner, her husband being present, and had told him very clearly that he insisted on having his money the next morning, otherwise they would find no places set for them at his table; he had added that their effects would not leave his inn.

"Who told you this?"

"I heard it myself, from in here. The two rooms are separated by a partition one board thick. I am sure that if they were there now they would hear everything we are saying."

"Where are they?"

"At table, where they are eating for tomorrow, but the lady is crying. You are in luck."

"Hold your tongue. I will have nothing to do with it. It's a trap. A decent woman would rather die of hunger than go and cry in public like that."

"Ah! if you knew how much prettier she is when she cries! I'm a poor man, but the devil take me if I won't give her two louis if she's willing to earn them."

"Go and offer them to her."

A moment later the couple enter their room and lock the door, and I begin to hear the lady's sobs and the voice of the man talking to her angrily in some patois I do not know. It was the Walloon dialect, which is spoken in the environs of Liège. I sent Leduc off to bed, ordering him to tell the innkeeper that I insisted on having another room the next day, for the partition could easily be forced and the unfortunate couple could even more easily turn thieves. The tears and the husband's harangues ended at midnight.

The next morning I was shaving when Leduc told me that the Chevalier Stuard wished to speak with me.

"Tell him that I do not know any Stuard."

A moment later he comes back and says that, on being thus refused, he had looked at the ceiling and stamped on the floor. He had gone back to his room, from which, coming out a moment later wearing his sword, he had gone downstairs.

"I'm going to see," he added, "if there is powder in the pans of your pistols."

My valet made me laugh; but a desperate man often does more than that. I again order him to ask the innkeeper for another room; and he comes to tell me he cannot give me one until the next day.

"Then I shall leave your house instantly and find lodging elsewhere, for I cannot bear these sobs. Do you hear them? Are they amusing? The woman will kill herself, and you will be to blame."

"I? I only asked her husband for my money."

"There—listen to him, I'm sure he is saying in his patois that you are a monster."

"He may say what he likes provided he pays me."

"You've condemned them to die of starvation. How much do they owe you?"

"Fifty francs, for I lent him six."

"And you're not ashamed to make such a fuss over so little? Here's your money. Go at once and tell them you have been paid and they can eat downstairs, but don't tell them it was I who paid you."

He hurries out with the money, and I hear him tell them that he has been paid, but that they should never know by whom, and that they were free to go down for dinner and supper; of course in future they must pay him day by day. No sooner had he said all this than he comes back to my room; but I turn him out, calling him a damned fool, for he had led them to guess the truth.

Leduc stood there gaping.

"What's the matter, idiot?"

"Fine doings. I'm learning. I shall turn author. You're a sly one."

"You're a fool. I'm going for a walk; take care you don't leave this room."

"Very well."

But I have scarcely started off before the Chevalier accosts me and overwhelms me with elaborate thanks. I reply that I do not know what he is thanking me for, and he leaves me. Being on the bank of the Rhone, I amuse myself examining the ancient bridge[14] and the river itself, which geographers say is the swiftest in Europe; and at dinnertime I return to my inn, where the innkeeper, informed that I would pay six francs without wine, gives me an excellent repast. While I was there I drank only white Hermitage,[15] a wine of the utmost excellence. I asked him to find me a guide for the next day, as I wanted to see Vaucluse and the fountain. I dress to go to the little Astrodi's benefit performance.

I find her at the theater door, I give her the sixteen tickets and take a place next to the box of the Vice-Legate, Prince Salviati, who arrived with a numerous suite of ladies and men wearing decorations. L'Astrodi's father comes up behind me to whisper that his daughter begged me to say that she was the same famous Astrodi I had known in Paris. I answer, also in a whisper, that I will not risk having my veracity impugned. The ease with which a scoundrel invites a man of honor to join in a piece of knavery is unbelievable, but he thinks he is paying him a compliment.

At the end of the first act a score of servants in Monseigneur's livery distributed ices among the first-tier boxes. I thought it my part to refuse. A young man as beautiful as the God of Love politely approaches me and asks why I have not accepted an ice.

"Because, not having the honor of being known to anyone, I do not wish to give anyone grounds for saying that he has done me a courtesy when he does not know me."

"You are staying at the 'Saint-Omer,' Monsieur?"

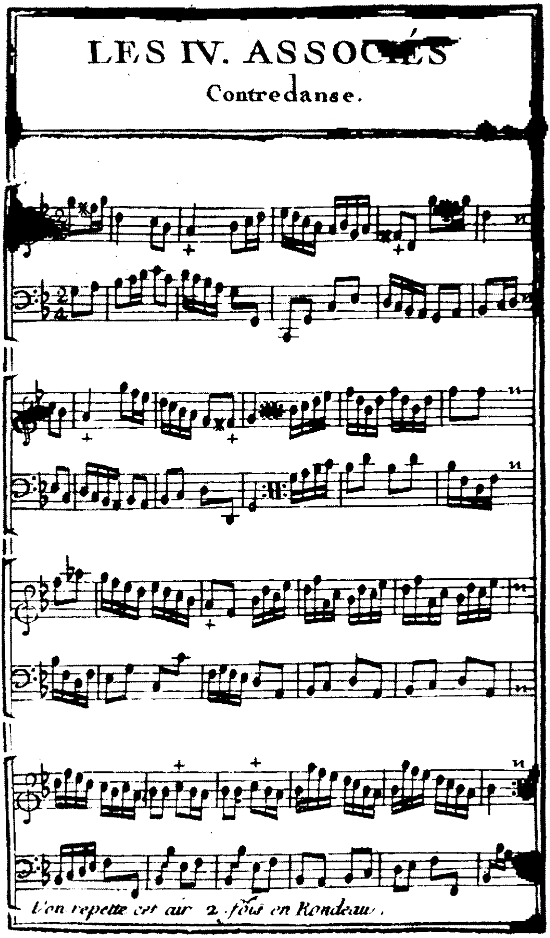
"Yes, Monsieur. I have stopped here only to see Vaucluse, and I shall have that pleasure tomorrow if I can obtain a guide."

"I will come to serve you in that capacity myself, if you will grant me the honor. I am Dolci,[16] son of the captain of the Vice-Legate's guard."

"Feeling the honor you are so kind as to do me, I will put off leaving until you arrive."

"You will see me at seven o'clock."

I am surprised by the dignified courtesy of this Adonis, whom one might suspect to be a girl. I laughed at the supposititious Astrodi, who was as bad an actress as she was ugly and who through the whole performance never took her pale eyes from my swarthy face. When she sang she looked at me and smiled, treating me to little signals which indicated an understanding between us and which must have made me a marked man to the entire nobility, who, in turn, must have deplored my bad taste. An actress whose voice and eyes did not displease me was a big hunchbacked girl, but a hunchback such as I had never seen; for, though she had enormous hunches both in front and behind, she was extremely tall, so that but for the rickets which had made her hunchbacked she would certainly have measured six


LES IV. ASSOCIÉS
Contredanse.
L'on repette cet air 2 fois en Rondeau.

Music for the Contradance "La Société" feet. In addition I imagined that she must be intelligent, as all hunchbacks are.

At the end of the play the hunchbacked girl was at the door of the theater with my favorite Astrodi. The latter was there to thank people, and the former to sell tickets for her own benefit performance, which was to take place three days later.

After receiving L'Astrodi's thanks, I hear the hunchback saying, with a smile which stretched from ear to ear and showed at least twenty-four fine teeth, that she hoped I would honor her benefit too.

"Provided," I replied, "that I do not leave day after tomorrow."

The other began laughing and, in the presence of the ladies who were waiting for their carriages, said that I would stay, that she would not let me go.

"Give him sixteen tickets," she said to the hunchback.

She gives them to me, and, ashamed to refuse them, I give her two louis.

"Day after tomorrow," says L'Astrodi, "we shall come to supper with you, provided you will be alone, for we want to get drunk."

As I returned to my inn the supper struck me as so comical a prospect that I decided to stay.

I was at table alone in my room when the Chevalier and his wife entered theirs, and I heard neither sobs nor tirades; but I was very much surprised when, with the first rays of dawn, I saw Monsieur Stuard, who said that, having heard that I was going to visit Vaucluse alone in a four-seated carriage, he had come to ask if I would permit him to accompany me with his wife, who was very curious to see the cascade. I replied that he would be honoring me, and he hurried off to get ready.

Leduc, who was dressing my hair, asked my permission to come on horseback, adding that he had been a true prophet. It was obvous that Madame Stuard was to be mine, and I was not averse to the prospect, for the adventure was entirely to my advantage. The innkeeper comes up with a guide, whom I dismiss, giving him six francs. Dolci arrives, beautiful as an angel; the lady is ready with her lord and master; the carriage is there, laden with everything we needed to eat well and drink still better, and we set off, Madame and Dolci on the back seat and Stuard and I on the front.

I had felt certain that during the course of the journey the young woman would relax and her gloom would vanish—but not a bit of it. In response to all my remarks to her I received only such very brief replies as, not being a peasant, she could not avoid giving me. Poor Dolci, who was intelligent, was in despair. Reasoning soundly, he thought himself the cause of all the gloom of the expedition; but I quickly put him at his ease by telling him that when he had offered me his company I did not know that I was to have the honor of escorting this beautiful lady, and that when I had learned it at six o'clock that morning I had been delighted to think that chance was putting such a charming companion beside him. To this account the lady made no response. Maintaining her silence, she did nothing but look into the distance and down at the ground to left and right.

Dolci, feeling less awkward after my explanation, began making various remarks designed to touch the springs of speech in her, but all to no purpose. He entered into a long conversation with her husband on a quantity of subjects, giving them all some oblique reference to the lady; but her beautiful mouth never opened.

The beauty of her face was perfect; her blue eyes were wonderfully large, her complexion a pure white enlivened by a rosy bloom, her arms were extremely beautiful, her hands well-fleshed and delicate, her figure showed that her bosom must be superb, and the light chestnut of her unpowdered hair inclined me to pass a most favorable judgment on all her invisible beauties. Nevertheless I sighed as I sadly reflected that, with her gloom, she might well inspire love, but that it could not last. I arrived at L'Isle[17] determined never again to be in her company anywhere; for she might well be insane, or in a state of desperation, forced as she was to live with a man whom she could not bear, and in that case I felt sorry for her; but I could not forgive her when I thought that, having been genteelly brought up, she should never have consented to join my outing that day when she knew that, with her gloom, she could not but arouse aversion.

As for the self-styled Stuard who was with her, whether as her husband or her lover, I did not need any profound reflection to know just what kind of man he was. He was young, neither handsome nor ugly, his manner promised nothing, and his talk showed him to be ignorant and stupid. A vagabond, as lacking in money as in talent, what was he doing traveling about Europe with this beauty who, since she was not accommodating, could find nothing to live on except in the purses of fools? Perhaps he knew that the world was full of them; yet experience constantly taught him that he could not count on them. The contemptible fellow became even more contemptible if he did not know that he was so.

Arrived at Vaucluse, I put myself entirely in the hands of Dolci, who had been there countless times and who loved Petrarch. We left our carriage in Apt[18] and went to the celebrated fountain, which was in fullest flow that day. Nature was the architect of the immense cave from which it comes. The fountain is at the foot of a cliff as sheer as a wall, a hundred feet high and of the same width. The cave itself, under the arch which forms the entrance to it, is only half as high, and from it the fountain flows with such an abundance of water that even at its birth it deserves the name of river. It is the Sorgue, which mingles with the Rhone near Avignon. There is no purer water in the world than that of this fountain, since in all the centuries it has been flowing the rocks have not received the slightest stain from it.

Those who are repelled by the water because it is black do not reflect that the cave itself, where the darkness is very dense, is what must make it look so.

> *Chiare, fresche, e dolci acque*
> *Ove le belle membra*
> *Pose colei che sola a me par donna.*
>
> ("Clear, fresh, sweet waters, in which she who to me is alone a woman dipped her beautiful limbs.")[19]

I insist on going to the top of the rock on which Petrarch had his house, the ruins of which I saw, shedding tears, as Leo Allatius[20] shed them when he saw Homer's tomb; and I wept again sixteen years later at Arquà,[21] where Petrarch died and where the house which he occupied still exists. The resemblance between the two places is striking, for from the room in which Petrarch wrote at Arquà one sees the summit of a rock very much like the one which I saw at Vaucluse and which, Dolci told me, was where Madonna Laura lived.

"Let us go there," I said, "it is not far."

What pleasure I felt when I saw the still existing remains of the house of the woman whom the amorous Petrarch immortalized in this one verse, which would melt a heart of stone:

> *Morte bella parea nel suo bel viso.*
>
> ("Death looked beautiful in her beautiful face.")[22]

I flung myself on its ruins with outstretched arms, kissing them and anointing them with my tears, asking Madame Stuard to forgive me if I had abandoned her arm to do homage to the departed spirit of a woman whose lover had been the most profound intellect which it was possible for Nature to produce. I said "intellect," for, whatever people may say, the body had nothing to do with it.

"Madame," I said to the astonished woman, who stood staring at me in her amazement, "four hundred and fifty years have passed since the place where you now are was trodden by the feet of Laura de Sade, who was perhaps not as beautiful as you are, but who was gay, polished, gentle, cheerful, and wise. May the same air which you are breathing at this moment, and which she breathed, make you resemble her, and you will inspire the flame of love in all who approach you; you will see the universe at your feet, and there will not be a mortal in the world who will dare to cause you the slightest pain. Gaiety, Madame, is the portion of the blessed, and gloom is the terrible image of souls condemned to eternal torments. Be gay, then, and deserve to be beautiful."

My enthusiasm impelled Dolci to come and embrace me. Stuard laughed, and the lady, who perhaps thought me mad, showed not the slightest sign of life in response. She took my arm again, and we slowly returned to the house of "Messer Francesco d'Arezzo,"[23] where I spent a quarter of an hour carving my name. *E sciolsi il voto* ("And I fulfilled my vow"). From there we went to dinner.

Dolci showed this extraordinary woman even more attention than I did. Stuard did nothing but eat and drink, refusing the water of the Sorgue, which, according to him, could only spoil the Hermitage wine; and it is possible that Petrarch himself would have been of the same opinion; we emptied eight bottles without our reason suffering from it; but the lady was abstemious. Back in Avignon, we bowed to her at the door of her room, declining the stupid Stuard's pressing invitation to sit down. I went to pass the last hour of the day on the bank of the Rhone with Dolci. Speaking of this strange woman, the young man pronounced judgment, and he hit the mark.

"She is," he said, "a whore[24] utterly infatuated with her own merits, who has left her country because, having lavished her favors too freely too soon, she found no one any longer interested in her. Sure of making her fortune wherever she was still a novelty, she set out with this scoundrel, maintaining her air of melancholy on principle, for she considers it the one sure means of making some man who undertakes her conquest fall madly in love with her. She has not yet found him. He must be a rich man whom she can set about ruining. She may have designs on you."

Men who reason so well at Dolci's age are those who become great masters. I left him, thanking him warmly and very glad to have made his acquaintance.

On my way to my room I saw at the door of his an elderly man of prepossessing appearance, who, bowing and calling me by my name, courteously asked me if I had found Vaucluse worthy of my interest. With great pleasure I recognize the Marchese Grimaldi,[25] of Genoa, a man of intelligence who was both likable and rich and who lived the greater part of the time in Venice because he enjoyed the pleasures of life more freely there than in his native city. My reply demanding a reasoned statement, I go in, thanking him for having done me the honor to remember me. I have no sooner finished my remarks on the fountain than he asks me if I enjoyed the promising company of my guests. I reply that I could not but have enjoyed it. Noticing my reserve, he sets about overcoming it by the following discourse:

"In Genoa we have very beautiful women; but we have not one who can match the beauty whom you took to L'Isle today. Last evening at table she struck me. Having given her my arm going upstairs, I said that if she thought I could dispel her melancholy she had only to speak. Note that I knew she had no money. It was her husband who thanked me for my offer, and I wished them good night.

"When, an hour ago, you saw her back to her room and left her there, I took the liberty of making her a visit. She received me with a graceful curtsy, and, her husband having asked me to keep her company until he returned, she did not hesitate to sit down on a sofa with me. I tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it. I then told her in a few words that her beauty had struck me, and that if she needed a hundred louis they were at her service, provided she would drop her serious manner in my company and assume a gaiety which would encourage the sentiments of friendship she had inspired in me. She replied only by a motion of the head which expressed gratitude but at the same time an absolute refusal of my proposal. I say that I am leaving tomorrow, and she does not answer. I take her hand again, and she haughtily withdraws it. At that I rise, beg her to excuse me, and leave. This is what happened to me half an hour ago. I have not fallen in love with her, for you see that I am amused; but in the light of her poverty her tactics astonish me. It is possible that you today put her in a position to scorn my offer, and in that case I understand to some extent; short of that, it is a phenomenon which I cannot explain. May I make bold to ask you outright if you fared better than I did?"

Delighted by the worthy gentleman's openness, I was as frank as he. I told him the whole story in detail; and we ended by laughing at it. I promised to call on him in Genoa and give him an account of what happened during the two days I planned to spend in Avignon after he left. He begged me to do so. He invited me to go down to supper with him to admire the recalcitrant's countenance; I said that, having dined very well, she would not be there; but he laughed and said he would wager she would go down; and he was right. When I saw her at table I decided that the role she was playing was assumed. The place beside her had been given to a Count Bussy,[26] who had just arrived, a young, handsome, conceited coxcomb, as anyone could see at a glance. Here is the scene with which we were entertained.

The Count, who was a wag by nature, playing the amiable fool with the fair sex yet at the same time bold and insolent, and who intended to leave at midnight, instantly set himself to cajoling and pestering his beautiful neighbor in a hundred ways. Finding her of a taciturnity which he had never before encountered, he did all the talking, he laughed, and, if the thought occurred to him that she was mocking him, he refused to consider it possible. I looked at Signor Grimaldi, who, like myself, could scarcely keep from laughing. Though nettled, the young roué went on; he gave her a choice bit to eat which he had first tasted himself, he even held it to her mouth; red with rage, she refused it, and he changed her plate, storming because she would not grant him a look. Seeing that no one present showed any decided inclination to defend the fortress, he remains unabashed; he laughs and decides to attack. He forcibly takes her hand and kisses it; she tries to pull it away, she rises, whereupon, still laughing, he catches her by the waist. But at that moment her husband rises, comes and takes her arm, and leaves the room with her. Somewhat disconcerted, the attacker follows her with his eyes, then resumes his place at the table, laughing again, though everyone else remains silent. He turns to ask his courier if his sword is upstairs; he answers no. He asks an abbé who is sitting beside him who the man who left with the lady is, and he replies that he is her husband; at that he laughs and says that husbands never fight.

"However," he added, "I shall offer him my apologies."

He rises, he goes upstairs, and the whole table begins commenting on the scene. A minute later he comes down, angry with the husband, who, shutting the door in his face, had told him he could go to the bordello. Declaring himself sorry that he must leave without finishing the affair, he orders champagne, offers it to everyone, no one accepts, he drinks, he gives the rest to his courier, and he leaves.

Seeing me to my room, Signor Grimaldi asks me what impression the scene had made on me. I said that I would not have stirred even if he had turned up her skirts.

"No more would I," he said; "but not if she had accepted my purse. I am curious to know how she will manage to leave here."

I told him again that I would bring him news of her in Genoa. He would not let me see him off, and he left at daybreak.

The next morning I received a note from L'Astrodi, asking me if I expected her for supper with her companion, and I answered in the affirmative. A moment later I see before me the Russian, the Duke of Kurland, whom I had left in Grenoble. I was alone. He tells me humbly that he is the son of a clockmaker in Narva, that his buckles are worthless, and that he has come to ask me for charity. I give him four louis.

"May I beg you," he says, "to keep my secret?"

"If anyone asks me about you I will say that I do not know who you are."

"In that case I will leave for Marseilles at once."

When the time comes I will recount in what condition I found him at Genoa. I sent for the innkeeper and told him privately that I wanted a choice supper for three people in my room and good wines. After replying that I would be satisfied, he said that he had just been raising a row in the Chevalier Stuard's room because he did not have money to pay for his day's board as they had agreed, and hence he was going to turn him out of the house at once, despite the fact that the lady was in bed with convulsions which were choking her.

"But that," he said, "does not pay me, and the scene yesterday evening brought discredit on my house."

"Go at once and tell her that in future she shall eat in her room with her husband morning and evening, and that I will pay for it as long as I remain here.''

''You know that meals in the room are charged double.''

''I know it.''

''Very well. I'm off.''[27]

The idea of this beautiful woman turned out into the street appalled me; but innkeepers do not practice gallantry. A moment later Stuard came to thank me and ask me to stop in at his room to persuade his wife to behave differently.

''She will not answer me, and you know I dislike that.''

''Come, she knows what you have just done, and she will speak, for after all, right feeling—''

''Who are you to talk to me of right feeling after what I saw last evening?''

''That gentleman left at midnight; and well for him that he did, otherwise I would have killed him this morning.''

''You make me laugh. It was last evening that you should have thrown your plate in his face.''

I go with him. I see her in her bed, with her back turned and the covers drawn up to her neck, and I hear her sobbing. I talk sense to her; but, as always, she does not answer me. Her husband makes to leave; but I tell him I will leave too, because no one could do anything for her and he should be convinced of it after the hundred louis she had refused from the Marchese Grimaldi, who had only wanted to kiss her hand and see her smiling.

''A hundred louis! By . . . , what behavior! We would have left at once for Liège, where our house is. A princess lets her hand be kissed for nothing; even an abbess. A hundred louis! By . . . , what behavior!''

He made me want to laugh, he cursed, he swore, and I was about to leave when convulsions, whether real or feigned, seize the poor woman. They begin by putting out an arm and hurling a bottle of water which was on the night table into the middle of the room. Stuard runs to her, holds her arm, she trembles, extends the other, she writhes with her eyes closed, she gradually arches her back, and the convulsions, seizing her thighs and legs, so disarrange the covers that I see things which I have never in my life been able to resist. The ignoble husband goes for water and leaves me there in motionless contemplation of a woman who lay as if dead in a posture than which voluptuousness could invent nothing more seductive. I feel trapped, and I rebel. I feel certain that it is only play-acting, a device by which, in her insane pride, the woman means to let me do whatever I wish and have the pleasure of denying it afterward. If it should kill me, I make up my mind to foil her. I take the cover and put it back over her. It was a hard task. I condemned to darkness dazzling charms which the monster was bent on using only to degrade me.

Stuard comes back with a bottle of water, he bathes her temples, he talks to her in the patois of Liège, he puts his hands under the cover to straighten her arched back; she pretends to feel nothing. A quarter of an hour later I pull myself together, my inertia vanishes, I leave them, and I go to walk beside the Rhone.

I strode along, angry with myself, for the slut had really bewitched me. I felt that, however brutally, enjoying all that I had seen was necessary to bring me back to reason. I saw that I must buy her, not by my attentions but with money, and, beyond that, by pretending to be taken in by all her artifices. I regretted that I had refrained from defiling her, even if her husband should have caught me in the act. I should have been satisfied, and have had every right to despise her afterward and make her aware of it. In my perplexity I see that it is still not too late, and I decide to tell her husband that I will give him twenty-five louis after he has arranged another interview for me under circumstances which will permit me to end the business.

I return to my inn with this idea in mind, and, not going to see how she is, I dine alone in my room. Leduc tells me that she is dining in her room too, and that the innkeeper has said she would not come down to the table again. I already knew it.

After dining I returned Monsieur Dolci's visit; he introduced me to his father, who was extremely good-hearted but not rich enough to satisfy his son's wish to travel. The young man himself was as agile as a monkey; he showed me his great skill in conjuring tricks. He was sweet-tempered, and, finding me curious to know if he was fortunate in love, he told me some tales from which I saw that he was in the propitious time of life which only inexperience renders unpropitious. He would have nothing to do with a certain rich woman because she demanded from him what he thought it ignoble to give when he did not love her, and he was sighing in vain for a young one because she demanded that he show her respect. I said that a gallant young man like himself ought to accommodate the generous rich woman with his person and very politely fail in respect to the younger one, who, after scolding him, would always be ready to forgive him. He was not a libertine, and he rather leaned toward Non-Conformity;[28] he amused himself innocently with friends of his own age in a garden near Avignon, where a sister of the gardener's wife entertained him when his friends were not there.

Toward nightfall I went back to my inn, and L'Astrodi and the hunchbacked Lepi[29] (for such was her name) did not keep me waiting. When I saw their two figures before me I felt a kind of consternation. I thought it impossible that what I knew was bound to happen would happen. L'Astrodi, ugly and knowing it, was sure she could make up for all her deficiencies by extreme licentiousness. La Lepi, indubitably a hunchback, but remarkably talented in her profession, was sure of arousing desire with her beautiful eyes and her teeth, which seemed to project from her mouth only to show their beauty. L'Astrodi at once came and gave me a Florentine kiss,[30] to which I had to submit willy-nilly; La Lepi timidly offered me only her imaginary cheeks, which I pretended to kiss. When I saw L'Astrodi begin cutting loose, I asked her to go slowly, for being a novice at entertainments of this kind I had to be initiated little by little. She promised to behave.

Before supper, not knowing what to say, I asked her if she had a lover in Avignon, and she answered that she had only the Vice-Legate's Auditor,[31] who, though a pervert, was pleasant and generous.

"I adapted myself to his taste very easily," she said, "though last year in Paris I would have thought it impossible, for I imagined it must hurt, but I was wrong."

"What! The Auditor treats you like a boy?"

"Yes. My sister would have adored him, for it is her passion."

"But your sister was abundantly endowed in the way of hips."

"What about me? Here—look, feel."

"You pass muster very well; but wait, it's too early. We'll be gay after supper."

"Do you know," La Lepi said to her, "that you are a wanton?"

"A wanton?"

"Shame on you! Who ever heard of a woman pulling up her skirts like that!"

"My dear, you'll do the same. Being in good company is being in the Golden Age."[32]

"I am amazed," I said to L'Astrodi, "that you tell everyone what sort of dealings you have with the Auditor."

"It's not I who tell everybody, it's everybody who tells me, and I'm congratulated on it, for he has never liked girls. I'd be ridiculous if I tried to deny it. I was surprised at my sister, but in this world one mustn't be surprised at anything. How about you—don't you like that?"

"No, I like *this* better."

And so saying, I put my hand out toward La Lepi, who was standing in front of me, and touched the place on her dress which ought to correspond to her *this,* and, my hand having found nothing, L'Astrodi burst out laughing. She rose, took my hand, and, to place it opposite her friend's *this,* she guided it to no more than six inches below her hump. It was there that, to my vast astonishment, my fingers felt the upper end of the work bench. La Lepi, who was ashamed to play the prude by moving away, began to laugh; but I was left rather nonplussed, for instead of having it in the middle of her person she had it a quarter of the way; the other three quarters were all thighs and legs. I became animated, thinking of the pleasure which this entirely new sight would afford me after supper.

"Haven't you a lover, my dear Lepi?"

"So," said L'Astrodi, "she is a virgin."

"That's not true," said the other, "for I had a lover in Bordeaux and another in Montpellier."

"Nevertheless," L'Astrodi rejoined, "you can say you are a virgin, for you have never been different from what you are now."

"That is true, too."

"What!" I said. "Then you were never a virgin? Tell me about it please, for it's something entirely new."

"Never, for it's a fact that before my first lover touched me I was just as I was after he had me. I was twelve years old."

"What did he say when he found you weren't a virgin?"

"When I swore to him that I was, he believed me, and he attributed the thing to rickets."

"Then he didn't hurt you?"

"No, for I asked him to be gentle."

"You must try it," L'Astrodi said to me; "we'll do it after supper."

"Oh, no, no!" La Lepi answered. "Monsieur is so big."

"What a reason! Are you afraid he'll put his whole self inside you? Look—I'll show it to you."

"There you are," said La Lepi, "it's just what I supposed. It will never go in."

"You're right," said L'Astrodi, "it's a bit unfair; you shall strike a bargain with him. Monsieur will be satisfied if you take in half of it."

"It's not the length, my dear. The door is too narrow."

"In that case you're lucky. You can sell your virginity after having had two lovers. But that would be nothing new."

The dialogue between the girls made me laugh, and the hunchback's ingenuous talk, which had every appearance of truth, had already decided me to try her after supper.

At table I had the pleasure of seeing the two girls eat as if they were starving and drink relentlessly. The wine having produced its effect, it was L'Astrodi who proposed that we put ourselves in the state of nature, and I agreed, getting into bed first and turning my back. I did not turn toward them again until L'Astrodi called to me; and La Lepi drew all my attention. She was bashful, but by dint of praising everything I saw in detail I put her at ease, and I persuaded her to get into bed beside me; but without L'Astrodi she could never have lain on her back, for she had none; she was all hump. But L'Astrodi doubled up a bolster and fitted it to her so well that she made all her parts parallel, and the task was finally accomplished to perfection. It was she who took charge of the insertion and managed it so successfully that La Lepi, to encourage me, said I had nothing more to fear. And so we brought the first act to its conclusion with great pleasure.

During the intermission she gave me the kisses which she could not give me in her ecstasy, for her head was actually buried in her chest.

"It's my turn now," said L'Astrodi; "but since I don't want to cuckold my Auditor, come and look the land over first. I insist, because afterward you'll make the journey with more courage. There!"

"What am I supposed to do with this half a lemon?"

"Squeeze the juice of it into the place. I want to see with my own eyes that you are sure you're taking no risk. Don't you know that if I were ill I couldn't stand the smart of it?"

"I've done it. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes. But, above all, don't cheat me, because if I become pregnant my reputation is made. And you, Lepi, lend our friend a hand." [33]

"What's 'lending a hand'?"

I had to interrupt the proceedings, for I was dying with laughter. She insisted on teaching her how, and I had to consent if I wanted her to let me do the same thing to her. Since I had undertaken not to cheat her, the business took a long time, but that was what she wanted. She upbraided La Lepi, who, tired of lending me a hand, told me to hurry up; and she showed her so effectively that she had no need of her that we ended simultaneously.

Thinking, after laughing so hard and doing so much, that I was incapable of more, I told them to go; but L'Astrodi objected and demanded punch. I was willing to make it; but wanting no more of them, I dressed again.

The punch, which I made for them with champagne, made them so wanton that they made me wanton again with them. L'Astrodi put the other in such a position that, seeing neither of her humps, I was pleased to imagine I was going to violate Jupiter's tall daughter. La

Lepi swore to me afterward that she had been the gainer by it; and I did not doubt her; but L'Astrodi, seeing me dead, would not listen to reason. She was determined to perform a miracle; but I would not let her kill me in order to resuscitate me. I promised them another supper of the same sort, intending not to keep my word. When, as they left, they saw ten louis, I thought they would eat me up. They got into my carriage, which was waiting for them at the door, giving me a thousand blessings. After eight hours' sleep I did not find myself in a state to complain of the more than lively entertainment; I quickly dressed to go for a walk.

But up comes Stuard, saying in what appeared to be great distress that if I did not arrange for him to leave before I did he would throw himself into the Rhone.

"I can afford twenty-five louis, Monsieur; but it is only to a lady gentle as a lamb that I will pay them over, and in private."

"Monsieur, it is exactly the amount we need; she is ready, go and talk to her. I shall not return until noon."

I put twenty-five louis into a pretty little purse and I hasten to my triumph. I enter her room in a respectful manner, and I see her in bed. As I approach she sits up, not troubling to pull up her shift, which left one of her breasts uncovered; and, before I open my mouth, here are the words which hers utters:

"I am here, Monsieur, prepared to pay you with my body for the paltry twenty-five louis my husband needs. Do whatever you will with me; you will meet no resistance; but remember that, in taking advantage of my need to assuage your brutality, you ought to feel far more deeply humiliated than I, who sell myself so cheaply only because necessity compels me. Your baseness is more shameful than mine. Come. Do your will."

With that she pushes the coverlet to the foot of the bed, displaying beauties with which I was already acquainted and which so ferocious a soul was unworthy to possess.

I gather up the coverlet, and I throw it over her in the greatest indignation.

"No, Madame," I reply; "it shall not be true that I leave this room humiliated by what you have said to me; it is you whom I will put to shame by telling you truths of which, if you were a decent woman, you could not be ignorant. I am no brute, and to convince you of it I leave without having enjoyed your charms, which I scorn and for which I had no idea of paying by giving you twenty-five paltry louis. There they are; but be sure that I give them to you only from a feeling of pity which I regret that I cannot overcome. Be sure, too, that, as soon as you give yourself to a man for money, even though it is for a hundred million, you are a prostitute if you do not at least pretend to love him; for then the man, unable to guess that you are feigning, will still think you are a decent woman. Farewell."

After that I returned to my room; and when her husband came to thank me, I at once asked him to say no more to me about his wife. The next morning he left with her for Lyons. The reader will learn at the proper time how I met them both again at Liège.

Dolci came during the afternoon to take me to his garden to see the gardener's sister-in-law. He was better looking than she. Put in a good humor, she only momentarily resisted his request to be kind to him in my presence; it was on this occasion that, having seen that nature had endowed him wonderfully well, I assured him that he did not need money from his father to travel, and he profited by my advice. He was a Ganymede[34] who, during his encounter with the girl in the garden, could easily have turned me into Jupiter.

On my way back to my inn, I saw getting out of a boat a young man some twenty-four or twenty-six years of age whose honest countenance was the picture of melancholy. He comes up to me and asks me for charity, displaying a bill authorizing him to ask it and a passport which showed me that he had left Madrid six weeks before. He was from Parma and his name was Gaetano Costa.[35] When I see "Parma," prepossession enters in; he interests me. I ask him what misfortune has reduced him to begging.

"The misfortune of not having money enough to return to my native country."

"What were you doing in Madrid, and why did you go there?"

"I went there four years ago as valet to Doctor Pistoria,[36] physician to the King of Spain; but not satisfied with my position, I asked him for permission to leave his service. This certificate shows you that he did not dismiss me."

"What can you do?"

"I write a good hand; I can serve as a secretary; in my own country I can follow the trade of scribe. Here are some French verses which I copied yesterday, and here are some Italian ones."

"Your handwriting is excellent; but can you write correctly by yourself?"

"From dictation I can write Latin and Spanish too."

"Correctly?"

"Yes, Monsieur, from dictation; for it is the person who dictates who must answer for the correctness."

I at once saw that the young man was an ignoramus; nevertheless, I take him to my room; I tell Leduc to speak to him in Spanish, and he answers reasonably well; but when I dictate to him in Italian and French I find that he does not know the first rules of orthography. I tell him that he does not know how to write, and, seeing him mortified, I console him by saying that I will take him to Genoa at my expense. He kisses my hand and assures me that I will find him a faithful servant.

I took a liking to him because he had a method of reasoning which was all his own and which he used in the belief that it gave him distinction; it was apparently what had won him the good opinon of the ignoramuses with whom he had associated until then, and he ingenuously used it with everyone. I laughed in his face when, by way of beginning, he modestly told me that the art of writing consisted in having a legible hand, so it followed that the person with a more legible hand than another was also the wiser. Since he said this with his eyes fixed on something in my handwriting, he claimed, without saying so, that I must be inferior to him. He thought that because of this superiority in him I ought to grant him a certain consideration. I laughed, I thought he was not beyond learning, and I kept him. But for these wild notions of his I should have given him charity, and the whim of taking him with me would not have entered my head. He made me laugh. He told me that correct spelling was unnecessary, since those who read and know a language do not need it in order to understand what the writing means, and those who do not know a language cannot see the mistakes in it. Seeing that I did not contradict him, he thought he had driven me to the wall and he took my laughter for applause. Having dictated something to him in French on the subject of the Council of Trent,[37] I exploded when I saw "Trente" written with a three and a zero;[38] and when I told him why I was laughing he said that it all came to the same thing, since the reader could not fail to read "Trente" if he had any knowledge of arithmetic. In short, he had some intelligence, which was why he was stupid; I thought it out of the ordinary, and I kept him. I was more stupid than he. Then, too, he was a good sort; he had no vices; he was addicted neither to women nor to wine nor to gambling nor to bad company, he seldom went out, and always alone. Leduc disliked him because he put on airs as if he were my secretary, and because he told him one day that every Spaniard with bowlegs was descended from a Moor. Leduc was bowlegged and, priding himself on old Christian descent, conceived an implacable hatred for Costa, who, after all, was right. It was for this reason that they had a fist fight two weeks later at Nice in Provence. Costa came whining to me with his nose swollen. I laughed. From that day on he respected Leduc, who because he had been longer in my service thought himself his superior. I have dilated on this Costa so that my reader may have an accurate idea of him, for unfortunately I shall have more to say about him in the course of these memoirs.

I left the next morning and went on to Marseilles without troubling to stop at Aix, where the Parlement[39] sits. I put up at the "Thirteen Cantons,"[40] being of a mind to spend at least a week in that ancient city, with which I had a great wish to become acquainted and at the same time to be completely free there; for that reason I had furnished myself with no letters of introduction; well supplied with cash, I did not need to be known to anyone. I at once informed the innkeeper that I would always eat in my room alone, and always fish; I knew that the fish to be had in that city were more delicate than those of the Atlantic and the Adriatic.

I went out the next morning, followed by a hire servant to show me the way back to my inn when I should tire of walking about. Strolling at random, I found myself on a remarkably wide and very long quay, where I thought I was in Venice. I see shops in which wines from the Levant and Spain were sold at retail, and where a number of people who preferred them to coffee and chocolate were breakfasting. I see the preoccupied haste of those who are coming and going, bumping into each other and wasting no time begging pardon. I see shopkeepers and hucksters offering all kinds of merchandise, and pretty girls, some dressed well, others poorly, side by side with women whose brazen manner seemed to say to those who looked at them, "You have only to follow me.'' I also see others who, though well dressed, walk modestly on, looking at no one in order to arouse more interest.

Everywhere I seem to see the freedom of my native country in the mixture of all nations which I observe and in the different costumes. It was a hodgepodge of Greeks, Turks, Africans, pirates (at least to judge from their looks), Jews, monks, charlatans, and from time to time I see Englishmen, who say nothing or talk to each other in low tones without taking much notice of anyone.

I stop at a street corner only long enough to read the announcement of the play[41] which was being performed that day, then I go to dinner very well pleased, and even better pleased after dinner because of the excellent fish I had been served. The red mullet eaten there, which we call *barboni* in Venice and the Tuscans *triglie,* are incomparable. The French call them *rougets,* presumably because their heads and fins are red.

I dressed to go to the play, and took a place in the amphitheater.[42]

CHAPTER IV

Rosalie. Toulon. Nice. My arrival in Genoa. Signor Grimaldi. Veronica and her sister.

I SEE that the four boxes to my right, like those to my left, are occupied by pretty women, all prepossessing and elegantly attired, and I see no men with them. During the first intermission I see young gentlemen wearing swords, and others without them, approach the boxes and converse familiarly with these ladies, or light women, and I hear a young Knight of Malta[1] say to the one who was alone in the box beside me:

"I will come to breakfast with you tomorrow."

It was all I needed. I examine her more carefully, and, finding her appetizing, I do not hesitate, as soon as I see the Knight make off, to ask her if she would let me come to supper.

"With pleasure, my friend; but I've been caught so many times that if you don't 'earnest' me, I shan't expect you."

"How am I to 'earnest' you, I don't understand."

"Apparently you have just arrived."

She laughs and summons the Knight with her fan.

"Explain to this foreigner, please, who asks me to let him come to supper tonight, what 'to earnest' means."

He says with a smile that Mademoiselle, to make sure I would not fail to do her the honor, wishes me to pay for the supper in advance. I thank him, and I ask the young lady if a louis is enough. She says it will do, and, giving it to her, I ask for her address. She hadn't a card in her pocket; but she asks the Knight to tell me the way to her house. He very politely says that when we leave the theater he will take me there himself; and he adds that she is the greatest wanton in Marseilles. He asks me if I have been in Marseilles before, I say I have not and that I have just arrived; and he congratulates himself on having made my acquaintance. We go to the center of the amphitheater, and, talking on, he names each of the fourteen or sixteen girls whom we see there, all of them ready to furnish the first comer with supper. He says that they all have free entrance to the theater and that the manager finds it to his advantage, for since decent women would not occupy those boxes they would be empty and the house would be dull. I scrutinize them, and I find five or six who are prettier than the one I had honored with my choice; but I count on the following days. I ask the Knight if he has a favorite among these beauties, and he answers no. He says he is in love with a dancer, whom he supports, but that, not being jealous of her, he will take me to her house. I assure him that it will be a pleasure; the ballet comes on; he points her out to me, and I congratulate him. At the end of the play he takes me to the door of my new conquest, and, after saying that we will meet again, he leaves me there.

I go upstairs, I find her in dishabille, and she no longer attracts me; but she makes some wanton sallies at which I laugh, and I sup reasonably well. After supper she goes to bed and invites me to do the same, but I excuse myself, saying that I never sleep out. She then shows me the coverall which sets the mind at rest, and, finding it too thick, I refuse it. She says that thin ones cost three livres and that everyone considers them too expensive.

"Give me a thin one."

"I have a dozen; but the dealer will not sell them singly."

"I will buy the dozen."

"Very well."

She rings, and a girl comes in whom she orders to bring her the package on her toilet table. The girl's face and her modest bearing strike me, and I tell her so.

"She is fifteen," she says; "but she's a silly goose and won't do anything because she claims to be a virgin."

"May I inspect her?"

"She won't let you. Ask her and you'll see."

The girl comes back with the package. I put myself in condition to order her to choose me one which fits well, and she sulkily begins looking and measuring.

"This one doesn't fit properly," I say, "try another"; and another and another, until I suddenly splash her and no mistake, her mistress laughs, and she, indignant at my scurvy trick, throws the whole packet in my face and angrily leaves. Having no further desire to do anything, I pay her for the coveralls and I leave. However, the girl whom I had treated so badly comes to light my way, and I make it up to her generously, giving her a louis. Very much surprised, she begs me not to tell her mistress.

"Is it true, my dear, that you still have your maidenhead?"

"Perfectly true, Monsieur."

"And why won't you let yourself be inspected?"

"Because it revolts me."

"You'll have to make up your mind to it, for otherwise, pretty as you are, one is at a loss what to do with you. Will you let me?"

"Yes, but not in this house."

"Then where?"

"Have someone bring you to my mother's house tomorrow morning, and I'll be there. Your hire valet knows the way."

Returning to my inn, I ask the valet if he knows the girl who lighted me down, and he replies that he does and that he had been astonished to see her there because he thought she was a decent girl.

"You shall take me to her mother's house tomorrow morning."

"Gladly."

The next morning he takes me at ten o'clock to a wretched one-story house on the outskirts of the city, where I see a woman spinning flax and children eating bread. She asks me what I want.

"Your daughter is not here?"

"No. And if she were, do you take me for her bawd?"

Just then the girl arrives, and the infuriated mother throws a bottle at her head which would have killed her if she had not missed her aim. I step between them, raising my cane, the children scream, my valet comes in and shuts the door; but the woman's rage does not abate, she calls her daughter a whore at the top of her voice, she orders her to leave the house, she says she is no longer her mother, and I can hardly hold her. My valet tells her not to shout so loud because of the neighbors, and she answers:

"Hold your tongue, you pimp."

I give her an écu, she throws it in my face, whereupon I open the door and go out with the poor girl, my valet snatching her from the hands of her mother, who had taken her by the hair. I am booed and jostled by the mob which followed me and which would have torn me to pieces if I had not taken refuge in a church, which I left by a different door a quarter of an hour later. I have never in all my life escaped from a greater danger. What saved me was my fear of angering the town mob, for I knew its ferocity.

Two hundred paces before I reach my inn I am joined by the girl, who is clinging to my valet's arm.

"Knowing how savage your mother is," I ask her, "how could you make me run such a risk?"

"I thought she would respect you."

"Try to stop crying. I don't know how I can be of use to you."

"I shall certainly not go back where I was yesterday. There is nothing for me but the streets."

I ask my valet if he knows some decent woman who would give her lodging, for which I would pay; he replies that he knows a place where furnished rooms are let; I tell him to go there and I will follow. He enters a house, where an old man shows me rooms on every floor. The girl says she needs only a lodging for six francs a month, and the man goes up to the attic, opens a garret with his key, and says:

"This one is six francs; but I must have the month's rent in advance and I warn you that my door is locked at ten o'clock and that no one must ever spend the night with you."

I saw a bed with coarse sheets, but clean; two chairs, a table, and a chest of drawers. The window was glazed and had blinds. I ask the man how much he will take per day to board her, and he says twenty sous, with two sous for the maid who will bring up her meals and do her room. The girl answers that she is satisfied, and she pays the month's rent and twenty sous for meals that day. I leave her there, saying that I will see her again.

Going downstairs with the old man, I ask him for a room for myself; and he gives me one at a louis, which I pay him on the spot. He gives me a skeleton key which fits the street door so that I can enter at any hour I please. He says that he cooks in his own part of the house and that he will prepare meals for me at whatever price I stipulate.

After doing this good deed, the source of which appeared to be a virtue, I dined alone, then went to a large coffeehouse, where I saw the agreeable Knight of Malta playing.[2] He left off when he saw me, putting in his purse the ten or twelve louis he had won. After asking me if I had been satisfied with the girl with whom I had supped, and hearing that I had done nothing, he asked me if I should like to have him introduce me to his dancer, and we went there. We found her at her toilet table having her hair arranged by a hairdresser. She received me with the jocularity which is appropriate to old acquaintance. She did not interest me; but for the Knight's sake I showed no sign of it.

After the hairdresser left, she had to dress for the theater, and she did not stand on ceremony. The Knight helped her change her shift, which she did with the greatest freedom, though asking my pardon. I said with a laugh that she had indeed made me uncomfortable; she refuses to believe it, she comes to me to learn the truth and, finding that I have lied, she calls me a milksop.

There is not a city in France in which light women are as profligate as they are in Marseilles. Not only do they pride themselves on refusing nothing; they are the first to offer the man what he perhaps does not dare ask for. She showed me a repeating watch on which she had got up a lottery at twelve francs a ticket, and offered me one, saying that she still had ten. I took them all, I paid her five louis, then I made her a present of the tickets. She ran to kiss me, telling her Knight that I could cuckold him whenever I wished. He replied that nothing would please him better. He invited me to sup with her, and politeness prompted me to accept; but after supper the only pleasure I enjoyed was watching the Knight pay her his respects in bed. I found him much less well endowed than Dolci.

After wishing them good night I left them on the pretext of my poor health, and I went to the furnished room in which I had placed the unfortunate girl. Having the key, I entered the house; the maidservant got up to show me to my room. It was midnight. I asked her if I might go to the garret, and she took me there at once. She knocked, and when the girl heard my voice she opened the door, and I sent the maid to wait for me in my room. I sit down on her bed; I ask her if she is satisfied, and she replies that she is happy.

"Then I hope I shall find you kind, and I shall come to bed with you."

"You may do whatever you please; but I warn you that I have given myself to a lover, though it was only once; but that's enough to keep you from finding me quite intact. Forgive me if I lied to you yesterday. I could not guess that you would love me."

Gentle as a lamb, she lets me lay bare all her beauties, feast on them with my eyes, explore them with my hands, and devour them with my mouth, and the mere thought that I was to become possessed of this treasure sets my soul on fire; but her obedient manner distresses me.

"My dear Rosalie" (such was her name), "your submissiveness shows me that you do not love me. Why do you not kindle to my desires?"

"I do not dare; I am afraid you will suspect me of pretending."

Both artifice and deceit are capable of such an answer; but at that moment it could be given only by candor. Impatient to clasp her in my arms, I quickly strip off everything which could lessen my pleasure, I lie down beside her, and a moment later I am surprised to find that she had lied when she said she had had a lover. I tell her so.

"Never," I say, "did a girl tell that sort of lie."

"I am glad that you think it is not true; but it is only too sure that I had a lover, and this is how.

"Two months ago my mother, though hot-tempered, loved me. I worked as a seamstress, I earned twenty and sometimes even thirty sous a day, and I gave it all to her; I'd never had a lover, and I didn't care; I laughed at people praising me for being virtuous when I had no idea that I was being anything of the kind. I had been brought up from childhood never to look young men I met in the street in the face and never to answer when they said silly things to me.

"Well, two months ago a rather good-looking young man, a native of Genoa and a merchant in a small way, made my mother's acquaintance by bringing her some fine cotton stockings to wash. When he saw me he didn't say much in my praise; but all that he said was perfectly honorable, I liked him, and he began coming to our house every evening; my mother was always present, sitting near me, but he never even took my hand to kiss it. My mother, very pleased to see that the young man loved me, often scolded me for not putting myself out to be polite to him. He was to leave for Genoa in a small ship which he owned, carrying merchandise, and he had assured us he would come back in the spring of the following year and would then declare his intentions, which would depend on his still finding me well behaved and, above all, without a lover. No more was needed. Considering him my future husband, my mother often let me talk with him at the door of our house until midnight. When he left I shut the door and got into bed beside her. I always found her asleep.

"Four or five days before he was to leave he persuaded me to walk fifty paces from our house with him to drink a glass of good muscatel at the shop of a Greek merchant who served customers all night. We spent only half an hour alone there together, and it was on that day that I first let him give me a few kisses. If when I got back to the house I had found my mother awake I would have told her all about it, for the pleasure I had felt seemed to me perfectly innocent.

"On the next day but one, urged to grant him the same favor, I consented, and love began to gain ground. The caresses we exchanged no longer seemed innocent, for we knew that we had gone beyond the bounds of decency; even so, we forgave ourselves because we had managed to abstain from the final act.

"Again on the next day but one, my lover having to weigh anchor that night, he took leave of my mother, and after she had gone to bed I did not hesitate to grant him a pleasure which I desired as much as he did. We went to the usual place, we ate to make us thirsty, we drank to quench our thirst, and our heated senses so emboldened our love that, forgetting our duty, we believed we were achieving a triumph. After our defeat we went to sleep, and, on waking to the light of day, we recognized the sin we had committed. We rose more melancholy than happy, and I went home, where my mother, who was already up, received me in more or less the same way as you saw her do yesterday. I assured her that marriage would wipe out the shame of my crime, and at this confession she took up a stick, with which she would perhaps have killed me if I had not taken to my heels.

"I spent the whole morning in a church, and at dinnertime, not knowing where to go, I was wandering through the streets when I met a woman I knew whose trade was finding situations for maidservants. I asked her if she might have a situation for me, and she replied that she had been asked for a girl that morning; but that the mistress of the house was a courtesan and hence I would run the risk of becoming the same. I replied that I was sure I could defend myself, and the woman placed me in the house of ill fame where you found me. The young lady was pleased to see me and even more pleased when, in answer to her questions, I said that I had never been with a man. But I heartily repented of having told her that lie.

"During the week I spent in the abandoned woman's house I was treated every day to the most outrageous and humiliating affronts that ever a girl endured. All the men who came there had no sooner seen me and been told that I was a virgin than they wanted to have me; they immediately offered me five or six louis, but I had to begin by letting them inspect me. I refused, and they made fun of me. Five or six times a day I had to witness the brutal excesses of the men who came to amuse themselves with my mistress, and when they were ready to leave at night and I lighted them down the stairs, they assailed me with the coarsest insults because I refused to do what they wanted for a twelve-sou piece; then they gave me half a copper,[3] saying that I must be rotten with the pox. When I went up to my garret to bed I barred my door; I thought I would kill myself when you came last evening and treated me in a way more shameful than I thought it possible to imagine; but when you left you were so reasonable and so generous that I not only forgave you, I loved you, believing that you were the man whom Providence had sent me and, above all, the man to calm my mother and persuade her to let me come home, being sure that my lover, returning in the spring and finding me there, would marry me. But since this morning I have lost all faith in my mother, who apparently believes I am a prostitute. Now I am yours, if you want me, and I forever renounce my lover, well knowing that I have become unworthy of him. Take me for your servant, and I will love you and you alone as faithfully as if I were your wife, and you will never find any ambition in me."

Whether they sprang from virtue or from weakness, I know that Rosalie saw my tears before I saw hers. But she shed them in torrents when she saw that I was touched.

"I think," I said, "you have only one shift."

"And another, which I happened to have in my pocket. Everything I owned was left at my mother's."

"Set your heart at rest, my dear Rosalie, tomorrow you shall have everything you may need, and tomorrow evening you shall sup with me in the room I have rented on the third floor. I will take care of you, sleep in peace."

"Then you pity me?"

"I believe, my dear child, that I love you."

"God grant it!"

This heartfelt "God grant it" sent me away laughing, and the maidservant, who had been waiting two hours for me, stopped scowling[4] when she saw a six-franc piece. I ordered her to tell her master I would eat a fast-day supper in my room with Rosalie and that I liked to eat well.

I went to the "Thirteen Cantons," truly in love with the poor girl, whose real story I had finally heard from her own beautiful lips. I felt she had shown so much virtue that she seemed not yet to have committed any sin. I decided never to abandon her. It is the decision to which one always comes when one is in love.

The next morning I went out on foot with my hire valet, instructing him to take me to some ready-made establishment where I could buy my unfortunate Rosalie everything she needed in the way of attire which, though not luxurious, would not suggest poverty.

At fifteen she had the figure of a girl of twenty, with a fully developed bosom and everything in excellent proportion. I did not go wrong in a single measurement. I spent my whole morning making the purchases, and my valet took her a small trunk containing two dresses, shifts, petticoats, stockings, handkerchiefs, bonnets, gloves, slippers, a fan, a work bag, and a mantle. Delighted with having thus prepared a delicious spectacle for my soul, I could scarcely wait to enjoy it at supper.

The Knight of Malta dropped in and invited himself to dine with me, and I was glad of it. Afterward he persuaded me to go to the theater, for, he told me, it being a day on which the subscriptions were suspended, I should see the best people in Marseilles in the boxes and no light women in the amphitheater, for on these days they could get in only by paying. He introduced me to a woman who received people of standing at her house, and she invited me there; but I declined, saying that I had to leave. However, it was an acquaintance which proved useful in connection with what was to befall me not long after I arrived in Marseilles for the second time. Her name was Audibert.[5]

I did not wait for the end of the play before going to see Rosalie, whom I really believed I did not recognize when she appeared before me. She was a tall brunette with black eyes, narrow eyebrows, delicate features in a face without much color and white as a lily. Her cheeks had two dimples which appeared only when she smiled, and there was one on her chin. Her lower lip, of the most brilliant carmine and protruding a little beyond the upper, seemed made to receive a kiss and keep it from falling. All this made up a rare countenance, one of those which impress because they speak and make one long to know what they are saying. To see Rosalie's beauty rightly one had to see her smiling, and until then I had always seen her sad; sadness had vanished and given place to the sweetness of gratitude and satisfaction. Examining her attentively, I was proud of my handiwork; but I had to get over my surprise quickly, for I could not but apprehend that she might be afraid I was passing an unfavorable judgment on her. So I hastened to impart my thoughts to her, ending by assuring her that, she being such as God had made her, I should expose myself to eternal ridicule if I kept her with me as a servant.

"You shall, my dear Rosalie, be my indubitable mistress, and my servants shall show you the same respect they would show my wife."

At that Rosalie, as if restored from death to life, said what my various kindnesses had made her feel, her confused expressions flooding my soul with joy, for I was certain I was hearing no tricks of art.

Having had no mirror in her garret, she had dressed without using one. I saw that she did not dare go to a large mirror which was there, I urged her to look at herself, and I saw her laugh; she said she was inclined to think she was in disguise. She praised the tastefulness and simplicity of her dress, and she vented her anger at the thought that her mother would consider it all sinful.

"You must forget your cruel mother. You look like a lady of quality, and I shall feel proud in Genoa when I am asked if you are my daughter."

"In Genoa?"

"Yes, Genoa. You turn pale?"

"It is from surprise, for I may well see a man there whom I have not yet forgotten."

"Do you want to stay here?"

"No, no! Love me. Be sure that I prefer you, and not from mercenary motives."

"Now you want to cry. Let us embrace each other, my angel."

She came to my arms and showered me with the sweet tears she could not hold back. In this state we sat down at table, waited on by the only maidservant in the house. We had dishes even tastier than those I was given to eat at the "Thirteen Cantons." I ate cuttlefish, which are known as *sipions*[6] and which I found delicious, eel livers, a crab more delicate than those from the Atlantic; I ate like an Apicius[7] and was put out to find that Rosalie could not eat.

"Have you the failing, dear heart, of not liking to eat well?"

"No one has a better appetite than mine, and I have an excellent digestion, as you will see when my heart and my soul have become a little more accustomed to the joy which overwhelms me."

"But you are not drinking either, and this wine is excellent. If you like the Greek's muscat I will send for some. It will remind you of your lover."

"If you want to be completely kind to me, pray in future spare me the greatest mortification to which you can subject me."

"I will subject you to none, my dear Rosalie—please forgive me. It will not happen again."

"When I see you I am in despair because I did not know you before I knew him."

"That feeling is enough, my dear one; it is sublime just because you have drawn it only from your beautiful soul. You are beautiful and virtuous, for you yielded only to love, and when I think that you are mine I am in despair because I am not sure that you love me, for my Evil Genius wants me to believe that if I had not rescued you I should not see you loving."

"Evil Genius indeed! Certainly, if I had met you in the street without knowing you I should not have fallen madly in love with you; but I am equally certain that I should have found you pleasing. I feel that I love you, and that it is not because of your generosity, for I feel, too, that if I were rich and you poor I would do anything for you; but I do not want that. I prefer being in your debt to seeing you in mine. That is all I know, and all that my intelligence can compass. You must guess the rest."

It was midnight; we were still at table; and I see the old master of the house asking me if I am satisfied.

"Not merely satisfied, but grateful. Who prepared this supper?"

"My daughter; but it is expensive."

"Hang the expense, my friend; you will be satisfied with me as I am with you, and tomorrow night you shall serve me the same sort of supper; and the charming young woman you see there will feel better and will eat."

"She will have a good appetite in bed. The same thing happened to me sixty years ago. You laugh, Mademoiselle?"

"I am laughing at the pleasure you must take in remembering it."

"You are right. And that is why I forgive young people all the sins they commit for love."

"You are a wise man," I said.

"If he is wise," said Rosalie when he had gone, "my mother is a great fool."

"Would you like me to take you to the theater tomorrow?"

"No, no—please not! I would obey you, but it would distress me. No theater and no walks. How people would talk! Nothing in Marseilles; but everything anywhere else, and gladly."

"Just as you please. But you shall have this room. No more garret. We shall leave in three days."

"So soon?"

"Yes. You shall tell me tomorrow anything you need for traveling which I might overlook."

"Another lined mantle, half-length boots, a nightcap, combs, a powder bag, a powder puff, a pot of pomade, and a prayer book so that I can go to mass."

"Then you can read?"

"Read and write."

"Giving me such an order is real proof of your love; one cannot love without reliance. Don't fear that I may forget anything; but you shall see to the boots yourself; there is a bootmaker ten paces from here; you can have your measurements taken at once."

With all this talk I prepared Rosalie for the delicious night we spent together. We slept for seven hours, which were preceded and followed by two of caresses. We got up at noon knowing each other intimately. Rosalie addressed me as *"tu,"* she no longer talked of gratitude, she had become used to happiness, and she laughed scornfully at her past afflictions. She came running to me in season and out of season, and in her enthusiasm she called me her child, who had brought her happiness, she devoured me with kisses, and, in short, she made me happy; and since in this life nothing is real except the present, I enjoyed it, dismissing the images of the past and loathing the darkness of the always dreadful future, for it offers nothing certain except death, *ultima linea rerum* ("the final boundary line of all things").[8]

My second night with Rosalie was more delightful than the first, for, having eaten a good supper and drunk sufficiently though moderately, in bed she was able to refine upon the pleasures of Venus and to surrender with less reserve to the furies she inspires.

I gave her a gold needle, with which to amuse herself tatting, and a watch. She said that she wanted one and would never have dared to ask me for it; but seeing that such a fear of displeasing me by asking me for something was a sign of little confidence in me, she promised, kissing me again and again, that in future she would not hide the slightest of her fancies from me. Thus did it please me to instruct her, and I was proud to think that the education I should give her would make her perfect.

On the fourth day I instructed her to be ready to get into my carriage as soon as I came to her room to give her my arm down the stairs. I told neither Leduc nor Costa anything; but I had told Rosalie that I had two servants with whom I often talked in order to laugh at the stupid things they said, but that she must be very reserved with them and beware of indulging in the slightest familiarity; she must give them absolute orders, never doubting that they would be obeyed immediately, but without pride, and must not let any soft-heartedness keep her from telling me if my servants failed in any way to show her respect.

So I set out from the "Thirteen Cantons" with four post horses, having relegated Leduc and Costa to the coachman's seat. My hire valet, whom I had paid liberally, had seen to tying Rosalie's trunk behind the carriage. I had the coachman stop at the door of the house in which she was waiting for me; I went to her room for her, and, after thanking the kind old man, who was sorry to see so likable a girl leave, I seated her in my carriage, ordering the postilions to take the road to Toulon, which I wanted to see before going to Italy. We reached it in five hours.

My dear Rosalie supped with me, maintaining a dignified manner, chiefly to impress Leduc, who claimed it was Costa's place to stand behind her chair. Without looking at him I told Rosalie that it was he who would have the honor to wait on her and to dress her hair whenever she wished; at that he gave in, making her a bow.

The next day we went to see the port,[9] and it was the Commandant himself who, happening to be there, did us the honor of showing us everything; I generously accorded him that of giving Rosalie his arm; and I had little difficulty in persuading him to stay to dinner with us.

Though with absolutely no experience of society, the girl spoke little but always well and responded with great charm to all the attentions and compliments which the amiable Commandant paid her.

In the afternoon he took us to see the arsenal, and politeness demanded that I accept his invitation to supper. There was no question of introducing Rosalie. It was the Commandant who introduced his wife, his daughter, and his son to me. I saw with pleasure that my young sweetheart held her own with women of fashion even better than with men. The ladies paid her every warm attention she could wish, and she received them as if to the manner born, with modesty and deference and that sweetness of manner which is the infallible sign of a good upbringing.

I was urgently invited to dinner the next day, but I took my leave. She jumped on my neck for joy when, back at the inn, I told her I had been thoroughly pleased with her.

"But," she said, "I'm always afraid of being asked who I am."

"In good company in France, my dear child, no one will ever ask you such a stupid question."

"But if I had been asked, how should I have answered?"

"By a subterfuge."

"What's that?"

" 'Please, Madam,—or Sir,—ask my traveling companion.' "

"I understand. It's called a subterfuge because it evades the question; but shouldn't I be rude if I answered that way?"

"Yes, but not as rude as the person who questioned you."

"And what would you answer if you were asked the same question?"

"That would depend on who asked it. If I didn't want to tell the truth, I should not be at a loss for things to say. In the meanwhile, I thank you for being interested in my lessons. Keep asking. You are my jewel, and it is my part to set you and make you shine. Let us go to bed, for we must leave early tomorrow so that we shall be at Antibes[10] the day after."

In that city I engaged a felucca[11] for Genoa, and, intending to return to France by the same route, I put my carriage in a stable, under a written agreement to pay six francs a month.

We left Antibes early; but two hours later, a strong wind having come up, and I seeing that my angel was dying with fear, I would not allow the sail to be hoisted. I had the felucca rowed into the harbor of Villefranche,[12] and, to find a good lodging, I hired a carriage and went to Nice,[13] where the bad weather obliged me to remain for three days.

I thought it my duty to make my bow to the Commandant, who was an old officer named Paterson.[14] The first thing he asked me was if I knew a Russian who went by the name of Charles Ivanov. I replied that I had seen him in a house in Grenoble.

"He is said to have escaped from Siberia and to be the youngest son of the Duke of Kurland."

"I have been told so too, but I know nothing about it."

"He has gone to Genoa, where a banker is said to have instructions to give him twenty thousand scudi; nevertheless, he found no one here who would give him a sou. I sent him to Genoa at my own expense to rid the city of him."

I was very glad that he had left before I arrived. An old officer named Ramini,[15] who was staying at my inn, asked me if I would take charge of a packet which Monsieur de Saint-Pierre,[16] the Spanish Consul, had to send to the Marchese Grimaldi in Genoa. I took charge of it with pleasure as soon as I learned that he was the same Marchese Grimaldi I had just seen in Avignon. Ramini also asked me if in Avignon I had met a Madame Stuard, who had spent two weeks in Nice with her so-called husband, penniless, never saying a word, enchanting everyone by her beauty, and not vouchsafing anyone so much as a smile. I told him she was no longer in Avignon and that it was I who had given her the means to leave there.

"But," I added, "how did she manage to get away from here without money?"

"Nobody knows. She left in a carriage, and the innkeeper was paid. I am very curious about her. The Marchese Grimaldi told me she refused a hundred louis he offered her and that she had treated a Venetian in the same fashion. Perhaps you are the man."

"I am he; but I gave her the money nevertheless."

Commandant Paterson came to see me toward nightfall, and I saw that he was enchanted by my beautiful Rosalie. What amused me in this city, where one ought to be bored and in which the midges devour foreigners in preference to the inhabitants, was a small faro bank at the coffeehouse,[17] at which I made Rosalie play too. Lucky on each of the three days, she won twenty Piedmontese pistole.[18] She put them in a little purse; and she told me afterward that her one wish was to have a purse with money in it. I was cross with her because, by not having confided this wish to me, she had broken her promise; but we made up without too much difficulty.

Thus did I bind her to me, hoping that I would keep her all the rest of my life and that, living happily with her, I should not need to run from one beauty to another.

The weather having turned fair, we set sail at nightfall and the next morning landed in Genoa, which I had never seen. I put up at the "Santa Marta" inn,[19] where, for decency's sake, I took two adjoining rooms, having my servants sleep in a closet next door.

The next morning I sent the package to Signor Grimaldi by Costa and later left my visiting card at the door of his palazzo.

I had a valet whom I engaged take me to a linen draper's, where I bought enough linen to keep Rosalie busy making up her deficiencies in that department. My gift gave her the greatest pleasure.

We were still at table when the Marchese Grimaldi was no sooner announced than he embraced me in person and thanked me for having taken charge of his packet. The first thing he asked me was for news of

Madame Stuard, and after hearing the whole story he laughed and said he did not know what he would have done in my place.

As he was looking at Rosalie with great attention, I said that she was a young lady whose goodness interested me as much as her beauty. I told him I wanted to find her a decent girl who could serve her as chambermaid, sew with her, go out with her dressed in the costume of the country, and above all speak good Italian to her so that she could learn it, for I wanted to be able to introduce her in Florence, Rome, and Naples.

"Why will you not accord the city of Genoa such a great pleasure? I offer to introduce the young lady everywhere, beginning with my own house, by any name and style you may designate."

"She has very good reasons for seeing no one here."

"That is enough. Do you expect to spend some time here?"

"A month at most. Our pleasures will consist in seeing the city and its surroundings and going to the theater.[20] We shall spend agreeable hours at table, where we shall daily eat such excellent mushrooms[21] as we have eaten today."

"A delightful program, I could not offer you a happier life than the one you propose to lead here. I will try, Mademoiselle, to find you a girl who will serve you well in all capacities."

"You, Monsieur? You are very kind to take such an interest in me."

"My interest is infinite, and even greater now that I have the illusion that I am in Marseilles."

Rosalie blushed, for she did not know that she rolled her r's and hence a man who had traveled could instantly tell her native country; but I immediately enlightened her and so set her mind at rest.

I having asked Signor Grimaldi how I could obtain the *Journal des Savants*[22] and the *Mercure de France*[23] and all such publications, he promised to send me a vendor who would see to it. He said as he left that he would come to breakfast with me the next day if I would allow him to make me a present of his chocolate, which he promised himself I would find excellent. I replied that he could not give me a more welcome present.

After he left she asked me to take her to a milliner's, where she wanted to buy ribbons and other things she needed, paying for them with her own money and striking her own bargain without my interfering.

"With all my heart. And afterwards we will go to the play."

At the milliner's, who was French, I found my little mistress charming; she assumed a lofty air, pretended to know everything, ordered bonnets of the latest fashion, bargained, and spent five or six louis with great aplomb. I said when we left that I had been taken for her lackey and that I would have my revenge. So saying, I take her to a jeweler's shop, and I buy handsome paste buckles, earrings, and a necklace without letting her say a word, I pay the price asked, and we go out.

"My dear friend, what you bought is charming, but you don't know how to spend your money. If you had bargained you would have saved at least four louis."

We went to the play; but since she did not understand a word of it she was so bored that at the end of the first act she asked me to take her back to the inn. I found a small chest which Signor Grimaldi had sent me, containing twenty-four pounds of chocolate. I told Costa, who had boasted of his skill in preparing it, that when Signor Grimaldi arrived the next morning he was to serve us three cups of it.

He came at nine o'clock with a merchant who sold me two large pieces of the finest cotton, with a pattern of flowers in various colors on a white ground, made in Peking, from which Rosalie was to have two *mezzaro*[24] made so that she could go about Genoa with her head covered according to the custom of the city, as the *zendale*[25] is used in Venice and the mantilla[26] in Madrid.

I thanked him heartily for the generous present of chocolate he had sent me, which we found exquisite. Costa strutted when he heard Signor Grimaldi praise him for the foam he had ordered him to whip up; and a moment later Leduc announced a woman by a name unknown to me. Signor Grimaldi said she was the mother of the chambermaid I had asked him to procure for me.

I see a very well-dressed woman followed by a girl of twenty-three or twenty-four, whom, merely glancing at her, I find very pretty. The mother, after thanking the Marchese Grimaldi, introduces her daughter to Rosalie, describes all her accomplishments, says that she is a good girl, assures her that she will serve her faithfully and that she can go out with her honorably. She could speak French, she would find her cheerful and willing. That done, she told her how much a lady she had served had given her per month besides her board, and she ended by asking her not to make her eat with the servants, for her daughter's only weakness was insisting on being respected. Her name was Veronica.[27] Rosalie, after agreeing to everything, said that insisting on being respected was not a weakness, for one could only demand respect by being respectable.

"So I will keep her, and I hope she will love me."

Veronica takes her hand, and Rosalie, with modest and affable dignity, lets her kiss it. The mother leaves, telling her daughter that she will at once send her all her clothes, and Rosalie takes her to her room to begin giving her her orders.

I felt it incumbent on me to thank the nobleman most particularly, for I thought it obvious that his choice of such a chambermaid had been made more for my sake than for Rosalie's. I said that I would not fail to wait upon him and that I would ascertain at what hours he received. He said that I could easily find him at his casino in Sampierdarena,[28] where he often spent the night.

CHAPTER V

The play. The Russian. P-i. Rosalie at the convent.

AFTER HE left, seeing that Rosalie was very busy with Veronica, I went and amused myself translating *L'Écossaise,*[1] to have it played by the troupe then at Genoa, whom I thought quite good actors.

At dinner, finding Rosalie sad, I asked her the reason.

"That Veronica," she said, "is prettier than I am."

"She is nothing compared with you; and you are my only beauty; but to reassure you I will ask Signor Grimaldi tomorrow to tell her mother she must take her home and to find you another chambermaid who is very ugly instead."

"No, because he would think I am jealous, and that would distress me."

"Then cheer up, for it pains me to see you sad."

"Well then, my dear, you will see me gay again as soon as I am sure you do not love her."

"I can assure you that I did not even see her eyes."

"What an idea of the Signore's to give me such a pretty maid! Did he want to play a trick on me?"

"On the contrary, he wanted to convince you that you need fear comparison with nobody. Are you satisfied with her?"

"She works very well, and she is most respectful. She doesn't speak four words to me without calling me *Signora,* and whatever she says to me in Italian she immediately explains in French. In a month I shall be speaking it so well that we won't need to take her to Florence with us. I've ordered Leduc to move out of the closet and sleep somewhere else; and I will send her dinner from our table. I will treat her well; but remember to reassure me."

"That will be easy enough, for I cannot see that there will be anything in common between her and me."

"Then you forgive me for having felt afraid?"

"You would not have felt so if you loved me less."

"I thank you, but keep my secret."

I made up my mind never to look at Veronica, for I loved my Rosalie too much to cause her the slightest distress.

I spent the day without going out, translating *L'Écossaise,* and the next morning I stayed at Signor Grimaldi's[2] until noon.

I got a man to show me the way to the banker Belloni's[3] office, where I changed all the gold coins I had into Florentine zecchini;[4] and when I made myself known the head of the house did me every honor. I had some twelve or fourteen thousand Roman scudi on Belloni and twenty thousand on Lepri.[5]

I bought a piece of calencar[6] to keep Rosalie occupied, for she did not want to go to the theater again. I went by myself, and, returning to the inn, I found Signor Grimaldi with her and Veronica, giving them advice about the dress they were working on. I embraced the

Senator,[7] then thanked Rosalie for having received him, saying gently that she ought to have left off sewing.

"Ask him, my dear, if he didn't force me to go on. He offered to leave."

With that, leaving Veronica to work on alone, she rose and, playing the role of mistress admirably, she managed to persuade the Marchese to sup with us, thus divining my wish. He ate almost nothing, for he did not usually sup; but I saw with pleasure that my jewel enchanted him. I thought I had nothing to fear from a man of sixty, besides which I was very glad to seize the opportunity to give Rosalie the education proper to a woman of standing, who cannot hope for the approval and applause of the best society unless she flirts.

Rosalie, though a novice in the art, and indeed unaware that such an art existed, nevertheless made me admire nature; she spoke to Signor Grimaldi in a manner from which a thinker could read that she wanted to foster his inclination by giving him hope. When he left she told him that she would be grateful if on another occasion he would dine less well, for she was curious to see him eat.

I took her in my arms a moment later to devour her with kisses, asking her where she had learned to converse with people of the great world.

"It is you, my dear, who speak to my soul; you tell me with your eyes whatever I should say and do."

After having Costa copy out my translation of *L'Écossaise,* I put it in my pocket and went with it to Rossi,[8] the head of the troupe of actors, who, as soon as he learned that I would make him a present of it, offered to have it performed at once. I gave him the names of the actors I had chosen, and invited him to come to dine at the "Santa Marta" with them to hear it read and to give out the parts, which I wished to assign myself.

Rosalie was delighted to dine with the three actresses and the actors who were to perform the play and to hear herself constantly being called Signora Casanova,[9] and even more so to see that it pleased me; Veronica interpreted all the words she did not understand.

As soon as they were seated in a circle they asked me to tell them the names of the characters I had decided they were to play; but they could not shake me: I told them that they must listen to the play, each not knowing what part I intended for him, but that he would be told immediately afterward. They all submitted to my decree, and just when I was ready to begin reading the Marchese Grimaldi arrived and, at the same time, the banker Belloni, come to return my visit. I was very glad to have them present at the reading, which lasted only an hour and a quarter.

After receiving the approval of the players, who by their praise of the situations convinced me that they had all listened to the whole play, I told Costa to give out the parts to the names I had indicated. I then saw both the leading lady and the leading man dissatisfied—she because I had given her the part of Lady Alton, he because I had not given him the part of Murray;[10] but they had to put up with it. I invited them to dinner on the next day but one, for a reading rehearsal of the play.

The banker Belloni invited me to dinner the next day with my lady, who very politely declined, and Signor Grimaldi willingly let her persuade him to keep her company in my stead.

At dinner at the banker's I was surprised to see the impostor Charles Ivanov, who, instead of pretending not to know me, came forward to embrace me; I drew back and made him a bow. Some of the people present may have attributed it to respect. He was richly accoutered; he talked constantly, affecting a certain haughty melancholy, and on the subject of politics he spoke rather intelligently. The conversation having turned to the Court of Russia, where Elisabeth Petrovna[11] was then reigning, he said nothing but sighed and turned away, pretending to dry his tears. At dessert he asked me if I had news of Madame Morin,[12] saying, as if to recall her to my mind, that it was at her house we had supped together; I replied that I knew she was in good health. His servant who waited on him at table wore a yellow livery with red braid. After dinner he found an opportunity to say that he urgently needed to talk with me.

"And I never to let it appear that we are in private communication anywhere."

"You can, by saying no more than a word, put me in a position to obtain a hundred thousand scudi, and I will give you fifty thousand."

I turned my back on him, and in Genoa I did not see him again.

Back at the inn, I found Signor Grimaldi teaching Rosalie Italian. He said that she had given him an exquisite repast, and that she must make me happy. Though observing all the proprieties, Signor Grimaldi was in love with her; but I remained unafraid. As he left she prevailed on him to attend the reading rehearsal of *L'Écossaise* the next day.

When the actors arrived, seeing a young man with them whom I had never seen before, I asked Rossi who he was.

"He is the prompter."

"No prompter. Send him away."

"We cannot do without a prompter."

"I will do the prompting. Send him away."

He sent him away, but the women especially refused to listen to reason. They said that even supposing they knew their parts as well as they knew their Paternoster they were sure to forget them if they did not see him in his box.

"He won't need to prompt us, but we have to see him."

"Very well," I said to the actress who was playing Lindane,[13] "I will get into the box myself, and I will see your underdrawers."

"She doesn't wear any," said the first lover.

"You don't know anything about it," she rejoined.

This exchange put us in a gay mood, and the votaries of Thalia[14] promised me that they would not need a prompter. I was well pleased with them at the reading rehearsal. They asked only three days to be ready to speak their parts from memory, and I was satisfied.

They came, but without the actress who played Lindane and the actor who played Murray. They were both ill, but Rossi vouched for them. I took the part of Murray, inviting Rosalie to read Lindane. She whispered to me that she could not read Italian well enough and did not want to set the actors laughing. She said that Veronica might read the part.

"Very well."

She asks Veronica if she will read it, and she says she does not need to read it since she knows it by heart.

"So much the better."

I laughed to myself, remembering Soleure. Chance was forcing me to talk love to Veronica, to whom, during the two weeks she had been with us, I had never addressed a word. I had not even really looked at her face, such was my dread of Rosalie's love taking alarm.

What I feared happened. At the scene in which I had to take Veronica's hand and say to her: *Sí, bella Lindane, debbo adorarvi* ("Yes, beautiful Lindane, I cannot but adore you"),[15] all present applauded, for I spoke the words as they should be spoken. I glance at Rosalie, and I am in despair to see her uneasy, though she was trying to hide it. But Veronica's acting amazed me; she blushed furiously when, taking her hand and pressing it, I said I adored her; it was impossible to act a girl in love better. We set the date for the final dress rehearsal at the theater, and the players, to excite curiosity, began announcing the date of the first performance a week beforehand, putting up bills in these terms: "We shall give *L'Écossaise* by Monsieur de Voltaire, translated by an unknown hand, and we shall perform it without a prompter.''

But how hard I found it after that rehearsal to soothe Rosalie! She would not be consoled, she wept and, thinking she was reproaching me, said the most touching things. She said that I was in love with Veronica and that I had translated the play on purpose to tell her so.

After I convinced her that she was wrong by good arguments and by tokens of the most loyal affection, she at last became calm, and the next day she asked my forgiveness, saying that she wanted me to cure her of her jealousy by talking to Veronica in her presence at every opportunity. She did more. Having got up first, she sent me a cup of chocolate by Veronica herself, who I saw was as astonished as I.

From that day on she showed no more signs of jealousy, and she was more courteous than ever to the girl, who was decidedly intelligent and with whom I saw that I could easily have fallen in love if my heart had been free.

On the day of the first performance she sat with her in a box I had taken, where Signor Grimaldi never left her side. The play was an unqualified success. The very large theater in Genoa was filled not with the populace but with the noblest and wealthiest in that great city. The actors, playing without a prompter, were pronounced excellent, and what they thought extraordinary was that the public demanded five more performances. Rossi, perhaps hoping that I would give him another play, asked my permission to present my supposed wife with a lynx-fur pelisse, which she greatly cherished.

But now for an unfortunate remark which, by my own fault, troubled the fair soul of that angel incarnate, whose happiness God nevertheless allowed me to assure.

''I have reason,'' she said to me one day, ''to suspect that I am pregnant. How my soul will rejoice if I can give you a pretty little boy!''

"If he is born at such and such a time, he will surely be mine, and he will be dear to me."

"And if he should be born two or three weeks earlier you would not be sure of it?"

"No, but I shall love him: he will be yours. I will provide for him even so."

"He could only be yours, I am sure of it. This time I really am unhappy. It is impossible, my dear, that I conceived by P-i,[16] for he was with me only once, and very imperfectly, whereas you know how lovingly we have been together so many times."

"Ah, my dear, do not weep, I implore you. You are right. What I told you is possible, but it is not likely. The child shall be mine, I will never doubt it, calm yourself."

"How can I calm myself now that I know you believed there might be any doubt about it?"

We said no more on the subject, but I often saw her sad and thoughtful. Tenderly amorous, I held her in my arms for hours on end, and she gave herself to love, but her pleasures seemed often to be interrupted by sighs which were not in harmony with the security an amorous soul should feel. I sorely repented of having troubled her with my stupid calculations.

A week or ten days later she came to me and gave me a sealed letter, saying that the hire valet had given it to her, taking advantage of a moment when I would not see him. She said that she felt insulted. I send for him and I ask him from whom he had received the letter.

"A young man whom I do not know gave me a scudo to do him the favor of delivering the letter to the Signora without your seeing it, and promised me two if I would bring him the answer tomorrow at the Banchi.[17] I did not think I was doing anything wrong, for the Signora was at liberty to tell you."

"That is true, but I shall dismiss you because the Signora, who, as you see, has not unsealed the letter, considers that by acting as you did you showed her disrespect.''

I told Leduc to pay him off, and so he was dismissed. I open the letter and I see that it is signed ''P-i.'' Rosalie leaves me and goes to her room to sew with Veronica. Here is the letter:

''I saw you, my dear Rosalie, enter a sedan chair when you came out of the theater escorted by His Excellency the Marchese Grimaldi, my godfather. I did not deceive you. I still intended to go to Marseilles in the spring and marry you, as I promised. I love you faithfully, and if you are willing to become my wife I am ready to give you my hand at once in my parents' presence. If you have done anything wrong, I will never reproach you with it, for I recognize that I am the cause of it. Tell me if you are willing for me to go to Signor Grimaldi and explain my intentions to him; I hope that he will have the goodness to vouch to you for me. I am also ready to receive you, without making any difficulties, from the hands of the gentleman with whom you are living, if you have not become his wife. Consider, if you are free, that your honor becomes spotless as soon as he who seduced you marries you.—P-i.''

''There,'' I said to myself, ''is an honorable man who deserves Rosalie, and here, in my own person, is a very dishonorable one if I do not let him have her, unless I instantly marry her. Rosalie shall decide.'' I call her, I give her the letter to read, she hands it back to me, and she asks me if I advise her to accept P-i's proposal. I reply that if she accepts it I shall die of grief, but that my honor demands that, if I will not give her up, I must marry her, and that I am ready. She flings herself on my neck, she says she loves no one but me, and that it is not true that my honor demands that I marry her.

''My dear Rosalie, I adore you, but I beg you to believe that you cannot know better than I do what my honor demands. If this P-i is a man of means who can make you happy, I must, even if it kills me, either advise you to accept his hand or offer you mine."

"Neither. We need be in no hurry. If you love me I am happy. I love you alone. I will not answer his letter. I want to hear no more of P-i."

"I will never mention him to you again, you may be sure; but you will see that the Marchese Grimaldi will do something about it."

"So he will; but you can be no less sure that he will speak of it to me only once."

"And to me too."

After this treaty of alliance, I decided to leave upon receiving the letters for Florence and Rome for which I had asked Signor Bragadin.[18] I lived with my dear Rosalie in the sweet peace of love; she was no longer jealous; the Marchese Grimaldi alone was the honorable witness of our happiness.

It was five or six days after P-i's letter was written that Signor Grimaldi, at his casino in Sampierdarena, said that he was very glad to see me for he wished to speak to me about a matter which should be of interest. Instantly guessing what it must be, and knowing what my answer must be, I asked him to speak. Here is what he said:

"A worthy merchant of our city came to me the other day to present his nephew, whose name is P-i. He told me that he was my godson, and I was convinced of it; he asked for my protection, and I replied that I would consider it my duty to be of use to him whenever the occasion arose; as his godfather, I owed him that.

"Thereupon my godson, left alone with me, told me that he had known your mistress in Marseilles before you did, that he had promised to return there and marry her in the spring of next year, that he had seen her come out of the theater here with me, that he had followed her, that he had learned she was living with you, that he had been told she was your wife, that he had not believed it, that he had written her a letter, which had come into your hands, in which he told her that he was ready to marry her, and that he had not received an answer. He had decided to appeal to me to learn if Rosalie accepted his proposal, and in that case he made bold to hope for my countenance, acquainting me with his entire financial condition so that I could vouch for him and be convinced that he was in a position to make her happy. I replied that I would speak about the matter to you and would let him know the outcome.

"Before speaking to you I inquired into the young man's financial situation and I learned that he already disposes of a considerable capital, that he has good morals and an excellent reputation on the Exchange. In addition, he is heir to all the property of the uncle who brought him to me. Tell me what answer I shall give him."

"You shall answer him that Rosalie thanks him and begs him to forget her. You know that we shall leave in three or four days. Rosalie loves me as much as I love her, and she will find me ready to marry her whenever she wishes it."

"That is clearly spoken. But I believe that to a man of your nature freedom must be far more precious than marriage. Will you permit me to discuss the matter with Rosalie myself?"

"You do not need my permission. Speak to her; but, of course, not as if you were speaking on my behalf, for, adoring her as I do, I cannot give her any reason to suppose that I could want her to leave me."

"If you object to my acting in the matter, speak out."

"On the contrary, I shall be delighted that you can swear I am not my dear Rosalie's tyrant."

"I will speak to her this evening."

To give the Marchese leisure to talk with her I did not come home until suppertime; he supped with us, and, after he left, she told me all that he had said. He had told her what he had told me; she had answered him as I had answered him, with only the addition that she had begged him not to mention P-i to her again; and he had promised not to say another word about him.

It was over and done with; we prepared to leave Genoa.

Three or four days after Signor Grimaldi had last talked to Rosalie on the subject of P-i, when we believed he had put the matter out of his mind, he asked me to bring her to dine with him at Sampierdarena. She had never been there, and he wanted her to see his garden before we left. We accepted.

So at noon the next day we are at his charming casino. We find him with an elderly couple whom he introduces to us, and he introduces me by my name and the young lady as my companion.

We all go to walk in the garden, and the couple take Rosalie between them, treating her with the most courteous amiability; she replies in kind, she is gay, she speaks Italian with them; the compliments she receives flatter her; after half an hour's stroll dinner is announced, we go to the dining room, I see six places. I guessed what was to come, but it was too late. We sit down at table, and just then in comes a young man. The Marchese tells him he is late and very quickly introduces him to me as Signor P-i, his godson and the nephew of the lady and gentleman who were present. He makes him sit down at his left, Rosalie was at his right, and I was seated beside her. I see her turn deathly pale; I was shaking from head to foot with rage. I find the Genoese aristocrat's procedure hard to swallow; it was a surprise, an unforgivable affront put upon Rosalie and me, which demanded that I avenge it in blood; and in the tumult of my soul I yet understand that I must champ the bit. What could I do? Take Rosalie's arm and leave with her? I thought of it; and, foreseeing the consequences, I did not have the courage to do it. I never spent a more torturing hour at table. Neither she nor I ate anything, and the Marchese, who served the guests, was wise enough to pretend not to notice that we sent back our plates untouched. During the whole dinner he talked to no one but P-i or his uncle on the subject of his business. When dinner was over he told the former that he could go about his occupations, and, after kissing his hand, he left.

He was a young man about twenty-four years of age, of middling stature, of undistinguished but good-natured and honest countenance, extremely respectful in manner, who spoke without brilliance but with good sense. I decided that he was not unworthy of Rosalie, but I trembled to think that I could not see her become his wife except by losing her. After he left, the Marchese chided his uncle for never having introduced the young man to him, as he could certainly have been useful to him in his business.

"But I am sure," he added, "that I shall be of use to him in future, and that I will help him to fortune."

Thereupon the uncle and aunt, who must have known everything, bestowed all kinds of praise on him, saying, as if in passing, that, having no children, they were delighted to see that he who would inherit all they possessed enjoyed His Excellency's countenance. They could not wait to see the young lady from Marseilles to whom he was engaged and to welcome her to their arms as their own daughter.

It was then that Rosalie, unable to bear more, said to me that she felt she would be ill if I did not escort her back to the inn at once, and I took leave of the Marchese, forcing myself to remain controlled. I saw that he was taken aback. Not knowing what to say, he beat about the bush; he told her that he hoped her indisposition would come to nothing, that he should not have the honor to see her that evening, but that he would not fail to do so the next day; and he gave her his arm to her sedan chair.

As soon as we were back at the "Santa Marta" and alone together we began to breathe again and to relieve our troubled souls with talk. She rightly felt that the Marchese had played a detestable trick on us; she decided that I must write him a note asking him not to trouble to visit us again. I assured her that I would find a way to avenge her; I said that I did not think it advisable to write him a note, but that we should hasten our departure and receive him the next day in a manner which would make him realize all our indignation. Serious bearing, purely formal greetings, politeness, complete concealment, and above all no reply to anything he might say concerning what he had done. Speaking of P-i, she said that if he loved her he was to be pitied, that she thought him honest, and that she could not hold his being at the dinner against him, since he might not have known that his presence at it was an affront to her.

"I thought I should die," she said, "when our eyes met; afterward he was not in a position to see me, and I do not know if he looked at me when he left."

"No, he looked at me, and I pity him too. He is a decent fellow."

"The worst is over, and I hope I shall have a good appetite at supper. Did you hear his aunt? She was apparently in the plot; she said she was ready to treat me like her own daughter. I think she is a very good woman."

After a good supper Love and Morpheus helped us to forget the affront the Marchese had put upon us, and to such effect that when we woke we were able to laugh at it. He came toward nightfall and, approaching me with a look of mortification, said that he had been unpardonably at fault in surprising us as he had done, and that he was ready, if the fault could be repaired, to accord me whatever satisfaction I might ask of him. Rosalie, not giving me time to reply, said that if he felt that he had treated us improperly, we considered ourselves adequately avenged and hence satisfied, and also under the necessity of being on our guard against him on every occasion, though it was difficult to foresee another, since we were on the verge of leaving.

After this proud answer she curtsied to him and went to her room. Thus left alone with me, he spoke as follows:

"Being immeasurably interested in your mistress's welfare, and knowing from experience that it is very improbable she can long be happy in any other situation than that which a girl of her character attains by marrying a young man of the character of my godson P-i, I resolved to make you both acquainted with him, for Rosalie herself knew him only very slightly. To accomplish this, I used a stratagem which I admit was dishonorable but which I trust you will forget for the sake of my good intention. I wish you a good journey, I hope that you will long live happily with this charming girl, I ask you to let me have news of you and to count on my friendship, my influence, and my best endeavors under all circumstances. So much for that. It remains for me only to confide one thing to you, in order that you may have a just idea of the young man's excellent character, whom, by his own avowal, Rosalie alone can make happy. He did not confide to me what you are about to hear until he saw that I would not undertake to deliver a letter which he had written to Rosalie, despairing of conveying it to her in any other way.

"After assuring me that Rosalie had loved him, and that hence she could feel no aversion to him, he added that if perhaps she could not resolve to become his wife because she believed she was pregnant he was content to defer the marriage until after she had borne her child, provided she would be willing to remain in Genoa in some place where her presence would be known to him alone. He offers to defray all her expenses, accompanying his proposal by a very wise consideration. Her being brought to bed too soon after her marriage, he said, would reflect on his honor and stand in the way of the affection which his parents should feel for his children."

He had scarcely finished speaking before Rosalie enters and surprises us with these words:

"If Signor P-i has not told you it is possible that I am pregnant by him, he is a very honorable young man; but it is I who tell you so. It seems to me very unlikely, but it is still a possibility. Tell him that I will remain in Genoa until after my delivery if I am pregnant, or until I am sure that I am not, and in that case I will go to join my friend here wherever he may be. The time at which I am delivered will show me the truth. If I am convinced that my child is Signor P-i's, tell him that he will find me ready to become his wife, and if he is himself convinced that it cannot be his, he must resign himself to forgetting me. As for my expenses, and the place where I shall stay, tell him he is not to take any steps in the matter or to concern himself with it in any way."

My astonishment left me half dazed. The Marchese asked me if I authorized him to convey her message, and I replied that I could have no will but Rosalie's. He left well satisfied.

"So you want to leave me?" I asked Rosalie.

"Yes, my dear; but not for long, if I can count on your constancy. My heart, and your honor and mine, command me, if I am pregnant, to make P-i certain that it is not by him, and you at the same time that it can only be by you."

"I shall have no doubt of it, my dear Rosalie."

"You have already doubted it, and that is enough. Our separation will cause me tears, but it is necessary for the peace of my soul. I hope that you will write to me; and after my delivery it will be for you to tell me how I am to join you, and if I am not pregnant we shall be able to meet again at the latest toward the end of this winter."

"I must consent to whatever is your wish. I think you should go to stay in a convent, and I see no one but the

Marchese to find one for you and to look after you like a father. Shall I speak to him about it? I will leave you money enough for your expenses."

"It will be no great amount; there is no need for you to speak to Signor Grimaldi, for he will offer me his services himself. Honor demands it of him."

She was right; and I admired her intelligence in her knowledge of the human heart, of the conduct befitting a nobleman, and of the laws of honor. The next morning I saw that the Russian adventurer had fled an hour before the police arrived to take him to prison on the complaint of the banker, who had found a letter of credit he had presented him to be a forgery. He had fled on foot, abandoning everything; so the banker lost very little.

The next morning the Marchese came to tell Rosalie that P-i had found nothing to object to in her plan and that he hoped she would be willing to become his wife after her delivery even if her calculations showed that the child was not his.

"He is free to entertain the hope," she said with a smile.

"He hopes, too, that you will occasionally grant him the honor of visiting you. I have spoken to the Superior of the XXX convent, who is distantly related to me; you will have two rooms, a decent woman who will keep you company, wait on you, and even deliver you if that proves to be necessary. I have settled the price of your board by the month, and every morning I will send you a confidential man of mine who will confer with your waiting woman and convey all your orders to me. I will myself visit you from time to time at the grating when you give me permission."

It was now my duty to thank the Marchese. I said that it was to him that I entrusted my dear Rosalie, and that I intended to leave on the day after she had gone alone to the convent he had found for her, giving the Superior a letter which he would have the goodness to write for her. He wrote it at once, and Rosalie having told him that she wanted to pay all her expenses herself, he put in writing the terms to which he had agreed. When he left she told him that she would retire to the convent the next day and that she would be delighted to see him at the grating the day after that. He promised he would be there.

We spent the sad night which two souls in love could not but spend when reason had commanded them to part. Complaints, consolations, endless alternatives, and promises which we were sure we would keep but which had yet to be confirmed by Destiny, into whose councils no mortal has ever been admitted.

She spent the whole morning packing with Veronica, who wept and at whom I did not look because I was angry with myself for finding her attractive. Rosalie would accept no more than two hundred zecchini from me, saying that, if she needed it, I could easily find a way to send her money. After asking Veronica to take good care of me during the two or three days I had decided to stay on in Genoa, she dropped me a silent curtsy, and she left, escorted to her sedan chair by Costa. Two hours later a servant of Signor Grimaldi's came for all her things, and I remained alone and very sad until the nobleman himself arrived to ask me to give him supper, at the same time advising me to have Veronica sup with us.

"She is an excellent girl," he said, "whom you really do not know and whom you will not be sorry to know better."

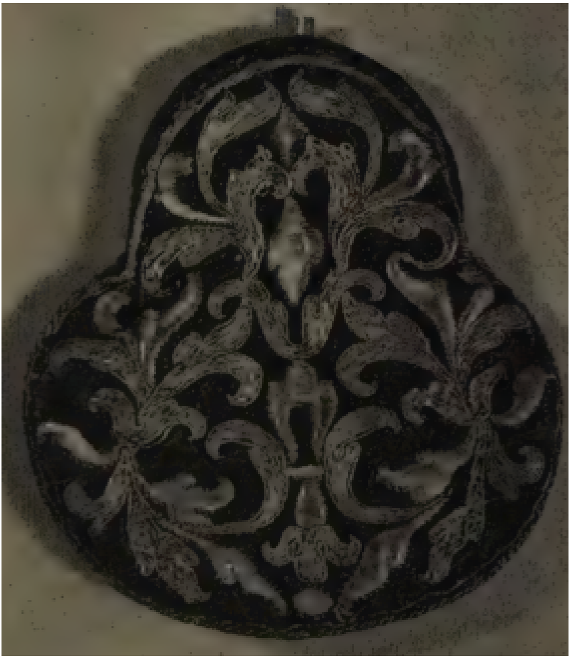
Though somewhat surprised, I at once went and asked her to do me the favor. She accepted the invitation, assuring me that she was sensible of all the honor I did her.

Nothing short of being the greatest fool on earth could have prevented me from seeing clearly that the wily Genoese had perfectly accomplished his purpose, tricking me as if I had been the rawest novice. Despite my having good reasons to hope that Rosalie would return to me, I foresaw that he would set about persuading her otherwise so artfully that he would succeed. I could only pretend to be aware of nothing and let things take what course they would.

His Excellency was nearly sixty years of age, a great epicure, a heavy gambler, rich, eloquent, an accomplished politician, highly regarded in his native country, who had long lived in Venice in order the better to enjoy his freedom and the pleasures of life, and who contrived to return there after being Doge despite the law[19] which forbids patricians who have been granted that high office to leave their country again. In spite of the friendliness which he always showed me he was able to maintain a tone of superiority which awed me. If he had not known that he possessed this ascendancy he would not have dared to trick me into dining with P-i. He made a dupe of me, and it became my part to win his esteem by resolving to act as I acted. It was from gratitude that he undertook to smooth my way to the conquest of Veronica after he made me fall in love with her.

At table, where I said almost nothing, he engaged her in arguments, and she shone. I clearly saw that she was delighted to convince me that she was more intelligent than Rosalie. Nothing could have been more calculated to displease me. Grimaldi, who was put out to see me gloomy, forced me to join in the conversation by leading Veronica to say that I was right to remain silent after the declaration of love which I had made to her and which she had received with disdain. Very much astonished, I said that I did not remember having loved her, still less having told her so. But I had to laugh when she replied that on that day her name was Lindane.

"Such a thing," I said, "can happen to me only in a play. The man who declares his love by words is a fool, he should speak only by his attentions."



Lady's Coin Purse of Green Damask

"Even so, the Signora took fright."

"Not a bit of it. She was fond of you."

"I know it; nevertheless she was jealous."

"If she was, she had no reason to be."

Our dialogue greatly amused the Senator, who said to me as he left that he would pay his first visit to Rosalie the next day and would bring me news of her at supper. I said that I would expect him. Veronica, after accompanying me to my room, asked me to let my servants wait on me, for, "The Signora being no longer there, people might suspect the worst."

I said she was right, and I rang for Leduc.

The next morning I received a letter from Geneva. It was from my friend the Syndic,[20] who said that he had presented Monsieur de Voltaire, on my behalf, with my translation of *L'Écossaise,* together with the very polite letter in which I asked him to excuse me for having made bold to turn his beautiful French prose into Italian. He said in so many words that he had pronounced my translation bad.

This news, and his impoliteness in not answering my letter, so irritated and offended me that I became that great man's enemy. From then on I criticized him in all the works I published, thinking to avenge myself by wronging him. It is I whom my critics will wrong if my works reach posterity. I will be reckoned among the Zoïluses[21] who dared to attack the great genius. The only wrong he did was seen in his invectives against religion. If he had been a good philosopher he would never have said anything on the subject, for even supposing that all he said of it was true, he should have known that the populace needs to live in ignorance for the sake of the general peace of the nation. *Vetabo qui Cereris*[22] *sacrum vulgarit arcanae sub iisdem sit trabibus,* etc. ("I will deny my roof to him who has revealed the rites of mystic Ceres").[23]

CHAPTER VI

I am in love with Veronica. Her sister. Ruse against ruse. My victory. Mutual disappointment.

NOT LIKING to eat alone, I ordered two places set. Veronica, after supping with us, deserved the distinction. Seeing only Costa behind my chair, I asked him where Leduc was; he said that he was ill; I told him to stand behind the Signorina's chair; he obeyed me with a smile. How absurd is the pride of servants! I thought Veronica prettier than usual. Her bearing, free and reserved as occasion demanded, convinced me that she could easily have played the role of princess in select company. Feeling distressed to see that she attracted me, I sadly consoled myself with the knowledge that her mother was to come for her that day. Such was the state of my soul.

We were at dessert when her mother came. She immediately made a pretense of thanking me for the honor I did her daughter. I reply that it was she who did me honor, for she was beautiful, intelligent, and good.

"Thank the Signore," she said, "for his three presents, for you are ugly, stupid, and ill-behaved. Oh, the slut!

You are dining with the Signore and I see that your shift is dirty."

"Excuse me, Mother, I put it on clean this morning."

"Permit me to say, Signora," I said to her mother, "that a shift can hardly look white against her skin."

My compliment made the mother laugh and greatly flattered the girl. When her mother told her she had come to take her home she replied that she was not sure she would be doing me a favor by leaving me twenty-four hours before my departure; and I added that on the contrary she would be doing me an ill turn.

"In that case," said her mother, "decency demands that I send you her younger sister, who will sleep with her."

I told her it was the thing to do, and I left them together.

Veronica was proving to be a difficulty, for I had found her too attractive at table, and, knowing myself, I must fear an attempt at resistance worse than death.

Her mother came in to wish me a good journey and the girl began busying herself with my linen. I sat down to write.

Toward nightfall a maid comes in with her sister Annetta,[1] who, after lowering her *mezzaro*,[2] kissed my hand, then joyfully embraced her sister. The maid, after putting down a package, left. Very curious to see Annetta's face, I at once called for lights. I saw a very young girl of a blondeness whose equal I had never seen. Her hair, her eyebrows were even whiter than her skin, which their excessive fairness darkened a little. She was so short-sighted that she was nearly blind; but her blue eyes were beautiful and very large. If the enamel of her teeth had not been tinged with yellow the girl could have passed for a rare beauty. The poor girl shuddered away from the strong light. She stood there, apparently content that I should examine her, showing the upper halves of two little breasts which seemed to be of marble and which informed my speculative mind that her entire body was of the same whiteness. Veronica was not generous in this respect; one saw that her bosom must be extremely beautiful, but it was always covered by a kerchief even when she was most negligently dressed; she made her sister sit down beside her and at once gave her some sewing to do. Finding it distressing to watch her, for in order to sew she had to hold the cloth an inch from her eyes, I told her that, at least at night, she need not do needlework, and she stopped as if out of obedience.

The Marchese Grimaldi arrived, and Annetta, whom he had never seen, was as much of a surprise to him as she was to me. He passed his beneficent hand over her pretty little bosom, the humble Annetta not daring to protest, and congratulated her on it.

A girl who, by the little she allows a man to see, makes him curious to see the rest has already gone two thirds of the way toward making him fall in love; for what is love if it is not a kind of curosity? I defy anyone to produce a more powerful curiosity in nature. Annetta had already made me curious.

Signor Grimaldi told Veronica that Rosalie asked her to stay with me until I left. I saw that Veronica was as astonished as I was by her insistence. I then told the Marchese to inform Rosalie that she had anticipated her wish and for that reason had sent for her sister Annetta.

"Two," he replied, "are better than one."

We then went to the other room, where he told me that Rosalie was content, and I should congratulate myself on having made her a happy woman, that he was sure she would become one, and that he was only sorry there was every reason why I should not go to see her.

"You are in love with her," I said.

"Certainly, and I regret being an old man."

"That makes no difference. She will love you dearly, and if P-i becomes her husband she can never feel anything toward him but cold friendliness. You shall write me at Florence how she will have received him."

"Remain here three more days and you will know. I believe you have no urgent business, stay here; these two girls will keep you entertained."

"It is precisely because I foresee they may do so that I want to leave tomorrow. Veronica terrifies me."

"I did not think you were a man to be terrified."

"I am afraid she has set out to torment me, for I think she is one to make a parade of virtue. I can love only Rosalie."

"Speaking of Rosalie, here is a letter she wrote you."

I unseal it and I go to a window to read it. Here is what it contained:

"My dear one. You leave me in the hands of a fond father, who will not let me want for anything until the time when I shall be in no further doubt concerning my condition. I will write you at whatever address you give me. If Veronica pleases you I should be wrong to feel jealous at this time. I believe she cannot resist you, and that she will drive away your sorrow, which really distresses me. Write me a line before you leave."[3]

I gave it to the Marchese to read, and I saw that he was touched.

"Yes," he said, "she will find me a fond father; and, if it becomes her duty to marry my godson, if he does not treat her well he shall not have her long. She will be happy even after my death. But did you see what she says to you about Veronica? I don't believe she is a Vestal,[4] though I have heard no gossip about her."

I had ordered four places set; so Annetta joined us at the table without waiting to be asked. Seeing Leduc, I told him that if he was ill he could go to bed.

"I am in good health."

"So much the better. Be off with you. You shall wait on me at table in Leghorn."

I saw that Veronica was delighted with his dismissal.

I determined to make love to her openly, treating her to meaning remarks at table while the Marchese addressed amusing ones to Annetta. Having turned the conversation to my journey, I asked him if I could have a felucca for Lerici[5] the next day.

"At whatever hour you wish, and with as many rowers; but I hope you will stay on for three or four days."

"No, for the delay might cost me dear."

Glancing at Veronica, I saw her smile. When supper was over, I having set myself to question Annetta, the Marchese talked with Veronica for a quarter of an hour, then came to me and said that he had been urged to ask me to stay for another three days or at least for supper the next day.

"Very well. We will talk about the three days at supper tomorrow."

The Marchese was exultant, and Veronica showed that she was pleased by my yielding. After he left I asked her if I might send Costa off to bed. She answered that, since her sister was with her, no one could suspect anything wrong. So she began dressing my hair for the night, while Annetta went to her room to unpack her things. To all my soft speeches she made no answer. When I was ready to go to bed she wished me good night, I make to embrace her, and her refusal surprises me. I tell her that I need to speak to her and to have her answer, and I invite her to sit down beside me.

"Why did you refuse me a pleasure which, after all, is only a token of friendship?"

"Because it is impossible that, being what we are, we should be merely friends; and we cannot be lovers."

"Why cannot we be lovers, since we are free?"

"I am not free from the prejudices for which you care nothing."

"I thought your mind was superior to—"

"A pitiful superiority which is always its own dupe!

What would become of me if I gave in to the feeling you inspire in me?"

"I expected that, my dear Veronica. No. The feeling I inspire in you is not love. It would be like mine. Love tramples on the prejudices which fetter it."

"I admit that you have not yet turned my head, but I know that when you go away I shall be sad for a time."

"If that is so it will not be my fault; but tell me what I can do to make you happy during the short time I shall be here."

"Nothing, because neither of us can be sure of anything about the other."

"And for that reason I am sure I shall never marry until I shall have become my mistress's friend."

"In other words, when you have ceased to be her lover."

"Precisely."

"You want to end where I want to begin."

"I wish you happiness; but it is staking too much. It seems to me, beautiful Veronica, that we could play at love unscathed, spending some happy hours together which prejudice would not have time to trouble."

"It is possible; but the mere thought of it frightens me, for it might undo me. Oh, no! Let me alone. Look, there is my sister taking fright because she sees me defending myself."

"Very well, I see that I am wrong. Rosalie was mistaken."

"What! What can she have thought?"

"She writes me that she thinks you kind."

"She is very fortunate if she has not had reason to repent of having been too kind."

She went off to bed, and so did I, regretting that I had approached her. I promised myself that I would leave her to her morality, whether genuine or feigned. But when I woke I saw her coming to my bedside so sweetly that I at once changed my plan. I thought she had repented and I hoped to find her made of better stuff upon my second attack. I assumed a demeanor to match hers, and I breakfasted joking with her and her sister, and I did the same at dinner and until the evening, when Signor Grimaldi, arriving and finding us so gay, felt obliged to offer us his congratulations. Seeing that Veronica received them as if she deserved them, I thought I was sure to have her after supper, and in my exultation I promised them I would stay on for four days instead of three.

"Good for you, Veronica!" he said. "Always exercise your rights as you have done on this occasion. Nature created you to have absolute dominion over those who love you."

It seemed to me that she should say at least a word or two to lessen the Marchese's certainty; but not a bit of it, she became more beautiful, she triumphed; I looked at her with the abashed humility of a captive proud of his chains. I was magnanimous enough to take her performance for a sure augury of my imminent victory. I avoided any private conversation with Marchese, so that I should not be obliged to enlighten him if he questioned me. When he left, he said that he would not have the pleasure of supping with us again until the next evening but one.

"Did you observe," she asked me as soon as we were alone, "how willing I am to let people believe what they please? I would rather be taken for kind, since that's the word for it, than be suspected of being ridiculous, for that is the charming epithet with which people honor a girl who has principles. Isn't that so?"

"No, my beautiful Veronica, I will never call you ridiculous; but I will say that you hate me if you make me spend an infernal night by refusing yourself to my love as you did yesterday. Let me tell you that at table you set me on fire."

"Oh, calm yourself, please! Tomorrow evening I won't set you on fire. Please, please, let me alone! Oh, this time—"

What roused her to anger was that, pulling her down with me onto the sofa, I pushed my hand too hard to the point where it could go no farther. She quickly fled, and three or four minutes later I saw her sister come to undress me. I gently told her to go to bed too, since I had to spend several hours writing; and, in order not to see the innocent child leave in humiliation, I opened my strongbox and gave her a watch.

"It's for my sister?"

"No, it is for you."

I allowed her to kiss my hand, and in my troubled state I wrote Rosalie a letter four pages long, which I burned without rereading it. After that I wrote her a reasonable one, in which, not even mentioning Veronica, I said that I would leave the next day.

I went to bed very late, extremely ill pleased with myself, for I considered that, whether she loved me or not, I had failed her both as a lover and as a man of honor. I rang at noon, and I was still more certain of my mistake when I saw only Annetta. As soon as Costa withdrew I asked her how her sister was, and she told me she was sewing. I wrote her a note in which, asking her pardon, I assured her I would not offend her again. I begged her to reappear as if nothing had happened. I was drinking my coffee when I saw her come in with mortification too plainly displayed in her face for me not to feel the whole weight of it. I told her that she need only put up my curls, for I intended to take a walk outside the city and not return to the inn until evening.

"I shall," I said, "have a good appetite for supper, and afterward you will have nothing to fear and no need to send Annetta to me."

I went out of the city and after walking for two hours stopped at a village tavern where I ordered an omelet.

Not having the strength to return to Genoa on foot, I asked for a carriage; but there was none. The tavern-keeper gave me a horse, with a man on foot to guide me and bring back the horse. Night was falling, and we had six miles to go. Rain was my companion all the way to Genoa, where I arrived at eight o'clock soaking wet, dying of cold and fatigue, and with the whole upper part of my thighs chafed raw by the rough saddle, which had torn my satin breeches. After having Costa change all my clothes, I told him to have supper served. I see Annetta and do not see Veronica; she tells me that she is in bed with a bad headache and hands me a letter she had written me. Here it is:

"I went to bed at three o'clock with one of the bad headaches to which I am subject. I already feel better and am sure I can wait on you tomorrow. I tell you this because I do not want you to imagine that I am angry or feigning. I believe you are truly sorry for having humiliated me, and for my part, I ask you to forgive me, or to feel sorry for me, if my way of thinking does not accord with yours."

"Go and ask her," I said, "if she would like us to have supper at her bedside."

She came back at once to say that her sister thanked me and requested that I let her sleep.

So I supped with Annetta, observing with pleasure that she drank only water; but she ate more than I did. My passion for her sister kept me from thinking of her; but I saw that if my heart were not otherwise engaged she would have attracted me. At dessert I decided to get her tipsy and make her talk about her sister. I gave her a glass of muscat from Lunel.[6]

"I drink nothing but water."

"Do you dislike wine?"

"No; but as I'm not used to it, it would go to my head."

"Then you shall go to bed and sleep the better."

She found it excellent, and she laughed when I gave her a second glass, and after that I turned the conversation to her sister, about whom she said every possible good thing with perfect sincerity.

"I love her, and she cannot bear me; she refuses my slightest caresses."

"She can only resist your caresses from fear that you will cease to love her."

"Do you think she is right to make me suffer?"

"No. But if you love her you ought to forgive her."

Annetta's reasoning was only too sound; but at the third glass she said she could no longer see anything and we left the table. The girl already attracted me a little too much; but I promised myself not to make any approach to her, for I feared I should find her too compliant. *Nolo nimis facilem dificilem que nimis* ("I want a woman neither to give in too easily nor to resist too much").[7] She was a good, gentle girl, who, at the age of fourteen and without experience, could not know her own rights. She might have thought that opposing what I might do to her would be rudeness. Only a rich, voluptuous Mussulman can relish that sort of thing.

So I ask her to tuck my hair under my nightcap, intending to send her off to bed at once; but before she leaves I tell her to bring me a jar of unscented pomade.

"What do you want it for?"

"To put on the raw spots from the accursed saddle on which I rode six miles. It will relieve the smarting, and I shall be well tomorrow. I must send for Costa, for I dare not ask this little service of you."

"Do you think I'd know how?"

"It's easy; but I fear to impose on your willingness."

"I understand the reason. But being so short-sighted, how am I to see the raw places?"

"On the bed. Put the candles on the night table."

"There they are; but don't have Costa do you the same service tomorrow morning, for he'd think it must have been me or my sister who took care of you this evening."

"Will you be as willing again tomorrow?"

"I or my sister, for she will get up very early."

"Not your sister, for she'd be afraid of giving me too much pleasure by touching me there with her beautiful hands."

"And I'm afraid of hurting you! Am I doing it right? What a state your poor skin is in!"

"My dear Annetta, that's not all."

"I'm so short-sighted. Turn around."

"Here I am."

But then I see her laugh at what chance shows her and what the service she was rendering me obliged her to touch. I think I can wager that, short-sighted as she is, she had never seen it so well before and that she must be enjoying it; I become sure of it when I see her straying hand rub where there are no raw spots. At that, unable to bear more, I take her hand to make her stop.

I had to laugh when I saw her motionless and serious, still holding the jar of pomade, and asking me if she had done it right.

"You are, my dear child, an angel incarnate, and I am sure you know what kind of pleasure it was which you have given me. Can you come and spend an hour with me?"

"Wait."

She goes, and she shuts my door, but without turning the key; I feel sure she will come back when she sees that her sister is asleep. She does not come, I get up and go to the door; I see her undress, get into bed, and put out the candle. I go back to bed, still with some hope, and I am not deceived. Five or six minutes later I see her come to my bedside in her shift.

"Come quickly to my arms, my angel, for it is very cold."

"Gladly; my sister is asleep, and I am sure she suspects nothing. Even if she wakes the bed is wide and she won't notice that I am not in it. I give myself to you; do as you will with me; but on condition that you will think no more of my sister."

"I find no difficulty, dear heart, in promising you that and swearing to it."

I found Annetta intact, and it did not occur to me to doubt it in the morning when I saw that the victim had not stained the altar with blood. It has often happened to me. I have learned from experience that no legitimate conclusions can be drawn from either a flow of blood or the lack of it. A girl can be convicted of having had a lover only if he has made her pregnant.

Annetta left me after two hours of encounters, and on waking I saw her at my bedside with Veronica and was delighted to observe not the least sign of a misunderstanding between them. Veronica told me that diet and sleep had, as always, cured her completely. I was in the same situation. Her sister Annetta had completely cured me of the curiosity about her with which she had inspired me. I felt it, and I congratulated myself on it.

At supper Signor Grimaldi, seeing me gay and calm, supposed it was because matters had been brought to a conclusion. I promised to dine with him the next day at Sampierdarena. I went there, and I gave him a long letter for Rosalie, whom I did not expect to see again except as the wife of P-i. But I did not tell her so in my letter.

The same day, supping with the two girls, I devoted equal attention to them both, and Veronica, doing up my hair in curl papers, said, when she was left alone with me, that now that she saw I had become reasonable she loved me far more. I replied that my supposed reasonableness was due to my having given up hope of conquering her.

"My beautiful Veronica, I have made my decision."

"Then your love was a little thing."

"It was a scarce born infant. You had only to foster it till it was mature, and then it could easily have remained alive."

Not knowing what to answer, she wished me a sound sleep and went to her room. Annetta did not come to pay me the visit for which I hoped; I did not know what to conclude.

I saw her in the morning when I rang. She said that her sister was ill in bed and had spent the night writing; and she gave me the letter. At that I saw why Annetta had not come.

The letter, which was very long, and which I returned to her, very nearly made me laugh. After some stuff as boring as it was beside the point, she said that she had refused to yield to my desire because she loved me with all her heart and dared not risk losing me as soon as she had satisfied my momentary fancy. She offered to surrender to my desires if I would grant her the same position which Rosalie had occupied in respect to me. I must leave Genoa with her, giving her a written undertaking, which Signor Grimaldi was to sign, by which I would promise to marry her at the end of a year, settling a dowry of fifty thousand Genoese lire on her, or, if I did not want to marry her, I was to give her the same amount, leaving her perfectly free. If she bore a child during the time we lived together I must agree to leave it with her when we separated, whether it was a girl or a boy which she had brought into the world. On these conditions she consented to become my mistress at once and to grant me all the favors I might ask.

This silly scheme showed me clearly that poor Veronica lacked the intelligence she needed if she was to make me her dupe. I was sure that Signor Grimaldi was not its author and that when I informed him of it he would laugh.

Annetta, bringing me my chocolate, said that her sister made bold to expect an answer to her letter. I said she should have one. I rose and went at once to take it to her in person, carrying her letter, which I immediately returned to her. I found her sitting up in bed, where her scanty attire might have seduced me if her idiotic scheme had not destroyed whatever good opinion of her I still entertained.

I sat down on her bed, and Annetta left the room, even shutting the door; but she told me afterward that she listened.

"Why write to each other," I asked her, "when we can talk?"

"One is oftener more at ease," she replied, "in writing than in speaking."

"That is true in politics and in business matters, where the parties try to trick each other; but in matters of the heart I am not of your opinion. Love, my dear, clears the board: no written undertakings, no guarantees; give yourself to me as Rosalie did, and begin by coming to my arms this very night, without my making you any promises. Trust in love. That is a plan which does honor to us both and which, if you wish, I will submit to Signor Grimaldi's approval. Your scheme, if it is not dishonorable to you, at least bears very poor witness to your intelligence, for it could be accepted only by a fool completely devoid of common sense. It is not possible that you love the man to whom you make such a proposal, and I am sure that Signor Grimaldi would be indignant at it and refuse to have anything to do with it."

My proud reply did not abash her. She said that she did not love me enough to give herself to me without knowing under what conditions. I replied that, on my side, I no longer loved her enough to obtain possession of her under those she had prescribed. After that I left her, and I ordered Costa to inform the master of the felucca that I wanted to sail at dawn the next day. Determined to do so, I went and took leave of the Marchese, who told me he had that morning brought P-i to see Rosalie, who had received him tolerably well. I was delighted to hear it. I commended her to his care again, but there was no need of it.

In that one year two women whom I loved to distraction, both of them abounding in good qualities, and with whom I would never have parted if it had depended on me alone, were both taken from me by the clever scheming of two old men whom I unintentionally helped to fall in love with them. They made both women's fortunes; but by indirection it was to me that they did the greatest good, for they rid me of them. They must both have known that my own fortune, though apparently ample, had no solid foundation. In the course of my history my reader will become convinced of it.

I spent the day watching Veronica's and Annetta's conscientious efforts to pack my things properly. I would not let Leduc and Costa join in. Veronica, neither gay nor sad, appeared to have resigned herself and talked to me as if there had never been the least difference between us. It made me very glad. After supper they went to bed, and Annetta pressed my hand in a way which told me that she would pay me a visit. I was very glad of it; I felt it my duty to make her a present of fifty zecchini without Veronica's knowledge, for I had no wish to do as much for her. I put the roll on my night table, and I gave it to her as soon as she arrived.

After telling me that Veronica was asleep, she asked me what I would have done if Veronica had accepted the offer I had made her to receive her in my bed.

"I heard everything," she said, "and I knew that you love her."

"I was certain, my dear, that she would never bring herself to do it. I love no one but you."

But a half hour later we are surprised by the presence of Veronica, who, candlestick in hand, encourages her generous sister by a great burst of laughter. I laugh too, not letting her leave my arms. Veronica had on nothing but her shift, she was beautiful, and I had no reason to be angry with her.

"You have come," I said, "to interrupt our pleasures and to cause pain to a sister whom you will henceforth scorn."

"I shall always love her."

"A slave to love, she has given herself to me without conditions."

"She had better sense than I did."

"You mean that?"

"I mean it."

"Very good. Then kiss her."

At this invitation she puts the light down on the night table, takes Annetta from me, and covers her with kisses. The scene goes to my soul. I invited her to lie down beside her, making room for her, and she comes in between the sheets. I feel that she is deathly cold, and the beauty of the spectacle, which I could never have anticipated, allures and transports me. I cannot resist making a pause. A full commentary alone can raise my enjoyment to its pinnacle. So talk there shall be.

"Is this charming trick you are playing on me premeditated?" I asked the two sisters. "And you, Veronica, were you playing a part this morning, or are you doing so now?"

"There was no premeditation. I was sincere this morning, and I am being sincere as you see me now. I hatched an absurd plot, which I beg you to forget, and I am being rightly punished for it; but it is in your power to end my punishment this instant."

"How?"

"By saying you forgive me, and proving it to me."

"I forgive you; but how can I prove it?"

"By continuing to make love to my dear sister without being troubled by my presence."

It was the acme of comedy, and my enthusiasm went to my head. I must not let myself descend to a passive role.

"What do you say, my soul?" I ask my little blonde. "Your sister, heroic beyond praise, wants only to be the spectator of our amorous exploits. Do you not feel generous enough to let her play a part?"

"No, my dear; but you shall be the generous one tomorrow night, putting on the same play with only the difference that Veronica shall act my role, while I, following the example she will set us tonight, shall be the spectator with the greatest pleasure."

"That would be perfect," said Veronica in a tone which belied her words, "if the Signore had not decided to leave at dawn."

"I shall stay, charming Veronica, if only to convince myself that you are adorable."

"And that I love you."

I could not ask her to make herself clearer, and I would gladly have given her proof of my gratitude then and there; but that would have been at Annetta's expense, and I should most unforgivably have spoiled the pure and charming play of which she was the author; but every time I recall this agreeable incident in my life I see that the play was composed by beauteous Nature and that Annetta was only the leading actress in it. Veronica, determined that, as spectator, she would not enter in, settled herself on her side, plumping up a pillow to lean her elbow on and resting her face on her hand. I began the farce as my part demanded, sure that I should play it to perfection as long as the spectator continued to watch the action. My eyes were fixed on her; she must have attributed it to politeness; but in the end she realized that I had put all my confidence in the interest she would show in the proceedings. Annetta saw nothing, her short-sighted eyes could not make out the direction of mine. Each time our pantomime displaced the coverlet, Veronica would put it back, each time offering me, as if by chance, a new picture and enjoying the instantaneous effect it made on my soul, which eagerly strove to demonstrate how lively an impression her charms made on it. Warmed to generosity, in the end she displayed all her treasures to me, smiling to show me she was glad I should read her thought. She must have surmised that the play I was putting on was really only the rehearsal for the one I was to act with her on the following night, and her imagination could not but add to its charms. I had the same thought.

What obliged me to break off the pretty game was Costa, who came knocking at my door to tell me the felucca was ready. Furious at the interruption, I went to the door and told him to pay the captain for the day and order him to be ready the next morning. Going back to bed, I saw that my two companions were delighted with my probity.

We must certainly have been in need of sleep, but, equally certainly, the play must not be allowed to end by the always untimely accident of an interruption; it must be only an intermission, and I must take advantage of a respite which nature made necessary. I proposed an ablution, which made Annetta laugh and which Veronica declared was courteous, appropriate, and justified. The refreshment not being part of the main action, I easily persuaded her to imitate us; the two sisters rendered each other mutual services in different postures, all of them such that I found the role of spectator preferable to any other.

After the drying, whose gentle tickling is properly accompanied by soft laughter, we returned to the stage where I was to perform the last act. I could scarcely wait to acquit myself, and I was sure I should bring it off with honor, counting, of course, on Annetta. Without her the dialogue could not be sustained. But the girl was too young; as I had foreseen, she forgot her part. The cruel god who played the trick on her was Morpheus. Veronica laughed when she saw her asleep, and I had to laugh too when I found that she was as if dead. It was a case of bringing her back to life, and Love has only the power to awaken. This dénouement had all the appearance of a catastrophe. "What a pity," Veronica's eyes said; but she said it only with her eyes. She was wrong, as I was—she for not taking Annetta's part without asking my permission, I for waiting for her to invite me. I thought I ought to refrain from infringing on the play which was not to be acted until the next night. Veronica went to her own bed to sleep, and I slept with Annetta until noon.

We spent the day most interestingly in discussions of what had befallen us, and, having decided to eat only one meal, we did not sit down at table until nightfall. We spent two hours there, satisfying our appetites with exquisite dishes and defying Bacchus to make us fear his power. We rose when we saw Annetta overcome by irresistible sleep. However, we did not consider this slight mishap enough to spoil our little play. Annetta as spectator had no possibility of enjoyment, and Veronica's dazzling charms would occupy me in a way which made it quite unnecessary to look at any others. We went to bed, and, she in my arms and I in hers, we spent more than an hour without moving but without accomplishing anything. Though she became aware of the reason, politeness prevented Veronica from telling me what it was, as modesty kept her from complaining of it. She concealed whatever she may have felt and continued to caress me, but I was furious. I could not understand it at all. Such a disaster had never befallen me except immediately after a long labor whose consummation had been sealed with my blood, or as the result of a surprise violent enough to obliterate all my natural faculties, as had been the case with Genoveffa when, coming out of the Great Circle, I had expected to be struck by lightning.[8] But in the situation in which I found myself, in the prime of life, with a girl who had everything to delight, who charmed me, whom I had wanted to find willing and tender, and whom I saw ready to refuse me nothing of all that I might, or could, ask of her—this was something I could not conceive and which made me positively desperate.

Reduced at last to dropping our masks and talking sense, I was the first to lament my misfortune.

"You did too much yesterday," she replied, "you drank too many liqueurs at supper. Do not be upset, my dear, for I am sure you love me. Stop trying to force nature, for your efforts will only weaken it. It seems to me that a calm sleep is the only remedy you need employ in order to become a man again. I have no need of it, but do not be concerned for me. Go to sleep. We will make love afterward."

After this brief discourse, which I found equally wise and tactful, Veronica turned her back to me and I did likewise. I saw that I could hope everything from sleep, and I determined to sleep, but in vain. The same nature which refused me the ability to work denied me the power to enjoy rest. My eager senses would not relax; they had no need of the relaxation I wanted, and they had no idea that their furtherance could have anything to do with what I needed to put me in a condition to satisfy my amorous desires. On the contrary, my burning senses wanted to remain awake in order to witness my enjoyment; and, far from doing me the kindness to relax, they could not but be angry with me, and they had every right to complain that, by my lack of judgment, I had dulled the vigor I needed to satisfy Love, whose activity and divine joy is that which most interests them and that in which they take part, amid charms which never fail to be present.

It is thus that, in my frenzy and my inability to sleep, I tried to console myself, indulging in physico-metaphysical analyses and arguing on the side of my senses to give me abundant reason for blaming only myself. When I ended I felt satisfied. Satisfied to find myself guilty! Strange satisfaction; but the only one capable of making happy a philosopher overwhelmed by a misfortune. The man who is in the wrong gains a great victory, if, after pleading his cause to himself, he succeeds in convincing himself of it. This is the only happiness I enjoy today when I converse with myself. In all my life no misfortune has befallen me except by my own fault, and I attribute almost all the good fortune I have enjoyed to the chances of life—which, to tell the truth, is a little unjust and humiliating; but such is man. I should go mad, I believe, if in my soliloquies I found that I was unhappy without its being my own fault, for I should not know where the fault lay unless I would admit that I was stupid. I know I am not stupid. Stupidity resides in an idiotic neighbor of mine[9] who is pleased to maintain that the brutes reason better than we do. "I will grant you," I answered him, "that they reason better than you do, but not better than I do." This answer made him my enemy, even though it admitted half of his thesis.

Veronica spent three hours in the arms of sleep and was surprised when I told her I had been unable to enjoy a moment's rest. She found me the nullity she had left me, and she finally lost patience when I tried a little too hard to convince her that the misfortune did not come from any ill will on my part. Tempted to attribute it to herself, and at the same time mortified by the thought that such a thing was possible, she undertook to break the spell which made me unfit. To achieve her end she used remedies which I thought were infallible; and I should have been in the wrong not to leave her to her own devices; but it was all effort thrown away. My despair became as great as hers when I saw her give up, discouraged, humiliated, and angry to the point of tears. She departed without a word, leaving me under the painful necessity of spending two or three hours before

Aurora's return in solitude. My baggage was all ready. My insomnia did not leave me.

At daybreak Costa came to tell me that the wind was strong and contrary and that the felucca could not confront it.

"We will leave," I replied, "when the weather permits."

At that I got up, lit a fire, and fell to writing. Two or three hours later, feeling sleepy, I got into bed, and I enjoyed a sleep of eight hours. On waking I felt calm, but with no desire for amusement. The two sisters were delighted, and I thought I detected a certain scorn in Veronica; but she might be justified, and I should have made a mistake to remark on it. Before we sat down at table I presented her with a hundred zecchini, and I did the same to the kind Annetta, who did not expect it, for she thought she had already received enough.

Toward midnight the captain of the felucca came to tell me that the weather was fair, and I took leave of them. I saw Veronica weep, but I knew why. I set sail for Derici with my two valets, and I went ashore there the next morning, immediately taking post horses for Leghorn. But here is a small yet instructive event worthy of the gravity of this history and not unworthy of being imparted to a reader who reads it with pleasure.

CHAPTER VII

A clever swindle. Passano at Leghorn. Pisa and Corilla. My opinion of squint eyes. Florence. I meet Teresa again. My son. La Corticelli.

AS I am watching the four horses being harnessed for me, a man whose face I do not trouble to notice comes up and asks if I wish to pay for the stage in advance or at the post station.

"I will pay now. Here is a portoghese,[1] bring me the change."

"At once."

Ten minutes later, just when I was going to ask for the change from my portoghese, up comes the post master and asks me for the money for my stage.

"I have already paid it, and I am waiting for the change from a portoghese. Wasn't it to you that I gave it?"

"To me? I beg your pardon."

"Then to whom did I give it?"

"You should know that."

"Damnation, it can only have been to one of your men."

I raise my voice. I am surrounded; the post master asks who had had a portoghese from me; no one knows anything about it. I swear, I curse, then I see I am in the wrong, I pay over again, and I laugh at the clever scoundrel who had tricked me so cleverly. So it is that one learns to live. From that day on I have never paid post except on good grounds. There is no country in which the rascals are more cunning than they are in Italy, if we except ancient and modern Greece.

At Leghorn I had scarcely put up at the best inn[2] before I am told that the theater[3] is open. Unfortunately I take a notion to go to it; one of the actors recognizes me, he comes up, he is delighted to see me, I invite him to supper, he introduces me to a man who calls himself an excellent poet and a great enemy of the Abate Chiari,[4] whom I disliked because he had composed a virulent satire[5] on me and I had not had my revenge. I tell him to come to supper too. The self-styled poet was Genoese, his name was Giacomo Passano,[6] and he had written three hundred sonnets against the Abate Chiari. He said that if he could get them printed the Abate would die of rage. I laughed. Having his manuscript in his pocket, he read me a dozen of them; I found them mediocre. When a sonnet is mediocre it is bad, for it should be sublime.

If I had taken time to study the man's face further than to suppose him some fifty years of age I should have known him for a scoundrel; but his sonnets against Chiari preoccupied me. On the title page of his manuscript I read: *La Chiareide di Ascanio Pogomas.*[7]

"It is," he said, "a perfect[8] anagram of my family and baptismal names; I beg you to admire its felicity."

This stupid remark still makes me laugh. Every one of his sonnets was a piece of flat rigmarole ending by saying that the Abate Chiari was a *coglione.*[9] He did not prove it, but he said it, and that might be enough to pain the Brescian priest, who was no *coglione* but a wit and a poet, and who, if he had known the theater, would have surpassed Goldoni,[10] for he had a better command of the language. This word *coglione,* which properly means "testicle," is used in Italy to mean "fool," as *couillon* in French means "dolt" and in German "cad." One cannot say a more insulting word to a German than *Kujon* or to a Frenchman than *faquin.*

For civility's sake I told Passano that he should get his *Chiareide* printed.

"I should like to sell it to a printer, for I am not rich enough to have it printed at my own expense, and the printers here are all ignorant starvelings; then, too, the press is restricted; the word *coglione* would be declared obscene. If I could go to Switzerland I am sure I could manage it there; but I haven't six zecchini. I would really go on foot."

"And how," I said, "would you live in Switzerland, where there are no actors?"

"I can paint miniatures. Look."

He then puts in my hands some oval ivory tablets measuring three or four inches, on which I see lubricious nudes, poorly drawn and even more poorly painted. I promise to give him a recommendation for Bern, and after supper I write the letter for him and I give him six zecchini to take him there. He insisted on giving me six of his pictures; but I refused them. I was stupid enough to recommend him to Monsieur M. F.,[11] father of the charming Sara. I told him to write to me at Rome in care of the banker Belloni.

The next day I went to dine in Pisa at the "Hussar" inn,[12] where I stayed for two days. From an Englishman I bought a very pretty carriage which seated two and had a folding seat for two more. It was this Englishman who took me to call on the celebrated poetess Corilla,[13] whom I wanted to meet. She did me the favor to improvise, and she enchanted me, not by her singing or her beauty but by the delightful things she said in good verse and in perfect Italian. She was squint-eyed, as the ancients depicted Venus[14]—the reason for which I have never been able to guess, for the Goddess of Beauty squinting always seemed to me a great incongruity. It was said that when Corilla, as she sang, fixed her squint eyes on any man in the company she was sure to make him fall in love with her. Thank God, she did not fix them on me very much; apparently she did not like me.

In Florence I found lodgings near the Ponte alla Carraia[15] at Doctor Vannini's,[16] who told me at once that he was "unworthily" a member of the Accademia della Crusca.[17] I took an apartment the windows of which looked out on the embankment of the Arno, next to a beautiful terrace. I also took a town carriage and a hire lackey, immediately dressing the coachman and the lackey in the blue and red livery of Signor Bragadin. I did not want to impose on anyone, but I wanted to make an impression. The next day I went out alone on foot, wearing a redingote, to see Florence and be seen by no one, and in the afternoon I went to the theater[18] to hear the Arlecchino Roffi,[19] whose reputation was greater than his talent, and to judge the Florentine style of delivery, which was highly praised and which I did not like. Only Pertici[20] pleased me. Unable to sing any longer because he had grown old, he had turned actor.

The next day I presented myself to the banker Sasso Sassi, on whom I had a large letter of credit, and after dining alone I dressed for the occasion and went to the opera in the Via della Pergola,[21] taking a seat in a box near the orchestra more to see the actresses than to hear the music, which has never transported me.

But what a surprise when I see the prima donna! I instantly recognized Teresa,[22] whom, after she dropped the mask of Bellino, I had left in Rimini at the beginning of the year 1744—the very Teresa whom I would certainly have married if Signor de Gages had not had me put under arrest. Seventeen years later I see her on the stage, beautiful, fresh, and she seems to me just as young as when I had left her. I thought her a miracle; I was decided that it must be someone else, when, singing an aria, she happens to turn her eyes on me, and from then on they never leave my face. That convinced me that I was not mistaken. At the end of her aria she goes off, and she is scarcely in the wings before she turns and signals me with her fan to come and speak to her.

I leave the box with my heart beating in a way for which I did not understand the reason; for, preserving the happiest memory of Teresa, I felt no guilt toward her except for not having answered her last letter, which she had written me from Naples thirteen years before. I made my way to the pit, more curious to see what the consequences of the interview would be than to learn all that must have happened to her in the course of seventeen years, which, in those days, seemed to me a century.

I come to a door through which one went up to the stage, and I see her at the top of a short stairway giving orders to the doorkeeper to let me enter. I approach her and we both remain mute. I take her hand and I put it against my chest so that she can feel my heart, which seemed to be trying to leap out.

"I cannot do as much here," she said, "but I thought my surprise would send me falling into the orchestra, and I do not know, my dear friend, how I managed to finish my aria. Alas! I have to sup out, I shall not sleep tonight; I expect you tomorrow at eight o'clock. Where are you staying?"

"At Vannini's."

"What name are you using?"

"The same." [23]

"When did you arrive here?"

"Yesterday."

"Shall you remain long in Florence?"

"As long as you wish."

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Accursed supper! What a day! Leave me, I have to go on. Good-by until tomorrow at seven."

A moment earlier she had said "at eight." I go to the parterre, and I remember that I have asked her neither her name nor her address; but I could easily find out all that. She was playing the part of Mandane.[24] At this distance I seem to see her even better, and I find her without an equal in the action with which she animated her recitative. I ask a very well-dressed young man who is sitting beside me the name of so great an actress.

"Then you have arrived in Florence only today?"

"Yes, Signore."

"Well then, her name is the same as mine because she is my wife; and my name is Cirillo Palesi,[25] at your service."

I bow to him, and I remain mute and as if I had fallen from a great height. He might have considered it impertinent if I had asked him where he lived. Teresa married to this handsome young man! And it is precisely her husband I bump into when I want to inquire about her!

I have not the strength to stay through the opera. I cannot wait to be alone so that I can reflect on this fantastic adventure, on the visit I was to make to the married Teresa the next morning at seven, for I must go by what she had said last, and on what her husband will say to me when he sees me. I feel my old fire rekindled, and I think I am not sorry to have found her married.

I go out, and I tell my lackey to call my carriage; he replies that I cannot have it until nine o'clock. The weather was so cold that the coachman had gone to the stable.

"Then we will walk. Tell me," I said, "what is the name of the *prima virtuosa*?"

"Her name was Lanti; but for the last two months it has been Palesi. I can tell you there is nothing to be done there. She is rich, and she married a young man who has nothing and no profession."

"Where does she live?"

"At the end of this street. We shall pass her door. She lives on the second floor."

After that I said no more to him, so that I could devote my attention to the route I was to take alone the next morning.

I ate scarcely a bite and went to bed at once, ordering Leduc to call me at six o'clock.

"It is not light until seven."

"I know that."

"Very well."

So at seven o'clock I am at the door of my first great passion. I go up to the second floor, I ring, and a woman who opens the door for me asks me if my name is Casanova.

"Yes."

"The Signora told me that you would come at eight o'clock; but it does not matter, go into this room, I will wake her."

Five or six minutes later I see her husband approach me politely in his nightcap, saying that his wife was getting up and would come; but I nearly laughed when, after staring at me for a time, he said:

"Was it not you, Signore, who asked me my wife's name yesterday evening?"

"I am the man, I thought I knew her, and my good luck saw to it that I should ask her husband. The friendship, Signore, which I shall always feel for you will be the same as that which I have always felt for her."

But there she is, beautiful as a star. She enters with open arms, I open mine, and we embrace like two fond friends, or like lovers enjoying the happiness of a moment for which they have longed. After a brief pause for thought, we embrace again, then she tells her husband to sit down. She draws me to a sofa, letting her tears flow freely, I cannot hold back mine; but a moment later, wiping our eyes, we happen to turn them on Signor Palesi's face, and we cannot help bursting out laughing. His amazement was too comic.

"You see my father," she said to him, "and more than my father, for I owe him everything. Happy moment, which I have awaited for ten years!"

Hearing me called "father," her husband stared at me again; but the emotion of the situation did not permit me to laugh. I was not quite two years older than Teresa; but fondness takes the name of father to mean whatever it chooses.

"Yes, Signore," I said, "she is my daughter, she is my sister, an angel without sex, she is a living treasure, and she is your wife.

"I did not," I said to her, "answer your last letter—"

"I know everything. You were in love with a nun, you were imprisoned under the Leads, and when I was in Vienna I heard of your prodigious escape. A false presentiment made me certain that I should see you there. Afterward I learned of your vicissitudes in Paris and Holland; but after you left Paris I could get news of you from no one. But here we are, and I shall die content. When I tell you all that has happened to me during these ten years you will hear some fine tales. Now I am happy. There is Signor Palesi, of Rome, who married me two months ago; we love each other, and I hope you will be his friend as you are mine."

I then rose to embrace him, and he came to meet me, though with extreme embarrassment, for he could not imagine what attitude he should assume toward me, who was now father, now brother, now friend. He did not know if he must be prepared to put up with me as the lover of his dear wife. It was she who, to reassure him, went and embraced him most heartily, making me the spectator of a second scene which I pretended to find very agreeable, but which annoyed me, for in that half hour Teresa had rekindled in me all the fire with which I had begun to burn for her at Ancona when Don Sancho Pico[26] introduced me to her.

Signor Palesi asked me if I would be pleased to breakfast, joining them for a cup of excellent chocolate which he whipped himself, and I replied that I was passionately fond of chocolate. He went off at once to make it.

Thereupon Teresa fell into my arms, saying:

"Let us embrace a hundred times this first day, my dear friend, and afterward leave it at that, since such is the decree of destiny. Tomorrow we shall meet again only as two fond friends; our transports at this happy moment are too well justified for us to restrain them."

After satisfying some of our fire, finding that we were as we had been when we parted in Rimini, we breathed again, and we resumed our places.

After reflecting a little:

"You must know," she said, "that I am still in love with my husband and determined never to deceive him. What I did just now did not depend upon me, and we must both forget it. It is over. Let it suffice us to know that we still love each other, and to have no possible doubt of it. In future, my dear friend, let us avoid any opportunity to be alone together. Does that make you sad?"

"I find you bound, and I am free. We would not have parted again; you have just rekindled all my old fire; I am the same, and happy that I have been able to prove it to myself and unhappy that I can no longer hope to possess you; I find you not only married but in love. Alas! I have delayed too long; but if I had not stopped in Genoa I should be equally unhappy. You shall know all when occasion serves. Meanwhile, I will obey no other laws than those you will prescribe for me. Your husband, I believe, does not know our story; so I must let nothing out, must I not?"

"Nothing; for he has no knowledge of my affairs, and I am very glad he shows no curiosity about them. He knows, like everyone else, that I made my fortune in Naples, where I say I went at the age of ten. Such things are falsehoods which harm no one, and which in my profession I must prefer to a number of truths which would injure me. I claim I am twenty-four—what do you say to that?"

"I would say you are telling the truth, though I know you are thirty-two."

"You mean thirty-one. When I met you I could not have been more than fourteen."

"I thought it was fifteen."

"Possibly; but tell me, please, do I look more than twenty-four?"

"I swear that you do not even look that. But in Naples—"

"In Naples a gazetteer might know everything; but nobody listens to such people. But I am waiting to see you at what will be one of the most interesting moments in your life."

"One of the most interesting moments in my life? When?"

"Permit me to say no more. I want to enjoy your surprise. But let us speak of something essential. How are you off? If you need money I am in a position to return yours to you with all the interest you can demand. My husband controls nothing; all that I have is my own. I have fifty thousand ducati del regno[27] at Naples, and the same amount in diamonds. Tell me how much you need. Quick, for the chocolate is coming."

Such was Teresa. Deeply moved, I was about to throw myself on her neck before answering her, when the chocolate arrived. Her husband entered, followed by a chambermaid who was a beauty and who carried three cups of chocolate on a silver-gilt tray. Palesi kept us entertained while we were drinking it, wittily describing the nature of his surprise when he saw that the man who had got him out of bed at seven o'clock was the same one who had asked him his wife's name the previous evening at the theater. Teresa's laughter, accompanied by mine, was not displeasing to the Roman, who I thought appeared jealous only for propriety's sake.

Teresa said that at ten o'clock a rehearsal of all the arias from the new opera was to be held at her house, that I was welcome to remain for it and dine with her afterward, and to spend the whole day there if I had nothing better to do. I replied that I would not leave her until after supper to let her go to bed with her fortunate husband. At these words Signor Palesi cordially embraced me, as if to say that he was grateful to me for not having raised obstacles to his exercising his rights.

He was no more than twenty or twenty-two years old, he was blond, and too good-looking for a man, for, such as he was, all mankind of either sex owed him approbation. I could not but forgive Teresa for having fallen in love with his pretty face, for I knew the power of a beautiful countenance only too well; but I disapproved of her having made him her husband, for a husband acquires sovereign rights.

Teresa's young chambermaid came in and said that my carriage was at the door.

"Will you permit my hire lackey to come in?" I asked Teresa. "Who," I said to the scoundrel, "ordered you to come here with my carriage?"

"No one; but I know my duty."

"Who told you I was here?"

"I guessed it."

"Go call Leduc and come here with him."

I told Leduc to pay him for three days, to take away his livery, and ask Doctor Vannini for another valet of the same stature who did not "guess." When the impertinent fellow begged Teresa to intervene for him, she told me I had done well.

At ten o'clock I saw all the actors and actresses arrive, together with a number of devotees of music, who all kissed her hand and whom she received most graciously. The rehearsal, which went on for three hours, bored me to extinction. I spent my time talking with Palesi, whom I liked for his never asking me where or when or how I had known his wife.

At the end of the rehearsal one of the actresses, a girl from Parma named Redegonda,[28] who had a male role and sang well, stayed for dinner with Teresa, and a moment later a young ballerina from Bologna named Corticelli,[29] whom she had also invited, arrived and at once kissed her hand. The girl's budding charms struck me; but, being full of Teresa at the moment, I paid her no special attention. After another moment I see a very stout old abate, of a bland and smiling countenance, who enters with stately steps and, looking at no one but Teresa, approaches and kisses her hand, going down on one knee in the Portuguese fashion. Gracious and smiling, Teresa makes him sit at her right; I was at her left. I at once recognize the Abate Gama,[30] whom I had left in the household of Cardinal Acquaviva[31] in Rome seventeen years earlier; but I give no sign of it. He had aged greatly, but it was he. The philandering old man, who had eyes only for Teresa, treated her to stale compliments and had not yet looked at anyone. Hoping that he will not recognize me, I avoid looking at him and I flirt with La Corticelli. Teresa calls me to order, saying that the Signor Abate wishes to know if I recognize him. At that I look at him, I pretend surprise, I rise, and I ask if I have the pleasure of seeing the Abate Gama.

"Himself," he replies, rising and taking me by the head to give me a number of kisses, in perfect accord with the combination of subtle policy and great curiosity which I knew to make up his character and which I have portrayed for my reader in the first volume of these memoirs.

After this beginning it can be imagined that we talked endlessly. He gave me news of Barbaruccia, of the Marchesa G., of Cardinal S. C.,[32] and he told me how he had passed from the service of Spain to that of Portugal, in which he still continued; but suddenly a figure appears which absorbs and bewilders all the faculties of my soul. A youth of perhaps fifteen or sixteen, but with the sort of maturity which an Italian can attain at that age, enters and bows to the whole company. I being the only person present who did not know him, Teresa presents him to me unabashed, saying:

"He is my brother."

I receive him as I should, but flabbergasted, not having had time to recover myself. This supposed brother of Teresa's was the image of me, except that he was not as dark; I instantly see that he is my son; nature had never been more indiscreet; it was the surprise which Teresa had promised me, and which she had cunningly arranged so that she should have the pleasure of seeing it in my face. In her first letters from Naples she had never written me that she was pregnant, and it had never occurred to me that she might be.

It seemed to me that Teresa should have avoided this meeting, for everyone present had eyes, and no more was needed to discern that the youth must be either my son or my brother. I give her a glance, but she turns away; the youth was looking at me in such confusion that he paid no attention to what his sister was saying to him. The others simply looked back and forth from his face to mine, and, convinced that he was my son, could only conclude that I had been the intimate friend of Teresa's mother, if it was true that she was his sister, for at the age she appeared to be it was impossible to suppose that she was his mother. Nor was it possible to conclude that I was Teresa's father, for I looked almost as young as she did.

What began to please me greatly was the youth's fine bearing and the intelligence he showed as he discoursed in the Neapolitan dialect, which he spoke very markedly. Teresa had me dine between herself and him. I found him well informed and with manners such as a Neapolitan upbringing rarely bestows. Teresa told him he should begin speaking Tuscan.

"It is only six months," she said to me, "since he left the custody of the man who brought him up and who taught him everything he knows, and especially music, which is his passion. You shall hear him at the harpsichord. I am eight years his elder."

Whether it was nature, prepossession, self-esteem, or whatever the reader may please, I rose from the table so enchanted with this son of Teresa's that I embraced him with such affection that the whole company applauded. I invited Teresa to dine with me the next day, together with everyone present.

"I too?" La Corticelli asked.

"You too."

After dinner the Abate Gama told me to choose between having him to breakfast or coming to breakfast with him the next morning, because he was dying to spend two hours alone with me. I invited him to my inn.

As soon as everyone had left, Don Cesarino (for such was the handsome youth's name) asked me if I would take him to the promenade with me. I embraced him and replied that he could go in my carriage with his brother-in-law, for I must not leave his sister alone. Palesi agreed.

As soon as we were alone I congratulated her on Cesarino.

"He is," she replied, "the happy fruit of our love. Happy, because he has everything to make him so. It is the same Duke[33] with whom I left Rimini who provided for his upbringing; I confided my secret to him as soon as I found that I was pregnant. I was delivered without anyone's knowing it, and it was he who sent him to nurse at Sorrento and had him baptized by the name of Cesare Filippo Lanti. He left him there until he was nine, then put him to board with a competent man, who saw that he received an excellent education and taught him music. From his earliest childhood he has always known me as his sister, and you cannot imagine my joy when I found that the older he grew the more he looked like you. I always considered him a sure pledge of our union, certain that it would take place as soon as we met again, for every time I looked at him I thought it impossible that he would not produce the same effect on your soul as he did on mine. I was sure that you could not refuse to make such a charming creature your legitimate son by marrying his fond mother.

"When the Duke died,[34] I left Naples, leaving him to board in the same place under the protection of Prince della Riccia,[35] who never thought him anything but my brother. Your son commands a capital of twenty thousand ducati del regno, the interest on which is paid to me and of which he does not know; but I let him want for nothing. My heart bleeds because I cannot tell him I am his mother; for I think he would love me all the more. You cannot imagine the pleasure I felt today when I saw your surprise and afterward observed how quickly you fell in love with him."

"And the resemblance?"

"It pleases me. Can it lead people to believe anything except that you were my mother's lover? Let it be so. My husband believes that is the source of the friendship between us, at which he might well have taken offense this morning when he saw our transports. He told me last night that Cesarino might be my brother on his mother's side but not on his father's, for he had seen his father at the theater and he could certainly not be mine. If I have children by Palesi all my property will go to them on my death; and if not it will go to Cesarino. My property is in trustworthy hands, even if Prince della Riccia should die."

She then took me to her bedroom, where she opened a strongbox which contained all her jewels and over fifty thousand ducati in good securities. In addition she had a large quantity of plate, and her talent, which assured her of leading roles in any theater in Italy.

I asked her if our son had yet had a love affair.

"I do not think so," she answered; "but I think my chambermaid is in love with him. I will keep my eyes open."

"Give him to me. I will teach him the way of the world."

"Ask anything of me, but leave me your son. Know that I never kiss him for fear of going mad. If you knew how good he is and how much he loves me, for I satisfy all his wishes. What will people say in Venice four months from now when they see the Casanova who escaped from the Leads become twenty years younger?"

"So you are going to Venice for La Sensa?"[36]

"Yes; and you are going to Rome?"

"And to Naples, to see my friend the Duke of Matalona."[37]

"I know him. He already has a son[38] by the daughter of the Duke of Bovino,[39] whom he married, a charming woman who was able to make a man of him. Everyone in Naples knows he was impotent."

In such talk we passed the day until Cesarino arrived with his brother-in-law. At supper my son won all that he had not earlier conquered of my paternal affection. He was sprightly and had all the Neapolitan vivacity. He wanted me to hear him at the harpsichord, at which he accompanied himself in some Neapolitan songs which made us laugh heartily. Teresa did nothing but look from him to me and from me to him, then she embraced her husband and exclaimed that to be happy in this world one must be in love.

So I spent that day, which was one of the happiest of my whole life.

CHAPTER VIII

La Corticelli. The Jewish impresario cudgeled. The pretended Charles Ivanov and the trick he plays on me. Arbitrary order to leave Tuscany. I arrive in Rome. My brother Giovanni.

AT NINE o'clock the next morning the Abate Gama was announced; he began by weeping for joy to see me, after so many years, in such good health and in the prime of life. The reader sees that he must have praised me to my face. However intelligent one may be, however well one may know those who practice it, having one's ears tickled is gratifying. The mild-mannered Abate, extremely amiable and without an iota of malice, but curious both by nature and by his occupation—such, in short, as I have portrayed him in my first volume—did not wait for any urging on my part to tell me his whole story for the past seventeen years, making it a lengthy business by recounting its various episodes in all possible detail. He had passed from the service of Spain to that of Portugal, and as Secretary of Embassy to Commander Almada,[1] he had been obliged to leave Rome because Pope Rezzonico[2] would not allow His Most Faithful Majesty[3] to punish the Jesuits who, though they had only broken his arm, had intended to kill him.[4] Gama traveled about Italy, corresponding with Almada and the famous Carvalho[5] and waiting for the end of the quarrel so that he could return to Rome; that was his whole story. But the eloquent Abate made it last for an hour, expecting that I would pay him in the same coin with a detailed account of my adventures; we both displayed our talent—the Abate by lengthening out his story, I by shortening mine, not without the minor pleasure of balking his curiosity. He asked me perfunctorily what I was going to do in Rome, and I replied that I was going to see the Pope to ask him to persuade the State Inquisitors[6] to pardon me. It was not true; but if I had told him truthfully that I was going there simply to amuse myself he would not have believed me. He who tells the truth to unbelieving ears prostitutes truth; it is murder. The Abate asked me to do him the favor of corresponding with him, and I promised to do so; then he told me that he was in position to show me his friendship by introducing me to the Marchese Botta-Adorno,[7] then Governor of Tuscany,[8] who was said to be a friend of the Emperor Francis I,[9] then reigning, and I replied that he would be doing me a great honor. He brought up the subject of Teresa, whereupon he found me constipated; I told him that she was a child when I had known her family in Bologna, and that her brother's resemblance to me could only be chance. On my table he saw something very well written, and he asked me if it was my secretary who had such a good hand. Costa, who was present, answered him in Spanish that it was he. The Abate then exhausted himself in compliments, ending by asking me to send Costa to him to copy some letters. I did not hesitate to answer that I urgently needed the young man all day. He wanted him only in order to make him talk. Such are the curious.

Curiosity, which moralists refuse to number among the passions, is a noble quality of mind whose laudable object is to know all of nature: *nihil dulcius quam omnia scire* ("nothing is sweeter than to know all things"); however, it is a thing of the senses, for it can arise only from perception and sensation. But curiosity is a vice when it seeks only to pry into the affairs of others, whether the man possessed by it tries to obtain knowledge of them directly or indirectly, whether he tries to discover them in order to be of service to the person he sounds or to use what he discovers for his own advantage; it is always a vice, or a disease, for the mind of a man curious by nature is never at rest. Discovering a secret is perpetrating a theft. I am not speaking of the kind of curiosity which, relying on the abstruse sciences, tries to know the future or things which are not in nature; it is the daughter of ignorance and superstition, and they who dally with it are fools; but the Abate Gama was no fool; he was curious by nature, and he was paid to be curious. Having some visits to make, he left me, promising that he would return at dinnertime.

Doctor Vannini brought me a new hire valet, vouching for him. He was from Parma and of the same height as the first; I told Leduc to give him the livery. I warned the innkeeper-academician that I wanted a creditable dinner, and I was served accordingly.

The first to arrive was La Corticelli, together with her mother, who went by the name of "Signora Laura,"[10] and her brother, a violinist who looked like a girl. Her mother told me that she never let her daughter dine alone with strangers. I replied that in that case she had only to go home or to leave her there and accept two scudi to dine with her son wherever she pleased. She took the two scudi and departed, saying she felt sure she was leaving her in good hands.

Her daughter made such amusing comments on this little dialogue between her mother and myself, laughing so heartily, that it was on that very day I began to love her. She was thirteen years of age, and looked only ten; she was well built, extremely fair, gay, with a sense of humor; but I do not know how or with what in her I could have fallen in love. She begged me to protect her against the Jewish opera impresario.[11] In the contract he had given her he had undertaken to have her dance a *pas de deux* in the second opera, and he had not done so. She asked me to force the Jew to abide by his undertaking. I promised to send the Jew word to come and talk with me.

The next to arrive was the Parmesan actress Redegonda, tall and beautiful. Costa, who was Parmesan too, told me she was the sister of my hire valet. In two or three minutes of questioning I found Redegonda worthy of attention. The Abate Gama arrives, and he congratulates me on finding me between the two pretty girls. I make him take my place, and he begins flirting with them; they laugh at him, but he persists. I saw that he thought he was pleasing them; and I well understood that vanity could prevent him from knowing he was making himself ridiculous; but I did not foresee that when I reached his age I might be like him. Indeed, I did not give it a thought. Unhappiness is the lot of the old man who does not know what he is or understand that the same sex which he attracted in his youth cannot but scorn him as soon as he shows that he still has pretensions though age has deprived him of all the qualities required to please.

My beautiful Teresa arrived last, with her husband and Cesarino, who had on a very fine coat; I embraced him after fulfilling the same obligation to his mother; and I sat down at table between them. The Abate Gama took the place between Redegonda and La Corticelli, and it was he who enlivened the meal with his witty remarks. I laughed to myself, seeing how attentively my hire valet changed his sister Redegonda's plate, while she plumed herself on being entitled to honors to which he could not aspire; she seized an opportunity to say to me:

"He's a good lad who, unfortunately, has no talent."

I had purposely put in my pocket an enameled gold box on the cover of which was my portrait, painted on the enamel in the form of a medallion and a very good likeness. I had had it made in Paris as a present for Madame d'Urfé; and I had not given it to her because the painter had made me too young. I had filled the box with the excellent Havana snuff which Monsieur de Chavigny[12] had given me and which Teresa liked very much, and I was waiting for her to ask me for some so that I could take it from my pocket.

It was the Abate Gama, who had some very good snuff in a box from Orihuela,[13] who passed it to Teresa, and she passed him some of hers in a snuffbox of light-colored tortoise shell, encrusted all over with gold, than which nothing could be handsomer. Gama finds fault with Teresa's snuff; I pronounce it good, but I venture to say that mine is better. With that I take out my snuffbox and offer her a pinch, holding it open. She could not see the portrait. She agrees that the snuff is excellent.

"In that case, Signora, shall we exchange?"

"Gladly. Give me a piece of paper."

"There's no need for that. Snuff is exchanged in whatever boxes it happens to be in."

So saying, I put Teresa's box in my pocket, and I hand her mine closed. When she sees the portrait she gives a cry which startles the company, and she cannot refrain from printing a kiss on the medallion.

"Look," she immediately says to Cesarino. "It is your portrait."

Cesarino looks at it in astonishment, and the box makes the round of the table. Everyone says it is my own portrait made ten years earlier but that it could pass for Cesarino's. Teresa is mad about it and swears the box shall never leave her hands, she gets up from the table and embraces her dear brother several times. I saw that the Abate Gama's politic mind was busily drawing conclusions from the little incident. He left toward nightfall, saying that he expected me for breakfast the next morning.

I spent the day flirting with Redegonda and Teresa, who, seeing that the girl attracted me, advised me to speak out and promised to invite her to visit her whenever I liked. But Teresa did not know her well.

The next morning the Abate Gama gave me a cup of exquisite chocolate; he said that he had sent word to Marshal Botta and that he would come for me at four o'clock to present me to him. Then, as ever the slave of his curiosity, he politely reproached me for having said nothing about my great wealth in my brief account of my adventures.

"My wealth, Signor Abate, is not great; but I have friends whose purses are open to me."

"If you have true friends you are rich. But they are very scarce."

Leaving him, I went to visit Redegonda, to whom I would gladly have given the preference over La Corticelli. She received me in a room in which I saw her mother, her uncle, and three or four children, her brothers and sisters.

"Have you not another room in which to receive your friends?"

"I do not need another room, for I have no friends to receive."

"Have the room and you will have friends. This one is all very well for receiving relatives, but not people who, like myself, come to pay homage to your charms and your talent."

"My daughter, Signore," said her mother, "has very little talent and no charms."

"Yet I find her most pleasing."

"That is an honor for her, and she will receive you whenever you come to see her, but in no other room than this."

"Here I am afraid I inconvenience you. Good-by, Signora."

I went to Teresa's and told her about my visit, and we laughed over it. She said she would be glad to see me at the opera in her *camerino*,[14] which I could enter by giving a testone[15] to the man who stood guard at the little stairway leading to the stage.

The Abate Gama came to fetch me to introduce me to Marshal Botta. I saw a man in every way worthy of respect. He was famous because of the Genoese affair.[16] He was commanding the Austrian army in person when the people of Genoa, angry at the presence of foreigners who were there only to subjugate their country, revolted and drove them out of the city. But for that the ancient Republic would have perished. He was with some Florentine ladies and gentlemen, whom he left in my honor. He talked to me of Venice like a man who knew my country well, and, after making me talk at length about France, he seemed satisfied. In his turn he talked of the Russian Court, where he had been when Elisabeth Petrovna, who still reigned, so easily ascended the throne of her father,[17] Peter the Great. He said that only in Russia did politics know the art of using poisons.

At the hour when the opera began, the Marshal withdrew, and everyone left. After taking home the Abate, who naturally assured me that I had made a very good impression on the Marshal, I went to the opera too, where, at the price of a testone, I went up to Teresa's *camerino*, to find her pretty chambermaid dressing her. She advised me to go to Redegonda's *camerino*, where, as she had to dress as a man, she might let me see charming things.

I had myself shown to it, and her mother did not want me to stay, for her daughter was just then dressing in male attire; but when I assured her I would turn my back she gave me permission, saying that I could sit at her toilet table. Now there was a large mirror on the toilet table, which admirably enabled me to see for nothing all of Redegonda's most private treasures, especially when she awkwardly put her legs into her breeches. She lost nothing by it, for I would have signed any conditions in order to obtain her favors. I thought it impossible she did not know that, seated where I was, I must see everything, and the idea increased my flame. I turned when her mother gave me permission, and, in her disguise as a man, admired this girl of twenty-one who was perfectly proportioned and five feet tall.

As soon as Redegonda was dressed she went out; whereupon I was able to talk with her privately in the wings.

"I am on fire," I said, "charming Redegonda, and I feel that I shall die if you do not make me happy. Do not pretend: as you know that in your mirror I saw the whole of you, and I cannot imagine you capable of having set me aflame only to drive me to despair."

"What can you have seen? I don't know what you're talking about."

"Come now. It's possible; but answer me. That's what matters. What am I to do to have you?"

"To have me? I do not understand such language. I am a decent girl."

"I believe it; and you must believe that after you have loved me you will not be anything else. Speak out, for I must know my fate this instant."

"I cannot say anything but that you are at liberty to come to see me."

"At what hour will you be alone?"

"Alone? Never."

"Very well, then, let your mother be present; it will not matter. If she is wise she will pretend not to see, and I will give you a hundred ducati each time."

"Really, either you are mad or you do not know me."

When, a quarter of an hour later, I recounted the whole incident to Teresa she advised me, after laughing heartily, to go at once and offer the mother the hundred ducati, and, if she refused them, to consider it good riddance and try my luck elsewhere.

I go back to the *camerino,* where she is alone.

"Signora, I am a foreigner, and I shall leave in a week or ten days; I am rich and in love with your daughter. Will you bring her to sup with me this evening, and be obliging? I will give you a hundred zecchini, and after that you shall ruin me."

"To whom do you think you are speaking? Your effrontery amazes me. Inquire who I am, and inquire into my daughter's behavior. You are the first person in the world who has dared to address me in such a manner."

"Then good-by, Signora."

"Good-by, Signore."

I find Redegonda in the wings, and I repeat the dialogue to her word for word. She bursts out laughing.

"Did I do right, or wrong?"

"More right than wrong; but if you love me come to see us."

"Come to see you now!"

"Why not? Who knows?"

"Who knows? You do not know me. Hope poisons me, my beautiful Redegonda; that is why I spoke to you clearly."

Determined to put the girl out of my mind, I went to sup with Teresa, where I spent three delicious hours which made my soul rejoice. The next day, having a great deal of writing to do, I did not go out, and toward evening I saw La Corticelli before me with her mother and her brother. She had come to hold me to my promise that I would protect her against the Jewish impresario who would not let her dance the *pas de deux* as he had undertaken to do in the contract. I said she should come to breakfast with me the next morning and I would talk to the Jew in her presence, provided he would come; I promised to send for him. Needing to finish my letters and to refrain from eating, I told Costa to serve them supper.

After finishing my correspondence, feeling in the mood for amusement, I have the little madcap sit beside me and I flirt with her in a fashion to which Signora Laura could make no objection; but I am a little surprised when the youth comes to join in.

"You are not a girl," I say.

Thus apostrophized, the rascal shows me that he is a boy, but in such a scandalous way that his sister, who was sitting on my lap, gives a great burst of laughter and throws herself into her mother's arms at the other end of the room, where, after eating a good supper, she had respectfully retired. When he sees his sister gone, the little scoundrel treats me to a gesture which annoys me, and I give him a light box on the ear. I rise and I ask Signora Laura for what purpose she has brought me this catamite. The only answer she gives me is:

"Isn't he a very pretty boy?"

I told her to leave, giving the Giton[18] a scudo to make up to him for the box on the ear. He took it, kissing my hand.

I went to bed laughing over the incident, for, such as nature made me, the wristband game[19] could never have been anything but the consequence of an intoxication produced by a great friendship.

The next morning I sent Costa to the Jew with a message asking him to come and hear something I had to tell him. A little later La Corticelli arrived with her mother, and the Jew came as we were breakfasting.

After setting forth La Corticelli's grievance to him, I read him his contract and I told him quietly that I could easily find means to make him abide by his undertaking.

After offering various excuses, whose insubstantiality La Corticelli herself proved to him, he ended by promising me he would see the ballet master that day and instruct him to have her dance with a partner whom he named to me and who, by her account, would be very glad to compose a *pas de deux* for her. After thus settling the matter, I let them leave.

I went to the Abate Gama's, to go on to dinner at Marshal Botta's, who had sent us an invitation. It was at this dinner that I made the acquaintance of the Chevalier Mann,[20] the English Resident, who was the idol of Florence, a man of wealth, amiable, a great lover of the arts, and with excellent taste. The next day I paid him a visit, and in his small garden, the furnishings of his house, his pictures, and his choice books, I saw the man of genius. After returning my visit he invited me to dinner, and he was kind enough also to invite Signora Palesi, her brother, and her husband. After dinner Cesarino delighted the company at the harpsichord. The conversation turning to resemblances, the Chevalier Mann showed us some miniature portraits of amazing beauty. Shortly before she left, Teresa told me gravely that she had kept me in mind.

"I told Redegonda," she said, "that I would come for her and keep her for supper with me and send her home afterward. Come to supper too, have your carriage wait at my door, and you shall be the one to take her home. You will have her alone with you only a few minutes, but that is something. I would wager that you will find her submissive."

"You shall hear the whole story tomorrow. I will not fail to be at your supper."

I got there at nine o'clock. Teresa receives me as one receives an unexpected friend, I tell Redegonda that I congratulate myself on finding her there, and she replies gaily that she had not expected to have the pleasure of seeing me. At supper no one had any appetite; only

Redegonda ate very heartily and laughed a great deal at all the stories I told her. After supper Teresa asks Redegonda if she wishes to have a sedan chair sent for or if she will let me take her home; she replies that, if I will be so kind, there is no need for a sedan chair. This answer makes me sure of everything. Good nights are said, embraces exchanged, I give her my arm, which she presses, we go down, her brother opens the carriage door; Redegonda gets in, I get in after her, and when I go to sit down, I find the place taken, I hear a great shriek of laughter and Redegonda saying to me:

"It's my mother."

I should have made a joke of it, but I did not have the strength. Redegonda sat down on her mother's lap. I coldly asked her why she had not come upstairs to supper with us. When we reached her door the *virtuosa's* mother said I might come up, but I excused myself, and for good reason. If she had done the slightest thing to annoy me I would have boxed her ears, and the man they had in the house looked too much like a cutthroat.

In my fury, I think of going to La Corticelli's; the hour was unwonted, and I had never been there; but no matter. I needed to calm myself, and I was almost certain I should find the Bolognese girl accommodating and Signora Laura unable to resist money.

My lackey shows me the way to her room.

"That will do. Go and wait for me in the carriage."

I knock, I knock again, the family wakes:

"Who is there?"

I give my name, the door is opened, I enter in darkness, and I hear Signora Laura say she is going to light a candle, and that if I had let her know she would have waited up for me despite its being so cold; and in fact I felt as if I were in an icehouse. I hear La Corticelli laughing, I grope for her bed, I find it, I put in my hand, and I touch the too obvious tokens of the male sex. I guess it is her brother, and I see him by the light of the candle her mother has lighted. I see his sister lying in the same bed laughing, with the covers drawn up to her chin because, like her brother, she was stark naked. Despite my freedom from prejudice on the subject, such infamous behavior disgusts me.

"Why," I ask Signora Laura, "do you not keep your son in bed with you?"

"What harm can I fear? They are brother and sister."

"It is not good."

The catamite makes off and gets into his mother's bed, and La Corticelli says in her Bolognese dialect, which immediately sets me laughing, that it was neither good nor bad, since she loved her brother only as a brother and he loved her only as a sister. She ended by saying that if I wanted her to sleep alone I had only to buy her a bed, which she would take with her when she went back to Bologna.

Talking and gesticulating, she unwittingly let me see a third of her nudity, and I saw nothing worth seeing, nevertheless it was ordained that I should fall in love with her skin, for it was all she had. If she had been alone I would have gone further with her; but, her mother and her brother being there, I feared scenes which might anger me. I gave her ten zecchini to buy herself a bed, and I left her.

I took refuge in my inn, cursing all the execrable mothers of *virtuose.*

I spent the whole of the next morning with Monsieur Mann in the gallery,[21] where in the course of five or six visits I saw marvels in the way of paintings, statues, and engraved gems. Before going to dine with the Abate Gama, whom I had invited, I went to tell Teresa the story of my two adventures of the night before, and we laughed over them. She said that if I absolutely needed a girl I had only to take La Corticelli, who certainly would not keep me languishing.

At table the Abate Gama, talking politics in good earnest, asks me if I would be willing to represent the Court of Portugal in a certain matter at the congress which, all Europe believed, was to be held in the city of Augsburg.[22] He assured me that if I did well in the post, which he would be glad to solicit for me, I could be sure that if I went to Lisbon afterward I could get whatever I might want from the Court. I replied that he would find me ready to undertake anything of which he thought me capable, that he had only to write to me, and that I would see to it that he always had my address. It was at that moment that I first felt the strongest possible desire to become a diplomat.

That evening at the opera I talked to the ballet master, to the dancer who was to be my protégée's partner, and to the Jew, who confirmed his promise that she should dance the *pas de deux* three or four days later and every day for the rest of the Carnival. La Corticelli told me she already had a bed and invited me to supper with her. I promised I would go.

Being sure that I would pay for everything, her mother had sent out to a cookshop for a supper for four, which was good enough, and several flagons of the best Florentine wine; in addition there was a clarified wine called "ogliatico" or "aleatico,"[23] which I found excellent, but the mother, the son, and the daughter, who were not accustomed to drinking so well, became tipsy. The mother and son went off to bed without ceremony, and the little madcap did likewise, urging me to follow her example. I did not dare, the cold was intense, there was no fire in the room, and her bed had only one cover; if I had undressed I should have caught a cold. She gave herself to me and tried to assure me that I was her first lover, and I pretended to believe her. I left after spending two hours with her, promising to spend the following night with her on condition that she would heat the room with a brazier and would buy another cover, and I left her fifty zecchini.

The next day a letter which I received from Grenoble interested me greatly. Valenglart wrote me that La Roman had left for Paris with her aunt, having become convinced that if they did not go what the horoscope declared could never come true.

So they would never have gone there if I had not taken it into my head to cast them a fantastic horoscope, for even if astrology had been a science I knew nothing about it. We find countless events in real history which would never have occurred if they had not been predicted. This is because we are the authors of our so-called destiny, and all the "antecedent necessities" of the Stoics are chimerical; the argument which proves the power of destiny seems strong only because it is sophistical. Cicero laughed at it. Someone whom he had invited to dinner, who had promised to go, and who had not appeared, wrote him that since he had not gone it was evident that he had not been *iturus* ("going to go"). Cicero answers him: *Veni ergo cras, et veni etiamsi venturus non sis* ("Then come tomorrow, and come even if you are not going to come").[24] At this date, when I am conscious that I rely entirely on my common sense, I owe this explanation to my reader, despite the axiom, *Fata viam inveniunt* ("Destiny finds the way").[25] If the fatalists are obliged by their own philosophy to consider the concatenation of all events necessary, *a parte ante* ("a priori"), what remains of man's moral freedom is nothing; and in that case he can neither earn merit nor incur guilt.[26] I cannot in conscience admit that I am a machine.

Having gone to the theater to see La Corticelli rehearse her *pas de deux,* I saw her in possession of a fine pelisse. When the other ballerinas caught sight of me they treated me to scornful looks; but my favorite, proud of being preferred, came to speak to me and give me playful pinches.[27]

At supper I found that Signora Laura had provided a large brazier and another cover on the bed. She showed me all the things her daughter had bought for herself and complained that she had not provided clothes for her brother. I pacified her by giving her six zecchini.

In bed I found the girl neither in love nor passionate but amusing. She made me laugh, and I found her accommodating. She needed no more to keep me constant. I gave her a watch and promised to sup with her on the next day but one. By then she should have danced her *pas de deux.*

But I was surprised when I saw her appear only in ensembles.

I go to sup with her as I had promised, and I find her wretched; she tells me, with tears, that I must avenge her for the insult, that the Jew put the blame on the tailor but he was lying. I try to calm her by promising her everything, I spend several hours with her, and I go back to my inn resolved to avenge her after making inquiries.

The next morning early I send Costa to tell the Jew to call on me. He answers that he knows what I want, and that if La Corticelli was not dancing in this opera she would dance in the next.

I then saw what had to be done, but I also saw that I must pretend to take the thing lightly. I summoned Leduc, I told him the whole story, saying that I would be dishonored if I did not avenge myself. I told him that he alone could give me the satisfaction of arranging a good cudgeling for the scoundrel, who by breaking his word to me had given me such an obvious proof of his disregard. I promised him twenty zecchini. I impressed the importance of secrecy on him. He asked me for twenty-four hours before he gave me a positive answer.

The next morning he came to my bedside to tell me that during the preceding day he had devoted himself entirely to acquiring a knowledge of the Jew's person and of the house in which he lived, asking information from no one.

"Today," he said, "I will not let him out of my sight; I shall know at what hour he goes to bed, and tomorrow you shall hear the rest."

"Be prudent, and before you entrust the business to anyone consider carefully."

The next day he tells me that if he goes home at the same hour and takes the same road, he will have the cudgeling before he gets to bed.

"What men have you chosen?"

"No one but myself, on whom I can rely, and you shall not give me the twenty zecchini until the whole town is telling the story. After cudgeling him I will go back for my redingote where I will have left it and I will re-enter the inn by the back door, going off to bed without anyone seeing me. Even Costa will be able to swear that I cannot possibly be the man who cudgeled him if anyone should say so. However, I will have pistols in my pocket in case I have to defend myself."

The next morning he comes to dress my hair and I see he is calm. But as soon as he sees that I am alone he gives me the news that the thing is done.

"The Jew," he said, "instead of running threw himself on the ground, his shouts brought a few people, and I slipped away. I don't know if I killed him, for two blows landed on his head."

"I should be sorry if you did."

I was invited to dinner at Teresa's, where the guests were Signor Sassi, the first castrato, and the Abate Gama. I hear the pretty story told. I say I am sorry, though he is a scoundrel. The castrato says he is not sorry, and that he is sure people will say it was he who made him the present.

"They are saying," the Abate said to me, "that it is you who had it done, and for good reason."

"It will not be easy to discover who is behind it," I replied, "for the rascal has gone too far with many decent people."

The subject was dropped at last, and we dined in high spirits.

The Jew got up from bed a few days later with a plaster on his nose, and the thing was generally attributed to me; but when nothing was discovered the affair was finally forgotten. Only La Corticelli, as wild with joy as she was scatterbrained, talked as if she were sure it was I who had avenged her and was furious with me for refusing to admit it.

With all this to entertain me, I was not thinking of leaving Florence in any hurry, when Doctor Vannini handed me a letter which someone had left with him. I open it in his presence and I find a bill of exchange for two hundred Florentine scudi drawn on Sasso Sassi,[28] at which Vannini looks and says it is good. I retire to my room to read the letter and I see that it is signed "Charles Ivanov."

He wrote me from the posthouse inn at Pistoia[29] that, still without luck or money, he had told his story to an Englishman who was leaving Florence for Lucca and who had generously made him a present of two hundred scudi, giving him the enclosed bill of exchange, which he had written in his presence. It was payable to bearer.

"I do not," he wrote, "dare to come to Florence myself for fear I shall be recognized and arrested because of the unfortunate business at Genoa. So I beg you to take pity on me, to send someone to collect the amount, and forward it to me here at once so that I can leave after paying my host."

The favor the poor wretch asked of me was very small; but I might compromise myself, for not only might the bill be false but even if it were good it would proclaim me a friend of his and in correspondence with him, a man whose name and description had been published in the gazettes. I decide to return his note to him in person. I go to the post station alone, I have two horses harnessed, and I go to the posthouse inn at Pistoia; the innkeeper himself takes me to the scoundrel's room and leaves me. I remained there only three or four minutes to tell him, handing him back his bill, that Signor Sassi knew me and that I did not want to give anyone grounds for supposing that I had any sort of connection with him. I advise him to give the bill of exchange to the innkeeper, who will simply go with it to Signor Sassi and bring him the money. He says he will take my advice, I leave him and return to Florence.

No later than the next day but one, I see Signor Sassi and the innkeeper from Pistoia in my room. Signor Sassi shows me the note for two hundred scudi, saying that the person who had given it to me had swindled me because, firstly, it was not in the lord's handwriting, and, secondly, the said lord, having no money in his bank, could not draw on him.

"This man here," he said, "discounted the bill, the Russian left, he comes to me for his money, I tell him the bill is forged, and he replies that it was you who brought it to the Russian in person and that, knowing you, he did not hesitate to discount it; he claims that you should reimburse him."

"I? He is mad."

I then tell Signor Sassi the whole story, I show him the letter in which the Russian had sent me the bill, I summon Vannini, who had brought me the letter and who was ready to swear that he had seen the bill of exchange. Signor Sassi tells the innkeeper from Pistoia that he is mistaken in claiming that I should reimburse him, but the innkeeper sticks to his guns; he insists on my reimbursing him, going so far as to say that I must be in league with the Russian to swindle him.

At that I run for my cane, the banker holds me, and the innkeeper decamps. Signor Sassi tells me that I am in the right, that I should pay no attention to what the innkeeper had said to me in his anger, and he leaves.

The next day I received a note from the head of the police, who is called the Auditor,[30] in which he asked me to call on him. I had no choice but to do so. As a foreigner, I must go and learn what he had to say to me. After receiving me politely enough, he tells me in so many words that I must reimburse the Pistoian innkeeper for the two hundred scudi he had given the Russian, since he would never have given them to him if he had not seen me bring him the note; I reply that, as a judge, he cannot sentence me to pay unless he believes I am an accomplice in the swindle. Instead of answering me *ad unguem* ("precisely") he repeats that I must pay.

"Signor Auditore, I will not pay."

He then rings, bowing to me, and I leave. I go to the banker Sassi and give him an account of the conversation I had just had with the Auditor, he is amazed, I beg him to go to him and make him listen to reason, he is willing, and he goes. I told him that I was to dine at the Abate Gama's.

When I told Gama the whole story he was indignant. He said he foresaw that the Auditor would stick to his guns, and that if Signor Sassi did not succeed I should inform Marshal Botta of the entire affair.

"That is unnecessary, for, after all, the Auditor cannot force me to pay."

"He can do worse."

"What?"

"Send you an order to leave."

"If he has that power I shall be surprised if he dares to abuse it to such an extent; but rather than pay I will leave. Let us go to the Marshal."

We go there at four o'clock, and we find that the banker Sassi is with him and has already informed him of the situation. Sassi, obviously mortified, tells me that the Auditor refused to listen to reason and that if I want to remain in Florence I must pay; I reply that I will leave when I receive the order, and that I will publish an account of this crying injustice. The Marshal tells me that the Auditor's decision is beyond belief and that he regrets he cannot interfere in the matter, but that I will do well to leave rather than pay.

Early the next morning a man brought me a letter from the Auditor, which I have mislaid, in which he told me that, my case being such that the usual legal steps could not be taken to make me pay, he had no choice but to order me to leave Florence within three days and Tuscany within five. His responsibility for the security of the city empowered him to give me this order. He said that I would be free to return as soon as His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke, to whom I was free to appeal, had disapproved of his decision.

I answered this *Cassian*[31] judge by only two lines, saying that his order would be executed to the letter.

After thus accepting my sentence, I put everything in order for my departure, and I spent the three days, during which I kept the Auditor's letter in my pocket, amusing myself at Teresa's, at the Chevalier Mann's, and at La Corticelli's, promising her that I would come to fetch her in person during Lent and spend a few days in Bologna with her. During the three days the Abate Gama was with me constantly. My great pleasure was the general distress which I saw in my friends and the execration bestowed on the Auditor. The day before I left, the Marchese Botta invited me to a dinner for thirty, and I spent that last day with my dear Teresa, both of us promising to maintain a regular correspondence in future. I left the next morning, and reached Rome in thirty-six hours.

It was an hour after midnight. The great city can be entered at any time; a foreigner is at once sent to the Customs Office,[32] which is always open, where his baggage is examined. The customs officials are strict only in regard to books. I had thirty or more, all hostile to religion or to the virtues it prescribes. I knew this, and I had resigned myself to giving them up without an argument, for I needed to get to bed at once. The clerk who examined my baggage politely told me to count them and leave them with him, assuring me that he would bring them all to me the next day at the inn to which I was going. I assented, and he kept his word. I gave him two zecchini.

No sooner is the examination over than I am in the Piazza di Spagna and in front of the "City of Paris";[33] such was the name of the inn which had been recommended to me. The whole household was asleep, my arrival rouses someone, I am asked to wait in a small room on the ground floor while a fire is made in the apartment I am to occupy. All the chairs were littered with dresses, petticoats, or shifts, I hear a girl in bed, covered up so that I see only her head, telling me to sit on her bed, in which another girl was asleep. I see a smiling mouth and two eyes which look like carbuncles. I praise them and ask her to let me kiss them. She answers only by putting her head under the coverlet; but I slip my hand beneath it and halfway down her figure and, finding her stark naked, I withdraw it, asking her to forgive me if I have been too inquisitive. I think I see that she is grateful for my kindness in restraining my curiosity.

"Who are you, my beautiful angel?"

"I am Teresa Roland,[34] daughter of the innkeeper, and this is my sister."

"You are seventeen?"

"Not quite."

"I can hardly wait to see you up and in my room tomorrow."

"Are there ladies in your party?"

"No."

"Too bad. We never go up to gentlemen's rooms."

"Won't you hold the coverlet a little lower? It keeps you from talking."

"It's too cold."

"Charming Teresa, your eyes scorch my soul."

She puts her head under the coverlet again, I seize the opportunity once more to advance my hand, she curls up, I take her by surprise, and I am sure that the angel is female.

It is enough. I withdraw my hand, again asking her pardon, and I see her little face reassured, smiling, red as fire, showing just a trace of anger but at the same time of consent. I was about to treat her to a discourse full of love, sentiment, and passion when a pretty maid entered and told me to go up.

"Good-by until tomorrow," I said to the charming Teresa, who answered only by turning over to resume her sleep.

After ordering dinner for one o'clock I go to bed and I sleep until noon, all my dreams being of this new Teresa. Costa tells me he has found the house in which my brother is living[35] and has left a note there. This was my brother Giovanni, who must then have been thirty years of age and who was in Rome studying under the famous Mengs,[36] who was at that time deprived of his pension because of the war, which obliged the King of Poland to live in Warsaw, the Prussians having occupied his Electorate of Saxony. It had been ten years since I had seen this brother.

I was still at table when I saw him appear before me. After embracing each other and spending an hour talking, he giving me a brief account of the little happenings of his life and I of the great ones of mine, he ended by saying that I should at once leave this inn, where it was expensive to live, and lodge where it would cost me nothing, in the house of the painter Mengs, who had an apartment which was unoccupied. As for meals, he said there was a cookshop in the same street. I reply that I have not the strength of mind to change lodgings because I have fallen in love with one of the innkeeper's daughters; and I tell him the story of the previous night. He laughs and replies that it is not love but a passing fancy, which I can still pursue, and he persuades me. I promised I would go to lodge with him the next day, and we went out together to walk about Rome a little.

I at once go to La Minerva[37] to call on Donna Cecilia,[38] and I am told that she had died two years earlier. I inquire where her daughter Donna Angelica[39] lives, I go there, I find her in, she gives me a poor reception, even to the point of saying that she scarcely remembers having met me. I leave her, and I feel no regret; she seems to me to have become ugly. I obtain the address of the doctor, the printer's son, who was to have married Baruccia,[40] and I put off visiting him until some other day, according the same treatment to my kind Father Giorgi,[41] who enjoyed the highest reputation in Rome. I also inquire for Don Gaspare Vivaldi[42] and am told that he is living in the country. My brother then took me to call on Signora Cherufini,[43] and this time I enter a house of the highest fashion. He introduces me, the lady receives me in the Roman manner, I find her charming and her daughters[44] even more so; but their swains of every description are too numerous, there is a glitter which annoys me, and the young ladies, one of whom was as pretty as a Cupid, seem too polite to everyone. I am asked an interesting question, I reply in a manner which should inspire a second, and I am not asked it. I do not care. I see that in this house I should lose something of my intrinsic value, and that the reason for it was the rank of the person who had brought me there. I hear an abate saying to another who is looking at me:

"He is Casanova's brother."

I tell him he should have said it was Casanova who was my brother, and he replies that it makes no difference. An abate says that it does make a difference, we talk, and we become good friends. It was the celebrated Abate Winckelmann,[45] who twelve years later[46] was murdered in Trieste.

Cardinal Alessandro Albani[47] arrives, Winckelmann introduces me; and His Eminence, who was nearly blind, says a great many things to me; none of them worth hearing. As soon as he learns that I am the man who had escaped from the Leads he rudely says that he is amazed that I have the effrontery to come to Rome, where at the least request from the Venetian State Inquisitors an *ordine santissimo*[48] would oblige me to leave. Nettled by such a warning, I bitterly reply that he had chosen the wrong ground on which to condemn me for effrontery, since I ran no risk in Rome.

"It would be the State Inquisitors," I said, "who could be taxed with effrontery if they dared to ask for me, since they would be unable to state for what crime they had deprived me of my freedom."

My short and tart reply silenced the Cardinal, who, ashamed to have taken me for a fool, said not another word. I never again set foot in the Casa Cherufini. We returned to the "City of Paris" with the Abate Winckelmann, whom my brother persuaded to stay to supper with us. The Abate bore a strong resemblance to the Abbé de Voisenon.[49] The next day the three of us went to the Villa Albani[50] to see the Cavaliere Mengs,[51] who was living there, being engaged in painting a ceiling.[52]

My host Roland, knowing my brother, came to pay me a visit while we were supping. I told the man, who was from Avignon and fond of good living, that I was sorry to leave his establishment to lodge with my brother because I had fallen in love with his daughter Teresa, though I had talked with her only a quarter of an hour and seen nothing of her but her head.

"You saw her in bed, I wager."

"Exactly. I want to see her out of it. With all due respect, may I ask you to have her come up?"

"Gladly."

She came up, delighted to have her father summon her. She had an elegant figure, her manner was cheerful and frank, and she could pass for pretty, though her only striking feature was her eyes. My enthusiasm diminished; but my brother, without saying a word to me, took such a fancy to her that, a year later,[53] he let himself be trapped. The young Teresa had the art to make him marry her, and two years later he took her with him to Dresden, where I saw her five years afterward with an infant. She died of consumption ten years later.

The next morning at the Villa Albani I saw for the first time the indefatigable painter Mengs, who was truly great in his art, but no less great an eccentric in society. However, I found him pleasant and glad that he could lodge me in Rome, to which he expected to return in a few days with his whole family. But what astonished me was the Villa Albani. Cardinal Alessandro had had it built, and, to satisfy his taste for antiquities, he had allowed nothing to be used in its construction except antique materials. Not only the statues and vases but all the columns and even the pedestals were Greek, and, being a great connoisseur and a shrewd Greek himself,[54] he had done it all at very little expense. Then, too, he often bought on credit, like Damasippus;[55] so no one could say that he was ruining himself. If a sovereign had wanted to erect the same building *Attalicis conditionibus* ("regardless of expense"),[56] it might have cost him fifty millions.

Not being able to have antique ceilings, he had them painted by Mengs, who was admittedly the greatest and most painstaking painter of this century and who most unfortunately died in the middle of his career,[57] without ever having trained a single good successor, for my brother never did anything to deserve the name of his pupil.

1761.

I shall have much more to say about Mengs when I am in Spain, that is, in the year 1767.

I had scarcely settled in with my brother, rented a fine carriage, and dressed my coachman and hire valet in livery before I waited on Monsignor Cornaro,[58] an Auditor of the Rota,[59] with the intention of making my way into the best society after arranging to be presented to His Holiness; but Monsignor Cornaro, fearing that, as a Venetian, he might compromise himself, introduced me to Cardinal Passionei,[60] who mentioned me to the sovereign pontiff; but before being granted this honor, here is what happened to me on my second visit to this most unusual Cardinal, an enemy of the Jesuits, a man of intelligence, and graced with a rare knowledge of literature.

CHAPTER IX

Cardinal Passionei. The Pope. Mariuccia. I arrive in Naples.

HE RECEIVED me in a great room in which he was busily writing; a minute later he put down his pen. He could not give me permission to sit, for there were no chairs. After saying that he would inform the Holy Father that he had seen me, he added that Monsignor Cornaro might have thought of someone better, since the Pope did not like him.[1]

"He chose to set esteem above liking."

"I do not know if he esteems me; but I know that he knows I do not esteem him. I liked and esteemed him as a cardinal, but since he has become Pope he has shown himself too much the *coglione*."[2]

"The Sacred College should have elected Your Eminence."

"Certainly not, for, intolerant as I am toward all that I consider wrong, I should perhaps have made too clean a sweep, and God knows what would have happened. The only member of the conclave with the qualities to be elected Pope was Cardinal Tamburini.[3] But come tomorrow, for I hear people arriving."

How my soul rejoiced when I heard none other than His Eminence call the Pope a *coglione* (fool) and commend Tamburini! I immediately noted it down in my records. But who may this Tamburini be? After dinner I put the question to Winckelmann, for when one would learn one should seek out a philosopher.

"Tamburini," he said, "is deserving of respect for his virtues, his character, his far-seeing intelligence, and his firmness. He has never concealed what he thinks of the Jesuits. He despises them, and that is why Passionei commends him. I, too, believe that he would be a great Pope."

But here is what I heard in Rome nine years later at the Prince of Santa Croce's[4] from a tool of the Jesuits, who were then at their last gasp:[5] The Benedictine Cardinal Tamburini was impious; on his deathbed he demanded the viaticum without first making his confession. I hear that, and I say nothing. The next day I asked someone who should know the truth of the matter and who could have no reason to hide it. He said that the Cardinal had himself celebrated mass three days earlier, and so it must be concluded that if he did not ask for a confessor it was because he would have had nothing to tell him.

Woe unto those who love truth and who do not know enough to seek it at its source. I hope, my dear reader, that you will not find it hard to forgive me my digressions.

So the next day I go to see the Cardinal, and he at once puts down his pen, saying that I had done well by coming early to tell him the story of my escape, of which he had heard wonders.

"Willingly, Your Most Excellent Eminence, but it is a long story."

"So be it. I have heard that you tell it well."

"Shall I sit on the floor?"

"Oh no, your coat is too handsome."

He rings. He tells the gentleman who enters to have a seat brought, and a lackey brings me a stool. A seat without arms or a back makes me angry, I tell my story badly, and in a quarter of an hour it is all over.

"I write better than you speak," he said, "and if you do not believe me read this at your leisure, it is a funeral eulogy on Prince Eugene;[6] I make you a present of it. You may go to kiss the Holy Father's foot tomorrow at ten o'clock."

Back at the house and thinking of the odd character of this Cardinal, a man of intelligence yet haughty, vain, and talkative, I decide to make him a handsome present. It was the *Pandectarum Liber unicus*,[7] which my Swiss acquaintance M. F.[8] had given me at Bern and for which I had no use; it was a folio, well bound and in a good state of preservation. It was a gift which, as the chief Librarian of the Vatican, he should prize, the more so since he had a fine library of his own[9] under the care of my friend Winckelmann. So I write His Eminence a short letter in Latin, and another to Winckelmann, who was to present the code to him as an offering from me. I thought this rare book was more than a fair exchange for his funeral oration, and I hoped that on another occasion he would not leave me to ask for a stool. I sent it to the Abate at once by Costa.

The next morning at the appointed hour I go to Monte Cavallo.[10] I needed to be neither introduced nor announced to the Holy Father, for any Christian is at liberty to appear before him once he sees the door open; besides, he had known me in Padua when he occupied the episcopal throne there;[11] nevertheless, I had preferred to have my visit arranged beforehand.

I had scarcely entered and kissed the holy cross depicted on his holy slipper before, laying one hand on my left shoulder, he said that he remembered the time I left his reception at Padua as soon as he began chanting the Rosary.

"I have, Most Holy Father, much greater sins to reproach myself with; so I have come to prostrate myself at your feet to receive absolution for them."

He then gave me his blessing with an ample gesture and asked me what favor I wished to ask of him.

"Your Holiness's intercession, so that I can freely return to Venice."

"We will speak to the Ambassador and give you our answer afterward. Do you often go to see Cardinal Passionei?"

"I have been there three times; he gave me his funeral oration on Prince Eugene, and to show him my gratitude I have sent him the *Pandects* as a present."

"Has he received it?"

"I believe so."

"If he has, he will send Winckelmann to pay you for it."

"That would be to treat me like a bookseller. I will not accept any payment."

"In that case he will send you back the code, we are certain. That is his habit."

"If His Eminence sends me back the code I will send him back the funeral oration."

At that the Pope laughed so hard that he was seized by a fit of coughing, and, after spitting, he laughed again.

"We shall be pleased to know the end of this incident, without the world's being informed of our harmless curiosity."

After these words a benediction given with an even more ample gesture informed me that my audience was ended.

As I left, an elderly Abate approached me, asking me in surprised tones if I was the Casanova who had escaped from the Leads.

"I am he."

"And you do not remember me? I am Momolo,[12] gondolier in those days for the Ca' Rezzonico." [13]

"Then you have become a priest?"

"Certainly not, but here we all dress as priests. I am first *scopatore*[14] (sweeper) to the Most Holy Father."

"I heartily congratulate you, and I beg you to excuse me if it makes me laugh."

"Laugh away, for my wife and my daughters laugh too every time they see me dressed as a priest. Come to see us."

"Where do you live?"

"Behind Trinità dei Monti.[15] Here is my address."

"You shall see me this evening."

I returned to the house, delighting in the thought that I was to spend the evening with the family of a Venetian gondolier. Dining with my brother, I told him nothing of my conversation with the Pope, but I invited him to accompany me on my visit to the gondolier turned *scopatore santissimo.*

But after dinner in comes the Abate Winckelmann, on purpose to tell me that I was high in the good graces of his Cardinal; that the code I had sent him was rare and valuable and in better condition than the one in the Vatican.[16]

"I have come," he said, "to pay you for it."

"I wrote His Eminence that I was making him a present of it."

"He does not accept presents of books, for he wants it for his own library and being Librarian of the Vatican he fears slander."

"That is understandable, but the code cost me nothing, so I do not wish to sell it. Tell the Cardinal that I will be honored if he will accept it as a present."

"He will send it back to you."

"And I will send him back his funeral oration. I will not take presents from someone who refuses to accept them."

And so it was: On the next day the Cardinal sent me back my book, and within the hour I sent him back his funeral oration, writing him that I had found it a masterpiece. My brother emphatically pronounced me wrong, but I paid no attention. Toward nightfall we went to the house of the Abate Momolo, who was expecting me and who had announced me to his family as a prodigy.

After introducing my brother to him, I examine all the members of the family one by one: his wife, four daughters, the eldest of whom was twenty-four, and two little boys; they were all ugly. I was there; it was for me to stay there and try to enjoy myself. In addition, the place smelled of poverty, for the *scopatore* had to live on two hundred scudi a year. For all that, the worthy man no sooner saw me seated than he told me he wanted to give me supper, though it would be only a polenta[17] and pork chops.

"Will you permit me to send to my house for six bottles of Orvieto[18] wine?"

"It is for you to say."

I immediately wrote Costa a note ordering him to come with the six bottles and a ham. A half hour later he arrived with my hire valet, who was carrying the basket, and all the girls exclaimed:

"What a handsome young man!"

I see Costa delighted, I ask the Abate Momolo if he wants to invite him for supper, all the girls say yes, and I tell him to stay. Delighted to be so honored, Costa immediately goes to the kitchen to help Momolo's wife make the polenta.

A cloth is spread on a large table, and a half hour later a polenta big enough to feed twelve hungry people is brought in and placed on it, followed by a large casserole filled with pork chops.

There is a knock at the street door; the boy says it is Signora Maria and her mother. I see all the girls make wry faces at the news.

"Who sent for them?" asks one.

"What do they want here?" asks another.

"They are hungry," says the father; "they shall share the food which Providence sends us."

I see the two starvelings come in: a very pretty girl of modest bearing and a sad-looking mother who seemed ashamed of her poverty. The girl at once apologizes, she says she would not have come if she had known that strangers were present. Momolo alone answers her greeting, saying that she has done well to come, and he places a chair for her between my brother and myself. I then look at her closely, and I find the poor girl a perfect beauty.

The family fall to eating, no more is said. The polenta is excellent, the pork delicious, the ham perfect; in less than an hour not a sign remains that anything to eat had ever been on the table; but the Orvieto wine continues to keep the company in high spirits. The conversation turns to the lottery,[19] which was to be drawn on the next day but one, and all the girls report the numbers on which they had risked three soldi. I tell them that if I could be sure of only one number I should be satisfied; young Mariuccia, who was on my right, said that if one number was enough for me she could give it to me. I laugh at her offer; but she does not laugh, she tells me in all seriousness that she is sure of twenty-seven. I ask the Abate Momolo if one can still stake, and he replies that the lottery does not close until midnight and that he would himself go and stake; I thereupon give him forty scudi in notes of hand and I tell him to put twenty scudi unconditionally on twenty-seven, of which I made a present to the five girls at the table, and twenty scudi on twenty-seven coming out fifth[20] for myself. He goes, and comes back a quarter of an hour later with the two tickets. Mariuccia thanks me and says she is sure she will win; but that she has doubts about my ticket, for it was not certain that her number would come out fifth.

"But I am certain of it because you are the fifth girl I have seen in the house."

My explanation made everybody laugh. Momolo's wife said I would have done better to give the forty scudi to the poor, and her husband told her to be still, for she had no idea how clever I was. My brother laughs, but he, too, tells me I have done a foolish thing. I reply that I have taken a chance. I adroitly press the modest Mariuccia's hand, she presses mine with all her strength, and I understood all that she meant. I left them about midnight, asking Momolo to repeat the supper on the next evening but one, so that we could rejoice over our winnings in the lottery.

On the way home my brother said that if I had not become rich as Croesus I must be a fool; but he agreed with me that Mariuccia was as beautiful as an angel.

The next day Mengs came to Rome, and I supped with him and his family. He had an ugly though goodhearted sister[21] who was talented; she had been in love with my brother, who, when she spoke to him, did not look her in the face. She painted portraits in miniature which were excellent likenesses, and I believe she is still living in Rome with her husband Maroni.[22] She said to me one day that my brother would not treat her so scornfully if he were not the most ungrateful of men.

Mengs's wife[23] was pretty, virtuous, very scrupulous in performing all the duties of a wife and mother, and very submissive to her husband, whom she could not have loved because he was not lovable. He was stubborn and cruel, and always got up from the table drunk; but when he dined out he had the good sense to drink only water. His wife had the patience to serve as his model for all the nudes he had occasion to paint. She told me one day that her confessor had ordered her to obey her husband in this respect without protest, for otherwise he would have taken another model, whom he would have enjoyed before painting her and so would have sinned.

After supper everyone was tipsy. Winckelmann turned somersaults on the floor with Mengs's children, male and female, who adored him. The learned man liked to frolic with the young in the manner of Anacreon and Horace: *Mille puellarum, puerorum mille furores* ("Passions for a thousand girls, a thousand boys").[24] What happened to me one day at his house is worth recording.

Early that morning I go without knocking into a small room in which he was usually alone copying out some antique inscription, and I see him hastily leave a boy, at the same time quickly setting his breeches to rights. I pretend to have seen nothing, immersed in admiring an Egyptian idol which was behind the door of the room. The Bathyllus,[25] who was indeed very pretty, leaves; Winckelmann comes to me laughing and says that, after the little I had seen he did not think he could keep me from deducing the rest, but that he owed himself a kind of justification, which he begged me to hear.

"Know," he said, "that not only am I not a pederast, but that all my life long I have declared it inconceivable that the inclination could have exercised such an attraction on the human race. If I said this after what you have just seen, you would pronounce me a hypocrite. But here is the truth of the matter. In the long course of my studies I first came to admire, then to idolize the ancients, who, as you know, were almost all of them b[uggers] [26] without concealing the fact, while a number of them even immortalized the charming objects of their love by their poems and even by magnificent monuments. Indeed, they went so far as to cite their inclination as testimony to their morality—for example, Horace, who, to prove to Augustus and Maecenas that he was beyond the reach of calumny, defied his enemies to prove to him that he had ever incurred the guilt of adultery.[27]

"In the light of this obvious truth, I scrutinized myself, and I felt a kind of disdain and even of shame because in this respect I did not in the least resemble my heroes. At considerable cost to my self-esteem, I felt that I was in a way contemptible, and, unable to convict myself of stupidity merely by cold theory, I decided to seek the light of practice, hoping that by analyzing the thing my mind would gain the illumination it needed in order to distinguish the true from the false. Having so resolved, I have been applying myself to the matter for the past three or four years, choosing the prettiest Smerdiases[28] in Rome; but all to no avail: when I set to work, *non arrivo* ('I get nowhere'). To my dismay I always find that a woman is preferable in every respect. But, quite aside from my seeing nothing wrong in that, I am afraid of acquiring a bad reputation, for what would people say in Rome, or anywhere else where I am known, if it could be said of me that I have a mistress?"

The next day I went to pay my respects to the Pope.

Seeing the Abate Momolo in the first antechamber, I begged him to bestow his best attention on the evening's polenta, then I was shown into the presence of the Holy Father, who at once said to me:

"*The Venetian Ambassador*[29] *has told us that, if you desire to return to your country, you must present yourself before the Secretary of the Tribunal.*"[30]

"I am ready to do so, if Your Holiness will give me a letter of recommendation in your own hand. Without such a letter, I will never expose myself to the risk of being shut up in a place from which the invisible hand of God released me by a series of miracles."

"You are wearing a very handsome coat, which you certainly did not put on to offer prayers to God."

"True, most Holy Father, but I did not put it on to go to a ball either."

"We know the whole story of the returned presents. Admit that you gratified your pride."

"But at the same time humbling an even greater pride."

Seeing the Pope smile, I went down on one knee and begged him to grant me his kind permission to present my code of the *Pandects* to the Vatican Library; by way of answer I received only a benediction, which in Papal language signifies: "Rise, your prayer is granted."

"We will send you," he said, "a token of our *singular affection,* without your having to pay the customary registration fee."

A second benediction told me to leave. I was curious to see the token of his "singular affection" which the Pope had promised me.

I at once sent my code to the library by Costa, then I dined with Mengs. Someone brings the five numbers drawn in the lottery, and my brother looks at me. I did not remember that I had played.

"Twenty-seven," he said, "came out fifth."

"So much the better, we will be gay."

My brother tells the whole story to Mengs, who replies:

"Follies sometimes turn out luckily; but they are follies none the less."

I told him that I would go at once to Naples to enjoy the fifteen hundred Roman scudi[31] which Fortune had sent me; and the Abate Alfani[32] says that he will come with me as my secretary. I make him promise to do so.

I invited Winckelmann to come and eat polenta at the Abate Momolo's, leaving it to my brother to show him the way there, then I went to see my banker, the Marchese Belloni,[33] to settle my accounts and obtain from him a letter of credit on a banker in Naples. I commanded nearly two hundred thousand francs, I had at least ten thousand scudi in jewels, and thirty thousand florins at Amsterdam.

Toward nightfall I go to Momolo's, where I find Winckelmann and my brother; but instead of finding the family joyous, they seem to me sad. Momolo said his daughters were angry because I had not staked on the number coming out fifth for them as I had for myself. They had twenty-seven scudi each[34] and they were gloomy, whereas two days earlier they had not had a copper and they were gay. More and more clearly I perceive that the true source of gaiety is in the mind which is free from cares.

Costa puts on the table a basket in which there are ten cornucopias of sweetmeats. I say that I will distribute them when everyone is at the table. Momolo's second daughter tells me that Mariuccia is not coming, but that they will send her two cornucopias.

"Why isn't she coming?"

"They had a quarrel yesterday," Momolo answered, "and Mariuccia, who is really in the right, left saying that she would not come again."

"You ungrateful creatures!" I said to them, though not harshly. "Consider that day before yesterday she brought you good luck. It was she who gave me the twenty-seven. In short, find a way to bring her here, or I will leave and take the cornucopias with me."

Momolo said that it would serve them right.

The mortified girls beg their father to go and persuade her to come, but he replies that they must go themselves, and in the end they decide to go with Costa; two would be enough. Mariuccia lived next door.

A half hour later I see them come back triumphant and Costa proud that his mediation had succeeded in reconciling the girls. At that I distributed my cornucopias.

The polenta came with the pork chops; but after them the Abate Momolo, whose acquaintance with me had brought two hundred scudi[35] into his house in one day, gave us choice dishes and excellent wines. Mariuccia's manner set me on fire. Since I could only press her hand, she could reply only by pressing mine in return; but I needed no clearer language to be certain that she loved me. Going down the stairs with her, I asked if I could not talk with her in some church; she replied that I should go the next morning at eight o'clock to Trinità dei Monti.

At seventeen or eighteen years of age, Mariuccia was tall, had a very good carriage, and seemed carved by the chisel of Praxiteles.[36] She was fair, but her fairness was not that of a blonde, which with its unrelieved brilliance almost suggests that she has no blood in her veins. Mariuccia's fairness was so alive that it offered the eyes a rosy bloom which no painter could ever have caught. Her black eyes, very large and prominent, and always in motion, had a dew on their surface which seemed a coating of the finest enamel. This imperceptible dew, which the air very easily dissipated, was continually restored by the rapid blinking of her lids. Her hair was gathered into four heavy braids, which joined at her neck to form a beautiful boss, yet not so tightly as to restrain a quantity of little curls which everywhere escaped from it, more especially to ornament her high and broad forehead with a random pattern as artless as it was unstudied. Living roses animated her cheeks, and sweet laughter dwelt on her beautiful mouth and her fiery lips, which, neither quite meeting nor quite parted, showed only the extremities of two perfectly even rows of teeth. Her hands, on which neither muscles nor veins were visible, appeared long in proportion to their breadth. This Roman beauty had not yet been seen by a connoisseur; it was to me that chance presented her in a blind alley where she lived in the darkness of poverty.

I did not fail to be at the church she had named at eight o'clock the next morning. As soon as she was sure I had seen her she went out, and I followed her. She stopped at a great ruined building and sat down on the highest steps of a long stairway, saying that no one would think of climbing it and so I could talk to her freely.

"Charming Mariuccia," I said, sitting down beside her, "you have made me fall madly in love with you; tell me what I can do for you; for, hoping to be granted your favors, my chief thought must be to deserve them."

"Make me happy, and I shall not find it hard to surrender to your love in return for your bounty, for I love you too."

"Then what can I do to make you happy?"

"Free me from the poverty which overwhelms me and from the constraint to which I am subjected by living with my mother, who means well but who, being devout to the point of superstition, damns my soul by dint of trying to assure my salvation. She even criticizes my cleanliness because it might make me pleasing to men. If you had given me as charity the money you enabled me to win in the lottery, she would have made me refuse it because you might have given it to me with evil intentions. She lets me go to mass alone only because our confessor assured her that she might let me do so; but I should never dare to stay out a minute longer, except on feast days, when I may stay at church two or three hours performing my devotions. So we can see each other nowhere but here. But this is what is needed if you want to make me happy and have the means to do it: a young, handsome, well-behaved young man, an excellent wigmaker, saw me at the *scopatore*'s two weeks ago; the next day he waited for me at the church door and gave me a letter. In it he declares his love, and he says that if I can bring him a dowry of four hundred scudi he will marry me, setting up shop as a wigmaker and buying the necessary household furnishings. I replied that I was poor and that I had only a hundred scudi, in the form of charity vouchers, which were in the hands of my confessor. By now I have a hundred more, for if I married my mother would give me the fifty of her winnings.[37] Hence you can ensure my happiness by obtaining another two hundred scudi in charity vouchers and taking them to my confessor, who is a saintly old man who loves me and would never tell anyone that he had them from you."

"I do not need to go looking for charity vouchers; I will take your confessor two hundred scudi today, and you shall see to the rest. Give me his name. I will tell you the outcome tomorrow morning, but not here, for the cold and the wind are killing me. Leave it to me to find a room where we shall be safe and at our ease and where no one can ever guess that we have spent an hour. You shall see me at the church, and you shall follow me."

Mariuccia gave me the old Minimite's name and promised to follow me the next morning. With gratitude depicted on her features, she received all the tokens of affection which she could receive and I give in the tormenting place where we were, but they amounted to so little that I left her on the stroke of nine o'clock much more in love with her than before and very impatient to have her in my arms the next day in a room which I must set about procuring. It was the first thing I did.

I leave the ruined palazzo, and, instead of going down toward the Piazza di Spagna, I retrace my steps and enter a narrow, dirty street in which there are a few humble houses. I see a woman coming out of one of them to ask me if I am looking for somebody.

"I am looking," I reply, "for a room to rent."

"There is none here, but you will find any number on the Piazza."

"That I know; but I want it here, not to save expense but to be sure I can spend an hour in the morning in it with someone in whom I am interested. I will pay whatever price is asked."

"I understand, and I would oblige you myself if I had two rooms; but my neighbor has one on the ground floor, and I can go and speak to her if you will wait a moment. You may go in."

I enter a hovel, where I see poverty and two little boys writing out their lessons. Five or six minutes later the woman comes back and tells me to accompany her; I go, leaving ten or twelve paoli[38] on the table, from which she takes them, kissing my hand. She shows me into the next house, where I find an empty room on the ground floor, and another woman who says she will let me have the room cheap if I will pay her three months in advance, that is, three Roman scudi, and will agree to supply all the furniture I may need.

"I will pay you the three scudi on the spot; but I cannot undertake to supply the furniture. See to it yourself, and let me have the room all furnished at three o'clock today. I will pay you twelve scudi."

"Twelve scudi? What furniture do you want?"

"A bed, a small table, four chairs, and a burning brazier of charcoal, for it is deathly cold here. I will come only occasionally, early in the morning, and I will always leave before noon."

"In that case, come at three o'clock and you will find my bed and everything else you have asked for."

I give her the three scudi, I promise to come back at three o'clock and I leave. So that is done.

I go at once to Trinità dei Monti, I ask for the father confessor, and I am shown to his room. I see a French monk who appears to be sixty years of age and whose fine, handsome countenance inspires confidence.

"Reverend Father, at the house of the Abate Momolo, *scopatore santissimo,* I saw a girl named Maria, whose father, XX, lives at Tivoli, and her mother with the girl herself. I fell in love with her, and I found an opportunity to tell her so and to offer her money to seduce her; she replied that instead of making her criminal offers I ought to use my influence to obtain her some charity vouchers which would enable her to marry a suitor who had presented himself and who would make her happy. Her reprimand touched me, but it did not cure me of my criminal passion. I talked to her a second time, and I told her that I wanted to give her two hundred scudi for nothing and that I would take them to her mother. She replied that I would cause her ruin, for she would believe that the money was payment for a crime and would refuse to accept it. She said it was to you, her confessor, that I should take it, and at the same time speak to you on her behalf so that the marriage she has in view can take place. So here is the money, which I bring you, wishing to have nothing further to do with the matter. I shall leave day after tomorrow for Naples, and I hope that on my return I shall find her married."

He took the hundred zecchini[39] and gave me a receipt; then he said that, by showing an interest in Mariuccia, I became the protector of an innocent dove, that she had been confessing to him for five years, and that he often ordered her to go to communion without hearing her confession because he knew her well enough to be certain that she was incapable of committing a mortal sin. He added that her mother was a saint, he promised me that he would see the marriage concluded after he had inquired into the character of the young man to whom she wished to give herself, and he assured me that no one should ever know from whom she had received this assistance.

After having thus arranged the whole matter to my satisfaction, I went to dine with Mengs and was easily persuaded to go to the opera at the Teatro Aliberti[40] with his whole family. But I did not fail to go first to the little room I had rented, to see if it was furnished. I found everything in it which I had ordered, I paid twelve scudi, and received the key to the room from the mistress of the house. She assured me that I would find it heated every day at seven o'clock in the morning.

My impatience to see the next day arrive made me find the whole opera bad and kept me awake the whole night.

The next morning even before the appointed hour I go to Trinità dei Monti; Mariuccia arrives a quarter of an hour later, I see her, I leave, she follows me at a distance, and I enter the house and open the door of my room, which I find heated. A moment later I see Mariuccia, apprehensive and uncertain, I lock the door, and, clasping her in my arms, I restore all her courage. I tell her about my visit to her confessor, and I end by showing her the receipt he had made out for the two hundred scudi and by assuring her that he would himself take steps to arrange her marriage. I urge her to make me happy, telling her that the time is passing quickly, she replies that we have almost three hours before us, for she has told her mother that she would perform her devotions to thank God for the hundred scudi they had won[41] in the lottery.

Full of my happiness and reveling beforehand in the pleasures in which I was to immerse my senses, I clasp Mariuccia in my arms, I cover her face with fiery kisses, and, undressing her little by little, I lay all her charms bare before me, and my soul rejoices to meet not the slightest resistance. Mariuccia does not anticipate my desires, but, pliable by nature, she abandons herself to my appetite, never daring to take her eyes from mine for fear that they will stray to some place which will give them too easy a triumph over the expiring remnants of her modesty.

But now she is in the bed, motionless and ready to succumb. It is the moment when, whether more or less fortunate than she in having no shame to conquer, I must make haste. The sacrifice was perfect, and I had no cause to doubt the purity of my victim. Other symptoms, far dearer to a soul in love, made mine certain that Mariuccia had never loved until that moment. But she did more. Pleasure makes pain precious. She assured me she had felt none, and at the second assault I saw her completely possessed by Venus.

The clock of Trinità dei Monti pealed the imperious strokes of ten o'clock into our ears. We quickly dressed. Having arranged to leave for Naples the next morning, I assured Mariuccia that only the hope of clasping her in my arms again before her wedding day would make me hasten my return to Rome. I promised to take her confessor another hundred scudi that day, which would make it possible for her to use the hundred she had won[42] in the lottery on clothes. I told her that I would spend the evening at the Abate Momolo's and should be delighted to see her there; but that we must behave in a manner calculated to dissipate whatever suspicions of an understanding between us might have arisen.

As she departed, she assured me that she knew she had surrendered to love far more than to interest. Leaving last, I informed the mistress of the house that I would not reappear there for ten or twelve days; and I went at once to the Minimite monastery to give my angel's kindly confessor the hundred scudi I had promised her.

When I told the old monk that I was giving them to him so that Mariuccia could use the hundred she had won in the lottery for buying dresses and making shifts, he assured me that he would himself go to her house immediately after dinner both to persuade her mother to consent to it and to speak privately with her daughter in order to obtain the address of the youth who wanted to marry her. When I returned from Naples I learned that he had punctually fulfilled his undertaking.

At two o'clock in the afternoon a *cameriere* of His Holiness sent in word that he had come to see the Cavaliere Mengs. We were all at table. He at once asked him if I was staying in his house, and Mengs introduced me. He immediately delivered to me, on his Most Holy Master's behalf, the cross of the Order of the Golden Spur,[43] together with a diploma sealed with the Papal seal and declaring me, as a Doctor of Civil and Canon Law, an Apostolic Prothonotary *extra urbem.*[44] Expressing my gratitude for this high honor, I assured the personage that I would go the next day to thank my new sovereign and ask his blessing. Mengs, as my confrère, immediately embraced me; but I had been granted the privilege of expending nothing. The Cavaliere Mengs had had to pay twenty-five scudi to have his diploma drawn up. They say at Rome that *sine effusione sanguinis non fit remissio* ("without shedding of blood is no remission").[45] Everything costs money, and with money one can obtain everything, in the Holy City.

I immediately hung the cross around my neck on a broad poppy-red ribbon.[46] This is the color of the order of the gilded soldiers of San Giovanni Laterano,[47] "companions of the palace," in Latin *comites palatini,* which, translated once again, gives "counts palatine." Poor Cahusac,[48] author of the opera *Zoroastre,* went mad in Paris about this time when the Papal Nuncio made him a count palatine in the same way. As for me, I did not go mad, but I was so delighted with the decoration that I at once asked Winckelmann if I could have my cross set with diamonds and rubies; he said I was at liberty to do so, and that he knew where I could buy one already set, which I could have for a thousand scudi and which had cost more. I bought it the next morning as soon as I saw it, to make a show with it in Naples. I never dared to wear it in Rome. When I appeared before the Holy Father to thank him I put the cross in my buttonhole in due observance of modesty. I gave up wearing the cross five years later in Warsaw when the Palatine of Russia, Prince Czartoryski,[49] asked me what I was doing with it.

"*It's a drug on the market,*" he said, "*only charlatans wear it any more.*"

But it is the present which the Popes give to Ambassadors, even though they know that these give it to their valets; it is very easy to pretend not to know something and to go quietly on in the same old way.

That evening Momolo gave a supper for me to celebrate my installation; but I made it up to him by opening a bank at faro. I was dexterous enough to lose forty scudi, sharing them out equally among the whole family and showing no partiality to Mariuccia. She found an opportunity to tell me that her confessor had come to her house, that she had given him all the necessary information concerning the young wigmaker, and that he had persuaded her mother to spend the hundred scudi on clothes for her.

Having observed that the Abate Momolo's second daughter was in love with Costa, I told her that I would be off to Naples the next morning but that I was leaving him for her, hoping on my return to find a marriage contract between them, that it would meet with my approval, and that I would even be glad to defray the expense of the wedding. The fact is that Costa did not marry the girl at that time, for fear I was marrying her off to him in order to have the use of her. He was a consummate fool. He proceeded to marry her the next year, after robbing me. We will speak of him again when the time comes.

The next morning, after breakfasting well and fondly embracing my brother, I set off in my fine carriage with the Abate Alfani, preceded by Leduc on horseback. I reached Naples at a time when the whole city was in a state of alarm because the fatal volcano was threatening to erupt.[50] At the last post station the post master showed me the will left by his father, who had died after the eruption of 1754: he said that the eruption by which God intended utterly to destroy the sinful city of Naples would take place in the winter of 1761; hence he advised me to go back to Rome. Alfani declared there was no doubt about it, we must obey the voice of God. The event was foretold, hence it would infallibly happen. Thus it is that certain people reason.

CHAPTER X

My short but enjoyable stay in Naples. The Duke of Matalona, my daughter, Donna Lucrezia. My departure.

IT IS impossible either to express or to conceive how greatly my soul rejoiced when I found myself once more in Naples, where eighteen years earlier I had made my fortune on my return from Martorano.[1] I had gone there only to pay the Duke of Matalona the visit which I had promised him when he was in Paris; but before waiting on that nobleman I wanted to inquire after all my old friends.

So I went out early on foot, first to make myself known to the banker who was Belloni's correspondent. After accepting my letter of credit he gave me the number of bank notes I asked for, assuring me that no one should know anything of our dealings.

Leaving his place of business, I went to the house in which Don Antonio Casanova[2] had lived. I was told that he was living on an estate he had bought near Salerno, and of which he bore the name with the title of Marchese. I go and inquire after Palo;[3] he had died and his son was living at Santa Lucia with a wife and children. I intended to go to see him, but I never found the time for it. I next ask where the advocate Castelli[4] is living; he was the husband of my dear Donna Lucrezia, with whom I had been so much in love at Rome; I could scarcely wait to see her, and I was in ecstasy at the thought of the pleasure we should feel when we met again. I am told that he has long been dead and that his widow lives twenty miles from Naples. I promise myself that I will visit her. I knew that Don Lelio Caraffa[5] was still alive and resided in the Palazzo Matalona.[6]

So I go to dine, then I dress and take a hackney carriage to the Palazzo Matalona. The Duke was still at table; but no matter, I am announced; he comes out to see who it is, he recognizes me, he gives a cry, he embraces me, he at once does me the honor to address me in the second person singular, he introduces me to his wife, who was a daughter of the Duke of Bovino,[7] and to all the very numerous company. I tell him that I have come to Naples only to pay him the visit I had promised him in Paris.

"Then it is only right that I should put you up; let someone go at once to the inn at which Casanova *s'est débarqué* ['disembarked'] and bring all his luggage here and, if he has a carriage, put it in my stable."

I accept.

A fine-looking man who was at the table no sooner heard the name Casanova than he said to me gaily:

"If you bear my name, you must be a bastard of my father's."

"Not of your father's," I replied, "but of your mother's."

My riposte is applauded, the man comes and embraces me, and the misunderstanding is explained. Instead of hearing "Casanova," he had heard "Casalnuovo," [8] and the gentleman was none other than the Duke of that fief.

"You know," the Duke of Matalona said to me, "that I have a son."[9]

"I was told so, and I found it hard to believe; but now I am no longer surprised. I see a princess who could not fail to perform the miracle."

The Duchess blushes, without vouchsafing me a look, but the company clap their hands, for it was well known that before his marriage the Duke of Matalona was supposed to be impotent. His son is summoned, I say that he looks like him; a cheerful monk who was seated beside the Duchess says he does not, and she coldly gives him a slap in the face, which he receives with a laugh.

In less than half an hour my banter endeared me to the entire company with the marked exception of the Duchess, who maintained a deliberate haughtiness which took the ground from under my feet. She was beautiful, but lofty as the clouds, deaf and mute in season and out of season, and always in control of her eyes. I labored for two days to persuade her to converse with me, and finally, despairing of success, I left her to her pride.

The Duke showed me to my apartment and, seeing my Spaniard, asked me where my secretary was, and when I said he was the Abate Alfani, who had assumed the office so that he could stay in Naples incognito, he replied that he had been well advised to do so, for he had cheated a great many people with his pretended antiquities.[10]

He took me to see his fine stable, where there were superb horses, then his picture gallery, then his library, and finally his private apartment and his choice books, which were all forbidden. After that he made me swear not to breathe a word of what he was going to read me. It was a scathing satire[11] on the whole court, of which I understood nothing. I never kept a secret more faithfully.

"You shall come with me," he said, "to the Teatro San Carlo,[12] where I will introduce you to the most beautiful ladies in Naples, and to which you may go whenever you wish; when you want to be completely free you shall go to my box on the third tier, which is always open to my friends. In that way the opera will cost you nothing. I will also introduce you at my mistress's box, to which you may go when you please."

"What, my dear Duke! You have a mistress?"

"Yes, for form's sake, for I love only my wife; nevertheless people believe I am in love with her and am even jealous because I never introduce anyone to her and do not allow her to receive visitors."

"And the Duchess, young and charming as she is—does not object to your having a mistress?"

"My wife cannot be jealous of her, because she knows that I am impotent with all the women on earth except with her."

"I take it you are not joking, but I find it hard to believe. Can a man have a mistress he does not love?"

"But I do love her, for she is divinely intelligent and she amuses me; but she does not interest me physically."

"That is possible; I suppose she is ugly."

"Ugly? You will see her this evening. She is pretty and only seventeen years old, she speaks French, her mind is unprejudiced, and she is well-bred."

At the hour for the opera he takes me to the great theater, he introduces me to several ladies, all of them ugly. In the great middle box I saw the very young King,[13] surrounded by many members of the nobility dressed richly but without taste. The whole parterre and all the boxes were full, the latter all covered with mirrors and illuminated inside and out because of an anniversary.[14] The effect was most striking.

He takes me to his private box on the third tier and introduces me to his friends; they were the most brilliant minds in Naples. I laughed to myself at those who do not believe that the intelligence of a nation is far more dependent on its climate than on education.[15] Such critics should be sent to Naples. What intelligence! Boerhaave,[16] the great Boerhaave, if he had been in Naples, would have known the nature of sulphur far better from its effects on plants, and even more clearly from its effects on animals. Nowhere but in that country is water the only remedy needed to cure any number of diseases which, in our country, would be deadly without the art of pharmacy.

The Duke, who had vanished, returns and takes me to the box in which his mistress was seated in company with a respectable-looking woman. As he enters he says:

"*Leonilda mia, ti presento il cavalier Don Giacomo Casanova veneziano amico mio*" ("My Leonilda, I beg to introduce my friend the Chevalier Don Giacomo Casanova, of Venice").

She receives me affably and modestly, and she renounces the pleasure of listening to the music for that of talking with me. When a girl is pretty it takes but a moment to find her so; if her charms must be examined to elicit a favorable judgment they become dubious. Donna Leonilda was striking. I smiled, glancing at the Duke, who had told me that he loved her as a father loves his daughter and that he kept her only for fashion's sake; he understands me, and he says I must believe what he had told me. I reply that it is incredible, and with a sly smile she says that *anything that is possible is credible.*

"I admit that," I said, "but one is free to believe or not believe when a thing seems unlikely."

"Exactly; but I think believing is quicker and easier. You arrived in Naples yesterday, it is incredible, yet it is true."

"What is incredible about it?"

"Can anyone believe that a stranger would come to Naples at a time when everyone there is in terror?"

"And indeed I felt afraid until this moment, but now I have no fear at all. If you are in Naples St. Januarius[17] cannot but protect it. You laugh?"

"I am laughing at an amusing idea. If I had a suitor with a face like St. Januarius's he would reap no favors."

"Is the saint so very ugly?"

"You can decide that for yourself when you see his statue."

The bantering tone which she had taken was one which was but a step from friendship and frankness. The charms of the mind are superior to the spell of beauty. I bring up the subject of love, and she discourses on it in masterly fashion.

"If love," she says, "is not followed by possession of the loved object it can only be a torment, and if possession is forbidden one must not allow oneself to love."

"I agree, and the more so because even the enjoyment of a beautiful object is not a true pleasure if it has not been preceded by love."

"And if love has preceded it, it accompanies it—of that there is no doubt. But one may doubt if love follows it."

"That is true, for possession is often the death of love."

"And if it is not dead in both the persons who love each other, that is murder, for the one of them in whom love survives is left unhappy."

"That is indubitable, Madame,[18] and from this argument, based on the most irrefutable dialectic, I must infer that you condemn the senses to perpetual starvation. That is cruel."

"God preserve me from such Platonism. I condemn love without enjoyment as severely as I do enjoyment without love. I leave you to draw the inference."

"Love and enjoy, enjoy and love, turn and turn about."

"Exactly."

My conclusion set her laughing, and the Duke kissed her hand. The duenna, who did not understand a word of French, listened to the opera; but I!

I was beside myself. These things were being said by a seventeen-year-old girl as pretty as a Cupid. The Duke now recited a ribald epigram by La Fontaine on enjoyment and desires, which is found only in the first edition[19] and of which the first four lines are as follows:

> *La jouissance et les désirs*
> *Sont ce que l'homme a de plus rare,*
> *Mais ce ne sont pas vrais plaisirs*
> *Dès le moment qu'on les sépare.*
>
> ("Enjoyment and desires are man's rarest possessions, but they cease to be true pleasures as soon as they are separated.")

I said that I had translated the epigram, with the six following lines, into Italian and Latin, and that in Italian it had taken me twenty lines to say what La Fontaine said in ten, whereas I said it all in six in my Latin translation. Donna Leonilda said she was sorry she did not know Latin.

In polite Neapolitan society the first token of friendship which a gentleman or a lady bestows on a new acquaintance is to use the second person singular in addressing him. Both parties are then more at their ease; but this mode of address entails no diminution in the respect which they owe each other.

Donna Leonilda filled me with admiration; if one does not recover from it, it becomes adoration, then irresistible love. The opera, which lasted five hours, came to its end without my realizing how long it was.

After the young prodigy left with her duenna the Duke told me that we must part unless I liked gambling.

"I am not averse to it with the right sort of players."

"Excellent. Then come with me. You will be with ten or twelve men of my stamp at a faro bank, then a cold supper; but it is a secret, for gambling is forbidden. I will vouch for you."

He takes me to the Duke of Monteleone's[20] and up to the fourth floor, where, after passing through ten or twelve rooms, I find myself in one in which a mild-looking banker was dealing; before him were silver and gold coins to the value of three or four hundred zecchini. The Duke makes me sit down beside him, introducing me as his friend. I go to take out my purse, but I am told that play there is on one's word and that one pays at the end of twenty-four hours. The banker gives me a *livret*[21] and a basket in which, between singles and doubles, there are a thousand counters. I say that each counter will be worth a Neapolitan ducat; that completes the ceremonies. In less than two hours I lose my whole basket, and I stop. Then I sup very gaily. The supper consisted of an enormous dish of macaroni and ten or twelve dishes of various sorts of shellfish. On the way home I never gave the Duke time to indulge in those condolences on one's losses which are always irksome. I kept him delightfully occupied with talk of Donna Leonilda.

Early the next morning the Duke sent me word that if I wanted to go to kiss the King's hand with him I must dress for the occasion. I put on a coat of rose-colored short-napped velvet embroidered with gold spangles, and I kissed the King's hand, which was swollen with chilblains.[22] He was nine years old. The Prince of San Nicandro[23] brought him up as far as in him lay, but he became an accomplished monarch, affable, tolerant, just, and generous, although too unceremonious, which, in a king, is a serious fault.

I had the honor of dining at the right of the Duchess, who, after looking at my coat, felt obliged to say that she had seldom seen a finer.

"By such means, Signora, do I attempt to preserve my person from too thorough a scrutiny."

She smiled. When we rose table the Duke took me downstairs with him to the apartment of his uncle Don Lelio, who remembered me well. I kissed the venerable old man's hand, asking him to forgive my youthful escapades. He told his nephew that eighteen years earlier he had chosen me to be the companion of his studies,[24] and he was very glad to hear me give a brief account of all my vicissitudes in Rome when I was in the service of Cardinal Acquaviva.[25]

After an hour of conversation he asked me to come to see him often.

Toward evening the Duke told me that if I wanted to go to the opera buffa at the Fiorentini[26] it would please his mistress if I went to see her in her box, and he gave me the number of it; he said that he would come for me toward the end of the performance and that we would sup together as we had done on the previous evening. I did not need to order horses harnessed. There was always a coupé in the courtyard awaiting my orders.

At the Teatro dei Fiorentini I found the opera already begun. I enter the box in which Donna Leonilda was sitting, and she receives me with these honeyed words:

"*Caro Don Giacomo,* it is a great pleasure to see you again."

She saw fit not to address me in the second person singular. The girl's alluring features struck me as being not unfamiliar, but I could not remember what young woman it was of whom she reminded me. Leonilda was a beauty; her hair was light chestnut, a color which is above suspicion, and her beautiful black eyes at once listened and questioned. But what enchanted me, and what I found entirely new, was that when she told a story she spoke with her hands, her elbows, her shoulders, and often with her chin. Her tongue did not suffice her to express all that she wanted to convey.

The conversation turning to La Fontaine's epigram, which I had not wanted to recite to her entire because it was licentious, she said that it could only provoke a smile.

"I have a room," she said, "which the Duke has had hung for me with Chinese designs representing a quantity of the postures in which the people of that country make love. We go there sometimes, and I assure you[27] they do not arouse the slightest sensation in me."

"That may be due to a defect in temperament, for when I see things of that sort well drawn they set me on fire; and I am amazed that when you look at them with the Duke you do not feel tempted to put some of them into practice."

"We feel only friendship for each other."

"That is not easy to believe."

"I could swear that he is a man; but I could not swear that he is capable of giving a woman any substantial proof of love."

"He has a son."

"True. And, according to him, he can love only his wife."

"That is nonsense, for you are a woman to inspire desires, and a man who could be familiarly in your company without his senses responding to it ought to kill himself."

"I am delighted, *caro Don Giacomo,* to learn that you love me, but since you are staying in Naples only a few days you will easily forget me."

"A curse on gaming, for we could spend charming evenings together."

"The Duke told me that you lost a thousand ducati without flinching last night. I take it that you are unlucky."

"Not always, but when I play on the same day on which I have fallen in love I am sure to lose."

"You will win this evening."

"Today I made my declaration; I shall lose again."

"Then don't play."

"They would say I'm afraid of losing or that I have no money."

"Then I hope you will win, and that you will come and tell me so at my house tomorrow morning. You can come with the Duke."

He arrives, and he asks me if I have enjoyed the opera. It is she who answers that we can tell him nothing about the opera because we had spent the whole time talking of love. She asks him to bring me to her house the next morning so that I can tell her I have won. The Duke replies that it is his turn, that he will be the dealer, but that he will bring me to breakfast with her whether I win or lose.

We left, and we went to the same place, where all the players were waiting for my Duke. It was a company of twelve, each of whom provided the bank in turn. They insisted that this made their chances equal. The idea made me laugh. Nothing is more difficult than to establish equality among players.

The Duke of Matalona takes his place, draws out his purse, and puts two thousand ducati in gold, silver, and bank notes on the table, asking the company to excuse him if he is doubling the amount of the bank in compliment to the stranger.

"Then I, too," I said, "will risk two thousand ducati, and no more, for at Venice people say that the prudent player must never lose more than he can win. So each of my counters will be worth two ducati."

So saying, I take from my pocket ten bank notes of a hundred ducati each and give them to the banker who had won them from me the evening before. War is declared, and in less than three hours, staking only on one card and with the utmost prudence, I lose my entire basket. That ended it. I had some twenty-five thousand ducati; but I had declared that I would not lose more, I was ashamed to go back on my word. I have all my life been dismayed by losing, but I have always had the strength of mind to conceal it; my natural gaiety was doubled precisely because it was forced by art. This has always gained me the good will of the company and opened resources to me. My appetite for supper was none the worse, and my ebullience made me think of so many laughable things to say that I succeeded in entirely dissipating the low spirits of the Duke of Matalona, who was in despair at having won so large a sum from a stranger who was his guest and whom people might think he had entertained only in order to win his money. He was the perfection of courtesy, lavish, rich, generous, and a man of honor.

On the way back to his palazzo he could not bring himself to say that he was not in need of money, that he would give me all the time I wanted to pay him; he rightly feared to wound my feelings; but before he went to bed he could not refrain from writing me a short note in which he said that if I needed credit at his banker's he would stand surety for me for whatever amount I might require. I replied that I was duly sensible of his courtesy and that if I should be in need of money I would accept his generous offer.

The next morning I went to his room early to embrace him and remind him that we were to breakfast with his beautiful mistress. He put on morning dress, as I had done, and we walked to the Fontana Medina[28] and the pretty house near it in which the angel lived.

She was still in bed, not naked but sitting up, modestly charming, beautiful as the day, wearing a dimity corset laced with wide rose-colored ribbons. She was reading *Le Sopha,* by the elegant Crébillon the Younger.[29] The Duke sat down on the foot of her bed, while I could only stand in a sort of daze, looking at her enchanting face, which I seemed once to have known and even to have loved. It was the first time that I saw her well. Laughing to see me so distracted, she told me to sit down in a small armchair at her bedside.

The Duke said that I was very glad to have lost two thousand ducati to him, for my loss made me sure that she loved me.

"*Caro il mio* Don Giacomo, I am sorry I told you that you would win, you would have done better not to play: I should love you just as much, and you would be richer by two thousand ducati."

"And I two thousand ducati the poorer," said the Duke with a smile.

"But I shall win this evening, charming Leonilda," I said, "if you will grant me some favor today. Otherwise I shall lose my soul and die in a very few days here at Naples."

"In that case, dear Leonilda," said the Duke, "you must grant him some small token."

"That I cannot."

The Duke told her she might dress and come to breakfast in the Chinese room, and she began to obey him at once, being neither too generous in what she let us see nor too miserly in what she managed to hide from us—a procedure which is sure to set any man on fire who has already been captivated by a woman's pretty face and intelligence and manners. Nevertheless I saw her beautiful bosom; it was a theft, but one which I could never have committed if she had not permitted it. On my side, I pretended I had seen nothing.

During the moments of distraction which a woman permits herself when she is dressing, she maintained with much ingenuity that a sensible girl should be more chary of her favors with a man whom she loves than with one whom she does not love, for the simple reason that she must always be afraid of losing the former while she has no interest in keeping the latter.

I said that in time she would find the contrary to be true in my case; and she replied that I was wrong.

The Chinese designs which covered the room in which we breakfasted were admirable rather for their coloring and their drawing than for the amorous acts they represented.

"On me," says the Duke, "they have no effect whatever"; and, so saying, he shows us his nullity. Leonilda does not look, but I was shocked; however, I concealed it.

"I am," I said, "in the same case, but I do not care to convince you of it."

The Duke says he does not believe it, he puts out a hand, and he finds that I am not lying; he shows his astonishment, and, withdrawing his hand, says that I must be as impotent as he is. I deny his conclusion and I say that to convince him of the contrary I had only to look into Leonilda's eyes, he asks her to look at me, she turns and fixes her eyes on mine, the Duke puts out his hand to the place of proof once more, and he finds he is wrong. He makes to uncover me, but I oppose him; he persists, he laughs, and I let him go on; in a sweet access of ardor I seize Leonilda's hand and, never taking my eyes from hers, I press it to my lips, and the Duke withdraws his wet hand, exclaiming, laughing, and getting up to fetch a towel. Leonilda has seen nothing, but she succumbs to uncontrollable laughter, as do I and the Duke. It was one of those delicious little games which so effectually stimulate Love, who, ever a child, revels in the play and laughter whose nectar makes him immortal. In playing it all three of us transgressed certain limits, though we managed to remain within certain others. We ended it with embraces, and Leonilda's lips pressed to mine sent me away with the Duke, plunged in the intoxication of the love which fetters the mind.

On the way I told the Duke that I would not see his mistress again unless he would relinquish her to me, declaring that I was prepared to marry her and give her a dowry of five thousand ducati.

"Speak to her, I will raise no objection. You shall learn from herself what property she has."

I went to dress, and when the bell rang went down to dinner. The Duchess was surrounded by a large company. She had the goodness to say she was sorry I had had bad luck.

"Fortune, Signora, is changeable; but your kind concern is bound to bring me luck. I shall win this evening."

"I doubt it, your opponent this evening will be Monteleone, who is very lucky."

Reflecting on the state of my gambling ventures after dinner, I decided to play for cash, first so that, in case I was overwhelmed, I should not endanger my honor by losing more on my word than I could pay, secondly in order to relieve the banker of any fear that I would be short when I was cleaned out for the third time, and thirdly in the hope that the change of system would also change my luck.

I spent four hours at the San Carlo in Leonilda's box, finding her more elaborately dressed and more brilliant than she had been on the previous days. I told her that the love she had inspired in me was of a kind which could tolerate neither rivals nor delay nor the slightest possibility of future inconstancy.

"I have told the Duke that I am prepared to marry you, giving you a dowry of five thousand ducati."

"What was his answer?"

"That I should make the proposal to yourself, and that he will raise no objection."

"And we will leave together."

"At once. After that only death can separate us."

"We will talk tomorrow morning. You will make me happy."

The Duke arrives, she tells him that there is no more question of anything between us but marriage.

"Marriage," he replied, "is the one thing in the world which must be considered the most before it is undertaken."

"But not too much, for as long as one is considering it one does not marry; in any case we have no time for that, since Don Giacomo has to leave."

"If it is to be a marriage," he said to me, "you can put off your departure, or return after becoming formally engaged to my dear Leonilda."

"No putting it off, my dear Duke, and no returning. We have made up our minds, and if we are mistaken we shall have all the time we need to repent."

The Duke laughs, he says we will discuss it the next day, and we go to our circle, where we find the Duke of Monteleone dealing with a well-stocked bank before him.

"I have bad luck," I said to him, "when I play on my word, so I hope you will permit me to play for cash."

"As you please—it makes no difference. I have made you a bank of four thousand ducati, so that you can recoup your losses."

"And I promise to break it or to lose four thousand."

So saying, I draw from my pocket six thousand ducati, in paper as always, I give two thousand to the Duke of Matalona, and I begin playing for a hundred ducati. After a very long session I broke the bank; and, the Duke of Matalona having left, I returned to his palazzo alone. When I told him the good news the next morning he embraced me and advised me always to play for cash. A great supper which the Princess della Valle[30] was giving would keep our circle of players from meeting that day. So we went to say good morning to Donna Leonilda, putting off discussing our marriage until the morrow, and we spent the rest of the day looking at the wonders of nature in the environs of Naples. At the great supper I saw the highest nobility of Naples, and great lavishness.

The next morning the Duke told me that I could go alone to his mistress's, where, having business, he would come later, and I went; but he did not come. For this reason we could settle nothing in the matter of our marriage. I spent two hours alone with her; but, as I felt I must be ruled by her inclinations, she found me amorous only in words. When I left her I again swore that it rested entirely with her to leave Naples with me, bound by marriage to my destiny until death.

The Duke asked me, with a smile, if, after spending the whole morning alone with his mistress, I still wanted to marry her.

"More than ever. What have you in mind?"

"Nothing. And since that is how things stand we will talk tomorrow."

That evening at Monteleone's I found a personable-looking banker with much gold before him; the Duke told me he was Don Marco Ottoboni.[31] He was holding the cards in his left hand, and he drew the card very well with his right, but he held the pack so tightly in his hand that I could not see it.

I decide to play for a ducato. With persistent bad luck, I lost only eighteen or twenty ducati after five or six deals. The banker politely asks me why I am staking such small sums against him.

"Because," I reply, "when I do not see at least half the pack I am afraid I shall lose."

The next night I broke the bank of the very amiable and very rich Prince del Cassaro,[32] who asked me to give him his revenge, inviting me to supper at a pretty house he had at Posilipo,[33] where he lived with a *virtuosa*[34] with whom he had fallen in love at Palermo. He also invited the Duke of Matalona and three or four others. This was the only occasion on which I dealt at Naples. I made him a bank of six thousand ducati, after telling him that, as I was on the eve of my departure, I would play only for cash. He lost ten thousand ducati and stopped only because he had no more money. Everyone made off, and I would have stopped too if the

Prince's mistress, who was playing on her word after losing thirty or forty once,[35] had not been in arrears another hundred. I continued to deal, hoping that she would recoup; but I finally put down the cards at two o'clock in the morning, saying that she should pay me in Rome.

Since I was determined not to leave Naples without having seen Caserta,[36] and since Donna Leonilda was of the same mind, the Duke sent us there in a very comfortable carriage drawn by six mules, whose trot was faster than a horse's gallop. During the journey I first heard the voice of her duenna.

It was on the day after our journey to Caserta that we settled the particulars of our marriage in a conversation which lasted two hours.

"Leonilda there," said the Duke, "has her mother living on an estate not far from the city with an income of six hundred ducati a year which I settled on her for life when I bought a piece of property which her husband left her; but Leonilda is not dependent on her. She relinquished her to me seven years ago, and I at once gave her a life annuity of five hundred ducati, which she will bring you as her dowry together with all her diamonds and a fine wardrobe. Her mother has confided her entirely to my love and to my word of honor that I would arrange an advantageous marriage for her. I had her educated, and when I became aware of her cast of mind I cultivated it, freeing her from all prejudices except the one which makes it a girl's duty to keep herself for him whom Heaven has destined to be her husband; and you can be certain that you will be the first man whom my dear Leonilda will clasp to her bosom."

I told him to have the deed for her dowry drawn up and to add to it five thousand ducati del regno, which I would pay over to him when the marriage contract was signed; he said that he would guarantee them himself by a mortgage on a country house which was worth twice as much, and, turning to Leonilda, who was weeping for joy, he said that he would send for her mother, who would be delighted to sign her marriage agreement.

Her mother was living at Sant'Agata in the household of the Marchese Galiani.[37] It was a day's journey from Naples. He said that he would send his carriage for her the next day, that the day after that we would sup together, and on the following day we would settle everything with the notary and would go at once to the little church in Portici, where a priest would marry us, he undertaking to secure a dispensation from publishing the banns. On the day after the wedding her mother would return to Sant'Agata with us, we would dine with her there, and we would continue our journey with her blessing.

At this conclusion to his discourse, I shuddered, then I laughed; but Leonilda, for all her intelligence, fell fainting into the arms of the Duke, who revived her, calling her his "dear daughter" and kissing her again and again. At the conclusion of the scene we all three dried our tears.

From that day on I did not play again. I had won fifteen thousand ducati, I considered myself a married man; it was my part to conduct myself with prudence.

The next day, at supper with Leonilda and the Duke after the opera at the San Carlo,

"What will my mother say," she asked me, "when she sees you tomorrow evening?"

"She will say that you have done a foolish thing to marry a stranger whom you have known for only a week. Have you written her my name, my country, my situation, my age?"

"I wrote her these three lines: '*Come tomorrow, my dear Mama, to sign my marriage contract with a man whom I receive from the hands of His Grace the Duke and with whom I shall leave for Rome on Monday.*'"

"And here are my three lines," said the Duke: "'*Come at once, my dear friend, to sign your daughter's marriage contract and give her your blessing, for she has wisely chosen a husband who could be her father.*'"

"That's not true," said Leonilda, coming to my arms; "she'll think you're an old man, and I don't like it."

"Is your mother old?"

"Her mother," said the Duke to me, "is a charming and very witty woman no more than thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old."

"What is she doing in Galiani's house?"

"Being an intimate friend of the Marchesa, she lives with her family, but she pays board."

The next morning, having various small matters of business to dispose of and needing to go to my banker to give him all my bank notes and obtain his draft on Rome, only excepting the five thousand ducati I was to pay over at the signing of the contract, I told the Duke to expect me at Leonilda's about suppertime.

At eight o'clock I enter the room, in which they were standing with their backs to the fireplace, the Duke between the mother and the daughter.

"Ah! There he is!"

I look first at the mother, who, the instant I appear, gives a piercing cry and sinks onto the sofa. I stare at her, and I see Donna Lucrezia Castelli.

"Donna Lucrezia!" I say, "how happy I am!"

"Let us recover our breath, my dear friend. Sit down here. You are going to marry my daughter."

I sit down; I understand it all; my hair stands on end, and I sink into the gloomiest silence. The astonishment was Leonilda's and the Duke's; they saw that we knew each other; but beyond that they could not go. I think of that past time and of Leonilda's age, and I see that she could be my daughter; but I considered that Donna Lucrezia could not be sure of it, for she was living with her husband, who was not yet fifty and who loved her. I rise, I take a light, and asking the Duke and Leonilda to excuse me, I request the mother to go into the next room with me.

The woman I had so greatly loved in Rome has scarcely sat down beside me before she says:

"Leonilda is your daughter,[38] I am sure of it; I have never considered her anything else, my husband himself knew it, and he made no protest; he adored her. I will show you her baptismal certificate, and after seeing the date of her birth you can calculate for yourself. My husband never touched me in Rome, and my daughter was not born prematurely. Do you remember that my late mother must have read you a letter in which I wrote her that I was pregnant? That was in the January of 1744. In six months she will be seventeen. It was my dear husband himself who gave her the name Leonilda Giacomina at the baptismal font, and when he played with her he always called her Giacomina. This marriage, my dear friend, horrifies me, yet you can understand that I will not oppose it, for I should not dare tell the reason. What do you think? Have you really the courage to marry her? You hesitate. Can it be that you have consummated the marriage before contracting it?"

"No, my dear friend."

"I breathe again."

"She has none of my features."

"That is true. She looks like me. You weep, dear friend."

"Who would not weep? I am going into the other room, and I will send you the Duke. You understand that he must be told all."

I enter, and I tell him to go and speak with Donna Lucrezia. Leonilda, aghast, comes and sits on my lap and asks me what is the matter. My distress keeps me from answering, she kisses me, trembling, and she sheds tears with me. We remained there mute for half an hour, until the Duke returned with Donna Lucrezia, who, alone of the four of us, had assumed a reasonable attitude.

"But my dear daughter," she said to Leonilda, "this unpleasant mystery must be revealed to you; and it is from your mother herself that you shall learn it. Do you remember what name my late husband often called you, when, holding you in his arms, he caressed you?"

"He called me 'charming Giacomina.' "

"That is the name of this gentleman here. He is your father. Go and kiss him as a daughter, and if he has been your lover forget your crime."

It was then that the pathos of the tragedy undid us. Leonilda ran to embrace her mother's knees, and, despite the tears which choked her, said:

"I have never loved him except as a daughter."

The scene then became dumb show, except that the sound of the tears and kisses of the two admirable creatures gave it life, while the Duke and I, the supremely interested witnesses of the spectacle, were like two marble statues.

We remained at table for three hours, always sad, always talking, and passing from reflection to reflection on this more unhappy than happy recognition, and we separated at midnight unaware that we had eaten nothing.

We knew that the next day at dinner we should discuss the incident more coolly and sensibly; we were sure that nothing would stop us from taking the wisest course, and without any difficulty, for there was no other.

On the way the Duke talked aloud to himself, making countless reflections on what moral philosophy may denominate "prejudice." That the union of a father with his daughter is horrible by nature no philosopher will make bold to say; but the prejudice in this regard is so strong that one must have a thoroughly depraved mind to trample it underfoot. It is the fruit of a respect for the laws which a good education has inculcated in a noble soul; and, so defined, it is no longer prejudice, it is duty.

This duty can also be considered natural in that nature inspires us to grant to those we love the same goods which we desire for ourselves. It would seem that what is most conducive to reciprocity in love is equality in everything, in age, in situation, in character; and at first sight one does not find this equality between father and daughter. The respect which she owes to him who had given her being raises an obstacle to the kind of affection she must feel for a lover. If the father takes possession of his daughter by virtue of his paternal authority, he exercises a tyranny which nature must abhor. Our natural love of good order likewise causes reason to regard such a union as monstrous. The offspring of it are bound to be marked by confusion and insubordination; in short, such a union is abhorrent from every point of view; but it is no longer so when the two individuals love each other and have no knowledge that reasons which have nothing to do with their mutual affection ought to prevent them from loving each other; and incestuous relations, the eternal subjects of Greek tragedies, instead of making me weep make me laugh, and if I weep at *Phèdre,*[39] it is Racine's art which makes me do so.

I went to bed, but I could not sleep. The sudden transition I had to make from carnal to fatherly love caused all my moral and physical faculties the deepest distress. I slept for two hours, after deciding that I would leave the next day.

On waking and finding my decision very wise, I go to communicate it to the Duke, who was still in bed. He replied that everyone knew I was soon to leave and that such haste would be interpreted unfavorably. He advised me to take a broth with him and to consider my projected marriage a joke.

"We will," he said, "spend these three or four days gaily, and we will apply our minds to dismissing the gloomy aspects of this untoward incident and even giving it a comic cast. I advise you to renew your affair with Donna Lucrezia. You must have found her as she was eighteen years ago; she cannot possibly have been better."

This little discourse reduces me to reason. To forget the projected marriage was certainly the best course I could take; but I was in love, and the object of love is not like some piece of merchandise for which, when one cannot have it, one can easily substitute another.

So we went to Leonilda's together, the Duke in his usual spirits, but I pale, undone, the perfect picture of gloom. What immediately surprises me is to find gaiety. Leonilda flings herself on my neck, calling me "dear Papa," her mother addresses me as "dear friend," and my eyes and my soul are held captive by her face, in which eighteen years had been unable to harm a single feature.

We enact a mute scene, embracing each other again and again at intervals; Leonilda gives me, and receives, any quantity of kisses, regardless of what desires they may arouse in us; it was enough for her to be certain that, knowing who we were, we should be able to resist them. She was right. One grows used to everything. It was shame which dissipated my gloom.

I tell Donna Lucrezia about the strange welcome her sister had accorded me in Rome, and we begin laughing; we recollect the night at Tivoli,[40] and the remembered images soften us. After a short silence I tell her that if she would like to come to Rome with me simply to visit Donna Angelica I would undertake to bring her back to Naples at the beginning of Lent. She promises to give me an answer the next day.

Dining between her and Leonilda, and having to forget the latter, it is not surprising that all my old flame was rekindled. Whether it was due to her gay banter, or to my need to love, or to the excellence of the dishes and the wines, at dessert I offered her my hand.

"I will marry you," I said, "and the three of us will set off together on Monday, for now that Leonilda is my daughter I cannot leave her in Naples."

At this proposal my three table companions looked at one another, and no one answered me.

After dinner, overtaken by sleepiness, I had to lie down on the bed, and I did not wake until eight o'clock, when I was surprised to see only Donna Lucrezia, who was writing. She comes to me, she says I have slept for five hours, and that she had not gone to the opera with her daughter and the Duke so that I should not be left alone.

Recollecting an old love in the presence of an adorable woman reawakens it, desires are rekindled, and the strength with which they return is boundless. If the two persons are still in love, neither yields to the other in eagerness; they feel as if they were regaining possession of a treasure which belongs to them and which a series of harsh circumstances has long forbidden them to enjoy. Such we became in an instant, with no preamble, no idle talk, no preliminaries, and even with no feigned attacks, in which one or the other cannot but be playing a role. Immersed in the sweetness of a happy silence, we surrendered ourselves to the one true author of nature, to love.

I was the first to break the silence during the first intermission. If a man has a mind which sees the amusing side of things, will it not continue to be of the same cast during the delightful repose which follows an amorous victory?

"Here I am again," I said, "in the charming country which undid me to the sound of gunfire and drums the first time I dared to explore it in the dark." [41]

She could not but laugh, and, memory joining in, we recollected in turn all that had happened to us at Testaccio and Frascati and Tivoli.[42] We passed them in review only to laugh, but what are the subjects for laughter which two lovers who are alone together bring up except an excuse to celebrate the festival of love once more?

At the end of the second act, in the enthusiasm which love crowned and content leaves in the soul,

"Let us," I said, "be each other's until death; let us thus assure ourselves that we will die happy; we are of the same age, and we can even hope to die at the same time."

"It is my dearest wish, but stay in Naples and leave Leonilda to the Duke. We will frequent society, we will find her a husband worthy of her, and our happiness will be complete."

"I cannot settle in Naples, my dear. Your daughter was ready to leave with me."

"Say 'our daughter.' I see that you wish you were not her father. You love her."

"Alas! I am very sure that my passion for her would be stilled as long as I could live with you; but I answer for nothing if you should not be there. She is charming, and her mind captivates me even more than her beauty. Being sure that she loved me, I renounced attempting to seduce her only for fear of making her distrust me. Such an apprehension on her part might have lessened her fondness. I aspired to her esteem, I did not want to trouble her innocence. I wanted to possess her only legitimately and with a right equal to hers. My dear, we have created an angel. I cannot understand how the Duke—"

"The Duke is impotent. Now you understand all."

"How can he be impotent? He has a son."

"He is impotent, I tell you."

"Nevertheless—"

"Nevertheless. He is impotent, and he knows it."

"Let me see you as I did at Tivoli."

"No, for a carriage is stopping."

How Leonilda burst out laughing when she saw her mother in my arms! She gave us countless kisses. The Duke arrived a moment later, and we supped very gaily. He declared me the happiest of mortals when I told him I should spend the night honorably with my wife and my daughter; and he was right: I was the happiest of mortals in those days.

> *Quand'ero in parte altr'uom da quel ch'io sono.*
>
> ("When I was in part a different man from the man I am.")[43]

After he left, it was Leonilda who undressed her mother, while, after wrapping my hair in a kerchief, I threw my clothes into the middle of the room. She tells her daughter to get into bed beside her.

"Your father," she says, "will confine his attention to your mother."

"And I," she replies, "will give mine to you both"; and, on the other side of the bed she undresses completely and gets in next to her, saying that as her father I was at liberty to see all my handiwork. Her mother is proud of her, she praises her, and she rejoices to see that I find her beautiful. It sufficed her that she was in the middle and that it was only upon her that I extinguished the fire with which she saw that I was burning. Leonilda's curiosity delighted me to the soul.

"So is that what you did," she asked me, "when you engendered me eighteen years ago?"

But the moment which leads Lucrezia to the death of love has come, just when, to spare her, I feel it my duty to withdraw. Moved to pity, Leonilda sends her mother's little soul on its flight with one hand and with the other puts a white handkerchief under her gushing father.

Lucrezia, grateful for her daughter's fond ministrations, turns her back to me, clasps her in her arms, gives her countless kisses, then, turning to me again, says in moving tones:

"There, look at her, she is unstained, touch if you want to, nothing has suffered harm, she is as I made her."

"Yes," said Leonilda, laughing, "look at me and kiss Mama."

Alas! I loved her mother, otherwise nothing would have saved her from my fury. The combat began again and did not end until we fell asleep.

What waked us was the rays of the sun.

"Go and draw the curtain, dear daughter," says her mother.

At that Leonilda, naked as my hand, obediently goes to draw the curtain, showing me beauties of which, when one is in love, one has never seen enough. Alas! Coming back to bed, she lets me bestow my kisses on all that I saw; but as soon as she sees me on the edge of the precipice she slips away and gives me to her mother, who receives me with open arms and imperiously orders me to not spare her but to make her another Leonilda. At the end of the encounter, which was a very long one, I believed I had obeyed her, but my blood, which she saw when I yielded to exhaustion, left her doubtful.

"You have accustomed me," she said, "to this frightening phenomenon."

After assuring the innocent Leonilda that it was of no consequence, we dressed, and the Duke of Matalona arrived. It was Leonilda who gave him an account of all our nocturnal labors. In the wretchedness of his impotence he could not but congratulate himself on not having witnessed them.

Determined to leave the next day so that I should be in Rome in time to enjoy the last week of the Carnival, I used all my powers of persuasion on the Duke to assure myself that a present I had determined to bestow on Leonilda would not be refused. It was the dowry of five thousand ducati which I would have given her if she could have become my wife. The Duke decided that her being my daughter was all the more reason why she should accept the amount as a dowry. She accepted it, smothering me with caresses and making me promise that I would come back to Naples to see her when I learned that she was married. I promised, and I kept my word.

Since I had decided to leave the next day, the Duke wanted me to see all the Neapolitan nobility in his palazzo at a great supper of the kind I had seen at the Princess della Valle Piccolomini's. So he left me with my daughter, saying that we would meet again at the supper. We dined together, and we spent the rest of the day within the bounds prescribed to a father and daughter. The large amount of blood I had lost the night before may have contributed to my share in our abstention. We did not embrace until the very last moment of our parting, which the mother felt as keenly as did the daughter.

I went off to dress for the supper. When I took leave of the Duchess, she addressed me in these words:

"I am sure that you will always recollect Naples with pleasure."

No one could doubt it. After showing my generosity to the Duke's household, I left as I had arrived. That nobleman, who died three or four years later, escorted me to the door of my carriage.

CHAPTER XI

Accident to my carriage. Mariuccia's wedding. Flight of Lord Lismore. My return to Florence and my departure with La Corticelli.

WITH MY Spaniard riding ahead and Don Ciccio seated beside me, I am sound asleep in an excellent four-horse carriage when I am startled awake by a violent jolt. It was midnight when my carriage was overturned in the middle of the highway, beyond Francolisi[1] and four miles from Sant'Agata. Alfani, who was underneath me, was screaming from the pain in his right arm, which he thought was broken and which afterward proved to be only dislocated. My Leduc, coming back, told me that the two postilions had fled and that they might have gone to take the news to highway robbers.

I easily got out of the carriage through the door which was above me; but Alfani, unable, between his age and his disabled arm, to make his own way, had to be pulled out. We managed it in a quarter of an hour. His piercing shrieks made me laugh because of the strange oaths with which he interlarded his silly prayers to St. Francis of Assisi, his patron.

For my part, accustomed to being overturned, I suffered no damage. It depends on the position one assumes. Don Ciccio may have hurt his arm because he put it outside.

From the carriage I take my dueling pistols, having short ones in my pocket, my carbine, and my sword. I tell Leduc to mount and go looking for armed peasants in the vicinity, money in hand. Meanwhile, Don Ciccio having lain down on the hard ground groaning and in no condition to resist robbers,[2] I make my own preparations to sell them my fortune and my life at the highest price. My carriage being close to the ditch, I unhitch the four horses, I tie them to the wheels and the pole in a circle, and I station myself behind them with my five firearms.

In this predicament I could not help laughing at poor old Alfani, who was writhing exactly like a dying dolphin on the seashore and who uttered the most horrible execrations when a mare whose back was turned to him took it into her head to empty her bladder on him. There was nothing to be done; he had to put up with the whole stinking rain and to forgive my laughter, which I had not the strength to hold in.

The darkness of the night and a strong north wind made my situation still more trying. At the least sound I heard, I cried, "Who goes there?" threatening death to anyone who should dare to advance. I had to spend two whole hours in this tragicomic situation.

Leduc finally arrived at full gallop, shouting at the top of his voice and followed by a band of peasants, each with his lantern, come to my rescue. There were ten or twelve of them, all armed with muskets, and all ready to obey my orders.

In less than an hour the carriage was put back on its four wheels, the horses were harnessed, and Don Ciccio was restored to the seat he had occupied. I sent all the peasants away well satisfied, keeping only two who, serving as my postilions, brought me to the posthouse at Sant'Agata[3] at daybreak. The row I raised there was terrifying:

"Where is the post master? Someone go fetch me a notary, for the first thing is to make a statement. I insist on an indemnity; and the postilions who overturned me on an excellent road, where a spill is impossible unless it is done on purpose, shall be at least sentenced to the galleys."

A wheelwright arrives; he looks over my carriage and finds the axle broken, a new one must be made at once, and the verdict is that I will have to stay there at least one day.

In need of a surgeon, Don Ciccio goes without telling me to the Marchese Galiani,[4] whom he knew[5] and who comes in person to ask me to stay in his house until my carriage is repaired. I accept his invitation. He orders my carriage put in his stable at once.

The Marchese Galiani was as learned as he was courteous—courteous in the Neapolitan fashion, without ceremony. He was not as brilliant as his brother,[6] whose wit was effervescent, and whom I had known in Paris as Embassy Secretary to the Count of Cantillana.[7] The Marchese who offered me his hospitality was a mathematician; at that time he was writing a commentary on Vitruvius,[8] which he afterward published; but *ploravere suis non respondere favorem speratum meritis* ("they lamented that their merits did not meet with the gratitude for which they had hoped").[9] He introduced me to his spouse,[10] whom I knew to be the intimate friend of Donna Lucrezia; she was an excellent wife and mother, with several young children. Don Ciccio was immediately put to bed, and a surgeon was summoned, who, after examining him thoroughly, eased his mind by assuring him that it was only a dislocation, or, in his language, a "luxation."

At noon we hear a carriage arriving at a fast trot; we go to the window, and I see Donna Lucrezia getting out of it.

She comes up the stairs, she embraces the Marchesa, and, not in the least surprised to see me, asks me what chance has brought me here. She tells the Marchesa that I am an old friend of her late husband's and that she had just seen me again in Naples at the Duke of Matalona's.

After dinner I asked this creature made for love if we could spend the night together, and she showed me that it was absolutely impossible. I repeated my offer to marry her at Sant'Agata and take her with me, and she replied that if I really loved her I had only to buy an estate in the Kingdom, where she would come to live with me and would not demand that I marry her except in case she gave me children.

I should have lived happily with that charming woman, but I loathed the idea of settling down anywhere. In Naples I could have bought an estate which would have made me rich; but I should have had to adopt a prudent course of conduct which was absolutely foreign to my nature. After supper I took leave of the entire company, and I left at dawn so that I should be in Rome the next day. I had only fifteen stages[11] to cover on a very good road.

Arriving at Carillano,[12] I see an Italian two-wheeled carriage known as a *mantice.* Two horses were being harnessed to it. I needed four; I get out, and I hear my name spoken. I turn, and there, sitting under the hood beside a young and pretty girl, is Signora Diana, the Prince del Cassaro's[13] *virtuosa,* who owed me three hundred once. She said that she was going to Rome and that she was very glad we should make the journey together.

"We shall spend the night," she said, "at Piperno." [14]

"Signora, I shall not stop until I reach Rome."

"We shall get there tomorrow just the same."

"I know that, but I sleep better in my carriage than I do in the poor beds one finds in these inns."

"I dare not travel at night."

"Then we shall meet again in Rome."

"That's not right. You see that I have only a fool of a valet and my chambermaid, who is no braver than I am, and besides the wind is cold and this is an open carriage. I will come in yours."

"I have my old secretary with me, who broke his arm day before yesterday."

"Shall we dine together at Terracina?[15] We will talk."

"Very well. We will dine there."

We ate well. We were to arrive at Piperno after dark; Signora Diana again urged me to spend the night there. She was blonde and too fat, I found her unappetizing, but her chambermaid attracted me. I finally promise that I will sup with her, put her under the innkeeper's protection, and then leave, for I could not waste ten hours at the post station.

At Piperno I find an opportunity to tell the chambermaid that if she promises to be kind to me that night I will stay there.

"I will come to your bed," I say, "and you may be sure I will make no noise; your mistress will not wake."

She promises, and she even lets one of my hands assure me that she will be kind.

After supper they go off to bed; I go to wish them good night, and I see them. I cannot be mistaken, the door is open; I knew what I needed to know. After putting out the candle I go off to bed too. A half hour later I make my way to their bed, and my hands encounter the Signora Diana. It was obvious. The chambermaid had told her the story, and they had changed places. I could not possibly be mistaken, I did not need to use my eyes, my hand had sufficiently convinced me. I paused, hesitating between two ideas, both of which would adequately avenge me for the trick. The first was to get into bed with her, the other to dress and leave at once. The latter prevailed. I woke Leduc, and he the innkeeper, I paid, I had horses harnessed, and I went to Rome. I saw Signora Diana three or four times at the Barbary horse race,[16] and we saluted each other from a distance; if I had thought she would pay me I would have gone to see her.

I found my brother, Mengs, and Winckelmann cheerful and in good health, and Costa very glad to see me back. I at once ordered him to tell the Abate Momolo that I would go to his house for polenta that evening and that he need make no preparations. I ordered Costa to see to providing a supper for twelve. I was sure that Mariuccia would be present, for Momolo knew that I enjoyed seeing her.

As the Carnival[17] was to begin the next day, I hired a landau for the entire week. This is a carriage seating four, the hood of which can be lowered either in front or behind and in which people drive on the Corso[18] every day of that week from twenty-one to twenty-four o'clock. They go masked, or unmasked if they choose; they wear all sorts of masking costumes on foot and on horseback; they threw sweetmeats to the populace, they hand out satires, pasquinades, pamphlets. The lordliest people in Rome mingle with the humblest, there is general confusion, and the Barbary horses race down the middle of the Corso between the landaus, filled with spectators, which are drawn up to left and right. Toward nightfall the whole crowd makes off to fill the theaters for operas, plays, pantomimes, and rope-dancing exhibitions, in all which entertainments the performers have to be whole men or castrati. People also go to inns and pothouses, where all the rooms are full of patrons eating with might and main, as if they never ate except on those days.

I at once went on foot to the banker Belloni's[19] to deposit my money and obtain a letter of credit on Turin, where I was to see the Abate Gama and be entrusted with the mission from the Court of Portugal to the Congress of Augsburg, on which all Europe was counting. After that I went to look at my room behind Trinità dei Monti, where I hoped to see Mariuccia the next morning. I found everything in good order.

In the evening the Abate Momolo greeted me with cries of joy, and his whole family did likewise. His eldest daughter said with a smile that she was sure I would be glad if she sent for Signora Maria; I replied that she was quite right; and a few minutes later I saw her arrive with her pious mother, who at once told me that I should not be surprised to see her daughter better dressed, for she was to be married in three or four days. I congratulated her, and all the girls together asked her: "To whom, to whom?" Whereupon Mariuccia blushed and said very modestly to one of Momolo's daughters:

"You know him; he is So-and-So, who has seen me here and who is going to open a wigmaker's shop."

Her mother adds that it was Father XXX, her confessor, who had arranged the marriage and who had in his keeping the four hundred scudi which her daughter would bring him as her dowry. Momolo adds that he is an upright young man, who would have married his daughter if she had had such a sum.

I see that the girl is mortified, I comfort her, I tell her that her turn will come, and she takes me at my word. She believed I could not fail to know that she was in love with Costa and that I was planning to have him marry her. Nothing was further from my thoughts. Her idea was confirmed when I told Costa to use my landau to take all Momolo's daughters to the Corso the next day, well masked, for they must not be recognized; I told him to hire clothes from the Jews. They were delighted.

"And Signora Maria?" the jealous sister asked me.

"Signora Maria," I replied, "is about to be married;

so she must not attend any entertainment except with her fiancé."

Her mother applauds me; whereupon the clever girl at once pretends to be mortified. I then turn to the Abate Momolo and ask him to do me the favor of inviting Mariuccia's fiancé to supper, and he promises he will do so.

Being very tired, and having let Mariuccia see me, I had nothing further of consequence to do. So I asked the company to excuse me, and, after wishing them all good appetites, I went home.

The next morning at seven o'clock I did not need to enter the church. Mariuccia saw me, followed me, and we were alone in our little room. She needed to talk to me, I was eager to hear all her news, but such talk would have infringed on love. We had only an hour before us, and when one is making love one does not spend time chatting. We did not even bother to undress. As she put on her hood after we exchanged a last kiss, she finally told me that she was sure she would be married on the last day but one of the Carnival, that her confessor had arranged everything, that I had done well to ask Momolo to invite her future husband to supper, and that we could spend four hours together on the coming Sunday, the eve of her wedding day. She left after that, and I slept for a good hour.

On my way back to the house[20] I meet a carriage driven at high speed and preceded by a courier. A young nobleman dressed in black and wearing a blue ribbon[21] puts out his head, calls my name, and orders the carriage stopped. I am greatly surprised to see Lord Tallow,[22] whom I had met in Paris at his mother's, the Countess of Lismore,[23] who was separated from her husband and the kept mistress of Monsieur de Saint-Albin,[24] the Archbishop of Cambrai. He was a natural son of the Duke of Orléans, Regent of France.

Lord Tallow was a handsome young man, full of wit and talent, but unbridled in his pursuit of all the vices. Knowing that he was not rich, I was surprised by the style in which I saw he was traveling and even more by the blue ribbon. He hastily says that he is going to dine at the Pretender's,[25] but that he will sup at home; he invites me, I accept. He was lodging in the house of the English tailor in the Piazza di Spagna.

I went there, after laughing my fill at the comedy at the Tor di nona,[26] where I saw Costa with all the *scopatore*'s daughters.

But I was very pleasantly surprised when, entering Lord Tallow's apartment, I saw the poet Poinsinet.[27] He was a short young man, ugly, amusing, full of inspiration and talent for the theater. He would have shone in the French Parnassus if five or six years later he had not most unfortunately fallen into the Guadalquivir and been drowned.[28] He was on his way to Madrid to make his fortune.

"What are you doing in Rome, my dear friend? And where, pray, is Lord Tallow?"

"He is in the next room; but he is no longer Tallow, he is Earl of Lismore, his father having died recently. You know that he was an adherent of the Pretender. I left Paris with him, gladly seizing such an opportunity to see Rome without spending a copper."

"Then His Lordship has become rich?"

"Not yet; but he will be, for his father's death makes him the master of an immense fortune. It is true that everything is confiscated; but that makes no difference, his claims are incontestable."

"Then he is rich in claims; but how did he become a Knight of one of the French King's orders?"

"You are joking. That's the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Michael,[29] the Grand Master of which is the Elector of Cologne, who has just died. His Lordship, who, as you know, plays the violin extremely well, happening to be at his court in Bonn, played him a concerto of Tartini's.

The gracious prince, not knowing how to give him any substantial token of his esteem, presented him with the ribbon you saw. You cannot imagine how pleased His Lordship was by the present, for when we return to Paris everyone who sees him go by will think it is the Order of the Holy Ghost."

We enter the drawing room, where we find His Lordship with the guests he had invited to supper. He comes to embrace me, calls me his dear friend, and, one by one, names to me all the persons who made up his select company: seven or eight girls, each prettier than the one before; three or four castrati, all fit to play women's parts to perfection in the Roman theaters; and five or six abati, husbands to all wives and wives to all husbands, who boasted of it and defied the girls to be more shameless than they. Yet the girls were not what would be called public prostitutes;[30] they were music lovers, devotees of painting, and dabblers in libertine philosophy. In this company I was a greenhorn. I see a respectable-looking man who is leaving; His Lordship asks him:

"Where are you going, Prince?"

He replies that he does not feel well. His Lordship tells me that he is the Prince of Chimay,[31] a subdeacon, and that he is seeking permission to marry in order to keep his illustrious family from becoming extinct. I praised his foresight.

At supper, where we were twenty-four, we may have emptied a hundred bottles. Everyone rose from the table intoxicated, except for myself and the poet Poinsinet, who had drunk only water. It was then that the great orgy began. It is impossible to describe all the excesses I saw; but a great libertine can imagine them. A castrato and a girl offered to undress in the next room, stipulating that they would keep their heads covered and lie in bed on their backs. They defied anyone to go in to see them and be able to decide which was male and which female. Bets were laid, and they went. We all entered, and no one ventured to decide. We were allowed only to look. I offered to wager His Lordship a hundred scudi against fifty that I would say which was the female. The probabilities were equal, and His Lordship accepted. I won, but there was no question of his paying me. This first act of the orgy ended with the prostitution of the two naked bodies. They defied all the men in the company to sodomize them, everyone set to work with the exception of myself and Poinsinet, and no one succeeded; but afterward we were treated to the spectacle of five or six copulations, in which the abati shone by alternating between the active and passive roles. I alone was respected. His Lordship, who had not shown a sign of life throughout the debauch, attacked poor Poinsinet; he defended himself in vain, he had to let himself be undressed and put in the same condition as His Lordship, who was stark naked too. We gathered around them. His Lordship took up his watch and offered it to the first person who could give either Poinsinet or himself an erection.[32] The hope of winning the watch put the girls, the abati, and the castrati on their mettle. Everyone wanted to be first; it was decided to write each name on a slip of paper and draw them. This was the most interesting part of the drama for me, who, during the whole incredible performance, never felt the slightest sensation, except that I laughed, chiefly at the distress exhibited by Poinsinet, who was reduced to being afraid of having an erection, since the drunken Earl swore that if he made him lose his watch he would have him pitilessly sodomized in the presence of all the actors. The scene, and the drama, ended when there was no one left with any hope of winning the watch. However, the secret of the Lesbians was employed only by the abati and the castrati; the girls would not use it; they wanted to preserve their right to look down on those who had employed it. It was pride rather than shame which stood them in good stead. They were afraid of employing it to no purpose.

What I gained from this hellish debauch is a better knowledge of myself. I risked my life. I had only my sword, and I would certainly have used it if His Lordship, in his Bacchic frenzy, had taken it into his head to force me to behave like the others, as he had done to poor Poinsinet. I have never understood what reason or what power made him respect me, for he was drunk. When I left, I promised him that I would come again whenever he sent me word, but I was firmly determined never to return there. Once outside of the stinking rooms, I thought I was restored to life. All sorts of foul things littered the floor of the abominable stage. Nevertheless I went to bed well satisfied to have witnessed a spectacle whose like I had never seen before and which I never saw equaled later.

Toward evening he came to see me on the pretext of returning my visit; he was on foot, he said that he did not care to see the Barbary horse race, and he invited me to take a walk with him at the Villa Medici.[33] I accept. I congratulate him on the immense fortune he must have inherited in order to live as he was doing, and he replies, laughing, that his entire capital is some fifty scudi, that he has no letter of credit, that his father had left nothing but debts, and that he already owed three or four thousand scudi.

"I am amazed that you are given credit."

"I am given credit because everyone knows that I have drawn a bill of exchange for two hundred thousand francs on Pâris de Montmartel.[34] But in five or six days it will come back protested, and I shall not wait until that awkward moment to make my escape."

"If you are certain it will be protested I advise you to leave today, for since the sum is so large the advice might be sent sooner."

"No, for I still have a slim hope. I have written my mother that I am ruined if she does not find a way to pay the amount to the banker on whom I drew, and in that case my bill will be accepted. You know my mother loves me.''

''I also know that she is not rich.''

''That is true; but Monsieur de Saint-Albin is so; and, between ourselves, I believe he is my father. Meanwhile, my creditors are almost as calm as I am. All those girls you saw would, if I asked them, give me all they possess, for each of them expects a substantial present this week, but I don't want to cheat them. The one I shall cheat, if I have to, is the Jew who wants to sell me this ring for three thousand zecchini, whereas I know it is worth only a thousand.''

''He will track you down.''

''I defy him to find me.''

It was a straw-colored solitaire of nine or ten carats. He left, asking me to say nothing. This harebrained wastrel did not arouse the slightest feeling of pity in me. I saw in him a wretch who would end his days in some fortress or who would kill himself if the idea occurred to him.

I went to sup at Momolo's, where I found the wigmaker, Mariuccia's fiancé. She had sent Momolo word that, her father having come from Palestrina on account of her marriage, she could not be present at the supper. I admired my dear Mariuccia's tactfulness; and throughout the supper I devoted my entire attention to the young man, in whom I found all that Mariuccia could wish. He was good-looking, sensible, and modest, and everything he said revealed an admirable frankness and probity. These characteristics, which would do honor to a great king, were nevertheless those of a wigmaker, whose distant prospect of succeeding in life was bounded by his wigs. He told me in the presence of Tecla (she was Momolo's daughter) that it was she who would have made him happy if she had had means to help him open a shop, and that he must thank God for having made the acquaintance of Mariuccia, who, after hearing him, had found a true father in God in her confessor. I asked him where he would hold the wedding party, and he said it would be at the house of his father, a gardener, who lived on the farther side of the Tiber, and that he had already decided to give him ten scudi for the expenses because he was poor.

How I wanted to give him ten scudi then and there! But how was I to do it? I should have betrayed myself.

"Is your father's garden pretty?" I asked him.

"Not pretty; but very well kept. Since he owns the land he has made one which he hopes to sell and which yields twenty scudi a year; I should think myself fortunate if I could buy it."

"What is the price of it?"

"Two hundred scudi."

"That is a bargain. Listen to me. I met your intended here, and I found her in all ways worthy of happiness. She deserves a decent young man like yourself. Tell me what you would do if I gave you two hundred scudi here and now to buy your father's garden?"

"I would add the garden to my wife's dowry."

"Excellent. Here are two hundred scudi, which I entrust to the Abate Momolo because I do not yet know you well enough. The garden is yours as part of the dowry of your future wife."

With that, I give him the money, which he hands to Momolo, who undertakes to make the purchase the next day; whereupon the young man kneels to kiss my hand, shedding tears of gratitude. All the girls cry, and so do I; but all these different tears had different sources: it was an alliance between vice and virtue. I made the young man rise and embraced him. He ventured to invite me to the wedding; I declined. I merely said that I would be glad if he would come to supper at Momolo's on Sunday; it was the eve of his marriage. I asked Momolo to arrange for Mariuccia and her father to be present too. I was sure I should see her Sunday morning. It would be for the last time.

It was seven o'clock when we met, and, having four hours before us, we went to bed. She began by telling me that everything had been arranged at her own house the day before, in the presence of her father, her fiancé, her confessor, the notary, and Momolo, who, having tendered the receipt from her fiancé's father, had included the garden in the contract for her dowry. She said further that her father confessor had found means to give her twenty scudi for the notary's fee and the expenses of the wedding.

"This evening," she said, "we shall sup together at Momolo's, and you did very well to arrange it. Nobody can say a word. My fiancé adores you. You did very well, too, to decline to come to my wedding at Trastevere.[35] The house would have been too poor for you, and the talk afterward would have made my future less happy."

"How will you manage if your husband takes it into his head to find fault with your physical condition, which he may expect to find intact?"

"My caresses, my sweetness, and my clear conscience, which do not even let me give it a thought, are my assurance that my husband will not think of it either."

"But if he brings it up?"

"It would hardly be tactful; but what is to keep me from answering, with all the sincerity of seeming innocence, that I don't know what he is talking about, that I have no knowledge of these things?"

Four hours passed very quickly. We parted, taking leave of love and shedding sweet tears.

After the Barbary horse race, which I attended with Mengs's family, who amused themselves throwing sweetmeats from a bag I had filled for them into the landaus we overtook, we went to the Teatro Aliberti, to which the castrato[36] who was playing the leading woman's part was drawing the entire city. He was the favorite of Cardinal Borghese, with whom he was invited to sup alone every evening.

The *virtuoso* sang very well, but his principal attraction was his beauty. I had seen him strolling at the Villa Medici, dressed in men's clothes, and though his face was handsome enough he had not made an impression on me, for one saw at once that he was not a whole man; but on the stage, dressed as a woman, he was a firebrand.

It would seem that a man dressed as a woman could not but be known for what he was if he let too much of his chest be seen; but it was precisely by so doing that the little monster bewitched everyone in the audience. Tightly laced in a very well-fitting corset, he had the figure of a nymph, and few women could show a firmer and more enticing bosom than his. The illusion he created was such that it was impossible to resist it. One looked, the spell acted, and one had either to fall in love or be the most stolid of all Germans. When he walked across the stage waiting for the *ritornello*[37] of the aria he was singing his gait was imposing, and when he swept his gaze over the boxes his black eyes revolved so tenderly and modestly that they ravished the soul. It was obvious that, as a man, he meant to foster the love of those who loved him as such and who would not have loved him if he had not been a man; but that he also meant to inspire love in those who, to love him, had to think of him as really a woman. Yet Rome, the Holy City, which thus drives the whole human race to become pederasts, refuses to admit it as she refuses to admit the existence of an illusion which she does everything possible to foster in the minds of audiences.

"You are right," replied a celebrated Monsignore of the wristband game[38] to put me off; "yes, you reason very soundly. Why do they allow this castrato to exhibit his beautiful breasts and at the same time insist that he be known to be a man and not a woman? And if women are forbidden to appear on the stage[39] so that the senses shall not be excited into becoming the victims of their charms, why seek out men endowed with the same attractions who deceive and seduce the senses and give rise to desires far more sinful than the natural desire aroused by real women? It is stubbornly maintained that to suppose pederasty so easy and so common is to malign the human race, and even that falling in love with these artificial creatures is matter for laughter, because those who do so are all bound to find they have been hoodwinked when it comes to conclusions; but would to God that it were so! Far from feeling hoodwinked, they throw themselves into the thing with gusto and even come to take such pleasure in the subterfuge that a great many people who are lacking neither in intellect nor in common sense prefer these gentlemen to all the prettiest girls in Rome."

"The Pope would do well to put a stop to this practice."

"I say no. One could not have a beautiful actress to supper alone without causing a scandal; and one can have a castrato to supper. It is true that afterward one goes to bed with him; but no one is supposed to know that; and if it becomes known no one can swear that there has been any wrongdoing, for after all he is a man, whereas one cannot go to bed with a woman except to enjoy her."

"True, Monsignore. The chief thing is to make certainty impossible, for well-bred people never pass judgment on uncertain grounds."

Having seen the Marchesa Passarini,[40] whom I had met in Dresden, in a box with His Highness Don Marcantonio Borghese,[41] I went to make my bow to them. The Prince, who had known me in Paris ten years earlier, invited me to dine with him the next day. I went, and he was not at home; I was told that I could dine even so, I left. On the first day in Lent he sent me his valet with an invitation to sup at the Marchesa's, whom he was keeping. I promised to go, and he waited for me in vain. Pride, the child of stupidity, never loses its mother's nature.

After the opera at the Aliberti I went to sup at Momolo's, where I saw Mariuccia with her father, her mother, and her fiancé. I was impatiently awaited. It is not difficult to make people happy if one confines one's efforts in that direction to those who deserve happiness. I supped delightfully in the company of these poor and honest people. It is possible that my satisfaction arose from my vanity, I knew that I was the author of the happiness and the joy I saw portrayed on the handsome faces of the bride and groom; but vanity itself must be held dear by him who, examining himself, finds that it has often been the cause of his doing good. After supper I made a small bank at faro, obliging everyone to play for counters, for none of them had a copper, and I saw to it that the bank was broken. After that we danced, despite the prohibition issued by the Pope, who believed that dancing was damnation and permitted gambling. His successor Ganganelli[42] did just the opposite. My present to the young couple was purposely small in order to avoid suspicion; I let them have my landau so that they could drive on the Corso and enjoy the Carnival, and I ordered Costa to take a box for them at the Teatro Capranica.[43]

Intending to leave Rome on the second day in Lent, I went to receive the Holy Father's blessing at twenty-two o'clock, just when the whole city was on the Corso. He received me most graciously. He said he was surprised I was not watching the great show with everyone else. He kept me for a good hour, talking of Venice and Padua, and when I again commended myself to his good offices in the matter of a pardon which would permit me to return to Venice, he told me to commend myself to God.

On the next day, which was the last day of the Carnival, I went to the Corso on horseback, dressed as Pulcinella,[44] throwing sweetmeats into all the landaus in which I saw children and finally emptying my basket on Momolo's daughters, whom I saw in my landau with Costa. Toward nightfall I went and took off my costume, then went to Momolo's, where I was to see Mariuccia for the last time. Our supper party was much the same as the one on the previous Sunday; but what was new to me, and very interesting, was that I saw Mariuccia married and that I thought her husband had a different attitude toward me from the one I had observed in him the first time I had seen him.

Wanting to know all, I found an opportunity to sit down beside Mariuccia at a time when we could talk freely. She gave me a detailed account of the whole of the first night, and she praised all her husband's excellent qualities. He was gentle, in love, even-tempered, and had become her fond friend after she had confided to him that I was her only benefactor.

"And he did not suspect," I asked, "a secret understanding between us and a few meetings?"

"Not in the least. I told him that what you had done to make me happy had been entirely through my confessor, after you had spoken with me only once in the church, where I had informed you of the good chance I had of being married to him."

"And you think he believed you?"

"I am sure of it; but even if he didn't, isn't it enough if he pretends to?"

"Certainly; I should even think more highly of him, for I would rather you were married to an intelligent man than to a fool."

This faithful narrative from Mariuccia's lips was the reason why, when I said good-by to the whole company, having to leave on the next day but one, I embraced the wigmaker, presenting him with my watch, and gave his wife a handsome ring of the same value. After that I went home to bed, telling Costa and Leduc that we would begin packing the next day.

But the next morning at nine o'clock I received a note from Lord Lismore, in which he asked me to go alone to the Villa Borghese[45] about noon to talk with him. Though I clearly foresaw what he would have to say to me, I went. I was in a position to give him some good advice, and my friendship for his mother made it my duty to go.

Since he was waiting for me where I could not fail to pass, he comes to meet me and hands me a letter from his mother, which he had received the day before and in which she told him that Pâris de Marmontel had just sent her a note saying that he had received a draft on her for two hundred thousand francs issued at Rome by him, which he would honor if she would be so good as to supply the funds. She had replied that she would let him know within three or four days if she could transfer the amount to him. She told her son that she had only asked for the delay to gain him time, which he should use to reach some place of safety, for he could be sure that his draft would be protested.

I hand him back her letter and tell him he must vanish.

"Give me the means, by buying this ring. You would not know that it does not belong to me if I had not told you so in confidence."

I arranged to meet him again at four o'clock, and I went to have the stone, which had been removed from the setting, appraised by one of the leading jewelers in Rome. After telling me that he knew the stone he declared it worth as much as two thousand Roman scudi. I took them to him, five hundred in gold and fifteen hundred in paper which he was to take to a banker who would give him a bill of exchange on Amsterdam for the amount in bank notes. He said that he would leave alone at nightfall and ride at full gallop to Leghorn, taking only a small courier's satchel with his absolute necessities and especially his precious blue ribbon. I wished him a good journey and kept the stone, which I had set in Bologna ten days later.

On the same day I obtained a letter of introduction from Cardinal Francesco Albani[46] to Monsignor Onorati, the Nuncio,[47] in Florence, and another from the painter Mengs to the Chevalier Mann,[48] whom he asked to put me up. I was going to Florence for La Corticelli and for my dear Teresa, and I counted on the Auditor's pretending not to know that I had returned to Tuscany in spite of the unjust order he had given me, and the more so if the Chevalier Mann should be putting me up.

On the second day of Lent the news of Lord Lismore's disappearance was the talk of the city. The English tailor was ruined, the Jew who owned the ring in despair, and all the scapegrace's wretched servants turned out into the street almost naked, for the tailor had despotically confiscated whatever he could lay his hands on, saying that it must all be the property of the swindling Lord who had ruined him.

The comic side of the tragedy was enacted for me by Poinsinet, who appeared before me clad in a redingote under which he had on nothing but his shirt. The host, having seized everything he possessed, had threatened to send him to prison when he had told him he was not in His Lordship's service.

"I haven't a copper," he said, "or another shirt, I know nobody, and I see nothing for it but to throw myself into the Tiber."

He was not destined to drown in the Tiber, but in the Guadalquivir, in Spain. I lightened his despair by telling him that he was at liberty to come to Florence with me, but no farther, for I had someone waiting for me in Florence. So he stayed with me, sedulously composing verses until the moment of my departure.

My dear brother Giovanni gave me a most beautiful onyx. It was a cameo representing a bathing Venus in bas-relief. It was a genuine antique, twenty-three centuries old, for with a very strong lens one could read the name of the sculptor Sostratus.[49] I sold it two years later in London to Dr. Maty[50] for three hundred pounds sterling, and it may still be in the British Museum.

So I set off with Poinsinet, whose gloom kept me entertained with the most amusing ideas. On the next day but one I arrive in Florence, going directly to Vannini's, who makes an effort to conceal his surprise at seeing me. I at once wait on the Chevalier Mann, whom I find at table alone; he receives me cordially, reads Mengs's letter, and asks me if the matter between the Auditor and myself has been settled, I say it has not, and I see him look chagrined, he tells me frankly that he would compromise himself if he put me up, that I had been ill advised to return to Florence.

"I am only here in passing."

"That is all very well; but you must realize that you cannot avoid going to see the Auditor"

I promise him I will do so, and I go back to my inn. No sooner have I entered my room than a police officer comes to tell me that the Auditor wishes to speak with me and will expect me early the next morning. The order annoys me, and in my ill-humor I decide to leave rather than to obey a command which was an insult to me. With this idea in mind, I set out; I go to Teresa's, I am told that she has left for Pisa; I go to La Corticelli's, she falls on my neck and makes all the Bolognese grimaces appropriate to the occasion. It is a fact that, though she was pretty enough, the only real attraction the girl had for me was that she made me laugh.

I give her mother money, ordering her to make us a good supper, and I go out with the girl, telling her that we will take a walk. I escort her to my inn, I leave her with Poinsinet, then I call Costa and the innkeeper into the other room. In his presence I order Costa to leave the next morning with Leduc and all my effects and to come to Bologna, where he will find me lodged at the

"Pilgrim."[51] The innkeeper departs. I then order Costa to leave Florence with Signora Laura and her son, telling her, as was true, that I had gone ahead with her daughter; I tell Leduc the same. After that I take Poinsinet aside and give him ten zecchini, asking him to find lodgings elsewhere. He weeps with gratitude and tells me that he will leave on foot the next morning for Parma, where he is sure that Monsieur Dutillot[52] will not leave him without succor.

I go back to the room in which La Corticelli was, I tell her to come with me; she thinks we are going back to her mother's; but, without enlightening her, I go to the post station, I have two horses harnessed to a chaise, and I order the postilion to drive to L'Uccellatoio,[53] the first post station on the road to Bologna.

"But where are we going?" she asks me.

"To Bologna."

"And Mama?"

"She will come tomorrow."

"Does she know it?"

"No; but she'll know it tomorrow when Costa tells her and takes her and all my luggage with him."

La Corticelli declares it an excellent joke, she laughs, and we set off.

CHAPTER XII[1]

I arrive in Bologna. I am expelled from Modena. I go to Parma and to Turin. The beautiful Jewess Leah. The milliner R.

LA CORTICELLI had a mantle well lined with fur, but the fool who was carrying her off did not have even a cloak. The wind was very cold; nevertheless I would not stop. I was afraid of being followed and forced to return, which would have caused me the keenest mortification. A scudo which I gave the postilion to drink my health induced him to go at full gallop. I thought the wind would blow me away on the crest of the Apennines; but nothing could stop me for more than the three or four minutes required to change horses. The postilions thought I was a prince abducting the girl who was with me. The idea of being taken for the heroine of an abduction made the little madcap laugh at the top of her lungs for all the five hours it took us to make forty miles. We left Florence at eight, and I did not stop until an hour after midnight at a post station in Papal territory, where I had nothing more to fear. The name of the station was "The Ass Unloads";[2] the name set my feather-brained companion laughing, and we went upstairs. The whole household was asleep, but the racket I made and three or four paoli which I at once distributed among the servants got me a fire lighted and set everyone scurrying to prepare a repast of some sort. We were dying of hunger and cold. The innkeeper told us there was nothing to eat, but I laughed at him; he had butter, eggs, macaroni, rice, Parmesan cheese, bread, and good wine; and the idiot did not see that we had the ingredients for an excellent meal. I got my way; and I had a bed made up which astonished the innkeeper, for I had insisted that all the bed furniture from four others should be used in making it up. La Corticelli, who was eating like a madwoman, suddenly said, "What will Mama say?" and burst into such hysterical laughter that she seemed on the verge of expiring.

We went to bed at four o'clock in the morning after ordering that we be waked when a four-horse English carriage[3] arrived. Stuffed with macaroni as we were, and tipsy from Chianti and Montepulciano,[4] we did not feel like making love, and when we woke what sports we indulged in amounted to very little. It was an hour after noon; we were ready to eat; and the innkeeper, following my instructions, gave us a very good meal. But when I saw darkness fall without having seen my carriage arrive I began to wonder what could have happened; however, La Corticelli refused to hear of anything untoward. I went to bed after supper, having decided to send the post master's son to Florence if my party did not arrive during the night. They did not arrive, and I dispatched an express messenger to Costa to learn what had happened; for if there had been violence of any kind I would have gone back to Florence myself, despite La Corticelli, who would have been very averse to returning.

The messenger I sent left at noon and came back at two o'clock to tell me that my party would arrive in less than an hour. My carriage was being drawn by horses supplied by a *vetturino,* and was followed by a two-horse calèche in which there were an old woman and a boy.

"It's Mama!" said La Corticelli, "Oh, how we'll laugh! We must have a good meal got ready for her and let her tell her whole amazing story, which she will remember to her dying day."

Costa told me that he had been delayed for twenty-four hours because the Auditor, to avenge himself for my having disregarded his order, had sent word to the post station to refuse my servants horses, but that a certain Agresti, who was not subject to the order, had given him horses, undertaking to get him to Bologna in two days and a half. But here is the discourse delivered by Signora Laura, which rejoiced her daughter's soul:

"I got supper ready, as you ordered me, and I spent more than ten paoli, as you will see, and which you will repay me, for I'm a poor woman; but just think how anxious I was when I saw hour after hour pass and never saw you come back. At midnight I sent my son to Vannini's to find out what had become of you, and imagine my grief—for I'm a mother—when my son came back and said no one at your inn knew anything about you. I spent the night without ever going to bed, and in the morning I went to the authorities and complained that you'd carried off my daughter and demanded that they send someone after you to make you bring her back; but think of it! they laughed at me and told me I shouldn't let her leave my house with you unless I went with her too. What slander!"

"Slander," said La Corticelli.

"Certainly, for it was as much as to tell me that I had consented to my daughter's being carried off, which those vermin had no reason to suppose, because if I'd consented to it I wouldn't have gone to them for justice. After that I went to Doctor Vannini's, where I found your valet, who assured me you'd gone to Bologna, where I'd find you if I'd follow your carriage, and you'll pay for it, I hope, for that's what I arranged with the *vetturino.* But let me tell you: what you've done is too much for a joke."

I consoled her by assuring her that I would pay for everything. We left the next morning, and we arrived in good time at Bologna, where I went to stay at La Corticelli's, sending my valets to an inn from which I had meals brought in for the whole family. I spent a week there, in the course of which my madcap mistress, who knew a quantity of girls as giddy as herself, procured me pleasures so delicious that I sigh every time I recall them to my aging memory. There are cities in Italy where one can procure all the pleasures which a sensual man finds in Bologna; but they are nowhere to be had so cheaply or so easily or so freely. In addition, one eats and drinks very well there, one strolls under the arcades, and one finds not only wits but men of learning in the sciences. It is a pity that—whether because of the air or the water or the wine—one contracts a slight case of the itch, which gives the Bolognese the pleasure of scratching, and that is not so trifling a pleasure as one might think when the itching is not too intense. Especially during the month of March the ladies use their fingers with enchanting grace to scratch their hands.

I left La Corticelli about the middle of Lent, wishing her a good journey too, for she was about to go to Prague, where she had been engaged for a year as second ballerina. I promised I would go to fetch her in person and take her to Paris with her mother. The reader will see how I kept my word.

It was sheer whim which led me to stay in Modena, which I reached the same day. The next morning I go out to see paintings, I return for dinner, and I find a boor awaiting me with an order from the government to continue my journey at latest the next day. I call the innkeeper, and I make him repeat the order in his presence. I told him I had understood. He goes.

"Who is that man?" I ask the innkeeper.

"A constable."

"And the government sends me a constable?"

"The person who sent him can be no one but the Bargello."[5]

"Then is the Bargello the Governor of Modena? The low scoundrel!"

"Low scoundrel! Don't let anyone hear you. All the aristocrats speak to him. He manages the opera;[6] the greatest noblemen eat at his table and so gain his good will."

"But why does this noble Bargello expel me from Modena?"

"I have no idea. Go and talk with him. You will find a man of parts."

Instead of going to see the blackguard,[7] I go to see the Abate Testagrossa;[8] still alive and then resting on his laurels, he was a man who, despite his humble birth, had distinguished himself by his intelligence and whom his master the Duke of Modena[9] had judged worthy to conduct political negotiations for him at several courts. This Abate, who had made my acquaintance in Vienna in 1753, after greeting me most graciously, was greatly annoyed to hear what had just befallen me.

"What can I do?" I ask him.

"Leave, for the man is capable of treating you even more insultingly."

"I will leave. But could you do me the favor of acquainting me with the reason for this strange proceeding?"

"Come back this evening."

That evening the Abate told me that the Bargello, as soon as he had seen my name in the register, had guessed that I was the same Casanova who had escaped from the Leads, and, one of his duties being to guard the city against suspicious persons, he hastened to order me to leave.

"I am surprised," I said, "that, telling me this, you do not feel ashamed for the Duke of Modena. What an outrage! What deliberate subversion of morality and even of the good of the State!"

The next morning, just before I get into my carriage, a tall, robust man between twenty-five and thirty years of age, with the look of a cutthroat, asks me for a word in private.

"If you will stop in Parma for only three days," he says, "and will now promise on your honor that you will give me fifty zecchini when I come to ask you for them and you have learned for a certainty that the Bargello has been killed, I promise to kill him myself by blowing out his brains with my carbine tonight."

"I thank you," I said, "and I beg you to let him die his natural death. Here is a scudo; go and drink my health."

It is certain that if I had been sure the villain was not setting a trap for me I should have given him the promise he asked for; but I feared a plot. I reached Parma the next day and put up at the post station inn, giving the name of Chevalier de Seingalt, which I still bear; for once a man of honor takes a name to which no one else can lay claim it is his duty to keep it. I had then borne it for two years,[10] though I often added it to my family name.

I had scarcely reached Parma before I dismissed Costa; but a week later, the day before my departure, I took him back. His father, a violinist and very poor, had a large family to provide for.

I inquired for Monsieur d'Antoine,[11] and he was no longer there; and the Director of the Mint, Dubois-Chatellerault,[12] was in Venice. He was there by permission of the Infant-Duke, to set up a coining press,[13] and he did it very well; but it was not used. Venetian coins are not milled. Republics are superstitiously attached to their old ways; they fear that the slightest change of any kind is likely, or indeed is bound, to have an effect on the constitution which will be detrimental to the State. *Ne tangas Camerinam* ("Touch not Camerina").[14] The Venetian government is still as rigidly Greek[15] in spirit as it was at the birth of the Republic.

My Spaniard, who was delighted when I dismissed Costa on arriving in Parma, was annoyed when I took him back.

"He is no profligate," he said, "he is sober, he does not frequent bad company; but I believe he is a thief precisely because he makes a point of not cheating you in small matters. You will be his victim. He's waiting to gain your entire confidence before he makes his move. That's not my way; I'm a bit of a cheat, but you know me"

The rascal saw better than I did. Five or six months later Costa stole fifty thousand scudi from me. Twenty-three years later—that is, in 1784—I found him in Vienna as valet to Count Hardegg,[16] and, finding him poor, I was tempted to get him hanged. I proved to him, documents in hand, that I could do it. At that he took refuge in tears and in the pity of an honest man named Bertrand who was in the household of the Sardinian Ambassador. This Bertrand, whom I esteemed, so worked on me that I heroically pardoned him. When I asked the wretch what he had done with all he had stolen from me in money and jewels he said he had lost it all by furnishing the funds for a *biribissi*,[17] that it had been his own associates who had cleaned him out. In that same year he had married Momolo's daughter, who had left him very soon afterward.

But to continue.

At Turin I went to lodge in a private house in which the Abate Gama, who was expecting me, was staying. I took the whole apartment on the second floor, laughing at the sermon on economy which he immediately preached me. Having assured him again that I would be ready to go to Augsburg whenever the representatives of the belligerent powers had assembled there, he assured me, on his side, that I would receive credentials in May and that he himself would give me all the necessary instructions. I was supremely gratified by this mission.

After making adequate arrangements with the mistress of the house for my meals I went to the coffeehouse, where the first person I saw was the self-styled Marquis Desarmoises, whose acquaintance I had made at Aix-en-Savoie. The first thing he told me was that games of chance were forbidden and that the ladies I had met at Aix would undoubtedly be delighted to see me again. As for himself, he said that he lived by playing backgammon, despite his not being lucky with dice, for in backgammon knowledge of the game outweighed bad luck. I could well understand that, with luck favoring neither player, the one who knew the game better would win, but I did not understand how the opposite case was possible.

We went to walk on the beautiful promenade leading to the citadel,[18] where I saw a quantity of pretty girls. Turin is the city of Italy in which the sex has all the charms for which love can hope, but in which the police are the most troublesome; and, the city being small and very populous, the spies know everything; it follows that the only freedom one can enjoy there is that which one obtains by taking the greatest precautions and employing the services of clever bawds, whom one must pay very well, for, if they are caught, they risk being punished with a severity nothing short of barbarous. Neither public prostitutes nor kept women are allowed there, which is most gratifying to the married women, as the ignorant police should have foreseen. For the same reason the devotees of the wristband game[19] make holiday there.

Among the beauties I see, only one impresses me so much that I ask about her. Desarmoises knew them all. He said that she was the famous Leah,[20] a Jewess and unconquerable, having resisted the attacks of the most celebrated amateurs of the sex in Turin; that, her father being a horse dealer, there was no difficulty in going to her house, but that there was nothing to be done there. I determine to take my chances, and he promises he will guide me to her house. I invite him to dine with me; on our way we encounter Monsieur Z.[21] and two or three more of the people who had been at Aix, I bestow and receive compliments, but I am not of a mind to call on any of them or even to leave a visiting card at the Marquis de Prié's[22] door.

Immediately after dinner he shows me the way to the Jewish horse dealer's outside the Porta del Po.[23] I ask him if he has a good saddle horse for sale; he sends a boy to the stable to bring one out; meanwhile, into the courtyard comes his charming daughter to receive compliments on her charms. I find her beyond praise. Slender, at most twenty-two years of age, dressed tastefully but without affectation, wearing no cap over hair whose blackness was just softened by a touch of powder, complexion of lilies and roses, lively and eloquent eyes which, under proud brows, declared war on all who came to conquer them. Her whole appearance betokened intelligence and social grace. Lost in ecstatic contemplation, I did not see the horse in front of me. Though my thoughts are elsewhere, I manage to examine it, looking at all its points as if I am an expert, I open its mouth, I inspect its feet and knees, I give it a sudden blow on the back, I feel its ears, I make it walk, trot, and gallop, and I tell the Jew that I will come the next day in top boots to ride it. It was a dapple gray, and priced at forty Piedmontese pistole, which comes to about a hundred zecchini. The beautiful Leah tells me that the horse is gentleness itself and that its amble is as fast as any other horse's trot.

"I have tried it several times," she says, "and if I were rich it would be mine."

"Then you would both be happy, for I am sure that it has loved you ever since you rode it. I will not buy it until I see you on its back."

She blushes, her father says she must do me the favor; she consents; I promise I will be there at nine o'clock in the morning.

I keep my word, and I find her dressed in riding clothes. What a body! What a likeness to the Callipygian Venus[24] in her hips, her thighs, her knees! I had already fallen under the spell. She mounts like the most nimble Spaniard, and I mount another horse which is standing ready for me. I accompany her everywhere, the horse went very well, but my thoughts were all of her. Returning to the house at a walk I tell her that I will buy the horse, but as a present for her, and that if she will not accept it she shall not see me again. The only condition I make is that she will ride it in the morning whenever I ask her to do me the favor. I say that I will stay in Turin five or six weeks, that I had fallen in love with her on the promenade, and that buying the horse had been only a pretext for gaining the sweet satisfaction of seeing her and declaring my passion. She replies, very sensibly, that the friendship she had inspired in me was infinitely flattering and that the generous present I was making her was not necessary to assure me of her own. That the condition I imposed on her was one which she cherished and that she would take pleasure in accepting the present I offered her even if she were not sure that her father would be displeased if she refused it; she ended by asking me to give her the horse in her father's presence, repeating my stipulation that I would not buy it if she refused it.

This I proceeded to do. Her father, whose name was Moses, thought it an excellent bargain, he congratulated his daughter, accepted, tendered me a receipt for the forty pistole I gave him, and invited me to breakfast with him on the following day.

The next morning Moses received me with the utmost respect. The charming Leah, in female attire, said that if I wanted to ride she would quickly dress as she had done the day before, and I replied that we would ride another day; but her father, who was always thinking of money, said that if I liked driving he could sell me a very pretty phaeton with two excellent horses. His daughter said he should show them to me, and he went off to order the horses harnessed.

"I will look at the carriage," I said to Leah, "but I will not buy it, for I have no use for it."

"You could go driving with the lady whom you love."

"With you. But perhaps you would not dare."

"Why not, in the country, outside of Turin?"

"Very well, I will look at it."

Her father drives up in the phaeton, I go downstairs with Leah, and I look at the carriage and the horses; I find them very attractive.

"You can have the whole rig for only four hundred zecchini; after Easter anyone who wants it will have to give me five hundred for it."

We get in with Leah, we drive a mile and return to the house. I tell Moses I will give him my answer the next day; he leaves, and I go upstairs again with Leah.

"The rig," I say, "is certainly worth four hundred zecchini, and tomorrow I will pay them with pleasure; but on the same conditions on which I bought the horse, and with one more—that you will grant me all the favors which are granted to love."

"You speak very clearly. I reply no less clearly. I am a decent girl and I am not for sale."

"Permit me to tell you, my beautiful Leah, that all women, decent or not, are for sale. When a man has the time, he buys them with his attentions, and when he is in a hurry, as I am, he has recourse to presents and money."

"Then he takes the wrong course; he would do better to inspire love by the assiduity of his attentions."

"Nothing would make me happier; but, I repeat, I am in a hurry."

Her father comes back, and a moment later I leave, saying that if I could not return on the morrow I would come some other day and we would talk about the phaeton.

It was clear that Leah had taken me for a spendthrift ready to become her dupe. She would have liked to get the phaeton on the same terms on which she had got the horse. For my part, I had been prepared to lose a hundred zecchini; but that must suffice. My course must be to suspend my visits and see what would result between Leah and her father, who, with his love of money, must be very much displeased that she had not found some way to make me buy the phaeton, whether by giving or not giving herself to me, for that could not matter to him. I was sure that in the end I should see them come to me.

It was on Saturday that I saw the beautiful Jewess on the promenade at the citadel.

"We see nothing more of you," she said; "either come to breakfast with me tomorrow morning or I will send you the horse."

I promised I would come, and I kept my word. She had me breakfast with her aunt, who was there only for propriety's sake, and after breakfast she put on riding clothes in my presence, but with her aunt still there. She stepped out of her skirt, under which she already had breeches, then took off her corset and put on a jacket, letting me see what I pretended not to see; but she knew what she was about. She asked me to arrange her jabot, and in doing so I touched what had previously engaged only my sight. I knew that she had a plan, and that my success depended entirely on foiling it. I had hopes of victory.

Her father arrived just as we were mounting; he said that if I would buy the phaeton and the horses he would let me have them for twenty zecchini less. I replied that it lay with his daughter to make me do whatever she pleased when we came back from our ride.

We set off at a walk, and she says that, having told her father that she could make me buy the carriage and horses, I ought to buy them so that he would not be angry with her.

"Buy them," she says, "on the understanding that you will not give them to me until you are sure that I love you. I promise we will go driving alone together whenever you please, so long as we do not get out anywhere; but I think you no longer care about that, your affection was only a passing fancy."

"To convince you that mine was not a passing fancy, I will buy the phaeton and have it put in a coach house in Turin and I will keep the horses in a stable and not use them; but if you do not make me happy within a week I will sell them."

"Come tomorrow."[25]

"I will come, but I want a pledge of your affection this morning."

"This morning? I couldn't."

"I will go upstairs with you; and when you change your clothes you can grant me some favors."

Back at the house, we get out, and she astonishes me by telling her father that the phaeton is mine and he has only to have the horses harnessed. The Jew laughs, he goes up with us, and Leah confidently tells me to count out the money.

"I haven't it on me, but I can give you a note."

"Here are pen and paper."

I immediately write the banker Zappata to pay 380 zecchini at sight. The Jew leaves to collect them, and Leah remains alone with me.

"By your trust in me," she says, "you have rendered yourself worthy of my heart."

"Then quick—get undressed."

"No. My aunt is in the house, she might come in, and I daren't lock the door. You shall be content with me tomorrow. But now I'm going to undress; so you go into that closet. You shall come out as soon as I am in women's clothes again."

I consent, and she locks me in. Looking at the door from bottom to top, I see a crack high up between the two leaves, I get on a stool, and I see the whole room, and Leah sitting before me on a sofa and immediately beginning to undress. She changed her shift, took off her shoes and stockings, wiped her feet, examined a toenail, took down her breeches, a button dropped off, and she bent to get it from under the sofa; there was no end to the postures in which she exhibited herself, and I felt certain she knew I was at the crack. I could not refrain from masturbating.

When she was dressed she opened the door; I fall on her neck, I tell her I have seen everything, she will not admit it, I try to enforce my rights, she resists, and in comes her father, thanking me and saying that his house and everything in it are at my service, after which he gives me a receipt for 380 zecchini. I leave thoroughly vexed, and I return to my lodging in the Via Po[26] in the phaeton. I put it in my coach house, and I send the horses to a stable, keeping the coachman. I was of a mind not to see Leah again. She had pleased me in her postures, but the pleasure she had given me had arisen entirely from an irritation which Love could not but abhor. She had forced him to be a thief, and the starving child had given in; but when afterward he thought he had the right to demand the same fare freely given and was refused it, scorn took the place of esteem. Leah would not admit that she was a whore, and my love would not consent to be a cheat.

I made the acquaintance of an amiable Chevalier, a man of letters, a soldier, and a great lover of horses, whose only fault was horse-faking. He introduced me to several families of consequence; but I did not cultivate them, for I had no wish to be drawn into the sentimental relationships which were all that they offered; what I wanted was substantial pleasures, for which I was willing to pay cash. The Chevalier de Brézé[27] was not the man I needed. He bought my phaeton and the horses for thirty zecchini less than I had paid for them, and he left for the country. A Signor Baretti,[28] who had known me at Aix-en-Savoie and who acted as croupier for the Marquis de Prié, took me to call on La Mazzoli,[29] a former dancer, then being kept by the Cavaliere Raiberti,[30] a cold, very gentlemanly personage who directed the Department of Foreign Affairs. La Mazzoli, who was not pretty, had several girls come to her house for me, but I did not find any of them worthy to take the place of Leah, whom I thought I no longer loved. I was mistaken.

The Cavaliere Coconà,[31] who had the pox at the time, offered me his mistress; she was a seamstress, whom, despite all she said to me, I never dared to touch. After a week I stopped seeing her. His brother Count Trana, whom I had also known at Aix, introduced me to Signora Sc.,[32] who tried to inveigle me into committing a crime. My Good Genius kept me from it. Count Trana cleared himself. Not long afterward his uncle died and he became rich. He married and was unhappy.

I was bored; and Desarmoises, who regularly ate at my table, became uneasy. I was thinking of going to Milan. He advised me to make the acquaintance of a French milliner, of some celebrity in Turin, known as "La R." [33] She employed seven or eight girls, who sewed for her in a room next to her shop. He thought that, if I went about it in the right way, I could get one of them. Since I had money I did not think it would be difficult. I went to La R.'s shop to buy some black blond-lace which

I wanted to send to Venice. On entering I was surprised to see Leah, who was bargaining for a number of things she had chosen and which she protested were too dear. She said, reproachfully but kindly, that she had thought I must be ill; I replied that I had been busy. She attracted me. I told her she would see me the next day. She invited me to a Jewish wedding party, at which, she said, I would find a large crowd. I knew that it would be entertaining, and I promised to go. After bargaining for a long time without coming to terms, Leah left, and La R. was going to put away all the gewgaws at which she had been looking, when I said that I would buy them myself. She smiled, I paid her, and she asked me where I was staying and at what time she should send me my purchases.

"You might do me the honor, Signora, of coming to breakfast with me tomorrow morning and bringing them yourself."

"I cannot leave my shop, Signore."

"Then by whom will you send them?"

Despite her thirty-five years, La R. attracted me. I told her that I wanted some black blond-lace. She opened a door and asked me to follow her. I was surprised to see seven or eight girls, all of them pretty, so busy working that they scarcely looked at me. La R. opens several cupboards and takes out magnificent lengths of blond-lace. With my eyes and my attention on the girls, I said that I wanted enough to make two Venetian *bautte*.[34] She knew what they were. In Venice they were the height of luxury. The lace cost me more than a hundred zecchini. She told two of her girls to take it to me the next day together with all the things which Leah had refused and I had bought.

"Yes, Mama."

They rise, and I find them charming. I go back to her shop with La R. and, sitting down at her counter, I praise the beauty of her apprentices, but I say—which was not true—that I would have preferred her to any of them. She declines my proffered homage, saying frankly that she has a lover, and an instant later she tells me he is at the door.

In comes the Comte de Saint-Gilles.[35] He was an old man who could no longer make any possible pretensions to gallantry. I thought that La R. had been trying to hoodwink me; but the next day I learned that she had told me the unvarnished truth. I had met him at the "Change"[36] coffeehouse; I left him with his fair one after making him a bow.

The next morning the pretty girls came, and I ordered chocolate, but they refused it. After giving me my purchases they were about to leave; but I suddenly thought of telling them to take Leah all the things she had chosen and to come back afterward and tell me how she had received the gift. They agreed to do so and waited while I wrote her a note. I could not give the two girls the slightest indication of my affection, for I had not dared to shut my door and the mistress of the house and her ugly daughters found a hundred excuses for constantly coming and going. But when they returned I waited for them at the foot of the stairs, and after giving them a gold pistole[37] I told them they had only to say the word and it was in their power to make my heart theirs. They said that Leah had graciously accepted my handsome present and that she was expecting me.

In the afternoon I pass La R.'s shop, she is alone, she calls to me, and I am glad to go and sit at her counter. She thanked me for my generosity to her girls, and she asks me if I am very much in love with the beautiful Jewess. I tell her frankly that I love her but that, having had no success, I had acted accordingly; she congratulates me, saying that she is nothing but a cheat whose only thought was to fleece the men who were taken with her charms.

"Perhaps that is also the principle of your charming girls."

"My girls are accommodating only when I tell them that they may be so."

"Then I commend myself to your kind offices, for they would not accept even a cup of chocolate from me."

"Their behavior is forced on them; you do not know Turin. Are your lodgings satisfactory?"

"They are excellent."

"Are you perfectly free there? Can you have anyone you choose to supper and do anything you like in your rooms? I am sure you cannot."

"So far I have had no occasion to try it; but I believe—"

"Do not deceive yourself. Everyone in the house is a spy for the police."

"Then you think I could not ask you to supper with one or two of your apprentices?"

"I should take good care not to go. The whole of Turin would know of it, and people would say what was not true."

"And if I went to lodge elsewhere?"

"It is the same everywhere; but I know a house in which you could live as you choose and to which my girls, if proper precautions were taken, could even come to bring you anything you might buy at my shop."

"Where is the house? I will do whatever you tell me to do."

After saying that I must not confide in any Piedmontese, she gave me the address of a small furnished house in which no one lived except the old caretaker and his wife. She said that I could rent it by the month, and that if I paid in advance no one would even ask my name. The house was some two hundred paces from the citadel, the last in an unfrequented street, with a back gate which gave onto the countryside and which I could even enter by carriage.

I went there at once; I found it answered her description in every detail, I rented it for a month, and the very next night I slept there. La R. admired my dispatch.

The next day I went to the wedding to which Leah had invited me, and which I found entertaining; but I resisted all the arts with which she tried to lure me back into her toils. However, I rented a closed carriage from her father, having it sent to my house and putting the horses in my stable; I was thus able to go wherever I pleased and enter and leave at any hour. It was just as if I were outside the city. I had to give the address of my new lodging to the ever too curious Abate Gama, and I thought I had good reason to hide nothing from Desarmoises, whom his poverty made completely dependent on me; nevertheless my door was closed to everyone except when I ordered it opened to people whom I expected. I could not doubt the fidelity of Costa and my Spaniard.

In that auspicious house I had, one by one, but always accompanied by another, all of La R.'s girls, the last of whom, whose name was Vittorina, was obstructed and did not know it. La R., who did not know it either, had given her to me as a virgin, and I was forced to believe her such for the two hours during which I hoped for victory; but finally, exhausted by my efforts, I decided to see what was the matter, candle in hand. I saw the fleshy membrane pierced by a hole so small that the head of a pin would scarcely pass through it. Vittorina herself urged me to put my little finger in by force, but to no purpose. The attempt caused her not the slightest pain, but what was in the way was only flesh. It was the outer extremity of her vagina, which nature by the purest chance had made impenetrable in her case. It condemned Vittorina to die a virgin unless some skillful surgeon performed the celebrated operation on her—the same one which was performed on Signorina Cherufini[38] soon after Signor Lepri[39] married her.

"Your little god Hymen," I said "defies the most vigorous Love to seat himself on his altar."

The poor girl wept.

When I told La R. the story she laughed and said that it could make Vittorina's fortune. It was Count de La Pérouse[40] who had Vittorina's obstruction removed some years later. When I came back from Spain I saw her pregnant.

Early in the morning on Maundy Thursday Moses and his daughter Leah came to see me. I was not expecting them. I greeted them cordially. They did not dare appear in Turin during our holy days. I advised them to spend them with me, and I realized that I should have no great difficulty in persuading them when I saw the scoundrel show me a ring he wanted to sell me. I said that I might buy it from his daughter, and he hoped that I would make her a present of it, but I disappointed him. I kept them for dinner and supper, and I gave them a room with two beds, in which they slept very comfortably.

The next morning, seeing that I had not yet bought the ring and having business, he asked me to let him use my carriage all day, saying that he would come back toward nightfall, at the beginning of his Sabbath, to go home with his daughter. After he left I bought the ring for six hundred zecchini, but on the conditions I laid down, and, being in my house, Leah could not cheat me. She refused me nothing; and in the evening her father was as pleased as I was—but not Leah, who expected that when she left I would give her a present. I told her that I would take it to her in person.

On Easter Monday a man brought me a note summoning me to the police office.

CHAPTER XIII[1]

My victory over the Vicario, the Superintendent of Police. My departure. Chambéry. Desarmoises's daughter. Monsieur Morin. M. M. of Aix. The boarder. Lyons. Paris.

SURPRISED BY such a summons, which promised me nothing pleasant, I dress and go by sedan chair to the office of the Vicario.[2] He was seated at a large table, with eighteen or twenty people standing about him. He was a man sixty years of age, with half of his nose concealed by a black patch because of a malignant ulcer.

"I have had you summoned here," he said, "to order you to leave[3] in three days at the latest."

"You have no right, Signore, to give me such an order; so I will not leave until it suits me."

"I will have you expelled by force."

"Indeed! I cannot resist force; but I hope you will think it over, for in a well-governed city it is unheard of to expel a man who is doing nothing illegal and who has a hundred thousand francs in the hands of a banker."

"So much the better. In three days you can pack and make arrangements with your banker. I advise you to obey: the order comes from the King."[4]

"If I left I should become an accomplice in your injustice; but since you speak in the King's name I will instantly wait on His Majesty. I am sure that he will revoke the unjust order which you have so publicly given me."

"Has not the King power to make you leave?"

"Yes, but only by using force if I resist. He also has the power to sentence me to death, but he has to supply the executioner to carry out the sentence on me."

I had met the Cavaliere Raiberti at the house of a dancer he was keeping; he was the First Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs. I have myself carried to his office,[5] and I tell him the whole story, ending by saying that I must have an audience with the King, for I had made up my mind I would not leave of my own free will. The worthy man advises me to go instead to speak with the Cavalier Ossorio,[6] who was then in charge of Foreign Affairs and who had the King's ear. I like his advice, and I at once wait on the Marchese Ossorio; he was a highly intelligent Sicilian. After telling him all the circumstances, I ask him to bring the matter to His Majesty's attention, since, considering the Vicario's order unjust, I was determined not to leave. He promised he would speak to the King and told me to come back the next day.

I went to dine with the Abate Gama, thinking that I would be the first to bring him the news. But not a bit of it: he knew that I had been ordered to leave and how I had answered the Vicario, and when I told him that I was still determined not to obey he did not dare to condemn my firmness. He assured me that, if I left, he would send me all the necessary instructions at whatever address I should give him.

The Cavalier Ossorio received me the next morning in the most affable manner. The Cavaliere Raiberti had spoken to him on my behalf. He said that he had spoken to the King and to Count d'Aglié[7] as well, and that I could stay; but that I must go at once to speak further with the latter, who would give me what time I might need to finish my business in Turin.

"I am waiting," I said, "for instructions from the Court of Portugal for the Congress to be held in Augsburg, which I shall attend."

"Then you believe that the Congress will be held?"

"No one doubts it."

"There are those who believe it will come to nothing. I am delighted to have been of service to you, and I shall be glad to hear how the Vicario receives you."

So I go to the Vicario, who no sooner sees me than he says that the Cavalier Ossorio had told him I had business which obliged me to remain in Turin a few more days, and so I might stay.

"But no doubt you can tell me approximately how many days you will need."

"I have no way of knowing precisely, for I am awaiting instructions from the Court of Portugal in regard to the Congress which is to be held at Augsburg. I think I might leave for Paris in a month; and if I am delayed longer than that I will do myself the honor of informing you."

"I shall be glad if you will."

I at once went back to the Cavalier Ossorio, who said with a smile that I had caught the Vicario, for I had set an indefinite time. But what a titbit it was for the politic Gama when I told him that the Cavalier Ossorio doubted if the Congress would be held! Nevertheless, I again assured him that I would go to Augsburg and that I would leave in three or four weeks.

La R. lavished congratulations on me, for she could not but be delighted that I had humiliated the Vicario; but we thought it best to give up the little suppers with her girls at my house. Having already had them all, I did not find this small sacrifice too painful. I continued in this course until the middle of May, when I left Turin after receiving from the Abate Gama a letter for Lord Stormont,[8] who was to be the Plenipotentiary for England at Augsburg. It was with him that I was to work in the matter of my mission.

Having decided to see Madame d'Urfé before going to Germany, I wrote to her asking her to send me a letter to Monsieur de Rochebaron,[9] at Lyons, which I might have occasion to use. Intending also to stop at Chambéry for three or four days to pay a visit at the convent grating to M. M., for whom I sighed every time I remembered her, I asked Signor Raiberti for a letter for that city; and I wrote to my friend Valenglart at Grenoble to remind Madame Morin that she had promised to show me a resemblance at Chambéry.[10]

But now for another inauspicious event, considering the very harmful consequences it had for me.

Five or six days before I left Turin, I see Desarmoises appear before me at ten o'clock in the morning, looking very downcast.

"I have just received an order," he said, "to leave Turin within twenty-four hours."

"Do you know the reason for it?"

"It is because yesterday at the Caffè del Commercio[11] I contradicted Count Scarnafigi[12] when he said that the writer of the *Gazette de Berne* was in the pay of France; he left the place in a rage, I followed him to make him listen to reason, but in vain; he apparently lodged a complaint, and tomorrow early I shall have to decamp."

"You are French, and since you can claim the protection of the Ambassador,[13] you would make a mistake in leaving so precipitately."

"In the first place the Ambassador is away, and in the second place my barbarous father disowns me. I would rather leave. I will wait for you in Lyons. I only ask you to lend me another hundred scudi, which I will repay you."

I gave him the small amount, and he left the next day at dawn. I told him that I would stop for some days in Chambéry.

After obtaining a letter of credit on Augsburg I left, and the next day I crossed the Mont Cenis on mules—I, Costa, Leduc, and my carriage. Three days later I reached Chambéry, putting up at the only inn,[14] where all travelers are obliged to lodge.

Seeing a very pretty young lady come out of the room next to mine, I ask the maid who she is, and she says she is the wife of a young man who was staying in bed recovering from a sword thrust he had received four days before on his way from France.

Leaving my room to go to the post station for the letter Valenglart was to have written me, I stop before my neighbor's, the door of which was open, and offer her my services as her fellow lodger; she asks me to come in; I see a handsome young man sitting up in bed, and I ask him how he feels. His wife tells me that the surgeon had forbidden him to talk because of a sword thrust in the chest which he had received half a league away on the road from France, that he hoped to be cured in a few days and continue his journey to Geneva. Just as I am about to leave, the maid comes in and asks me if I will sup alone in my room or with Madame. I reply, laughing at her blunder, that I will sup in my room, that I have not the pleasure of the lady's acquaintance; the latter replies that it would be an honor and a pleasure if I would sup with her, and her husband says the same in a whisper; so I say that I will gladly avail myself of his kindness. Whether she was married or unmarried, she was charming. When I found her escorting me to the stairs I took the liberty of kissing her hand, which in France is a tender yet at the same time respectful declaration of love.

I hurry to the post station, and I find two letters, one from Valenglart telling me that Madame Morin would come to Chambéry if I would send a carriage for her. I open the other letter, and I see that it is signed Desarmoises. He wrote me from Lyons. He said that on his way from Chambéry he had met his daughter in a carriage with "a scoundrel" who had carried her off and that he had pinked him in the body with his sword but had been unable to stop the carriage which was taking them to Chambéry. He asked me to make inquiries and to persuade his daughter to return to Lyons, and, if she refused, to go to the police for assistance, acting in the name and at the behest of her unhappy father, who demanded her return; he assured me they were not married, and he implored me to use whatever means were in my power to do him this service of friendship. He asked me to answer him at once by express messenger, sending me his address.

I had no need to make inquiries. His daughter could only be my neighbor; but I was very far from taking any steps to send the charming creature back to Lyons.

Returning to the inn, I sent Leduc to Monsieur Valenglart in Grenoble with a four-seated carriage and a letter containing another addressed to Madame Morin, in which I told her that, since I had stopped at Chambéry only for her, I would await her convenience. After that I joyfully abandoned myself to the promising adventure which Fortune was offering me. Mademoiselle Desarmoises and her abductor had inspired me with feelings of the fondest friendship; I did not stop to discover if what was leading me on was vice or virtue.

I enter their room, and I see the surgeon dressing the young man's wound. It was not dangerous; it was suppurating. After the surgeon left, I congratulate him, I recommend diet and silence, and I return to my room for the rest of the day until suppertime, after handing Mademoiselle Desarmoises, in his presence, the letter I had just received from her father. I was sure that she would come and speak to me.

A quarter of an hour later I see her appear before me, looking downcast. She hands me the letter, asking me what I intend to do.

"Nothing. I shall consider myself fortunate if you will enable me to be of service to you."

"I breathe again."

"Could you believe anything else of me? The moment I saw you, you interested me. Are you and he married?"

"No, but we shall be as soon as we reach Geneva."

"Sit down and tell me the whole story. I know that your father has the misfortune to be in love with you and that you shun him."

"So he has told you that; I am glad of it. A year ago he arrived in Lyons, and a quarter of an hour later I took refuge with a friend of my mother's, for I cannot spend so much as an hour with him except at the risk of suffering the most monstrous violence. The young man whom you saw in bed is the only son of a merchant in Geneva; my father himself brought him to our house two years ago, and we immediately fell in love. After my father left, he asked my hand of my mother, who, my father being in Marseilles, did not feel that she had the right to decide my future. She wrote to him in Marseilles, and he replied that he would make up his mind when he returned to Lyons. Meanwhile my lover went to Geneva, where he obtained his father's consent to our marriage, and he came back to Lyons with all the necessary information and an excellent letter of recommendation to Monsieur Tolosan.[15] When my father arrived last year I fled, as I told you, and my lover had Monsieur Tolosan himself ask for my hand on his behalf. My father said he would answer him when I had come home. Monsieur Tolosan told me I should return to my father's house, and I replied that I would do so if my mother would come to fetch me and take me under her protection; but when Monsieur Tolosan told her this she said she knew her husband too well to bring me back home. He again asked my father for his consent, but to no purpose. A week or ten days later he left, then we learned that he was at Aix-en-Savoie, then at Turin, and finally, seeing that my father would not make up his mind, my lover proposed that I go away with him, having Monsieur Tolosan himself assure me that he would marry me in Geneva; my mother consented. So we set off a week ago. By ill luck we took the road through Savoy and met my father not far from this city. He recognized us, he made the carriage stop, he comes to me, he tries to force me to get out, I scream, my lover takes me in his arms, my father seizes his sword and plunges it into his body. Seeing people coming in response to my cries and the coachman's, and believing that he had killed my lover, he got on his horse again and fled at full gallop. I will show you the sword stained halfway up with blood, though the wound is only three inches deep."

"I have to answer his letter. I am trying to think how best to obtain his consent for you."

"There is no need of that. We shall be none the less married and none the less happy without it."

"That is true; but you cannot so lightly disregard your dowry."

"What dowry? He has nothing."

"But when your grandfather the Marquis Desarmoises dies, he will be rich."

"That's a fairy tale. My father has nothing but a small annuity for having served for thirty years as a courier. His father has been dead for twenty years. My mother and my sister live by the work of their hands."

Very much surprised by the shameless effrontery of a man who, after imposing on me in such a fashion, now put me in a position to discover the whole extent of his imposture, I said nothing more. We went to supper and spent three hours at the table. We talked of nothing but the situation, and the wounded man had only to listen to me to know what I thought on the subject. At nineteen, Mademoiselle Desarmoises had every quality to attract.

She wittily ridiculed the foolish passion with which, she told me, her father had loved her madly from the time she was eleven years old.

"And you always resisted him?"

"I resisted him only when he tried to carry his playing with me too far."

"And did that go on long?"

"Two years. I was thirteen when, seeing that I was ripe, he tried to make off with the fruit; but I screamed and jumped out of his bed stark naked and took refuge in my mother's, who from that day on would not let me sleep with him again."

"So you slept with him? How could your mother allow it?"

"She did not think he could love me like a lover, and I had no idea there was anything wrong in it. I believed that all he did to me and wanted me to do to him was only play."

"But you saved the jewel."

"I kept it for my lover."

At that the poor wounded man, weak though he was from hunger, laughed, and she rose from the table and gave him a quantity of kisses. I was in a state of excitement, for her faithful narrative had set the girl before my mind's eye more than stark naked. I thought that if I had been in her father's place she would not have escaped me so easily, and I forgave him for having forgotten in his love that she was his daughter. When she escorted me to my room I made her feel the effect her narrative had produced on me, and she laughed; but since my servants were there, I had to let her go.

The next morning very early I wrote to her father that his daughter was determined not to leave her lover, who was only slightly wounded, and that at Chambéry she was completely safe under the protection of the laws. I went to her room to show her my letter, and, finding her at a loss to express her gratitude, I asked her lover to permit her to embrace me; he opened his arms and said:

"And me too."

My hypocritical love then donned the mask of fatherly affection. I called them my children, and I offered them my purse full of gold if they needed it. The surgeon comes, and I go back to my room. Madame Morin arrived at eleven o'clock with her daughter, preceded by Leduc cracking his whip. I ran to embrace her, thanking her again and again for the favor she was doing me. The first piece of news she gave me was that her niece Mademoiselle Roman[16] was the King's mistress, lived in a fine house in Passy,[17] was five months gone with child [18] and on the way to becoming the Queen of France, as my divine horoscope had predicted.

"At Grenoble," she said, "no one talks of anything but you, and I advise you not to go back there, for you would never be allowed to leave. You will have the whole nobility at your feet and every woman who is eager to know her daughter's destiny. The whole town now believes in judicial astrology, and Valenglart is exultant. He has wagered a hundred louis against fifty that she will give birth to a prince; he is sure he will win; if he loses he will be laughed at."

"He will win. I am going to Paris, and I hope you will give me a letter to Madame Varnier, who will arrange for me to have the pleasure of seeing your niece."

"It is only right that you should, and I will give you a letter to her tomorrow."

I introduced Mademoiselle Desarmoises to her by her lover's family name, after asking her if she would stay for dinner. So she joined the three of us, and after dinner we went to the convent, where M. M., as soon as her aunt was announced, came down to the grating very much surprised at her visit and even more so when she saw me. When Madame Morin introduced me she told me that she had seen me five or six times at the spring at Aix, but that I could not recognize her for she had always gone there veiled. I admired her tact and her presence of mind. I thought she looked even more beautiful. After we spent an hour talking of Grenoble and M. M.'s old friends she left us to ask the Abbess to come down, and to fetch a young girl boarder of whom she was fond and whom she wanted to introduce to Madame Morin.

I availed myself of the opportunity to tell that lady that she was quite right about the resemblance and to ask her to do me the favor of arranging for me to breakfast with her[19] the next morning and of giving her a dozen pounds of chocolate which I had at my lodging. She urged me to give them to her myself.

She came back to the grating with the Abbess, two other young nuns, and the boarder, who was from Lyons and pretty enough to eat. While I, as in duty bound, took on all the nuns, Madame Morin told her niece that I wanted to try some chocolate which I had brought from Turin, if her lay sister would prepare it. M. M. told me to send her the chocolate, saying that she would be delighted to breakfast with us the next morning and with the nuns who were there.

I sent it to her as soon as we were back at the inn, and we supped in Madame Morin's room, still in the company of Mademoiselle Desarmoises, whose charms dazzled me more and more; but I talked to her only of M. M., with whom she felt sure I had had an intrigue at Aix.

The next morning, after the breakfast, I told her she would not find it so easy to give me a dinner for twelve at which we would all be seated side by side at the same table; she replied that we would all be at the same table, the only difference being that half of it would be in the convent and the other half, cut off by a grating, would be in the visiting room. I then said it was something I should like to see, if she would permit me to pay for it; and she consented. So the dinner was fixed for the next day. M. M. undertook to arrange everything and to invite six nuns; I said I would send her the wines. It was Madame Morin who, knowing my tastes, told her to spare no expense.

After escorting Madame Morin, her daughter, and Mademoiselle Desarmoises back to the inn I called on Monsieur Magnan,[20] to whom I had a letter of introduction from the Cavaliere Raiberti, and asked him to find me some good wines, and he gave me all sorts of them in more than sufficient quantities. I sent them to M. M.

Monsieur Magnan was a pleasant-looking, intelligent man, very well off, who lived in a very comfortable house outside the city and had a pleasant wife who had not yet lost her bloom and nine or ten children, among them four very pretty girls, the eldest of whom was nineteen. He was passionately fond of good living, and to convince me of it he invited me to dinner on the next day but one.

After having spent all day in the convent visiting room we would have supped in the wounded man's room in order not to leave him alone, if the surgeon had not told us he must be allowed to sleep.

The next day we went to the visiting room at eleven o'clock, and at noon dinner was announced. The table was a charming sight. The guests numbering twelve, two thirds of them were beyond the grating, for the nuns, counting the boarder, numbered eight and we only four; the grating was between us; but the table appeared to be continuous. I was seated beside M. M.; but to no purpose, for the wall was between us up to the sill, and above that was the grating. At my left I had Mademoiselle Desarmoises, who needed no help in keeping the nuns entertained with amusing stories. We who were outside had Costa and Leduc to wait on us, while the nuns within were waited on by their lay sisters. The abundance of dishes, the bottles, and the conversation made the dinner last three hours; we were all tipsy; and but for the grating I could easily have possessed all the eleven females present, who were in no state to reason. Mademoiselle Desarmoises had become so gay that, if I had not kept her in check, she would have scandalized all the nuns. I could not wait to have her alone with me in some place where nothing would interfere with my forcing her to quench the flame which, at no cost to herself, she had set raging in my soul from the beginning to the end of this unique dinner.

After coffee we removed to another visiting room where we remained until nightfall. Madame Morin took leave of her niece, and the exchange of thanks between the nuns and myself, in which each side tried to outdo the other, went on for a quarter of an hour. After I had told M. M. in everyone's hearing that I would do myself the honor of seeing her again before my departure, we went home, very well pleased with the occasion, which still delights me every time I remember it.

Madame Morin left me a letter to her cousin Madame Varnier, and I promised to write her from Paris whatever I managed to learn about her niece. She drove away at eight o'clock in the morning, preceded by my Spaniard, whom I ordered to convey my compliments to the caretaker's whole family. I went to dine with the pleasure-loving Magnan, finding everything delicious. I promised him I would stay with him whenever I was in Chambéry, and I kept my word.

Leaving Magnan's house, I went to call on M. M., who at once came to the grating alone. After thanking me for visiting her, and for having contrived to make such a brilliant occasion of it under the cloak of her aunt, she said my coming had disturbed her peace of mind.

"I am ready, my dear, to climb the garden wall more nimbly than your ill-omened lover"

"Alas! Believe me, you are already spied on. Everyone here is sure that we knew each other in Aix. Let us forget all, my dear friend, and so spare ourselves the torture of vain desires."

"Give me your hand."

"No, it is over. I still love you, but I cannot wait to know that you are gone. Your leaving will give me a true proof of your affection."

"You amaze me. You appear to be in perfect health; you look more beautiful than ever; I know that you are made for love. I do not understand how you can be content to live in continual abstinence."

"Alas, when one cannot have the reality, one plays at it. I will not hide it from you that I love my young boarder. It is a love which fosters my peace of mind; it is an innocent passion; her caresses suffice to quench a flame which would kill me if I did not diminish its intensity by make-believe."

"And your conscience does not suffer?"

"What I do does not trouble me."

"But you know it is a sin."

"And I confess it."

"And what does your confessor say?"

"Nothing. He absolves me, and I am happy."

"And does your little boarder confess too?"

"Of course; but she sees no reason to tell her confessor what she does not consider a sin."

"I am astonished that her confessor has not enlightened her, for enlightening the young mind is a great pleasure."

"Our confessor is a wise old man."

"Then I must leave without receiving so much as a kiss from you?"

"Nothing at all."

"May I come tomorrow? I shall leave the next day."

"Yes; but I will not come down alone, for the nuns might imagine something. I will bring my little boarder.

Then nothing can be said. Come after dinner, but to the other visiting room."

If I had not known M. M. at Aix her religion would have surprised me; but such was her character. She loved God, and she did not believe that he would fail in mercy because she had not had the strength to overcome nature. I returned to the inn annoyed that she would have nothing more to do with me, but sure that Mademoiselle Desarmoises would make up to me for it.

I found her sitting on the bed beside her lover, whom diet and fever had made extremely weak; she said she would come to supper in my room in order to let the patient rest, and the patient pressed my hand to show me his gratitude.

Having dined all too well at Magnan's, I ate very little; but Mademoiselle Desarmoises, who had not dined, ate and drank with ravenous appetite. She enjoyed my amazement. After my servants left I challenged her to drink glass for glass of punch with me, and it put her in the state of gaiety which wants nothing but to laugh and which laughs to find itself entirely deprived of will power and reason. However, I cannot say that I took advantage of her state of intoxication, for, all her natural voluptuousness being aroused, she could not wait to join in all the pleasures which I urged upon her until two o'clock in the morning, when, both incapable of more, we parted.

After sleeping until eleven o'clock I went to see her in her room, where I found her as fresh as a rose. When I asked her at what hour she wished to dine she replied in the most enchanting manner that she would rather save her appetite for supper. Her lover remarked to me, calmly and politely, that it was impossible to keep up with her.

"At drinking," I said.

"At drinking," he replied, "and at something else too."

She laughed, and hurried to kiss him.

This brief dialogue convinced me that Mademoiselle Desarmoises must adore the young man, for in addition to his being very handsome he was of just the temperament she needed. I went and dined alone. Leduc arrived from Grenoble just as I was leaving to see M. M. He told me that the caretaker's daughters had made him put off his departure while they wrote to me; and he gave me three letters and three dozen pairs of gloves which they had sent me as a present. Their letters were entirely devoted to urging to come and spend a month with them. I had not the courage to return to a town where, with the reputation I had made, I should have had to cast every girl's horoscope or become the most boorish of men by refusing her the favor.

After sending my name in to M. M. I entered the visiting room which she had indicated, and a moment later I saw her before me with the boarder who was the object of her affection. She was not yet twelve years of age, and her face denoted an alliance between sweetness and subtlety; dark, tall, well built, and tightly laced in a corset, she showed her entire bosom, delighted that those who saw it could not think she took pride in it, since all that she displayed was the place for what love might hope to find there. It was easy to guess what the unseen part of her figure was like, and her interesting face impelled one to judge most favorably of all the rest. I told her at once that she was very pretty and that she could not fail to make the man happy whom Heaven had destined to be her husband. I knew that the compliment would make her blush. It is cruel, but it is precisely there that seduction begins. A girl of her age who did not blush would be either an idiot or thoroughly indoctrinated and experienced in all the practices of libertinism. Nevertheless, the source of the blush which rises to a youthful face when its owner is confronted with an alarming idea is a puzzling problem. It may be modesty, it may be shame, and it may be a mixture of the two. It is a conflict between vice and virtue, in which virtue usually succumbs, being overthrown by those henchmen of vice, the desires. Knowing the boarder from what M. M. had told me, I could not but know what caused her to blush.

Pretending not to have noticed her blushing, I talked with M. M. for a moment, then returned to the attack. She had already recovered her composure.

"How old are you, my charming child?"

"Thirteen."

"You're mistaken, darling," said M. M. "You're not quite twelve yet."

"The time will come," I said, "when, instead of adding to your age, you will subtract from it."

"I will never lie, I'm very sure of that."

"Then you want to become a nun?"

"I have not yet received my vocation; but nothing will oblige me to lie even if I live in the world."

"You will begin to lie as soon as you have a lover."

"Then my love will lie too?"

"Of course he will."

"If that were the way of it, love would be a very base thing, but I don't believe it, for I love my dear friend here and I never hide the truth from her."

"But you will not love a man as you love a woman."

"Exactly the same."

"No, for you don't sleep with her, and you would sleep with your lover."

"That makes no difference. My love would be the same."

"What! You wouldn't rather sleep with me than with M. M.?"

"No indeed, for you are a man and you would see me."

"Then you must know you are ugly."

At that she turned to M. M. with her pretty face red as fire, asking her if she was really ugly. She replied, bursting with laughter, that on the contrary she was very pretty, and she took her between her knees. I said that her corset was too tightly laced, for her waist could not possibly be so small. She replied that her corset was so loose that I could put my hand under it. I said that I did not believe it, whereupon she turned her little boarder so that her side was toward me and against the grating and told me to put out my hand; at the same time she pulled up her dress. I put my hand under it, and I found that M. M. was right, but I cursed the shift and the grating which prevented my arm from going farther.

"I believe," I said to M. M., not withdrawing my hand, "that this is a little man; may I convince myself of it?"

But at the same time that I asked her permission, my hand went to work without waiting for it to be granted, and to such good purpose that I convinced and more than convinced myself not only that the boarder was a charming little girl but that M. M. took no less pleasure than she did in my curiosity. The little girl drew away, bestowing a kiss on her dear friend, whose smiling countenance assured her that she had not committed any great sin in letting herself be thus explored; but, on my side, surprise had almost stupefied me. The little girl asked permission to absent herself for a moment. I must have been the cause of it.

"Are you aware," I said to M. M., "that the revelation you have procured me makes me unhappy?"

"Why?"

"Because, having found your boarder charming, I am dying to devour her."

"I'm sorry, for you cannot do any more than you have done; but even if it were possible I would not let you have her, for you would spoil her for me."

"Give me your hand."

"Certainly not. I don't want to see."

"But you are not angry with my hand or with my eyes."

"On the contrary, if you have had pleasure I am very glad, and if you have awakened desires in her she will love me the more."

"Oh that the three of us could be together in perfect freedom!"

"Impossible."

"Are you sure no one saw us?"

"Perfectly sure."

"The sill of this grating kept many charms from me."

"Why didn't you go to the other one? It is lower."

"Let us go there."

"No, for I couldn't think up a reason."

"I will come tomorrow, and I will leave for Lyons at nightfall."

The little girl returned, and I rose and stood facing her. I had a quantity of charms on my watch chains, and I had not had time to rearrange my clothing properly. She noticed it at once; and my charms gave her curiosity a very plausible pretext.

"You have a lot of pretty things there," she said. "May I look?"

"As much as you like, and touch them too."

At that, M. M., foreseeing what would happen, said that she would return. In no time at all I made the too curious boarder lose all her interest in the charms. She did not try to hide her amazement or the pleasure she took in satisfying her curiosity about an object entirely new to her and all of whose parts she found herself at perfect liberty to examine. She desisted from her investigation when she was startled by an eruption the agreeable sight of which I took the greatest pleasure in providing for her.

Seeing M. M. slowly returning, I quickly rang down the curtain and seated my self. My watches being still on the sill, she asked the little girl if she had found the charms pretty; she answered yes, but soberly. In less than two hours she had made so long a journey that she had good reason to be thoughtful. I spent the rest of the day telling M. M. the whole story of my journey to Grenoble, Marseilles, Genoa, Rome, and Naples, promising that I would come to finish it the next day at the same hour. The little girl said that she was curious to know how I had ended matters with the Duke of Matalona's mistress.

Back at the inn, I supped with Mademoiselle Desarmoises, and after paying her the due tribute of a lover I went off to bed, assuring her that it was entirely on her account that I was still delaying my departure. The next day, after dining with her, I went to the convent visiting room. After sending in my name to M. M. I went to the grating with the low sill.

She came alone, but at once told me that the little girl would soon follow her.

"Yesterday," she said, "you set her on fire; she told me everything and she indulged in every kind of wantonness, each time calling me her husband. You have seduced her, and I am very glad you are leaving, for I believe she would go mad. Wait till you see how she is dressed."

"Are you sure she won't tell?"

"Perfectly sure. All I ask is that you do nothing to her in my presence. When I see that the time has come, I will leave."

In she comes, as gay as possible, with a dress which is open in front and a skirt which reaches only halfway down her legs.

She has scarcely sat down before she reminds me that I had left off my story with Donna Leonilda in bed, and I go on to the end when her mother showed her to me stark naked. At that M. M. left, and the little girl quickly asked what I had done to assure myself that my daughter was a virgin. Stretching out my arm and putting my hand into the opening of her skirt, I made her feel what

I had done, enjoying her emotion, which she did not trouble to hide. She then gave me her hand, so that I could use it for the same purpose; but M. M. came back.

"It doesn't matter," the little girl said, "I've told her everything; she's kind, she won't tell."

I went on with my story, and when I finally came to the place where I described the charming obstructed girl and recounted all the efforts I had vainly made to satisfy her, the little boarder became so curious that, to enable me to teach her, she exposed herself in the most charming of all postures. M. M., seeing that I had risen, fled just as I was about to break my promise to her; but the boarder told me to kneel on the sill and leave it to her. I obeyed, guessing her intention. She was moved to eat me, and she may have hoped to swallow me; but the too great pleasure she aroused in my soul liquefied my heart. She did not leave me until she was convinced of my exhaustion. I sat down, and in gratitude pressed my lips to the sweet mouth which had sucked the quintessence of my soul and my heart.

I left the two angels toward the end of the day, saying good-by and promising that I would see them again the following year.

Back at the inn, I took leave of the wounded man, whom I vainly urged to make free of my purse; he assured me that he was not in need of money. I promised him I would oblige Desarmoises to refrain from proceeding against him if he ever went back to Lyons, and I kept my word. His fiancée came to sup with me and to sport until midnight, when she left me so that I could go to sleep until daybreak, when I had ordered horses.

I arrived in Lyons the next day, going to lodge at the "Parc"[21] and at once sending word to Desarmoises. I told him, concealing nothing, that his daughter's charms had seduced me, that her future husband was a most amiable young man, and that he had every reason to consent to their marriage, though he had no need of his consent. He did all that I demanded of him when I said that I could continue to be his friend only on that condition. He drew up a document, signed by two witnesses, which I sent to the wounded man in Chambéry by express messenger the same day.

Desarmoises insisted on my dining with his wife and his younger daughter in his mean house. The girl had not the slightest charm, and his wife filled me with pity.

Since I had to go to Paris, I gave him the money he needed to wait for me in Strassburg with my Spanish valet. Monsieur de Rochebaron was in the country. I thought I was wise to take only Costa with me, but I was wrong. I took the road through the Bourbonnais, and I reached Paris on the third day, going to lodge at the Hôtel du Saint-Esprit[22] in the Rue Saint-Esprit.

Since I needed to go to bed I at once wrote a note to Madame d'Urfé, sending it to her by Costa. I promised that I would go to dine with her the next day. Costa was quite handsome but spoke French very badly and was rather stupid, so I was sure that Madame d'Urfé would take him for some extraordinary being. She replied that she awaited me with the utmost impatience.

"Tell me," I said to Costa, "how the lady received you and how she read my note."

"She looked at me in a mirror, speaking words which I could not understand; after that she burned incense, walking around the room three times. Then she looked at me closely, smiled, and told me to wait outside for her answer."

Volume Eight

CHAPTER I[1]

My stay in Paris and my departure for Strassburg, where I find La Renaud. My misfortunes in Munich and my unhappy stay in Augsburg.

AT TEN o'clock in the morning, refreshed by the pleasant feeling that I was once more in Paris, which, for all its imperfections, is so attractive that no city in the world can dispute its right to be considered the city of cities, I went to see my dear Madame d'Urfé, who received me with open arms. She told me that young D'Aranda was well and that, if I wished, she would have him to dine with us the next day. I said I should be glad to see him, then I assured her that the operation by which she was to be reborn a man would take place as soon as Querilinte,[2] one of the three heads of the Rosy Cross, had been freed from the dungeons of the Inquisition in Lisbon.

"That is why," I added, "I must go to Augsburg in the course of the next month, where, on the pretext of a mission I have obtained from the government, I shall confer with Lord Stormont[3] with a view to securing the adept's release. To that end, Madame, I shall need a good

letter of credit and some watches and snuffboxes to bestow as occasion demands, for we shall have to win over some of the profane."

"I will gladly see to all that, my dear friend, but you need be in no hurry, for the Congress is not to assemble until September."

"It will never be held, Madame, believe me; but the ambassadors of the belligerent powers will confer even so. If, contrary to my expectations, a congress should be held I should have to go to Lisbon.[4] *In any case I promise you we shall meet again this winter; I shall have to devote the two weeks I shall spend here to defeating a plot of Saint-Germain's."*

"Saint-Germain! He would not dare come back to Paris."

"On the contrary, I am certain he is here now, but he is in hiding. The government messenger who ordered him to leave for London convinced him that the English Ambassador was not taken in by the demand for his surrender which Count d'Affry made to the States General in the King's name." [5]

This whole tale was built on nothing but probabilities, and it will be seen that I guessed right.

Madame d'Urfé then congratulated me on the charming girl who had left Grenoble at my instigation.[6] *Valenglart had written her the whole story.*

"The King adores her," she said, "and she will soon make him a father. I went to see her in Passy with the Duchess of Lauraguais." [7]

"She will give birth to a son who will make France happy, and thirty years from now you will see wonderful things,[8] *which I am unfortunately forbidden to tell you before your transformation. Did you speak to her of me?"*

"No, but I am sure you will find means to see her, if only at Madame Varnier's."

She was right. But now for what chance brought to *pass, as if to urge the excellent woman on to ever more insane delusions.*

About four o'clock we were talking of my travels and our plans, when she took a fancy to go to the Bois de Boulogne. She asked me to accompany her, and I acceded to her request. When we were near Madrid[9] *we got out of the carriage and, making our way deep into the wood, sat down under a tree.*

"It was eighteen years ago today," she said, "that I fell asleep alone in the very place where we are. While I slept the divine Horosmadis[10] *descended from the sun and stayed with me until I woke. As I opened my eyes I saw him leave and ascend to Heaven. He left me pregnant with a daughter, whom he took from me ten years ago, doubtless to punish me for having so far forgotten myself for a moment as to love a mortal after him. My divine Iriasis*[11] *looked like him."*

"Are you perfectly certain that Monsieur d'Urfé was not her father?"

"Monsieur d'Urfé never had intercourse with me again after he saw me lying beside the divine Anael."[12]

"He is the Genius of Venus. Was he squint-eyed?"

"Extremely so. Then you know that he squints?"

"I also know that in the amorous crisis he ceases to squint."

"I did not notice that. He, too, left me because of a sin I committed with an Arab."

"He had been sent to you by the Genius of Mercury,[13] *who is Anael's enemy."*

"It must be so, and it was a grievous misfortune."

"No, your meeting with him made you fit for transformation."

We were walking toward the carriage when suddenly Saint-Germain came in sight; but as soon as he noticed us he turned back and disappeared into another walk.

"Did you see him?" I said. "He is working against us, but our Geniuses made him tremble."

"I am thunderstruck. I shall go to Versailles tomorrow morning to tell the Duke of Choiseul he is here. I wonder what he will say."

When we were back in Paris I took leave of the lady and went on foot to call on my brother, who lived near the Porte Saint-Denis.[14] *He received me with cries of joy, as did his wife, whom I found very pretty but very unhappy, for Heaven had refused her husband the power to prove that he was a man, and she had the misfortune to be in love with him. I say the misfortune, for her love made her faithful; otherwise, since her husband treated her very well and left her perfectly free, she could easily have remedied her misfortune. She was consumed with grief because, having no idea that my brother was impotent,*[15] *she imagined that he deprived her of the object of her desires only because he did not reciprocate the love she felt for him; and her mistake was excusable, for her husband looked a Hercules, and indeed he was one in every respect except that in which she wished to find him so. Her grief brought on a consumption, of which she died five or six years later.*[16] *She did not die to punish her husband, but we shall see later that her death did in fact prove to be a punishment to him.*

The next day I called on Madame Varnier to give her Madame Morin's letter. I was cordially received, and she was so good as to tell me that there was no one whose acquaintance she would rather make than mine, for her niece had told her so many things about me that she was extremely curious to learn more. Curiosity is well known to be woman's greatest infirmity.

"You shall see my beautiful niece, Monsieur," she added, "and she herself will tell you all her circumstances and the state of her heart."

She immediately wrote her a note and enclosed Madame Morin's letter in the same envelope.

"If you want to know what answer my niece sends me," said Madame Varnier, "stay for dinner."

I accepted, and she immediately gave orders that she was at home to no one.

The little Savoyard who had taken the letter to Passy returned at four o'clock with a note in these words: "The moment when I see the Chevalier de Seingalt again will be one of the happiest of my life. Arrange to have him at your house day after tomorrow at ten o'clock, and if he cannot be there then, please let me know."

After hearing the note read and undertaking to be there on time, I left Madame Varnier and called on Madame du Rumain,[17] *who made me promise to devote a whole day to answering a quantity of questions she wanted to ask me, in which I should need the help of my oracle.*

The next day I heard from Madame d'Urfé the amusing reply the Duke of Choiseul had made to her when she told him she had met the Count of Saint-Germain in the Bois de Boulogne.

"It does not surprise me," the Minister had said, "since he spent the night in my study."

The Duke, a man of wit and, above all, a man of the world, was of an expansive nature and could keep secrets only in highly important matters; very different in this respect from the would-be diplomats who think they lend themselves importance by making a mystery of trifles whose concealment is of no more consequence than their revelation. It is true that Monsieur de Choiseul rarely thought anything important; and in fact if diplomacy were not the science of intrigue and craftiness, if morality and truth were the foundation of affairs of state, as they should be, secrecy would be more ridiculous than necessary.

The Duke of Choiseul had pretended to disgrace Saint-Germain in France so that he could have him in London as a spy; but Lord Halifax[18] *was not taken in; he even declared it a clumsy stratagem; but such are the civilities* *which all governments exchange, lest they be found wanting in their own estimation.*

Young D'Aranda, after lavishing caresses on me, asked me to come to breakfast with him at his boarding school, assuring me that Mademoiselle Viard would be delighted to see me.

The next morning I took good care not to miss my appointment with the beautiful Mademoiselle Roman. I was at Madame Varnier's a quarter of an hour before the dazzling brunette arrived, and I awaited her with palpitations of the heart which showed me that the small favors I had managed to obtain had not sufficed to quench the fire she had kindled in me. When she appeared, her full figure rather overawed me. A sort of respect which I felt that I owed to a child-bearing sultana kept me from approaching her with demonstrations of affection, but she was far from thinking she deserved more respect than when I had known her in Grenoble, poor but untouched. She said as much without mincing her words, after cordially embracing me.

"People think I am happy," she said, "everyone envies my lot; but can one be happy when one has lost one's self-respect? It is six months since I have really laughed, whereas in Grenoble, poor and almost without the necessities of life, I laughed naturally, out of a gaiety on which there was no constraint. I have diamonds, laces, a splendid house, carriages, a beautiful garden, maids, a lady in waiting who perhaps despises me; I am treated like a princess by the highest ladies of the Court, who come to see me familiarly; yet not a day goes by in which I do not suffer some mortification."

"Mortification?"

"Yes, petitions thrust upon me, in which I am asked to beg some favor and which I am obliged to refuse, making the excuse that I am powerless since I dare not ask anything of the King."

"But why not?"

"Because I cannot speak to my lover without having the monarch before my eyes. Ah! happiness is in simplicity, not in pomp."

"It is in conforming to one's condition, and you must make every effort to rise to the height of that which destiny has decreed for you."

"I cannot; I love the King and I am always afraid of displeasing him. I always think he gives me more than I deserve; that is why I do not dare to ask any favors of him for others."

"But the King would be happy, I am sure, to prove his love to you by granting you what you ask for the people in whom you show an interest."

"I believe so, and it would make me happy, but I cannot prevail on myself; I have a hundred louis a month for pin money; I distribute them in charity and presents, but sparingly, so that I can reach the end of the month. I have got it into my head, mistakenly no doubt, but ineradicably, that the King loves me only because I do not importune him."

"And do you love him?"

"How could I help it? Perfectly polished, kind, gentle, handsome, amorous, and tender, he has everything needed to conquer a woman's heart.

"He is always asking me if I am satisfied with my furniture, my clothes, my servants, my garden, if I want anything changed. I kiss him, I thank him, I tell him that everything is as it should be, and I am happy to see him pleased."

"Does he ever speak to you of the scion you are going to bestow on him?"

"He often says that in my condition I must take every care of my health. I have reason to hope that he will recognize my son as a prince of the blood; the Queen being dead,[19] *he ought in conscience to do so."*

"You may be sure he will."

"Oh, how I shall love my son! What happiness to be

sure it will not be a girl! But I do not say a word about that to anyone. If I dared tell the King about your horoscope I am sure he would want to know you; but I am afraid of slander.''

''And so am I, my dear. Continue to keep silent on the subject; and may nothing come to trouble a happiness which can only increase and which I am glad to have procured for you.''

We did not part without shedding tears. She left first, after embracing me and calling me her best friend. I remained alone with Madame Varnier to regain my composure, and I said that instead of casting her horoscope I ought to have married her.

''She would have been happier. You may not have foreseen either her shyness or her lack of ambition.''

''I can assure you, Madame, that I did not reckon on either courage or ambition in her. I lost sight of my own happiness, thinking only of hers. But what is done is done. Yet I should be consoled if I saw her perfectly happy. I hope it will come, especially if she bears a son.''

After I dined with Madame d'Urfé we decided to send D'Aranda back to his boarding school so that we should be freer for our cabalistic activities; then I went to the opera,[20] *where my brother had arranged to meet me to take me to supper at Madame Vanloo's,*[21] *who received me most cordially.*

''You will have the pleasure,'' she said, ''of supping with Madame Blondel and her husband.''

The reader will remember that she was Manon Balletti, whom I was to have married.

''Does she know I am here?'' I asked.

''No, I wanted to have the pleasure of seeing her surprise.''

''I am grateful to you for not having wanted to enjoy mine. We shall meet again, Madame, but for today I bid you good-by; as a man of honor I feel that I cannot

permit myself ever to be in any place where Madame Blondel is.''

I departed, leaving the company aghast, and, not knowing where to go, I took a hackney carriage and went to sup with my sister-in-law, who was most grateful to me for coming. But through the whole supper the charming woman did nothing but complain of her husband, who should not have married her since he knew he was incapable of fulfilling the functions of a man toward a woman.

''Why did you not make the experiment before you married him?''

''But was it proper for me to make the advances? And then who could suppose that such a fine man would be good for nothing? Here is the story. I was dancing, as you know, at the Comédie Italienne[22] *and was being kept by Monsieur de Saincy,*[23] *treasurer of the ecclesiastical bursary. It was he who brought your brother to my house. I liked him and it was not long before I saw that he was in love with me. My lover advised me that it was a perfect opportunity to give me a settled position by arranging a marriage. With that idea in mind I conceived the plan of granting him nothing. He would come to see me in the morning, often finding me alone in bed; we talked, he appeared to become ardent, but it all ended in kisses. I was waiting for a formal declaration, which would bring about what I then wanted. It was at that juncture that Monsieur de Saincy settled an annuity of a thousand écus on me, making it possible for me to retire from the stage.*

''Spring having come, Monsieur de Saincy invited your brother to spend a month in the country, taking me with him, and, in order to maintain an appearance of perfect decency, it was agreed that I should be introduced as his wife. The proposal was acceptable to Casanova, who thought it only a joke and probably did not suppose it

could lead to anything. So he introduced me as his wife to my lover's entire family as well as to his relatives—Councillors in the Parlement, officers, men about town—and their wives, who were all women of high fashion. It amused him that the plot of the comedy gave him the right to insist that we sleep together. I could not refuse without putting myself in a most deplorable light; in any case, I was far from averse to making the concession, I saw in it only a quick road to what I most wanted.

"But how can I tell you? Your brother, devoted and showing me countless proofs of his love, having me in his possession for thirty nights in succession, never reached the conclusion which cannot but seem so natural under such circumstances."

"But you should have drawn the inference that he was impotent, for unless he was made of marble, or had taken a vow to remain chaste under the strongest of temptations, his behavior was impossible."

"So it seems to you; but the fact is that he showed himself neither capable nor incapable of giving me proofs of his ardor."

"Why did you not make sure yourself?"

"Vanity, even mistaken pride, kept me from discovering the truth. I did not even suspect it, I indulged in a thousand ideas which flattered my self-esteem. I thought that, truly loving me, he might well fear to put me to the test before I was his wife. This kept me from descending to the humiliating course of trying to find out for myself."

"All that, my dear sister-in-law, might have been natural, though decidedly unusual, if you had been an innocent girl; but my brother knew perfectly well that you had more than passed through your novitiate."

"That is very true; but what fantasies will not arise in the mind of a woman who is in love and whom love and self-esteem spur on in equal measure."

"Your reasoning is very sound, but a trifle belated."

"I know it only too well. Finally we came back to Paris, he to his lodging, I to my little house, he continuing to court me, I receiving him and at a loss to understand such strange behavior. Monsieur de Saincy, who knew that nothing of consequence had taken place between us, made conjecture after conjecture and could not solve the puzzle. 'No doubt he is afraid of getting you with child,' he said, 'and so being obliged to marry you.' I began to believe it myself; yet I thought it a strange line of reasoning for a man in love.

"Monsieur de Nesle,[24] *an officer in the French Guards and married to a pretty woman who had made my acquaintance in the country, went to your brother's to call on me. Not finding me there, he asked him why I was not living with him. He replied quite frankly that I was not his wife and that it had only been a joke. Monsieur de Nesle came to me to ask if it were true, and, when he learned that it was, he asked me if I would be averse to his forcing Casanova to marry me. I replied that, on the contrary, I should be delighted. That sufficed him. He went to your brother and told him that his wife would never have consented to associate with me on equal terms if he had not himself introduced me to her as his wife, a situation which had entitled me to enjoy all the privileges of good society; that his imposture was an insult to the whole company; and that he must atone for it by marrying me within the week or fighting a duel to the death with him. He added that if he fell in the duel he would be avenged by all the men whom his action had also offended. Casanova laughed and replied that, far from fighting a duel in order not to marry me, he was ready to break more than one lance to get me. 'I love her, and if I am to her liking I am perfectly ready to give her my hand. Be so good,' he added, 'as to take it upon yourself to prepare the way, and I will be at your orders whenever you please.'*

"Monsieur de Nesle embraced him, promised he would

see to everything, then came to me with the news, which made me completely happy, and within the week the thing was done. Monsieur de Nesle gave us a splendid supper on our wedding day, and from then on I have been his wife in name. But it is an empty title, for, despite the ceremony and the fatal 'yes,' I am not married, for your brother is completely impotent. I am unhappy, and it is entirely his fault, for he must have known himself. He deceived me most horribly."

"But he was forced into it; he is less to be censured than pitied. I pity you, too; yet I blame you, for after having gone to bed with him for a month without his giving you a single proof of his virility, you could not but suspect the truth. Even if you had been a complete novice Monsieur de Saincy should have set you right; for he must know very well that no man can lie beside a pretty woman, hold her naked in his arms for such a long time, and not find himself, despite his will, in a physical condition which will force him to reveal himself, unless he is completely without the faculty which constitutes his essence."

"It seems perfectly true when I hear you say it, yet neither of us ever thought of it, he looks such a Hercules."

"I see only one remedy for your situation, my dear sister-in-law: you must either have your marriage annulled or take a lover; and I think my brother is too reasonable to object to that."

"I am perfectly free, but I cannot think of either a lover or a divorce; for the wretch treats me so well that my love for him only grows, which doubtless increases my unhappiness."

I saw that the poor woman was so wretched that I would gladly have consented to console her; but it was out of the question. Yet her confiding in me had soothed her grief for the moment, I congratulated her on it, and *after kissing her in a way which showed her that I was not my brother, I wished her good night.*

The next day I went to see Madame Vanloo, who told me that Madame Blondel had charged her to thank me for not having stayed, but that her husband had asked her to tell me that he was very sorry not to have seen me in order to let me know how greatly he was indebted to me.

"He would seem to have found his wife a virgin, but it is not my fault, and he is indebted for it to no one but Manon Balletti. I am told he has a pretty baby,[25] *that he lives in the Louvre, and that she lives in another house in the Rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs.*[26]

"It is true, but he sups with her every evening."

"An odd arrangement for a married couple!"

"A very good one, I assure you. Blondel wants to have his wife only as a conquest. He says it keeps love alive, and that, never having had a mistress worthy to be his wife, he is very happy to have found a wife worthy to be his mistress."

I devoted the whole of the next day to Madame du Rumain, considering knotty questions with her until the evening. I left her well satisfied with the answers. The marriage of her daughter, Mademoiselle Coëtanfao, to Monsieur de Polignac, which took place five or six years later,[27] *was the result of our cabalistic calculations.*

The beautiful stocking-seller[28] *of the Rue des Prouvaires, whom I had loved so ardently, was no longer in Paris. A certain Monsieur de Langlade*[29] *had carried her off, and her husband was living in poverty. Camilla*[30] *was ill, and Corallina*[31] *had become a Marquise and titular mistress of the Count of La Marche,*[32] *son of the Prince of Conti, to whom she had given a son whom I knew twenty years later, when he wore the Cross of Malta and bore the name of Chevalier de Montréal.*[33] *Several other young women whom I had known had* *become widows and gone to live in the provinces, or were otherwise inaccessible.*

Such was Paris in my day. Women, intrigues, and principles changed there as quickly as the fashions.

I devoted a whole day to my old friend Balletti,[34] *who had retired from the stage after the death of his father and had married a pretty ballet girl; he was experimenting with the herb melissa, hoping to succeed in discovering the philosopher's stone.*

I had a pleasant surprise in the lobby of the Comédie Française[35] *when I saw the poet Poinsinet, who, after embracing me several times, told me that at Parma Monsieur Dutillot had overwhelmed him with favors.*

"He did not get me a position," he said, "for in Italy no one knows what to do with a French poet."

"Have you any news of Lord Lismore?"[36] *I asked him.*

"Yes, he wrote to his mother from Leghorn, saying that he was going to India and that if you had not been so good as to give him a thousand louis he would now be in prison in Rome."

"I am very much interested in his welfare, and I should be glad to call on Milady[37] *with you."*

"I will tell her you are in Paris, and I am sure she will invite you to supper, for she is most eager to talk with you."

"How are you getting on here?" I asked him. "Are you satisfied with Apollo?"[38]

"He is not the god of the Pactolus;[39] *I haven't a sou; I have no room, and I shall be glad to be indebted to you for a supper if you will invite me. I will read you* Le Cercle,[40] *which the actors have accepted, and which I have in my pocket. I am sure it will be a success."*

Le Cercle *was a short play in prose, in which the poet ridiculed the jargon of the physician Herrenschwandt,*[41] *brother to the Herrenschwandt I had met in Soleure. And in fact it proved to be a great success.*

I took him to supper, and the poor votary of the Muses ate like four. The next day he came to tell me that the Countess of Lismore expected me for supper.

I found the lady, who was still beautiful, with Monsieur de Saint-Albin,[42] *Archbishop of Cambrai, her aged lover, who spent the entire revenue of his archbishopric on her. This worthy Prince of the Church was one of the natural sons of the Duke of Orléans, the celebrated Regent of France, by an actress. He supped with us, but he never opened his mouth except to eat, and his mistress talked to me of nothing but her son, whose intelligence and talents she praised to the skies, whereas Lord Lismore was really nothing but a wastrel; but I felt I must play up to her. It would have been cruel to contradict her. I left, promising that I would write to her if I ever met her son.*

Poinsinet, who was hearthless and homeless, as the saying goes, came to spend the night in my room, and the next day, after making him take two cups of chocolate, I gave him money enough to rent a room. I did not see him again, for some years later he was drowned, not in Hippocrene[43] *but in the Guadalquivir. He told me that he had spent a week at Monsieur de Voltaire's and that he had hurried back to Paris to obtain the Abbé Morellet's*[44] *release from the Bastille.*

I had nothing more to do before leaving Paris, and I was only waiting for some clothes I was having made and a cross, in rubies and diamonds, of the order which the Holy Father had conferred on me.[45]

I expected everything in five or six days, when an unfortunate incident forced me to leave hurriedly. Here is the incident, which I record reluctantly, for it was a piece of imprudence on my part which very nearly cost me my life and my honor, to say nothing of more than a hundred thousand francs. I am sorry for the fools who, falling into misfortune, complain of Fate, whereas they have nothing to complain of but themselves.

I was walking in the Tuileries about ten o'clock in the morning when I had the bad luck to encounter La Dazenoncourt[46] *with another girl. La Dazenoncourt was a ballet girl at the Opéra whose acquaintance I had vainly tried to make before my last departure from Paris. Congratulating myself on the fortunate chance which had thrown me in her way at just the right moment, I approached her, and I did not have much trouble in persuading her to accept a dinner at Choisy.*[47]

We walked toward the Pont Royal,[48] *and, taking a hackney coach there, set off. After ordering dinner, when we were going out to stroll in the garden, I saw a hackney coach stop and two adventurers whom I knew get out of it with two girls who were friends of the two I was escorting. The accursed hostess, who happened to be at the door, came and told us that if we were willing to be served together she would give us an excellent dinner; I said nothing, or rather, I gave in to the "yeses" of my two light-o'-loves. As it turned out, the dinner was excellent, and after paying, just as we were about to return to Paris, I noticed that I was without a ring which I had taken off during dinner to show it to one of the two adventurers, whose name was Santis,*[49] *and who had said he wanted to examine it. It was a very pretty miniature, the diamond setting of which had cost me twenty-five louis. I politely asked Santis to return my ring; he replied with the greatest coolness that he had already returned it.*

"If you had returned it," I replied, "I should have it, and I do not."

He sticks to his assertion; the girls said nothing, but Santis's friend, a Portuguese named Xavier, had the effrontery to tell me that he had seen him return it to me.

"You are a liar," I say, and, seizing Santis by the neckerchief, I tell him that he shall not leave until I have my ring. But, the Portuguese having at the same time risen to help his friend, I fall back a step and, sword in

hand, repeat my accusation. The hostess arriving and setting up an outcry, Santis tells me that if I will allow him a few words aside he will convince me. Guilelessly believing that, ashamed to give me back my ring in the presence of so many people, he would restore it to me in private, I sheathed my sword, crying:

"Let us go."

Xavier got into the hackney coach with the four girls and they returned to Paris. Santis followed me behind the Château, and there, assuming a smile, he said that, wanting to play a joke, he had put my ring in his friend's pocket but that he would give it back to me in Paris.

"That is a lie," I said; "your friend claims that he saw you return it to me, and you let him go. Do you think I am ninny enough to be taken in by such a trick? You are a pair of robbers."

So saying, I put out my hand to seize his watch chain, but he falls back and draws his sword. I draw mine, and I am scarcely on guard before he makes a lunge at me, I parry it, close in on him, and run him through. He falls, calling for help. I sheathe my sword and, leaving him to his own devices, find my coach and set off for Paris.

I got out at the Place Maubert[50] *and made my way to my hotel by a roundabout route. I was sure that no one would have come to my lodging in search of me, for even my landlord did not know my name.*

I spent the rest of the day packing my trunks, and after ordering Costa to put them on my carriage I went to see Madame d'Urfé and informed her of what had happened, asking her, as soon as what she was to give me should be ready, to deliver it to Costa, who would rejoin me at Augsburg. I should have told her to send it all to me by one of her servants, but my good Genius had abandoned me that day. Then, too, I did not think that Costa was a thief.

Back at the Hôtel du Saint-Esprit,[51] *I gave the scoundrel my instructions, telling him to waste no time and* *to keep his mouth shut, and giving him the money he would need for the journey.*

I left Paris in my own carriage, with four hired horses which took me as far as the second post station, and I did not stop until I reached Strassburg, where I found Desarmoises[52] *and my Spaniard.*

Having nothing to do in that city, I wanted to cross the Rhine immediately, but Desarmoises persuaded me to go to the "Ghost" with him to meet a pretty woman who had put off leaving for Augsburg only in the hope that we might make the journey together.

"She is a young lady whom you know," said the pretended Marquis, "but I had to give her my word of honor not to tell you her name. She has only her chambermaid with her, and I am certain that you will be glad to see her."

My curiosity conquered. I follow Desarmoises and I enter my room, in which I see a pretty woman but one whom I do not at first recognize. My memory returning, I see that she is a dancer whom I had thought charming when I saw her on the stage in Dresden eight years earlier. At that time she belonged to Count Brühl,[53] *Master of the Horse to the King of Poland, the Elector of Saxony; but I had not even tried to pay my court to her. Finding her now with the most luxurious appointments and ready to leave for Augsburg, I instantly began imagining what pleasure such a meeting had in store for me.*

After expressing a delighted recognition on either side, we arranged to leave together for Augsburg the next morning. The beauty was going to Munich, but as I had nothing to do in that small capital we agreed that she should go there alone.

"I am certain," she said, "that you will decide to come there yourself, for the envoys of the powers which are to take part in the Congress will not go to Augsburg until some time in September."

We supped together, and the next day we set out, she in her carriage with her chambermaid and I in mine with Desarmoises, preceded by Leduc on horseback; but at Rastadt we changed our arrangements, for La Renaud[54] *thought she would awaken less curiosity if she rode in my carriage instead of staying in her own, and Desarmoises willingly occupied her place beside her maid. It did not take us long to become intimate. She informed me of her situation, or at least seemed to do so, and I confided to her everything which it was not in my interest to conceal. I told her that I had a mission from the Court of Lisbon; she believed me, and I believed that she was going to Munich and Augsburg only to sell her diamonds.*

The conversation having turned to Desarmoises, she said that I could perfectly well continue my association with him but that I should not allow him to style himself "Marquis."

"But," I replied, "he is the son of the Marquis Desarmoises, of Nancy."

"He is nothing but an old courier to whom the Department of Foreign Affairs pays a small pension. I know the Marquis Desarmoises who lives in Nancy, and who is not as old as he."

"In that case he can hardly be his father."

"The innkeeper at the 'Ghost' knew him when he was a courier."

"How did you happen to meet him?"

"We dined together at the public table. After dinner he came to me in my room and told me he was waiting for someone in order to leave for Augsburg, and that we might make the journey together. He mentioned your name, and after asking him a few questions I concluded that it could be none other than you, and here we are, to my great pleasure. But one word more: I advise you to give up false names and false titles. Why do you call yourself Seingalt?"

"It is my name, my dear; but that is no reason why people who have long known me may not call me Casanova as well, for I am both. You should be able to understand that."

"Yes, I understand it. Your mother is in Prague, and since she receives none of her pension[55] *because of the war, I think she may be in rather straitened circumstances."*

"I know that, but I do not forget my duty as a good son, I have sent her money."

"I congratulate you. Where shall you lodge in Augsburg?"

"I shall rent a house, and if it would please you I will make you its mistress and you shall do the honors of it."

"A charming idea, my friend! We will give good suppers there and spend the night gaming."

"That's a delightful plan."

"I undertake to find you an excellent cook; Bavarian cooks are justly famous. We shall cut a fine figure at the Congress, and everyone will say we are madly in love with each other."

"It goes without saying, my dear, that I tolerate no trifling in the matter of fidelity."

"For that, my friend, you may trust me. You know very well how I lived in Dresden."

"I trust you, but not blindly, I warn you. In the meanwhile, let us drop ceremony between us: call me tu. *It is love's way."*

"Very good! Kiss me."

My beautiful Renaud did not like traveling at night because she liked not to stint herself at supper and to go to bed when her head began to turn. The heat of the wine then made her a Bacchante difficult to satisfy; but when I was exhausted I asked her to let me alone, and she had no choice but to obey.

Arrived at Augsburg, we were going to stop at the "Three Moors," [56] *but the innkeeper, though saying that* *he would give us a good dinner, told me that he could not put me up, because the French Envoy*[57] *had taken the entire inn. I decided to call on Signor Carli,*[58] *to whom I had a letter of introduction, and he immediately found me a pretty house with a garden, which I rented for six months and which La Renaud liked very much.*

No one was yet in Augsburg. Having to go to Munich, La Renaud put it to me that I would be bored during her absence and so persuaded me to accompany her. We put up at the "Stag,"[59] *where we found excellent lodgings; Desarmoises went to stay elsewhere. My business having nothing to do with my new companion, I gave her a carriage and a lackey for her own use and did the like for myself.*

The Abate Gama had given me a letter from the Commendatore Almada[60] *for Lord Stormont, the English Ambassador to the Court of Bavaria.*[61] *That nobleman being in Munich, I hastened to acquit myself of my commission. He received me very well, and assured me that when the time came he would do everything in his power, Lord Halifax having informed him of the entire business. On leaving his British Lordship I went to wait on Monsieur de Folard,*[62] *the French Ambassador, to whom I presented a letter which Monsieur de Choiseul had sent me through Madame d'Urfé. Monsieur de Folard received me most cordially and invited me to dinner for the next day, and on the day after that he presented me to the Elector.*[63]

During the four ill-fated weeks which I spent in Munich the French Ambassador's house was the only one I frequented. I call the four weeks "ill-fated" and with good reason, for during that period I lost all my money, I pawned more than forty thousand francs' worth of jewels, which I never redeemed, and finally, and worst of all, I lost my health. My assassins were none other than La Renaud and Desarmoises, he who owed me so much and repaid me so ill.

The third day after my arrival in Munich I was obliged to pay a private call on the Dowager Electress of Saxony.[64] *It was my brother-in-law,*[65] *who was in that princess's service, who insisted on my doing so, saying that I could not avoid it, for she knew me and, in any case, had already made inquiries about me. I had no reason to repent of my politeness, for the Electress received me well and made me talk a great deal; she was curious, like all idle people who are not self-sufficient because they cannot find resources enough either in their native intelligence or in their education.*

I have done many foolish things in my lifetime; I confess it as frankly as Rousseau,[66] *and with less egotism than that unfortunate great man; but among them there have been few as absurd as my going to Munich when I had nothing to do there. But I was passing through a crisis; it was a period during which my fatal Genius had proceeded in crescendo from folly to folly ever since the time I left Turin and even since the time I left Naples. My fall at night, my evening at Lismore's, my association with Desarmoises, my excursion to Choisy, my trust in Costa, my affair with La Renaud, and, above all, my incredible ineptitude in letting myself be fleeced at faro at a court where the gamesters who held the bank were reputed to be the most skillful in Europe at improving upon luck. There, among others, was the famous, the infamous Afflisio,*[67] *the associate of Duke Frederick of Zweibrücken,*[68] *whom that prince gilded with the title of his aide-de-camp and whom everyone knew to be the cleverest scoundrel imaginable.*

I played every day, and, frequently losing on my word, the straits to which my obligation to pay the next day reduced me caused me intolerable anxiety. When I had exhausted my credit with the bankers I had to turn to the Jews, who lend only against pledges, and it was Desarmoises who acted as my go-between, together with La Renaud, who ended by laying hands on everything I *owned. Nor was that the worst service she did me; she infected me with a disease which was devouring her, but which, confining its ravages to her inner organs, left her exterior intact and all the more perilous because her fresh complexion seemed to indicate the most perfect health. In short, that serpent dispatched from hell for my destruction had brought me so completely under her spell that I neglected the disease for a month because she had the art to persuade me that her reputation would be ruined if I put myself in a surgeon's care during our stay in Munich, since every hanger-on at Court knew that we were living together as man and wife.*

When I reflect on it I cannot comprehend such an incredible submission to her wishes on my part, especially when, with every passing day, I added fresh virulence to the poison she had instilled into my veins!

My stay in Munich was a kind of damnation, or rather, in the course of that fatal month I experienced every possible form of it, as if all the pains suffered by the souls of the lost had joined to give me a foretaste of hell. Renaud loved gambling, and Desarmoises dealt for her on equal shares. I would never play at their table, for the false Marquis cheated remorselessly and often with more impudence than skill. He invited disreputable people to my lodging, entertaining them at my expense; afterwards when they began to play there were scandalous scenes every evening.

The Dowager Electress of Saxony caused me the most intense mortification the last two times I had the honor of conversing with her.

"Everyone here is aware, Monsieur, that you are living with La Renaud and of the kind of life she leads in your house, possibly without your knowledge," that princess said to me; "it is very much to your discredit, and I advise you to have done with it."

She did not know that everything forced me into it. I had been gone from Paris a month, and I had still *heard nothing either from Madame d'Urfé or from Costa. I could not guess the reason, but I began to suspect my Italian's fidelity. I also feared that my kind Madame d'Urfé had died, or had recovered her sanity, which would have had the same result for me; and the condition I was in made it impossible for me to return to Paris to find out what it was so essential I should know, both for my peace of mind and for the replenishment of my purse.*

So I was utterly without resources; and what made me suffer the most was my being forced to admit to myself that I was experiencing the first symptoms of failing powers, the usual result of age; I no longer had the careless confidence which is bestowed by youth and the consciousness of strength, yet I had not been sufficiently matured by experience to mend my ways. Nevertheless, the habit of resolute action which I owed to my character was not quite dead in me: I took a sudden leave of La Renaud, telling her that I would expect her in Augsburg. She made no attempt to detain me but promised that she would join me as soon as possible, since she was on the verge of selling her jewels advantageously. I set out, preceded by Leduc and very well content that Desarmoises chose to remain with the unworthy creature whose ill-omened acquaintance I owed to him. Arriving at my charming house in Augsburg, I went to bed, resolved not to leave it until I was rid of the poison which was devouring me. Signor Carli, my banker, recommended a certain Kephalides,[69] *a pupil of the celebrated Faget,*[70] *who some years previously had rid me of a similar affliction in Paris. Kephalides was considered the best surgeon in Augsburg. After examining me he assured me that he would cure me by sudorifics without recourse to the ever ominous lancet. So he began by putting me on the strictest diet, prescribed baths, subjected me to mercury massages. I endured this treatment for six* weeks, and, far from being cured, I felt worse than I had done when he took me in hand. I was terrifyingly thin, and I had two monstrously big inguinal tumors. I had to submit to their being opened, but the painful operation, in addition to nearly costing me my life, accomplished nothing. He clumsily cut the artery, bringing on a hemorrhage which was stopped only with difficulty and which would have killed me except for the care of Signor Algardi,[71] a Bolognese physician who was in the service of the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg.

On my declaring that I had had enough of Kephalides, Algardi proceeded to prepare, in my presence, ninety pills containing eighteen grains of manna.[72] I took one of these pills in the morning, washing it down with a large glass of diluted milk, and another in the evening, after which I took some barley water, and that was all I had in the way of nourishment. This heroic remedy restored me to health in two and a half months, during which I suffered intensely; but I did not begin to put on flesh again and recover my strength until toward the end of the year.

It was during this period of suffering that I learned the details of Costa's flight with all the diamonds and watches and snuffboxes and linen and embroidered coats, packed in an excellent trunk, which Madame d'Urfé had entrusted to him for me, together with the hundred louis she had given him for traveling expenses. The kind lady sent me a bill of exchange for fifty thousand francs, which she had fortunately not had time to give to the man who had robbed me, and the sum arrived most opportunely to rescue me from the state of indigence to which my bad conduct had reduced me.

At this same time I suffered another disappointment which I felt very keenly: I discovered that Leduc was robbing me. I would have forgiven him if he had not driven me to take public measures which I could not *avoid except at the cost of my honor. Nevertheless I kept him until I returned to Paris at the beginning of the following year.*

Toward the end of September, when it became certain that the Congress would not be held, La Renaud passed through Augsburg with Desarmoises on their way back to Paris; but she did not dare come to see me for fear I would make her return my various goods and chattels, of which she had taken possession without notifying me, and she doubtless supposed that I was informed of her rascality. Four or five years later in Paris she married a certain Böhmer,[73] *the same man who gave the Cardinal de Rohan the famous diamond necklace,*[74] *believing it was intended for the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, Queen of France. She was in Paris when I returned there, but I made no effort to see her, wanting to forget everything if that were possible. I considered it a necessity, for of all the things I did during that ill-fated year what I saw as the most detestable was my own course of behavior, or rather, my own self. However, I would not have so far slighted the infamous Desarmoises as to deprive myself of the pleasure of cutting off his ears if he had given me time to do it; but the old scoundrel, who no doubt foresaw what treatment I had in store for him, took to his heels. He died, penniless and consumptive, in Normandy not long afterward.*

No sooner was my health restored than, forgetting all my past sufferings, I went back to amusing myself. Annemirl,[75] *my excellent cook, who had been idle for so long, had to work hard to satisfy my gluttonous appetite; for three weeks I was prey to a ravenous hunger, which, however, my nature required in order to restore my person to its original corpulence. My landlord the engraver and his pretty daughter Gertrude, whom I had eat with me, watched me in a kind of stupor and feared fatal results from my intemperance. My dear Dr. Algardi, who had saved my life, predicted a dyspepsia which would* *bring me to the grave; but my need to eat was stronger than his arguments; I paid no attention, and I was right; for by dint of eating well I recovered my original constitution, and I soon felt perfectly capable of renewing my offerings on the altar of the god for whom I had just suffered so greatly.*

My cook and Gertrude, both young and pretty, made me amorous, and, gratitude entering in, I tendered my love to them both at once; for I had foreseen that, attacking them one at a time, I should have conquered neither. In addition, I knew that I had not much time to lose, for I had promised Madame d'Urfé that I would sup with her on the first day of the year 1762 in an apartment which she had furnished in the Rue du Bac.[76] *She had decorated it with the magnificent tapestries which had been woven for René of Savoy*[77] *and on which all the operations of the Great Work*[78] *were depicted. She had written me that she had been in Choisy and had there learned that the Italian Santis, whom I had stretched on the ground with a thrust which had run him through, had been imprisoned in Bicêtre*[79] *for fraud after recovering from his wound.*

Gertrude and Annemirl kept me pleasantly entertained during the remainder of my stay in Augsburg, but they did not captivate me to the point of making me neglect good society. I spent my evenings very pleasantly in visits to Count Max Lamberg,[80] *who was residing at the Prince-Bishop's Court with the title of Grand Marshal. His wife,*[81] *a charming woman, had everything to attract good company in large numbers. At the Count's I made the acquaintance of Baron Sellentin,*[82] *a captain in the Prussian service, who was stationed in Augsburg to recruit for his master. What especially drew me to Count Lamberg was his literary genius.*[83] *Possessing a scholarly mind of the highest order and, above all, a vast erudition, he published several works which are highly esteemed. I maintained a correspondence with him which ceased* *only at his death, which occurred by his own fault four years ago, in 1792. I say "by his own fault," but I should have said "by the fault of his physicians," who treated him with mercury for a malady with which Venus had nothing to do and which only served to defame him after his death.*

His widow, as charming as ever, still lives in Bavaria, beloved by her friends and her daughters, for all of whom she arranged excellent marriages.[84]

During this time a small down-at-heels troupe of actors, my fellow countrymen, arrived in Augsburg, and I got them permission to perform in a wretched little theater. Since they occasioned a little incident which amuses me because I am the hero of it, I will give it to my readers in the hope of pleasing them.

CHAPTER II

The actors and the play. Bassi. The girl from Strassburg. The female count. I return to Paris. I arrive in Metz. The beautiful Raton and the false Countess of Lascaris.

AN UGLY woman, but lively and talkative in the Italian manner, having gained admission to my house, begged me to intercede with the magistrate to grant the troupe[1] *to which she belonged permission to perform. She was ugly, but she was Italian and poor, and, not even asking her name or trying to find out if the troupe was worth the effort, I promised to do what I could for her, and I had no difficulty in obtaining the favor she sought.*

Having gone to the first performance, I saw with surprise that the leading actor was a Venetian with whom, twenty years earlier, I had studied at the Seminary of San Cipriano.[2] *His name was Bassi,*[3] *and, like myself, he had renounced the priesthood. His destiny had made him take up the trade of actor, and from all appearances he was miserably poor, whereas I, whom chance had launched on a course which was all vicissitudes, appeared to be wealthy.*

Curious to learn of his adventures, and impelled both by the kindly feeling which draws us toward the friends of our youth and especially our schoolmates, and by a wish to enjoy his surprise when he recognized me, I went to him on the stage as soon as the curtain fell. He recognized me instantly and, after embracing me, introduced me to his wife,[4] *the woman who had come to speak with me, and his daughter,*[5] *who was thirteen or fourteen years of age and very pretty and whose dancing I had watched with pleasure. Nor did he stop there; seeing that I was cordial to him and to his family, he turned toward his fellow actors, whose director he was, and bluntly introduced me to them as his best friend. Hearing that appellation and seeing me dressed like a nobleman, with a cross on my breast, the good people insisted that I was a famous cosmopolitan charlatan*[6] *who was expected at Augsburg, and Bassi made no attempt to undeceive them, which surprised me.*

When the troupe had taken off their theatrical rags and put on their everyday ones, Bassi's ugly wife took my arm and marched me away, saying that I should sup with her. I let her lead me, and before long we arrived at a lodging such as I had imagined. It was an immense room on the ground floor, which served at once as kitchen, dining room, and bedroom. A long table, half of which was covered by a ragged cloth which showed signs of having done service for a month; on the other end of it was a filthy pot in which someone was washing a few earthenware dishes which had been left there since dinner and were to be used at supper. A single candle, stuck in the neck of a broken bottle, lighted the den, and since there were no snuffers Bassi's ugly wife supplied the deficiency very skillfully with thumb and index finger, then unceremoniously wiped her hand on the tablecloth after throwing the bit of wick on the floor.

An actor, the odd-job man for the troupe, who wore long mustaches because he played only murderers and *highway robbers, served an enormous dish of reheated meat swimming in a muddy liquid honored with the name of sauce; and the ravenous family fell to dipping it up with pieces of bread which, in the absence of knives and forks, they tore from the loaf with their fingers or simply with their teeth; but since they were all doing it, no one had the right to turn up his nose. A large pot of beer passed from mouth to mouth, and amid this abject poverty gaiety animated every face, making me ask myself, "What is happiness?" To conclude the meal the actor-cook set down a second dish filled with pieces of fried pork, which was finished off with great relish. Bassi did me the favor of excusing me from sharing in this appetizing banquet, and I was grateful to him.*

After this barrack-room fare he gave me a brief account of his adventures, all of them as unremarkable as the poor devil to whom they had happened; meanwhile his pretty daughter, sitting on my lap, did her best to make me believe she was innocent. He ended his story by saying that he was going to Venice,[7] where he was sure he would make his fortune during the Carnival. I wished him all possible luck, and when he asked me what my profession was I took it into my head to tell him I was a doctor.

"It's a much better trade than mine," he said, "and I am happy that I can give you a valuable present."

"And what may that be?" I asked.

"It is," replied Bassi, "the Venetian theriaca,[8] which you can sell for two florins the pound and which will cost you only four groschen." [9]

"I shall be glad to accept it. But tell me—are you satisfied with what you took in?"

"I can't complain for a first performance; I paid all my expenses and had enough left over to give each of the actors a florin. But I don't know how I am to play tomorrow, for my company is in revolt, and they say they won't play unless I give them a florin each in advance."

"They really don't ask very much."

"I know that, but I haven't a copper and have nothing to pawn; otherwise I'd satisfy their demands, and they would be sorry afterward, for I'm sure to make at least fifty florins tomorrow."

"How many of you are there?"

"Fourteen, counting my family. Can you lend me ten florins? I'll return them to you tomorrow after the performance."

"Gladly; but I should also like to have you all to supper at the inn nearest the theater. Here are ten florins."

The poor devil could scarcely find words to express all his gratitude and undertook to order the supper at a florin a head, as I had instructed him to do. I needed to be amused and to laugh at the sight of fourteen famished actors eating with ravenous appetites.

The troupe played the next day, but since twenty or thirty people at most attended the performance poor Bassi took in barely enough to pay for the musicians and the lights. He was in despair and, far from being able to repay me, came to beg me to lend him another ten florins, always in the hope of a good house the next day. I comforted him by saying that we would talk about it after supper and that I would expect him at the inn with his whole troupe.

By dint of liberal applications of wine from the Margravate[10] *I made the supper last three hours, the reason being that a girl from Strassburg,*[11] *the soubrette of the troupe, at once so captured my interest that I began to think of possessing her. Endowed with a most attractive figure and a delicious voice, the girl kept me roaring with laughter by pronouncing Italian in the incongruous accent of Alsace, accompanying it with gestures which were at once pleasing and comic and which gave her a charm not easy to describe.*

Determined to gain possession of the young actress no *later than the next day, before leaving the inn I addressed the assembled troupe as follows: "Ladies and gentlemen, I engage you for a week at fifty florins a day, but on condition you will perform for my benefit and that you will pay the expenses of the theater. It is understood that you will set the price of tickets at whatever figure I name, and that five members of the company, whom I shall be free to designate, shall sup with me every evening. If the receipts come to more than fifty florins you will divide the surplus among you."*

My proposal was greeted with cries of joy, and, ink, pen, and paper being brought, the two parties bound themselves by a formal agreement.

"For tomorrow," I said to Bassi, "I will leave the tickets at the same price as yesterday and today; for day after tomorrow, we shall see. You and your family will sup with me tomorrow, together with the young lady from Strassburg, whom I would not dream of separating from her dear Arlecchino."

The next day he announced a carefully chosen bill of a nature to draw a large audience; nevertheless the parterre was occupied by only a score of common people and the boxes remained almost empty.

At supper Bassi, the promise of whose bill had been well kept in the performance, came to me in great embarrassment and handed me ten or twelve florins. I took them, saying, "Courage," and I divided them among my guests. We had a good supper, which I had seen to ordering without their knowledge, and I kept them at table until midnight, giving them good wine and playing countless pranks with Bassi's daughter and the girl from Strassburg, who were on either side of me, and paying no attention to the jealous Arlecchino, who sulked because of the liberties I took with his mistress. The latter accepted my caresses rather ungraciously, for she hoped that Arlecchino would marry her and she did not want to make him angry. At the end of supper we rose, and

I took her in my arms, laughing and giving her caresses which doubtless seemed too suggestive to her lover, who snatched her from me. For my part, finding his lack of tolerance a trifle ill-bred, I took him by the shoulders and kicked him out of the room, which treatment he received with great humility. However, the scene became dismal, for the beauty began crying bitterly. Bassi and his ugly wife, long since hardened to their trade, laughed at the poor weeping creature, and Bassi's daughter told her that it was her lover who had first failed in respect to me; but she went on whimpering and ended by saying that she would not come to supper with me again unless I made her lover return to her.

"I promise to mend the matter so that everyone will be content," I said; and four zecchini which I put into her hand so far restored her good humor that before long there was not a cloud in the sky. She even tried to convince me that she was not cruel and would be still less so if I would avoid arousing Arlecchino's jealousy. I promised to do whatever she wished, and she made every effort to convince me that she would be perfectly compliant at the first opportunity.

I ordered Bassi to announce on the bills for the next day that tickets for the parterre were two florins and for the boxes a ducat[12] *but that the gallery would be open free to the first comers.*

"We shall have nobody," he said in alarm.

"That may be so, but we shall see. You must ask the police for twelve soldiers to maintain order, I will pay for them."

"We'll need them for the rag, tag, and bobtail that will come to storm the free places; but the rest of the house—"

"I repeat; we shall see. Do as I wish, and whether it succeeds or fails, we will laugh at supper as we always do."

The next day I went to see Arlecchino in his little *garret, and by giving him two louis and promising to respect his mistress I made him as pliant as a glove.*

Bassi's handbills set the whole city laughing. Everyone said he was mad; but when it came out that the speculation was the manager's and that the manager was I, it was my turn to be called mad—but what did I care? That evening the gallery was packed an hour before the performance, but the parterre was empty and so were the boxes, except for Count Lamberg, the Abate Bolo,[13] *of Genoa, and a young man whom I suspected to be a woman in disguise.*[14]

The actors outdid themselves, and the applause from the gallery made it a most animated performance.

When we got to the inn Bassi gave me the three ducats which were the evening's receipts, but I of course made him a present of them; for him, they meant the beginning of affluence. At table I sat between his wife and his daughter, leaving my beauty from Strassburg beside her lover. I told the manager to continue the same course, to let people laugh if they chose, and I made him promise to give his best plays.

When the supper and the wine had put me in high spirits, seeing that I could accomplish nothing with the girl from Strassburg because of her lover, I let myself go with Bassi's little daughter, who let me do whatever I pleased, while her father and mother only laughed and the fool of an Arlecchino fumed because he could not do the same with his Dulcinea.[15] *But when, at the end of supper, I showed him the little Bassi in a state of nature and myself in the costume of Adam before he ate the fatal apple, the fool made to leave, taking the girl from Strassburg by the arm and urging her to leave with him. At that, in the most serious and commanding tone, I ordered him to mind his manners and stay where he was, and he, dumbfounded, merely turned his back; but his beauty did not follow his example; instead, on the pretext of defending the little Bassi, who had already lodged* *me without difficulty, she cleverly assumed such a position that it both increased my pleasure and rewarded her with as much of the same as my straying hand could give her.*

This bacchanalian scene having fired Bassi's wife, she began urging her husband to give her a proof of his conjugal affection, to such effect that he yielded to her solicitations, while the modest Arlecchino, who had gone to the fireplace, remained there motionless with his head in his hands. Profiting by his posture, the girl from Strassburg, surrendering to nature, let me do whatever I pleased; so giving her the place on the edge of the table from which I had just released Bassi's daughter, I accomplished the Great Work in all its perfection, and the violence of her embraces proved to me that she had taken at least as active a part in it as I.

At the conclusion of the orgy I emptied my purse on the table, and I enjoyed the eagerness with which the company shared a score of zecchini.

Fatigue and intemperance, at a time when I had not yet fully recovered my strength, had made me sleep long and late. I had only just risen when I received a summons to appear at the Town Hall before the burgomaster on duty.[16] *I hastened to dress and set out, being extremely curious to know for what I was wanted. I knew that I had nothing to fear. When I appeared, the magistrate addressed me in German, but I turned a deaf ear, and with good reason, for I knew scarcely words enough in that language to ask for the most necessary things. Informed of my ignorance, he at once began speaking to me in the un-Ciceronian and pedantic Latin which is commonly found in German universities.*[17]

"Why," he asked, "do you use a false name?"

"My name is not false. Inquire of the banker Carli, who paid me fifty thousand florins."

"I know that, but your name is Casanova; so why do you use the name Seingalt?"

“I assume it, or rather I assumed it, because it is mine. It belongs to me so legitimately that if someone dared to use it I should challenge his right to it by every means, public and private.”

“And how does the name belong to you?”

“Because I created it; but that does not keep me from also being Casanova.”

“Sir, either the one or the other. You cannot have two names at the same time.”

“Spaniards often have half a dozen names,[18] *and so do the Portuguese.”*

“But you are neither Portuguese nor Spanish, you are Italian; and after all how can anyone create a name?”

“It is the simplest and easiest thing in the world.”

“Explain yourself.”

“The alphabet belongs to everyone; there’s no denying that. I took eight letters, and I combined them in such a way as to produce the word Seingalt. The word thus formed pleased me, and I adopted it as my surname, in the firm conviction that, since no one ever bore it before me, no one has the right to deny it to me, still less to bear it without my permission.”

“That is a very far-fetched idea; but you support it with an argument which is more specious than well grounded; for your name can only be your father’s name.”

“I think you are mistaken, for the name you bear yourself by right of inheritance did not exist from all eternity; it must have been invented by one of your ancestors who had not received it from his father, even if your name were Adam. Do you admit that, Your Worship?”

“I am obliged to; but it is something new.”

“There you are mistaken. Far from being new, it is very old, and I undertake to bring you tomorrow any number of names all invented by perfectly respectable people who are still alive and who enjoy them in peace without anyone’s taking it into his head to summon them

to the Town Hall to account for them, unless they disavow them when and as they please, to the detriment of society.''

''But you will admit that there are laws against false names?''

''Yes, against false names; but I repeat that nothing is more true than my name. Yours, which I respect without knowing it, cannot be truer than mine; for it is possible that you are not the son of the man whom you believe to be your father.''

He smiled, rose, and escorted me to the door, saying that he would ask Signor Carli about me.

As it happened I had to go there myself, and I did so at once. The story set him laughing. He told me that the Burgomaster was a Catholic, a worthy man, rich and rather stupid—in short, a good soul who could be handled without any difficulty.

The next morning Signor Carli came to me for breakfast and invited me to go to the Burgomaster's with him.

''I saw him yesterday,'' he said, ''and in a long discussion I had with him I turned his arguments against him to such purpose that he is now entirely of your opinion.''

I accepted the invitation with pleasure, for I foresaw that I should find good company there. I was not mistaken: there were charming women and several agreeable men. Among others I noticed the disguised woman whom I had seen at the theater. I set myself to observe her during dinner, and I was soon convinced that I had guessed right. Yet everyone spoke to her as if she were a man, and she played her part very well. For my part, wanting a little amusement and unwilling to have it supposed that I was taken in, I accosted her on the level of polite pleasantry, but confining my remarks to the sort of amorous persiflage which one addresses to a woman, and in my allusions, my ambiguous phrases, I expressed if not certainty as to her sex at least something more than *doubt. She pretended to notice nothing, and the company was not far from laughing aloud at what it thought my mistake.*

After dinner, when we were taking coffee, the pretended gentleman showed a certain canon the portrait set in a ring which he wore. It was the portrait of a young lady who was present, and a very good likeness, which was not difficult since the original was ugly. This did not shake my conviction, but I began to wonder when I saw him kiss her hand with mingled fondness and respect, and I stopped my jesting. Signor Carli seized an opportunity to tell me that the gentleman, for all his feminine appearance, was a man, and indeed on the eve of marrying the young lady whose hand he had kissed.

"That may be so," I replied, "but I find it very hard to believe."

However, the fact is that he married her during the Carnival and received a very considerable dowry; but at the end of a year the poor deceived girl died of grief, and it was only on her deathbed that she told the reason. Her stupid parents, ashamed of having been so grossly taken in, did not dare to say anything and got the swindling female out of sight, but not before she had made sure of the dowry. The story, which soon came out, still sets the good citizens of Augsburg laughing, and gave me, though a little too late, a great reputation for perspicacity among them.

I continued to enjoy the favors of my two female table companions and the girl from Strassburg, who cost me some hundred louis. At the end of a week I released Bassi from our agreement with some money in his pocket. He continued to give performances, returning to the usual prices for tickets and putting an end to the free places in the gallery. He did rather well.

I left Augsburg about the middle of December.

I was very melancholy because of the charming Gertrude, who believed she was pregnant and who could not *make up her mind to go to France with me. I would gladly have taken her with her father's consent, for he, not intending to find a husband for her, would have been delighted to get rid of her by giving her to me as my mistress.*

We shall speak of this good-hearted girl five or six years hence, as we shall of Annemirl, that excellent cook, to whom I made a present of four hundred florins. She married some time later, and on my second visit to Augsburg[19] *I was grieved to find her unhappy.*

I set out, with Leduc on the coachman's seat, never having been able to forgive him, and when we reached Paris and were in the middle of the Rue Saint-Antoine, I made him get down with his trunk and left him there, giving him no letter of recommendation, despite his entreaties. I never heard of him again, and I still regret him, for he was an excellent servant, though with many grave failings. I should perhaps have remembered the important services he had rendered me in Stuttgart, Soleure, Naples, Florence, and Turin; but I was indignant at his impudence in compromising me before the magistrate in Augsburg,[20] *where I should have been dishonored if my presence of mind had not put me in possession of the means to convict him of a theft for which, but for that, I should have been adjudged guilty.*

I had done a great deal by saving him from the hands of the law, nor had I failed to reward him liberally each time I had had occasion to congratulate myself on his loyalty or his obedience.

From Augsburg I traveled to Basel by way of Constance, where I put up at the most expensive inn[21] *in Switzerland. The proprietor, whose name was Imhof, was the king of fleecers; but I found his daughters agreeable, and after amusing myself there for three days I continued my journey. I reached Paris on the last day of the year 1761, going directly to the apartment in the Rue du*

Bac which my good angel Madame d'Urfé had furnished for me with equal forethought and elegance.

I spent three whole weeks in those charming rooms without going anywhere, in order to convince the kind lady that I had returned to Paris for no other reason than to keep my promise to accomplish her rebirth as a man.

We spent the three weeks making the necessary preparations for that divine operation, preparations consisting in paying the appropriate devotions to each of the Geniuses of the seven planets on the days sacred to them. After these preparations I was to go to a place which would be made known to me only through the inspiration of the Geniuses and there obtain possession of a virgin, the daughter of an initiate, and impregnate her with a male child by a method known to no one except the Brothers of the Rosy Cross. The child was to be born alive, but with only a sensitive soul.[22] *Madame d'Urfé was to receive him into her arms the instant he came into the world and keep him with her, in her own bed, for seven days. At the end of the seven days she was to die, pressing her mouth against that of the child, who would thus receive her intelligent soul.*

After this exchange it would be for me to bring up the child by the virtue of the magistery[23] *which was known to me, and as soon as he had reached his third year Madame d'Urfé was to become conscious of herself, and I was then to begin initiating her into perfect knowledge of the Great Doctrine.*

The operation had to be performed on the day of the full moon in April, May, or June. Above all, Madame d'Urfé was to make a will in due form leaving all her property to the child, whose guardian I was to be until its thirteenth year.

In her insane exaltation, she considered the possibility of the operation a self-evident truth, and she was on fire *with impatience to see the virgin who was to be its chosen vessel. She begged me to hasten my departure.*

By making the oracle deliver itself in these terms, I had hoped to arouse some repugnance in her, since, after all, she would have to die, and I counted on the natural love of life drawing the thing out. But finding just the opposite, I saw that I must keep my promise to her, at least in appearance, and go to fetch the mysterious virgin.

I saw that I needed an unscrupulous hussy whom I should have to instruct in her role, and I thought of La Corticelli. She must, I knew, have been in Prague for nine months, and I remembered that in Bologna I had promised I would go to see her before the end of the year. But I had just come back from Germany, bringing no very pleasant memories with me, and I thought the journey too long for the season and especially for so trifling a matter. I decided to spare myself the discomfort of such an expedition and I settled on summoning her to France, at the same time sending her the necessary money and telling her where I would meet her.

Monsieur de Fouquet,[24] *a friend of Madame d'Urfé's, was the Intendant*[25] *of Metz; I was sure that if I waited on that nobleman with a letter from his dear friend he would give me a distinguished reception. In addition, the Count of Lastic,*[26] *her nephew, whom I knew very well, was there with his regiment. These considerations determined me to choose that city as the place where I would meet the virgin Corticelli, who could hardly guess that I intended her to play such a role. Madame d'Urfé having given me as many letters as I wanted, I left Paris on January 25, 1762, loaded with presents and with a generous letter of credit, which I did not use because my purse was well stocked.*

I did not take a servant, for after Costa's theft and Leduc's treachery I thought I no longer dared to trust one. I reached Metz in two days and went to lodge at the

"King Dagobert," an excellent inn, where I found the Swedish Count Lewenhaupt,[27] whom I had met at the house of the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst,[28] mother of the Empress of Russia, who lived in Paris. He invited me to supper with the Duke of Zweibrücken, who was traveling to Paris, alone and incognito, to visit Louis XV, whose faithful friend he remained until his death.

The day after I arrived I took my letters to the Intendant, who invited me to dine at his table every day. Monsieur de Lastic was not in Metz, which I regretted, for he would have added greatly to the pleasure of my stay in that beautiful city. On the same day I sent La Corticelli fifty louis, writing her to come to meet me with her mother as soon as she was at liberty, and to get someone who knew the road to accompany her. She could not leave Prague until the beginning of Lent, and to make sure that she would not fail me I promised her in my letter that I would make her fortune.

In four or five days I knew the city perfectly, but I avoided assemblies in order to go to the theater,[29] where an actress in the comic opera company had captivated me. Her name was Raton,[30] and she was only fifteen years old, reckoning in the manner of actresses, who always steal two or three years from the account if they can manage no more—a weakness which almost all women share and which we must forgive them, for youth is their greatest advantage. Raton was less beautiful than attractive, and what made her an object of envy was that she had set a price of twenty-five louis on her first fruits. One could spend a trial night with her for a louis; the twenty-five were due only if the investigator proved able to bring the undertaking to its due conclusion.

It was well known that several officers and young councillors at the Parlement had attempted the operation without succeeding, and each of them had paid his louis.

The thing was too unusual not to excite my curiosity, and I could not resist making the trial. So I lost no time *in calling on her, but, not wanting to be duped, I took my precautions. I told the beauty that she must come to sup with me, that I would give her twenty-five louis if I was completely happy, and, if I was not, she should have six instead of one, provided she was not obstructed. Her aunt assured me that I would not find that deformity in her. I remembered Vittorina.*[31]

Raton came to supper with her aunt, who, when dessert was served, retired to spend the night in an adjoining room. The girl was a masterpiece in the perfection of her forms, and I felt not a little uneasy at the thought that I was to have her entirely at my disposition, amenable, laughing, and defying me to conquer a fleece, not of gold[32] *but of ebony, which the flower of the youth of Metz had sought to conquer in vain. The reader will perhaps think that, since I no longer enjoyed the vigor of my youth, the vain efforts which so many others had expended should have discouraged me; but not at all, I knew myself, and I laughed at them. Those who had made the attempt were Frenchmen who were better versed in the art of taking fortresses by storm than in that of outwitting the art of a conscienceless girl determined to elude them. An Italian, I knew all about that, and I had made such preparations that I had no doubt of victory.*

But they proved unnecessary, for as soon as Raton was in my arms, aware from the way in which I attacked her that trickery would accomplish nothing, she frankly yielded to my desires, wasting no time in attempting the elusive tactics which, to unseasoned combatants, made her appear to be what she no longer was. She gave herself freely, and, when I promised to keep her secret, she paid me ardor for ardor. It was no new thing to her; hence I should not have needed to give her the twenty-five louis; but I was satisfied, and, having very little regard for this kind of priority, I recompensed her as if I had been the first to bite the apple.

I kept Raton at a louis a day until La Corticelli arrived, and she could not help being faithful to me for I never let her out of my sight. I felt so much the better for a diet of this girl, who was thoroughly likable, that I very much repented having bound myself to wait for my Italian accomplice, whose arrival was announced to me just as I was leaving my box to go home. My temporary valet said in a loud voice that "Her Ladyship my wife," my daughter, and a gentleman had just arrived from Frankfort and were waiting for me at the inn.

"Idiot!" I said, "I have no wife and no daughter."

Which did not prevent everyone in Metz from learning that my family had arrived.

La Corticelli threw herself on my neck, laughing as always, and the old woman introduced the worthy man who had escorted them from Prague to Metz. He was an Italian named Monti, long settled in Prague, where he gave Italian lessons. I saw to it that Signor Monti and the old woman were comfortably lodged; then I took the little madcap to my room, finding her changed for the better: she had grown taller, her forms had gained in definition, and her charming manners added all that was needed to make her a very attractive girl.

CHAPTER III

I return to Paris with La Corticelli, transformed for the occasion into the Countess Lascaris. The abortive hypostasis. Aix-la-Chapelle. Duel. Mimi d'Aché. La Corticelli betrays me, but only to her own undoing. Journey to Sulzbach.

"WHY DID you let your mother call herself my wife, you scatterbrain? Do you think I can take it as a compliment? If she wanted to pass you off as my daughter she should have given it out that she was your governess."

"My mother has her own ideas; she'd rather be whipped than be taken for my governess, because in her mind there's no difference between a governess and a bawd."

"She's an ignorant fool; but we'll make her listen to reason of her own free will or by force. But I see you are well set up; have you made your fortune?"

"At Prague I captivated Count N . . . ,[1] and he was generous. But before anything else, my dear friend, I beg you to send Signor Monti back. The worthy man's family is in Prague, and he cannot stay here long."

"You are right; I will see that he is sent back at once."

The coach was to leave that evening for Frankfort;

I summoned Monti and, after thanking him for his kindness, I paid him liberally, and he left well pleased.

Having nothing further to do in Metz, I took leave of my new acquaintances, and on the next day but one I slept at Nancy, whence I wrote to Madame d'Urfé that I was returning with a virgin, the last descendant of the Lascaris[2] *family which had reigned in Constantinople. I asked her to receive her from my hands at a country house which belonged to her family, where we should have to remain for some days to perform certain cabalistic ceremonies.*

She replied that she would expect me at Pont-Carré,[3] *an ancient castle four leagues from Paris, and that she would there receive the young princess with all the cordiality she could wish for: "I have all the more reason to do so," she added in the exaltation of her insanity, "because the Lascaris family is connected with the D'Urfés, and because I am to be reborn from the offspring of this favored virgin." I saw that my course should be not to cool her enthusiasm but to hold it in check and moderate its manifestations. So I immediately wrote to her on the subject, explaining why she must treat her as no more than a countess, and I ended by announcing that we should arrive, with the young Lascaris's governess, on Monday in Holy Week.*

I spent ten or twelve days in Nancy, instructing my young scatterbrain and convincing her mother that she must content herself with being the most humble servant of the Countess Lascaris. I found it a very difficult task; I had not only to make it plain that her hope of affluence depended on her complete submission, I even had to threaten that I would send her back to Bologna alone. I was sorely to repent of my persistence. The woman's obstinacy was an inspiration of my Good Genius, who wanted to guard me against the greatest mistake I have made in all my life!

We arrived at Pont-Carré on the appointed day.

Madame d'Urfé, whom I had informed in advance of the hour of our arrival, had the drawbridges of the castle lowered and stood in the gateway surrounded by her entire household, like a general ready to surrender the place to us with all the honors of war. The dear lady, who was insane only because she had an excess of intelligence, gave the pretended princess a reception so flattering that she would have been astounded by it if I had not taken care to forewarn her. She embraced her three times with truly maternal tenderness, addressed her as her "very dear niece," and recited her own genealogy and that of the house of Lascaris to show her how she came to be her aunt. What most pleasantly surprised me was that my Italian madcap heard her out with polite dignity and did not once laugh, though the whole comedy must have struck her as extremely funny.

As soon as we had retired to the apartment the fairy performed some mysterious fumigations, and censed the newcomer, who received the homage with all the modesty of an opera goddess and then threw herself into the arms of the priestess, who received her with the greatest enthusiasm.

At table the Countess was animated, gracious, talkative, which won her the heart of Madame d'Urfé, who was not at all surprised to hear her chatter away in French. Madonna Laura, who knew only her native Italian, was not present. She had been given an excellent room, where her meals were brought to her and which she never left except to go to mass.

The castle of Pont-Carré was a sort of fortress, which, in the days of the civil wars,[4] *had withstood more than one siege. It was square, as its name indicated, flanked by four crenelated towers, and surrounded by a wide moat. The rooms were huge and richly furnished, but in the old fashion. The air was infested with venomous gnats, which ate us up and produced extremely painful swellings on our faces, but I had undertaken to spend a* *week there, and I should have found it hard to invent a pretext for shortening the time. Madame d'Urfé had a bed for her niece set up beside her own, and I was not afraid she would attempt to assure herself of her virginity, for the oracle had forbidden it, upon pain of destroying the effect of the operation, which we fixed for the fourteenth day of the April moon.*

On that day we supped temperately, then I went to bed. A quarter of an hour later Madame d'Urfé brought me the virgin Lascaris. She undressed her, perfumed her, draped her in a magnificent veil, and, when she had put her beside me, remained, wishing to be present at the operation which was to result in her being reborn nine months later.

The act was consummated in due form, and when that was done Madame d'Urfé left us alone for that night, which was very well employed. After that night the Countess slept with her aunt until the last day of the moon, at which time I was to ask the oracle if the young Lascaris had conceived by my efforts. It might well be the case, for nothing had been spared to achieve that end; but I thought it wiser to make the oracle reply that the operation had failed because the youthful D'Aranda had seen the whole performance from behind a screen. Madame d'Urfé was in despair; but I comforted her by a second answer in which the oracle told her that what it had been impossible to accomplish during the April moon in France could be accomplished outside of the kingdom during the May moon, but that she must send the prying youth, whose influence had been so adverse, a hundred leagues from Paris for at least a year. The oracle also stipulated how D'Aranda was to travel: he must have a tutor, a manservant, and all his appurtenances in perfect order.

The oracle had spoken; no more was needed. Madame d'Urfé at once thought of an Abbé whom she liked, and D'Aranda was sent to Lyons,[5] *with a warm letter of rec-*

ommendation to her relative, Monsieur de Rochebaron.[6] *The lad was delighted to travel and never learned anything of the little slander I had permitted myself in order to get him out of the way. What made me take this action was not empty whim. I had seen beyond peradventure that La Corticelli was in love with him and that her mother was fostering the intrigue. I had twice surprised her in her room with the youth, who was interested in her only as a young adolescent is interested in all girls; and my disapproval of my Italian accomplice's designs became, in Signora Laura's mind, an unwarranted opposition to her daughter's inclination.*

Our business now was to think of some place abroad where we could go to repeat the mysterious operation. We decided on Aix-la-Chapelle, and in five or six days everything was in readiness for the journey.

La Corticelli, angry with me for having spirited away the object of her love, reproached me vehemently and from then on began to behave badly toward me; she even went so far as to indulge in threats if I would not summon back the "pretty boy," as she called him.

"You have no right to be jealous," she said, "and I am my own mistress."

"Quite so, my beauty," I replied, "but I have a right to prevent you from behaving like a prostitute in the situation in which I have placed you."

Her mother flew into a rage and told me that she wanted to go back to Bologna with her daughter; and to soothe her I promised I would take them both there after our journey to Aix-la-Chapelle.

However, I did not feel easy, and, fearing difficulties, I hastened my departure. We left one May day in a berlin in which I accompanied Madame d'Urfé, the pretended Countess Lascaris, and a maid, her favorite, named Brougnole.[7] *A two-seated cabriolet followed us; it was occupied by Signora Laura and another maid. Two menservants in full livery sat on the outside seat* *of the berlin. We rested one day in Brussels and another in Liège. At Aix*[8] *we found a great number of distinguished foreigners, and at the first ball Madame d'Urfé presented my Lascaris to two Princesses of Mecklenburg*[9] *as her niece. The pretended Countess received their embraces calmly and modestly, and she attracted the particular attention of the Margrave of Bayreuth*[10] *and of the Duchess of Württemberg,*[11] *who together took possession of her and did not leave her until the end of the ball. I was on tenterhooks for fear that my heroine would betray herself by some piece of theatrical repartee. She danced with a grace which won her the attention and applause of the whole company; and it was I who was complimented on her performance. I suffered martyrdom, for I thought the compliments were malicious; it was as if everyone had divined the ballerina disguised as a countess, and I believed I was dishonored. Having found an opportunity to speak privately to the young madcap, I begged her to dance like a young lady of station and not like a ballet girl, but she was proud of her success and had the impudence to answer that a young lady might well be able to dance like a dancer and that she would never dance badly to please me. This behavior so disgusted me with her that, had I known how, I would have got rid of her then and there; but I silently swore that she would escape nothing by waiting; and, be it a vice or a virtue, vengeance never ceases to burn in my heart until it has been satisfied.*

On the morning after the ball Madame d'Urfé made her a present of a casket containing a very fine watch set with brilliants, a pair of diamond earrings, and a ring adorned with a rose diamond weighing fifteen carats. All together they were worth sixty thousand francs. I took charge of them, lest it should occur to her to leave without my consent.

Meanwhile, to ward off boredom, I gambled, I lost my money, and I made bad acquaintances. The worst *of them all was a French officer named D'Aché,[12] who had a pretty wife and an even prettier daughter. The girl very soon captured the place in my heart on which La Corticelli by now had only a slight hold; but as soon as Madame d'Aché saw that I preferred her daughter she refused to receive my visits.*

I had lent D'Aché ten louis; so I thought I could complain to him of his wife's behavior toward me; but he curtly replied that if I went to the house only for his daughter, his wife was in the right; that his daughter was a girl who could well find a husband, and if my intentions were honorable I had only to declare them to her mother. Nothing in all this was offensive except his tone, and I took offense at it; however, knowing that he was a coarse brute, a drunkard, and always ready to fight over a "yea" or a "nay," I decided to say nothing and forget his daughter, not wanting to become involved with a man of his kind.

I was in this frame of mind and almost cured of my fancy for his daughter, when, four days after our conversation, I entered a billiard room where D'Aché was playing with a Swiss named Schmit,[13] an officer in the Swedish service. As soon as D'Aché saw me he asked me if I would bet him the ten louis he owed me. The game was just beginning; I replied:

"Yes, that will make it twenty or nothing. I accept."

Toward the end of the game D'Aché, seeing that he was losing, made an unfair stroke so obvious that the marker told him so to his face; but D'Aché, for whom the stroke won the game, takes the money which was in the stake bag and puts it in his pocket, paying no attention to the marker's adjurations or to those of his opponent, who, seeing that he has been cheated, makes to hit the blackguard across the face with his cue. D'Aché, who had warded off the blow with his arm, instantly draws his sword and runs at Schmit, who was unarmed. The marker, a sturdy young man, caught D'Aché around *the waist and prevented murder. The Swiss leaves, saying:*

"We shall meet again."

The scoundrel, who had cooled down, looks at me and says:

"Now we are quits."

"Very much so."

"I'm glad of that; but, the devil take it, you could have spared me an insult which dishonors me."

"So I could, but I was under no obligation to do it. Besides, you must know what your rights are. Schmit was without his sword, but I believe he is a man of mettle, and he will give you satisfaction if you have courage enough to return his money to him, for, after all, you lost."

An officer whose name was De Pienne[14] *took me aside and said that he would himself pay me the twenty louis which D'Aché had pocketed, but that Schmit must give him satisfaction, sword in hand. I did not hesitate to promise him that the Swiss would fulfill the obligation, and I undertook to bring him an affirmative reply the next day in the place where we then were.*

I had no doubt that I should do as I had said. A gentleman who carries a weapon must always be ready to use it, whether in avenging an insult to his honor or in giving satisfaction for an insult he may have offered. I know that this is a prejudice which, rightly or wrongly, is called "barbaric," but there are social prejudices to which no man of honor can deny allegiance, and Schmit impressed me as being a thorough gentleman.

I went to him at daybreak the next morning; he was still in bed. As soon as he saw me,

"I am sure," he said, "that you have come to ask me to fight D'Aché. I am more than ready to burn powder with him, but on condition that he shall first pay me the twenty louis he stole from me."

"You shall have them tomorrow morning, and I will

be with you. D'Aché's second will be Monsieur de Pienne."

"Well and good. I shall expect you here at daybreak."

I saw De Pienne two hours later, and we arranged the meeting for six o'clock in the morning on the following day, with two pistols. We chose a garden half a league from the city.

At daybreak I found my Swiss waiting for me at the door of his lodging, humming the "Ranz-des-Vaches," of which his fellow countrymen are so fond. I thought it a good omen.

"You have come." he said. "Let us be off."

On the way he said:

"I have never fought except with a gentleman, and I find it hard to kill a scoundrel; that should be work for a hangman."

"I understand," I said, "that it is very distasteful to risk one's life against such people."

"I risk nothing," said Schmit with a laugh, "for I am certain to kill him."

"Certain?"

"Perfectly certain, because I shall make him tremble."

He was right. The secret is infallible when one knows how to employ it and when one is in the right against a coward. We found D'Aché and De Pienne at the appointed place, and we saw five or six people who could have been there only out of curiosity.

D'Aché took twenty louis from his pocket and handed them to his opponent, saying:

"I may have been mistaken, but I mean to make you pay dearly for your brutality."

Then, turning to me:

"I owe you twenty louis," he said.

I did not answer him.

Schmit, having put his money in his purse with the utmost calm, and making no reply to the other's boasting, took his station between two trees about four paces apart, *drew a pair of dueling pistols from his pocket, and said to D'Aché:*

"You have only to place yourself at ten paces' distance and fire first. The space between these two trees is the place where I choose to walk back and forth. You may walk too, if you wish, when it is my turn to fire."

No one could have explained his intentions more clearly or have spoken more calmly.

"But," said I, "we must decide who is to have the first shot."

"There is no need of that," said Schmit, "I never fire first; in any case the gentleman has that right."

De Pienne placed his friend at the specified distance, then he retired with me, and D'Aché fired at his opponent, who was slowly walking back and forth without looking at him. Schmit turned around with the greatest composure and said:

"You missed me, sir; I was sure you would; try again."

I thought he was mad, and I expected some kind of discussion between the parties. But not a bit of it. D'Aché, thus given leave to take the second shot, fired and again missed his opponent, who, without a word, but in a firm and confident manner, fired his first shot into the air, then, aiming at D'Aché with his second pistol, hit him in the center of the forehead and stretched him dead on the ground. Putting his pistols back in his pocket, Schmit instantly set off, unaccompanied, as if he were continuing his walk. I left two minutes later, when I was certain that the unfortunate D'Aché was lifeless.

I was in a daze, for such a duel seemed to me a dream, something out of a romance, rather than a reality. I could not get over it, for I had not detected the slightest change on the impassive countenance of the Swiss.

I went to breakfast with Madame d'Urfé, whom I found inconsolable, for it was the day of the full moon, and at exactly three minutes past four o'clock I was to *accomplish the mysterious creation of the child from whom she was to be reborn. But the divine Lascaris, who was to be the chosen vessel, was writhing on her bed, feigning convulsions which would make it impossible for me to accomplish the work of fecundation.*

On hearing an account of this disaster from the heart-broken Madame d'Urfé, I affected a hypocritical grief, for the dancer's spitefulness served my turn to perfection, first because she no longer aroused the slightest desire in me, second because I foresaw that I could make use of the incident to avenge myself and punish her.

I lavished consolations on Madame d'Urfé, and, after consulting the oracle, I found that the young Countess Lescaris had been defiled by a black Genius, and that I must go in search of the predestined girl whose purity was under the protection of the higher Geniuses. Seeing the mad Madame d'Urfé perfectly content with the oracle's promises, I left her and went to see La Corticelli, whom I found on her bed, with her mother beside her.

"So you are suffering from convulsions, my dear," I said.

"No, I am perfectly well; but I shall go on having them until you give me back my jewel casket."

"You have become naughty, my poor child, and it has come from taking your mother's advice. As for the casket, if you continue to behave in this way you may never get it back."

"I will tell all."

"No one will believe you, and I will send you back to Bologna without a single one of the presents Madame d'Urfé has given you."

"You will have to give me back the casket when I announce that I am pregnant—as in fact I am If you do not satisfy me I shall go and tell the old fool everything, no matter what may happen."

Greatly surprised, I stared at her without saying a word, but I was considering how best to get rid of the im-

pudent wench. Signora Laura said, with perfect calm, that it was only true that her daughter was with child, but that it was not by me.

"Then who made her pregnant?" I asked her.

"Count N . . . , whose mistress she was in Prague."

I did not think it possible, for she showed no signs of being with child, but, even so, it might be the case. Forced to think of some course which would foil the scoundrelly pair, I left the room without a word and shut myself up with Madame d'Urfé to consult the oracle concerning the operation which was to make her happy.

After a quantity of questions more obscure than the oracles which the Pythia delivered from her tripod at Delphi,[15] *the interpretation of which I consequently left to my poor infatuated Madame d'Urfé, she herself discovered—and I took great care not to contradict her—that the young Lascaris had gone mad. Fostering all her fears, I succeeded in making her read in the reply of a cabalistic figure that the princess had failed to answer our expectations because she had been defiled by a black Genius hostile to the Rosicrucian Order; and, being now well launched, she added of her own motion that the girl must be pregnant with a gnome.*

She then drew up another figure to learn how we were to go about attaining our end without fail, and I so directed her that she found she must write to the moon.[16]

This extravagance, which should have brought her back to reason, filled her with joy. Her enthusiasm was that of a mystic in ecstasy, and I became certain that even if I had tried to prove the groundlessness of her hopes I should have wasted my breath. At most she would have concluded that a hostile Genius had corrupted me and that I was no longer a perfect Rosicrucian. But I was far from undertaking a cure which would have been so disadvantageous to me and of no use to her. If nothing else, her infatuation made her happy, and no doubt a return to the truth would have made her the reverse.

In short, she received the command to write to the moon all the more joyously because she knew the devotions in which that planet delights and the form of ceremony with which it must be approached; but she could not perform it without the help of an adept, and I knew that she counted on me. I said that I would be hers to command, but that we must wait until the first phase of the coming moon, which fact she knew as well as I did. I was very glad to gain some time, for, having lost a great deal at cards, I could not leave Aix-la-Chapelle before I received the sum represented by a bill of exchange which I had drawn on Monsieur D. O.[17] *in Amsterdam. In the meanwhile we agreed that, since the young Lascaris had gone mad, we would pay no attention to anything she might say in her insane fits, for, her mind being in the power of the evil Genius who had taken possession of her, it was he who put the words into her mouth.*

However, her condition deserving our pity, we agreed that, to lighten her lot as much as possible, she should continue to eat with us, but that in the evening, when we rose from supper, she should go to bed in her governess's room.

After having thus disposed Madame d'Urfé not to believe anything La Corticelli might say to her, and to give her whole thought to the letter she must write to the Genius Selenis,[18] *who inhabits the moon, I set seriously about finding means to replace the money I had lost, which the cabala could not do for me. I pawned La Corticelli's casket for a thousand louis, and went to deal at an English club,*[19] *where I could win much more than I could with Frenchmen or Spaniards.*

Three or four days after D'Aché's death his widow wrote me a note asking me to call on her. I found her with De Pienne. She told me in sorrowful tones that, her husband having contracted many debts, his creditors had seized everything, so that she could not pay the expenses *of a journey to throw herself and her daughter on the mercy of her family in Colmar.*

"You are," she went on, "the cause of my husband's death; I ask you for a thousand écus; if you refuse me I will sue you in court, for, the Swiss officer having left, there is no one else I can sue."

"What you have permitted yourself to say surprises me, Madame," I rejoined coldly, "and but for my respect for your misfortune, I should reply with the acerbity which your behavior cannot but inspire in me. In the first place I have not a thousand écus to throw away, and even if I had them, your threatening tone would be little calculated to induce me to make such a sacrifice. In addition, I am curious to see how you could possibly go about suing me. As for Monsieur Schmit, he fought like a brave man and a gentleman, and I have yet to understand what you could gain by suing him if he had remained here. Good-by, Madame."

I had scarcely got fifty paces from the house, when I was joined by De Pienne, who said that before Madame d'Aché sued me it was for us to go to some private place and cut each other's throats. Neither of us was wearing a sword.

"Your intention is scarcely flattering," I said calmly; "indeed, it has a certain brutality which does not encourage me to involve myself with a man whom I do not know and to whom I owe nothing."

"You are a coward."

"I might be one if I imitated you. What you may think of me leaves me completely indifferent."

"You will be sorry."

"Perhaps, but meanwhile I give you due warning that I never go about without a pair of pistols in good condition and that I know how to use them. Here they are," I added, drawing them from my pocket and cocking the one in my right hand.

At sight of them the bully gave a curse and fled in one direction while I made off in the other.

Not far from where this scene had taken place I ran into a Neapolitan named Militerni,[20] *then a Lieutenant-Colonel and Aide-de-Camp to the Prince of Condé, who was in command of the French army. Militerni was a man who enjoyed life, always ready to oblige and always short of money. We were friends, and I told him what had just happened.*

"I should be sorry," I said, "to become involved with De Pienne, and if you can dispose of him for me I promise you a hundred écus."

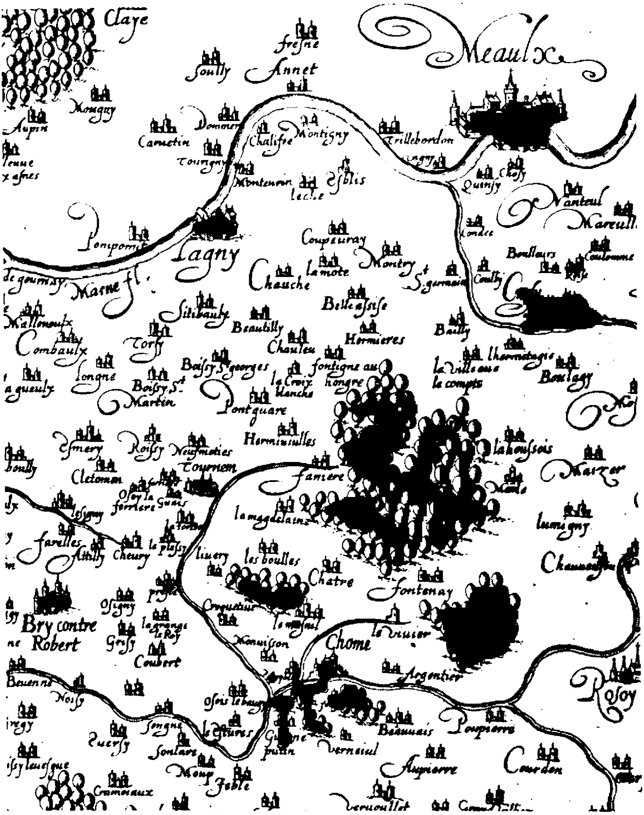
"It can doubtless be done," he replied; "I will tell you more tomorrow."

And in fact he came to me the next morning and announced that my cutthroat had left Aix at daybreak in obedience to a formal order from his military superior, and at the same time he gave me an unrestricted passport from the Prince of Condé.

I admit that I was gratified by the news. I have never feared to cross swords with the first comer, though I have never sought the barbarous pleasure of shedding a man's blood; but this time I felt an intense aversion to involving myself with a man whom I had reason to believe was no more scrupulous than his friend D'Aché. So I heartily thanked Militerni, at the same time giving him the hundred écus I had promised him, which I considered too well spent to regret them.

Militerni, a past master at jesting and a tool of Marshal d'Estrées,[21] *was not without either intelligence or education; but he lacked discipline and, to some extent, refinement. Withal, he was a most agreeable companion, for he was imperturbably good-humored and he had a considerable knowledge of the world. Made a Field Marshal in 1768, he went to Naples and married*[22] *a rich heiress, whom he left a widow a year later.*

The day after De Pienne left, I received a note from


Claye
Fresne
Meaulx
Soully
Annet
Mougny
Aupin
Dommer
Carnetin
Chalifre
Montigny
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Tougny
Esblis
Quinsy
Vanteul
Mareull
Pompone
Lagny
Coupeuray
Condee
Boullaurs
Coulomme
de gournay
Marne fl.
Chauche
La mote
Montry
S. germain
Coully
Belle assise
Beautilly
Combaulx
Torsy
Chauleu
Hermieres
Bailly
Boissy S. georges
fontigne au hongre
la Croix blanche
la villeneue le compte
lhermitage
Boulagy
longne
Boissy S.t Martin
Pont quare
Emery
Roissy
Neufmoutier
la houssois
Marzer
Tournen
Famiere
Ossoy la ferriere
Suais
lesigny
la magdelaine
lumigny
farelles
Attilly
Cheury
le plessis
liuery
les boulles
Chatre
Fontenay
Ossigny
Bry contre Robert
la grange le Roy
le viuier
Chome
Grisy
Coubert
Argentier
Rosoy
Nossy
Beauuais
Poupierre
Quercy
Songne
lestures
Courdon
Jeble

Surroundings of the Château de Pont-Carré

Mademoiselle d'Aché asking me, on behalf of her mother, who was ill, to call on her. I replied that she would find me at such-and-such a place at an hour which I specified, where she could tell me whatever she wished.

I found her at the appointed place with her mother, who came despite her pretended illness. Complaints, tears, reproaches—nothing was spared. She called me her "persecutor," and said that the departure of De Pienne, her only friend, had reduced her to despair, that she had pawned all her possessions, that she had no further resources, and that I, being rich, ought to help her if I was not the basest of men.

"I am far from being insensible to your misfortunes, Madame, and though I am not so to your insults I cannot refrain from telling you that you proved yourself the basest of women by inciting De Pienne, who may be an honorable man, to murder me. In short, rich or not, though I owe you nothing, I will give you what you need to take your things out of pawn, and I may even escort you to Colmar myself; but you must consent to my giving your charming daughter some first proofs of my love here and now."

"And you dare to make this horrible proposal to me?"

"Be it horrible or not, it is the proposal I make you."

"Never."

"Good-by, Madame."

I called the waiter to pay for the refreshments I had ordered, and I put six double louis in the girl's hand, but the proud mother, seeing it, forbade her to accept them. I was not surprised, despite her indigence, for the mother was charming and indeed a better prize than her daughter, and she knew it. I should have given her the preference, and so have ended all protest—but whim! In love, there is no accounting for it. I felt that she must hate me, and the more so because, since she did not love her daughter, she was humiliated to find her a preferred rival.

My departure leaving me still holding the six double louis which pride or pique had refused, I went to the faro bank and decided to sacrifice them to Fortune; but that capricious goddess, as haughty as the proud widow, refused them as she had done, and, having left them five times on one card, I very nearly broke the bank then and there. An Englishman named Martin offered to go halves with me; knowing him to be a good player, I accepted his proposal, and in eight or ten deals we managed so well that, after taking the casket out of pawn, I found not only that my other losses were made good but that I was also ahead by a considerable sum.

In the meanwhile La Corticelli, thoroughly angry with me, had revealed everything to Madame d'Urfé, telling her the true story of her life, of our acquaintance, and of her pregnancy. But the more truth she put into her account, the more the good lady was confirmed in her idea that the girl was mad, and she only laughed with me over the supposed insanity of my Italian traitress. She put all her trust in the instructions which Selenis was to give her in his answer.

For my part, however, being unable to overlook the girl's behavior, I decided to send her to eat in her mother's room, seeing to it that I alone kept Madame d'Urfé company and assuring her that we should easily find another chosen vessel, since the young Lascaris's madness made her wholly unfit to participate in our mysteries.

It was not long before the widow D'Aché, under the stress of need, found herself obliged to give me her Mimi; but I conquered her by kindness and, in the beginning, by so far respecting appearances that she could pretend to know nothing. I redeemed all the things she had pawned; and, satisfied with her behavior, though her daughter had not yet yielded entirely to my ardor, I formed the plan of taking them both to Colmar with Madame d'Urfé. To persuade the lady to perform this good action without suspecting its real motives, it oc-

curred to me to make her receive the order from the moon in the letter she was awaiting from that planet; I was certain that, under such circumstances, she would obey blindly.

The way in which I contrived the exchange of letters between Selenis and Madame d'Urfé was as follows.

On the day determined by the phase of the moon we went to sup together in a garden outside the city,[23] *where, in a room on the ground floor, I had prepared everything necessary for the ceremony; I had in my pocket the letter which was to come down from the moon in reply to the one which Madame d'Urfé had carefully prepared and which we were to send to its address. A few paces from the ceremonial chamber I had arranged to have a large bath filled with the perfumes pleasing to the luminary of the night, which we were to enter together at the hour of the moon, which on that day was an hour after midnight.*

When we had burned the aromatics and sprinkled the perfumes appropriate to the worship of Selenis and recited the mystic prayers, we undressed completely, and, holding my letter concealed in my left hand, with my right I escorted her to the edge of the bath, in which was an alabaster cup filled with spirits of juniper, which I ignited, meanwhile uttering cabalistic words which I did not understand and which she repeated after me, handing me the letter addressed to Selenis. I burned the letter in the juniper flame on which the full moon was shining, and the credulous Madame d'Urfé assured me that she had seen the characters she had written ascending along the luminary's rays.

After that we got into the bath, and the letter which I held concealed in my hand, written in silver on glazed green paper, appeared on the surface of the water ten minutes later. As soon as Madame d'Urfé saw it she took it up reverently and left the bath with me.

After drying and perfuming ourselves, we dressed again. When we were in a state of decency I told Madame *d'Urfé that she might read the letter, which she had laid on a perfumed white satin cushion. She obeyed, and a visible gloom descended on her when she read that her hypostasis was put off until the arrival of Querilinte, whom she would see with me at Marseilles in the spring of the following year. The Genius further told her that the young Countess Lascaris could only do her harm, and that she must leave it to me to get rid of her. He ended by ordering her to instruct me not to leave in Aix a woman who had lost her husband and who had a daughter whom the Geniuses had destined to be of great service to our Order. She was to arrange for her to travel to Alsace with her daughter and not let them out of her sight until they had arrived there, so that our influence would protect them from the dangers by which they were threatened if they were left to themselves.*

Madame d'Urfé, who, her madness aside, was extremely kindhearted, recommended the widow to me with all the warmth of fanaticism and humanity and was extremely impatient to learn their whole story. I coldly told her whatever I thought proper to strengthen her in her resolve and promised to introduce the ladies to her as soon as possible.

We returned to Aix, and we spent the rest of the night together, discussing all the matters which filled her imagination. Everything being favorable to my plans, I devoted myself entirely to arranging for the journey to Alsace and to obtaining complete possession of Mimi after having so well deserved her favors by the service I was doing her.

The next day I was lucky at cards, and, to crown my day, I went to enjoy the grateful surprise of Madame d'Aché when I informed her that I had decided to take her to Colmar myself with her Mimi. I said that I must begin by introducing them to the lady whom I had the honor of accompanying, and I asked her to be ready the next day, for the Marquise was impatient to make her acquaintance. I clearly saw that she found it hard to *convince herself that what I was telling her was true, for she assumed that the Marquise was in love with me, and she could not reconcile that idea with Madame d'Urfé's eagerness to put me in the company of two women who might well be dangerous rivals.*

I went for them the next day at an hour we had agreed upon, and Madame d'Urfé received them with a cordiality which must greatly have surprised them, for they could not know that they owed it to a recommendation direct from the moon. The four of us dined together, and the two ladies conversed like women of the world. Mimi was charming, and I paid her particular attention, of which her mother well knew the reason and which the Marquise attributed to the esteem in which the Rosicrucians held her.

In the evening we all went to the ball, where La Corticelli, always bent on causing me every possible annoyance, danced in a manner forbidden to well-born young ladies. She performed entrechats à huit, *pirouettes, caprioles, mid-leg* battements*—in short, all the acrobatics of an opera ballet girl. I was in torment! An officer who perhaps did not know that I gave myself out to be her uncle, or perhaps only pretended not to know it, asked me if she was a professional dancer. I heard another officer behind me saying that he thought he had seen her dance at the theater in Prague during the last Carnival. I realized that I must hasten my departure, for I foresaw that the wretched girl would end by costing me my life if we remained in Aix.*

Madame d'Aché having, as I said, the manners of good society, completely won the approval of Madame d'Urfé, who thought that she saw a new favor from Selenis in her amiability. Feeling that, after the services I was doing her in so marked a manner, she owed me some gratitude, Madame d'Aché pretended not to feel well and left the ball first, so that when I took her daughter home I found myself alone with her and under no constraint. Taking advantage of this favorable circumstance, *I spent two hours with Mimi, who proved to be so amenable, so willing, and so passionate that when I left her I had nothing more to desire.*

On the third day I furnished the mother and daughter with traveling clothes, and, in an elegant and roomy berlin which I had secured, we all set out happily from Aix. A half hour before leaving I made an acquaintance the consequences of which were disastrous later on. A Flemish officer, whom I did not know, accosted me and described his destitute situation so feelingly that I could not help giving him twelve louis. Ten minutes later he brought me a note in which he acknowledged his indebtedness and stated the time at which he would repay me. The note showed me that his name was Malingan.[24] *My reader shall learn the sequel ten months hence.*

Just as we were leaving I directed La Corticelli to a four-seated carriage in which she was to travel with her mother and two maids. She shook from head to foot; her pride was wounded, and for a moment I thought she would go out of her mind; tears, insults, curses—nothing was spared. I remained unmoved, and Madame d'Urfé, laughing over the insane vagaries of her supposed niece, showed that she was very glad to be seated opposite me and beside the protégée of the powerful Selenis; while Mimi seized every opportunity to show how happy she was to be in my company.

We arrived at Liège the next day at nightfall, and I suggested to Madame d'Urfé that we spend the following day there, for I wanted to hire horses to travel to Luxembourg by way of the Ardennes; it was a detour in which I indulged myself in order to possess my charming Mimi the longer.

Having risen early, I went out to see the city. On my way toward the great bridge, a woman so closely wrapped in a black mantilla that only the tip of her nose was visible comes up to me and asks me to follow her to a house of which she points to the open door.

"As I have not the honor of your acquaintance," I said, "prudence does not permit me to accept your invitation."

"You know me," she replied, and, taking me to the corner of the next street, she uncovered her face. The reader may imagine my surprise: it was the beautiful Stuard, whom I had encountered in Avignon, the insensible statue of the Fountain of Vaucluse.[25] *I was very glad to see her again.*

Curious, I follow her and go up with her to a room on the second floor, where she greets me most lovingly. It was no use, for, despite her beauty, I bore her a grudge and I rejected her advances; doubtless because I was in love with Mimi, who made me happy and whom I wished to please by keeping myself entirely for her. However, I took three louis from my purse and gave them to her, asking her to tell me her story.

"Stuard," she said, "was only my traveling companion; my name is Ranson, and I am kept by a rich landowner. I have come back to Liège after suffering much."

"I am very glad," I said, "that you are well situated now, but you must acknowledge that your behavior in Avignon was as preposterous as it was silly. But let us say no more about it. Good-by, Madame."

I went back to my hotel to write the Marchese Grimaldi[26] *an account of my meeting with La Stuard.*

We set off again the next day and spent two days crossing the Ardennes.[27] *It is one of the strangest landscapes in Europe, a vast forest whose tales of ancient chivalry furnished Ariosto with such beautiful pages on the subject of Bayard.*[28]

Amid this immense forest, which contains not a single city, and which one must nevertheless cross to get from one country to another, one finds almost none of the comforts or even the necessities of life.

One would search it in vain for vices and for virtues and for what we call "manners." The inhabitants are *without ambition, and, unable to have correct ideas of the truth, they hatch monstrous notions concerning nature, the sciences, and the powers of men who, in their opinion, deserve the epithet "wise." It is enough to be a physician to gain the reputation of being an astrologer, and still more a magician, among them. Yet the Ardennes are well populated, for I have been assured that they contain twelve hundred churches. The inhabitants are kindly, even obliging, especially the girls; but in general the fair sex does not deserve that epithet there. In this vast district, the entire length of which is watered by the Meuse, lies the city of Bouillon,*[29] *a hole if ever there was one, but in my time it was the freest city in Europe. The Duke of Bouillon*[30] *was so jealous of his jurisdictional rights that he preferred his prerogative to all the honors which could have been paid him at the Court of France.*

We stopped one day at Metz, where we paid no visits, and in three days we arrived at Colmar, where we left Madame d'Aché, whose good graces I had won. Her family, who were very well off, received both mother and daughter with the greatest affection. Mimi shed many tears when we parted, but I comforted her by promising to see her again before long. Madame d'Urfé, whom I had prepared for the separation, felt it very little, and for my part I did not find it hard to console myself. At the same time that I congratulated myself on having contributed to the happiness of the mother and daughter, I bowed to the secret counsels of Providence.

The next day we went to Sulzbach,[31] *where Baron Schaumbourg,*[32] *an acquaintance of Madame d'Urfé's, gave us a cordial reception. I should have been bored in the dreary place had it not been for cards. Madame d'Urfé, feeling in need of company, encouraged La Corticelli to hope for the return of my good graces and, with them, of hers. The wretched creature, who had used every means to cross me, seeing how easily I had* *foiled her plots and how deeply I had humiliated her, had changed her role: she had become docile, obliging, and submissive. She hoped to regain some part of the esteem which she had so completely lost, and she thought that victory was at hand when she saw that Madame d'Aché and her daughter had remained behind in Colmar. But what she had most at heart was neither my friendship nor the Marquise's, but the casket, for which she no longer dared to ask me and which she was not to see again. By her pleasantries at table, which made Madame d'Urfé laugh heartily, the madcap managed to inspire some twinges of desire in me; but the compliments of that kind which I paid her did not lead me to lessen my severity in the least; she always slept with her mother.*

A week after we arrived at Sulzbach I put Madame d'Urfé in the care of Baron Schaumbourg and went to Colmar, where I expected to be happy in love. I was disappointed, for I found the mother and the daughter both preparing to be married.

A rich merchant who had loved the mother eighteen years earlier, seeing her a widow and still beautiful, felt his old fire rekindled, offered his hand, and was accepted. A young advocate found Mimi to his taste and asked her in marriage. The mother and the daughter, who, besides considering it a good match, feared the consequences of my love, hastened to give their consent. I was made much of by the family, and supped with a numerous and choice company; but seeing that I could only be in the ladies' way and be bored myself while hoping for some momentary favor, I bade them good-by and the next day returned to Sulzbach. There I found a charming woman from Strassburg by the name of Salzmann[33] *and three or four gamesters who said that they had come to take the waters and who gave me advance notice of several female table companions, whose acquaintance the reader will make in the next chapter.*

CHAPTER IV

I send La Corticelli to Turin. Helena initiated into the mysteries of Love. I pay a visit to Lyons. I arrive in Turin.

MADAME SAXE possessed every quality to command the homage of a man given to love; and if she had not had a jealous officer who never let her out of his sight and who looked threateningly at anyone who dared to show his admiration by aspiring to please her, she would probably not have been without ardent admirers. The officer was fond of piquet,[1] *but he insisted that Madame should always sit at his side, and she seemed happy to be there.*

In the afternoon I played with him, and we went on in this way for five or six days. I got tired of it then, for as soon as he had won ten or twelve louis from me he would get up and leave. The officer's name was D'Entragues;[2] *he was handsome, though thin, and lacked neither intelligence nor the tone of good society.*

Two days had passed since we had played together, when he came to me after dinner and asked if I would like him to give me my revenge.

"I am not interested," I said, "for you and I do not play in the same way. I play for my pleasure, because play amuses me, whereas you play to win."

"What do you mean? You insult me."

"That is not my intention; but each time we have played together you have left me in the lurch after an hour."

"You ought to be grateful to me, for, not being my equal at play, you would perforce have lost a great deal."

"That may be so, but I do not believe it."

"I can prove it to you."

"I accept; but the first to stop playing shall lose fifty louis."

"I accept, but money on the table."

"I never play otherwise."

I order the waiter to bring cards and I go to my room for four or five rolls of fifty louis. We begin playing at five louis a hundred, each of us first setting fifty louis aside for the wager.

It was three o'clock when we sat down to play, and at nine D'Entragues said we might go to supper.

"I am not hungry," I replied, "but you are free to get up if you want me to put the hundred louis in my pocket."

He laughed and went on playing, but the beautiful lady scowled at me, which I gave no sign of noticing. All the people who were looking on went to supper, then came back to keep us company until midnight; but at that hour we were left alone. D'Entragues, who now saw what he had let himself in for, said not a word, and I opened my mouth only to reckon my points; we played on steadily and quietly.

At six o'clock in the morning the water-drinkers began to pass by, and they all congratulated us on our tenacity, clapping their hands, at which we only scowled. Louis were heaped up on the table; I lost a hundred, yet the game was going my way.

At nine o'clock the beautiful Saxe arrived, and a few moments later Madame d'Urfé with Baron Schaumbourg. The two ladies joined in advising us to take a cup of chocolate. D'Entragues consented first, and, thinking that I was on my last legs, he made bold to say:

"Let us agree that the first who asks for food or who leaves the table for more than a quarter of an hour or who falls asleep on his chair will lose the wager."

"I take you at your word," I cried, "and I accept any other more stringent condition you may be pleased to propose."

The chocolate arrives, we take it, and then go on playing. At noon we are summoned to dinner, but we reply together that we are not hungry. About four o'clock we were persuaded to take some broth. When supper-time came everyone began to think the thing was being carried too far, and Madame Saxe proposed that we divide the stake. D'Entragues, who had won a hundred louis from me, would have been glad to accept her proposal, but I refused it, and Baron Schaumbourg declared that I was within my rights. My opponent could have let the wages go and stopped playing; he would still have been ahead; but avarice kept him from doing so even more than pride. For my part, the amount by which I was behind meant something to me, but very little in comparison with the point of honor. I looked fresh, while he looked like a disinterred corpse, his thinness lending itself to the macabre effect. As Madame Saxe continued to insist, I said that I profoundly regretted my inability to yield to the solicitations of a charming woman who in every respect deserved far greater sacrifices, but that in the present case there was a certain element of nice honor, and so I was resolved either to win or not to yield the victory to my antagonist until I dropped dead.

By speaking in these terms I hoped to accomplish two things: to frighten D'Entragues by my firmness and to anger him by making him jealous; certain that a jealous *man sees double, I hoped that his skill would suffer accordingly and that in winning the fifty louis of the wager, I should not have the heartbreak of losing a hundred to his superior skill at play.*

The beautiful Madame Saxe gave me a scornful look and left, but Madame d'Urfé, who believed that I was infallible, avenged me by saying to Monsieur d'Entragues, in a tone of the deepest conviction:

"My God, Monsieur, how I pity you!"

The people who had been with us before supper did not come back; we were left to continue our combat alone. We played all night, and I paid as much attention to my opponent's face as I did to my cards. The more I saw that it was becoming troubled, the more blunders he made; he mixed up his cards, he scored incorrectly, and often made wrong discards. I was scarcely less exhausted than he; I felt my strength failing, and I hoped every minute to see him drop dead, for fear that I should be beaten despite my strong constitution. I had won back my money at daybreak, when, D'Entragues having gone out, I took him to task for having stayed away longer than a quarter of an hour. This trumped-up quarrel left him the worse and roused me—at once the natural result of our different temperaments, a gamester's stratagem, and a subject of study for the moralist and the psychologist; and my trick succeeded because it was not planned beforehand and could not be foreseen. The same thing holds true for army commanders: a military stratagem must come to a captain's mind from the existing circumstances, from the concatenation of events, and from a habit of instantly grasping the connections and the distinctions between men and between things.

At nine o'clock Madame Saxe arrived; her lover was losing.

"Now, Monsieur," she said to me, "it is for you to yield."

"Madame, in the hope of being agreeable to you, I am ready to withdraw my stake and end the matter."

These words, uttered in a tone of marked gallantry, aroused the anger of D'Entragues, who added sharply that it was now his turn to say he would not stop until one of us dropped dead.

"You see, most amiable lady," I said, with a look which, in my state, must have been more bleary than lovelorn, "that I am not the more obstinate of the two."

We were served a dish of broth, but D'Entragues, who was in the last stage of exhaustion, had no sooner swallowed it than he became so ill that he reeled in his chair, broke into a sweat, and fainted. He was quickly carried off, and I, after giving six louis to the marker, who had stayed up for forty-two hours, and putting my money in my pocket, instead of going to bed made my way to an apothecary's shop, where I took a mild emetic. Having then gone to bed, I slept lightly for some hours, and about three o'clock I dined with the best of appetites.

D'Entragues did not reappear until the next day. I expected a quarrel of some sort, but night brings counsel, and I was mistaken. As soon as he saw me he came and embraced me, saying:

"I accepted an insane wager, but you have given me a lesson I shall remember all the rest of my life, and I am grateful to you for it"

"I am very glad of it, if only the effort has not injured your health."

"No, I feel perfectly well, but we shall not play together again."

"I hope at least that we shall not play against each other."

Eight or ten days later I gave Madame d'Urfé the pleasure of taking her to Basel with the pretended Lascaris. We put up at the inn of the notorious Imhoff, who fleeced us; but his "Three Kings" was the best hostelry *in the town. I said earlier, I believe, that one of the peculiarities of Basel is that noon there is at eleven o'clock,[3] an absurdity due to a historical circumstance which the Prince of Porrentruy[4] explained to me but which I have forgotten. The citizens of Basel are said to be subject to a kind of madness of which they are cured by the waters of Sulzbach but which recurs soon after they are at home again.[5]*

We should have spent some time in Basel but for an incident which tried my patience and caused me to hasten our departure. It was as follows:

Need had forced me to forgive La Corticelli to some extent, and when I came home early, after supping with the rattlebrained creature and Madame d'Urfé, I would spend the night with her; but when I came home late, which happened rather often, I slept alone in my own room. The hussy likewise slept alone in a small room adjoining her mother's, through which one had to pass to enter hers.

Having come home an hour after midnight and not feeling sleepy, after putting on my dressing gown I take a candle and go to visit my beauty. I was somewhat surprised to find the door of Signora Laura's room ajar, and just as I was about to go in, the old woman reached out and caught me by my dressing gown, begging me not to enter her daughter's room.

"Why?" I said.

"She was very ill all evening, and she needs sleep."

"Very well, I will sleep too."

So saying, I give the old woman a push, I enter the girl's room, and I find her in bed with someone who hides under the coverlet.

After contemplating the tableau for a moment I began laughing, and, sitting down on the bed, I asked her who the fortunate mortal was whom it was my duty to throw out the window. Beside me on a chair I saw the person's *coat, breeches, hat, and cane; but, having good pistols in my pockets, I knew I had nothing to fear; however, I did not want to make a noise.*

Trembling all over, she took my hand and implored me with tears in her eyes to forgive her.

"He is a young nobleman," she said, "whose name I do not know."

"A young nobleman whose name you do not know, you cheat? Very well! He shall tell it to me himself."

As I utter the words I take a pistol and, with one vigorous hand, uncover the bird who should not have laid in my nest if he expected to escape punishment. I saw a young man whom I did not know, with his head wrapped in a madras kerchief but otherwise naked as a little Adam, as was my vixen. He turned his back to reach for his undershirt, which he had thrown down beside the bed, but, seizing his arm, I kept him from moving, for the mouth of my pistol spoke an irresistible language.

"Who are you, my fine young gentleman, if I may ask?"

"I am Count B.,[6] Canon of Basel."

"Do you think you are performing an ecclesiastical function here?"

"Oh no, Monsieur, I beg you to forgive me and Madame too, for the guilt is entirely mine."

"That is not what I asked you."

"Monsieur, Her Ladyship the Countess is perfectly innocent."

I was in a fortunate frame of mind, far from being angry, I could scarcely keep from laughing. The tableau had a certain charm for me, because it was at once comic and voluptuous. The combination of the two cowering nudities was genuinely lascivious, and I remained in contemplation of it for a good quarter of an hour, uttering not a word and trying to resist the strong temptation I felt to get into bed with them. I overcame it only be-

cause I feared that I should find in the Canon a fool incapable of worthily playing a role which, in his place, I should have sustained to perfection. As for La Corticelli, since it never cost her anything to change on the instant from tears to gaiety, she would have played hers ravishingly; but if, as I feared, I had found myself dealing with a fool, it would have degraded me.

Convinced that neither of them had divined what was taking place in my mind, I rose, ordering the Canon to dress.

"This incident," I said to him, "must never be divulged; but you and I will at once repair two hundred paces away and engage each other at point-blank range with these pistols."

"Ah, Monsieur," my gentleman cried, "take me wherever you like and kill me if you please, for I was not born to fight."

"Really?"

"Yes, Monsieur; and I took orders only to escape that fatal obligation."

"Then you are a coward who will take a cudgeling?"

"Anything you please; but you would be a barbarian, for love blinded me. I entered this room only a quarter of an hour ago; Her Ladyship was asleep and so was her waiting woman."

"Tell that to someone else, liar!"

"I had only just taken off my undershirt when you came in, and before that I had never been face to face with this angel."

"That," said the wench, "is as true as the Gospels."

"Do you know that you are two shameless scoundrels? And you, my fine Canon, seducer of girls, you deserve that I should have you grilled like a little St. Lawrence."[7]

Meanwhile the wretched Canon had put on his clothes.

"Follow me, Monsieur," I said in a tone calculated to freeze him, and I led him into my room.

"What will you do," I asked him, "if I forgive you and let you leave this house without a stain on your honor?"

"Ah, Monsieur, I will leave in an hour at the most and you will never see me here again; and wherever you meet me in future you will be sure to find me a man ready to do anything to serve you."

"Very well. Go, and in future remember to take better precautions in your amorous adventures."

After thus sending him off, I went to bed thoroughly satisfied with what I had seen and what I had done; for it left me with a perfectly free hand in respect to the little cheat.

As soon as I got up the next morning I went into La Corticelli's room and ordered her, calmly but peremptorily, to pack her things, forbidding her to leave her room until she got into the carriage.

"I will say I am ill."

"Do as you please, but no one will pay any attention, no matter what you say."

Without waiting for her to protest further, I went to Madame d'Urfé and, telling her the story of the night and enlarging on the comic side of it, I made her laugh heartily. It was just what I needed to put it into her mind to ask the oracle what we should do after this flagrant proof of the young Lascaris's having been polluted by the black Genius in the guise of a priest. The oracle replied that we must leave the next day for Besançon, that from there she must go to Lyons with all her servants and wait for me, while I took the young Countess and her governess to Geneva, where I would arrange to have them sent back to their native country once and for all.

The amiable visionary was delighted with the decree and saw in it only a proof of the kindness of her good Selenis, who thus afforded her the pleasure of seeing young D'Aranda[8] *again. As for me, we agreed that I* *should meet her in the spring of the next year to perform the great operation which would cause her to be reborn from herself as a man. She considered the operation infallible and perfectly consonant with common sense.*

Everything was ready for the next morning, and we left, Madame d'Urfé and I in the berlin, La Corticelli, her mother, and the two maids in the other carriage. When we reached Besançon Madame d'Urfé left me, taking her servants with her, and the next day I set out for Geneva with the mother and daughter. I put up, as always, at the "Scales."

During the whole journey not only did I not address a word to my companions, I did not even honor them with a look. I had them eat with a valet from Franche-Comté[9] *whom I had decided to engage on Baron Schaumbourg's recommendation.*

I called on my banker to ask him to find me a reliable vetturino[10] *to take two unaccompanied women in whom I was interested to Turin. At the same time I gave him fifty louis for a bill of exchange on that city.*

Back at the inn, I wrote to the Cavaliere Raiberti,[11] *sending him the bill of exchange. I told him that three or four days after receiving my letter he should expect the arrival of a Bolognese dancer and her mother with a letter of introduction. I asked him to put them to board in a decent house and to pay the charges on my account. At the same time I said he would do me a great favor if he could arrange for her to dance, even gratis, during the Carnival, and told him to warn her that if I heard anything to her discredit when I arrived in Turin I would abandon her.*

The next day one of Monsieur Tronchin's clerks came, bringing me the vetturino, *who said that he would be ready to leave as soon as he had dined. After confirming the agreement he had made with the banker, I sent for the two Corticellis, and I said to the* vetturino:

"Here are the two persons whom you are to convey,

and they will pay you immediately after they arrive in Turin, safe and sound with their baggage, in four and a half days, as specified in the contract, one copy of which they will take with them and you the other."

An hour later he came to load the carriage.

La Corticelli dissolved into tears. I was not cruel enough to let her go without some consolation. She had been sufficiently punished for her bad behavior. I had her dine with me, and, handing her the letter of introduction to Signor Raïberti and twenty-five louis, eight of which were for the usual expenses, I told her what I had written to that gentleman, who, in accordance with my instructions, would see that she wanted for nothing. She asked me for a trunk in which there were three dresses and a magnificent mantle, which Madame d'Urfé had intended to give her before she went mad; but I told her we would talk about it in Turin. She did not dare to mention the jewel casket, and only wept; but she aroused no pity in me. I left her far better off than I had taken her; for she had beautiful dresses, linens, jewels, and a very fine watch I had given her. It was more than she had managed to deserve.

At the moment of leaving I escorted her to the carriage, less for politeness' sake than to commend her to the vetturino *again. When she had gone, feeling relieved of a great burden, I went to call on my Syndic,*[12] *whom my readers will not have forgotten. I had not written to him since my stay in Florence; he must have put me out of his mind, and I looked forward to enjoying his surprise. And in truth it was extreme; but after the first moment he threw himself on my neck, embraced me a dozen times, shedding tears of joy, and finally said that he had lost all hope of seeing me again.*

"What are our dear little friends doing?"

"They are as well as can be. You are still the subject of their conversations and of their fond regrets; they will be mad with joy when they learn that you are here."

"You must not let them wait to hear the news."

"Certainly not; I shall go and tell them that we will all sup together this evening. By the way, Monsieur de Voltaire has let the Duke of Villars have his house and has gone to live at Ferney."[13]

"That's all the same to me, for I do not intend to visit him[14] *this time. I shall stay here two or three weeks, and I devote them entirely to you."*

"You will make several people happy."

"Before you go out, be so kind as to let me have writing materials for three or four letters; I will make good use of my time until you come back."

He gave me the freedom of his desk, and I wrote at once to my late housekeeper, Madame Lebel,[15] *that I should spend some three weeks in Geneva and that if I were sure I should see her again I would gladly go to Lausanne. Unfortunately for me, I also wrote to Bern, to Ascanio Pogomas, otherwise Giacomo Passano,*[16] *the bad poet and enemy of the Abate Chiari, whom I had met in Leghorn. I told him to go to Turin and wait for me. At the same time I wrote to my friend M. F.,*[17] *to whom I had given him a letter of recommendation, to give him twelve louis for the journey.*

My evil Genius made me think of the man, who was of imposing stature and had all the look of an astrologer, with the idea of presenting him to Madame d'Urfé as a great adept. A year from now you shall see, my dear reader, whether I had reason to repent of trusting in that ill-omened inspiration.

That evening, as the Syndic and I were on our way to visit our pretty cousins, I saw a fine English carriage for sale, and I exchanged it for mine, giving a hundred louis to boot. While I was bargaining for it, the uncle of the beautiful theologian[18] *who maintained theses so learnedly, and to whom I had given such sweet lessons in physiology, recognized me, came to embrace me, and invited me to dine at his house the next day.*

Before we reached the dwelling of our lovable young friends the Syndic informed me that we should find with them a very pretty girl who had not yet been initiated into the sweet mysteries.

"So much the better," I said. "I will act accordingly, and perhaps I shall be the one to initiate her."

I had put in my pocket a jewel box in which I had a dozen very pretty rings. I had long known that such trifles take one very far.

The moment when I met those charming girls again was, I confess, one of the most agreeable in my life. In their welcome I saw joy, satisfaction, candor, gratitude, and love of pleasure. They loved one another without jealousy, without envy, and without any of those ideas which could have made them think less well of themselves. They considered themselves worthy of my esteem precisely because they had lavished their favors on me without any thought of degradation and under the impulsion of the same feeling which had drawn me to them.

The presence of their new friend obliged us to limit our first embraces to the conventional demonstrations which are called "decent," and the young novice granted me the same favor, blushing and not raising her eyes.

After the usual remarks, the commonplaces of which one delivers oneself after a long absence, and a few double meanings which made us laugh and gave the young Agnes[19] *matter for thought, I told her that she looked as beautiful as a Cupid, and that I would wager that her mind, no less beautiful than her ravishing figure, was free from certain prejudices.*

"I have," she answered modestly, "all the prejudices which are inculcated by honor and religion."

I saw that I must be careful not to shock her, use tact, and play for time. It was not a fortress to be taken by assault in a sudden attack. But, as usual, I fell in love with her.

The Syndic having spoken my name,

"Ah," cried the girl, "then are not you, Monsieur, the gentleman who two years ago discussed some very strange questions with my cousin, the pastor's niece? [20] *I am very glad to have the opportunity to make your acquaintance."*

"I am happy to make yours, Mademoiselle, and I hope that when she spoke of me your charming cousin said nothing to prejudice you against me."

"Quite the contrary, for she esteems you highly."

"I shall have the honor of dining with her tomorrow, and I shall not fail to thank her."

"Tomorrow? I shall arrange to be there, for I am very fond of philosophical discussions, though I dare not put my word in."

The Syndic praised her prudence and her discretion so warmly that I clearly saw he was in love with her and that, if he had not yet seduced her, he must be looking far and wide for a way to accomplish it. The beautiful girl was named Helena.[21] *I asked the young ladies if the beautiful Helena was our sister. The eldest replied with a sly smile that she was a sister but that she had no brother, and, having thus enlightened me, ran to embrace her. After that the Syndic and I outdid ourselves paying her honeyed compliments, saying that we hoped to become her brothers. Helena blushed, but answered not a word to all our gallantries. Having then displayed my jewel box and seen all the young ladies enchanted by the beauty of my rings, I managed to persuade them to choose the ones they liked best, and the charming Helena followed her companions' example and paid me with a chaste kiss. Soon afterward she left us, and we were once again able to enjoy our old freedom.*

The Syndic had good reason to be in love with Helena, for the girl possessed not only all that is required to please but all that is needed to inspire a violent passion; but the three friends had no hope that they could prevail upon her to join in their pleasures, for they insisted that *her feeling of modesty in the presence of men could not be conquered.*

We supped very gaily, and after supper we returned to our sports, the Syndic, as usual, being merely the spectator of our exploits and very well satisfied to be no more than that. I passed the three nymphs in review twice in succession, cheating them for their own good and sparing them when I was forced to yield to nature. At midnight we parted, and the good Syndic saw me to the door of my lodging.

The next day I went to dinner at the pastor's, where I found a number of guests, among them Monsieur d'Harcourt[22] *and Monsieur de Ximénès,*[23] *who told me that Monsieur de Voltaire knew I was in Geneva and hoped to see me. I answered him only by a low bow. Mademoiselle Hedwig, the pastor's niece, paid me a very flattering compliment which pleased me less than the sight of her cousin Helena, who was with her and whom she presented to me, saying that, having become acquainted, we should not lack opportunities to meet. It was what I most wanted. The twenty-year-old theologian was beautiful and appetizing, but she did not have that* je ne sais quoi *which is so piquant, the something of bitter-sweet which heightens even voluptuousness. However, her friendship with her cousin was all that I needed to enable me to inspire a favorable feeling in that young lady.*

We had an excellent dinner, during which the conversation turned only on indifferent matters; but at dessert the pastor invited Monsieur de Ximénès to put some questions to his niece. Knowing this scholar by reputation, I expected some problem in geometry, but I was mistaken, for he asked her if a mental reservation suffices to justify the person who makes it.

Hedwig modestly replied that, despite the case in which a lie might become necessary, a mental reservation was always a fraud.

"Then tell me how Jesus Christ could say that the

time at which the world would end was unknown to him.'' [24]

''He could say it because he did not know.''

''Then he was not God?''

''The conclusion is false because, God having all power, he has the power to be ignorant of futurity.''

The word ''futurity,'' [25] *so aptly coined, seemed to me sublime. Hedwig was enthusiastically applauded, and her uncle went around the table to embrace her. I had a very natural objection on the tip of my tongue, and one which, arising out of the subject, might have embarrassed her; but I wanted to ingratiate myself with her and I said nothing.*

Monsieur d'Harcourt was next urged to question her, but he replied with Horace, nulla mihi religio est.[26] *Thereupon Hedwig, turning to me, said that she could not help thinking of the amphidromia,*[27] *a pagan festival:*

''But I wish,'' she added, ''that you would ask me a question concerning something difficult which you could not resolve yourself.''

''You make it easy for me, Mademoiselle.''

''So much the better, you won't have to think so hard.''

''I am trying to think of something new. I have it. Will you grant me that Jesus Christ possessed all the qualities of mankind in the highest degree?''

''Yes, all, except its weaknesses.''

''Do you reckon the procreative power among its weaknesses?''

''No.''

''Then be so kind as to tell me what would be the nature of the creature which would have been born if Jesus Christ had seen fit to give the woman of Samaria a child.''

Hedwig turned fiery red. The pastor and the entire company looked at one another, and I fixed my eyes on the beautiful theologian, who was thinking. Monsieur d'Harcourt said that we must send for Monsieur de

Voltaire to resolve so thorny a question; but, Hedwig raising her eyes with a meditative look which seemed to declare her ready to answer, everyone fell silent.

"Jesus Christ," she said, "had two perfect natures in perfect equilibrium; they were inseparable. So if the woman of Samaria had had carnal knowledge of our Redeemer she would certainly have conceived; for it would be absurd to suppose so important an act in a God without admitting its natural consequence. At the end of nine months the woman of Samaria would have given birth to a male, not a female, child; and this creature, born of a human woman and a man-God, would have been one fourth God and three fourths man."

At these words all the company clapped their hands, and Monsieur de Ximénès admired the logic of the calculation; then he said:

"As a natural consequence, if the Samaritan's son had married, the children issuing from his marriage would have possessed seven eighths of humanity and one eighth of divinity."

"Unless he had married a goddess," I added, "which would have markedly changed the proportions."

"Tell me," Hedwig went on, "exactly what proportion of divinity the child would have had in the sixteenth generation."

"Wait a moment and give me a pencil," said Monsieur de Ximénès.

"There is no need to calculate," I said; "he would have had a particle of the spirit which animates you."

Everyone echoed this gallantry, which was not displeasing to her to whom I addressed it.

The beautiful blonde set me on fire by the charms of her mind. We rose from the table and gathered around her, and she demolished all our compliments with the most perfect courtesy. Having taken Helena aside, I asked her to induce her cousin to choose one of the rings from my box, which I had taken care to refill the evening *before; the charming girl willingly undertook the commission. A quarter of an hour later Hedwig came to show me her hand, and I was pleased to see the ring she had chosen; I kissed her hand with delight, and she must have guessed, from the ardor of my kisses, all that she had inspired in me.*

That evening Helena gave the Syndic and the three friends an account of all the questions which had been asked at dinner, not forgetting the slightest detail. She spoke easily and with grace; I did not once need to prompt her. We begged her to stay for supper, but, taking the three friends aside, she convinced them that she could not; but she told them she would be able to spend two days at a country house they had on the lake, if they would themselves ask her mother to permit it.

At the Syndic's request the three friends called on her mother the next day, and on the day after they set out with Helena. That evening we went to supper with them, but we could not spend the night there. The Syndic was to take me to a house not far away where we would be very well lodged. That being so, we were in no hurry; and the eldest, eager to please her friend the Syndic, told him that he might leave with me whenever he pleased and that they were going to bed. So saying, she took Helena's arm and led her to her room, and the two others went to theirs. A few minutes after they left, the Syndic entered the apartment to which Helena had gone, and I repaired to the two other girls.

I had spent scarcely an hour between my two little friends when the Syndic appeared and interrupted my erotic diversions by asking me to leave.

"What have you done with Helena?" I asked him.

"Nothing, she is an intractable fool. She hid under the covers and refused to look at the amusements in which I indulged with her friend."

"You should have addressed your attentions to her."

"I did so, but she repulsed me time after time. I am

exhausted. I have given up, and I am sure I shall get nowhere with the wildcat unless you undertake to tame her.''

''How am I to do that?''

''Go to dine with them tomorrow; I shall not be there, for I have to spend the day in Geneva. I will come for supper, and if we could get her tipsy!''

''That would be a pity. Leave it to me.''

So the next day I went by myself and asked them if I might dine with them, and they entertained me in the full sense of the word. When we went for a walk after dinner the three friends, anticipating my wish, left me alone with the beautiful recalcitrant, who resisted my caresses and my pleadings and almost made me lose all hope of taming her.

''The Syndic,'' I said, ''is in love with you; and last night—''

''Last night,'' she interrupted me, ''last night he amused himself with his old sweetheart. I have no objection to everyone's acting as he pleases and sees fit; but I wish to be left free in my own acts and tastes.''

''If I could succeed in possessing your heart, I should consider myself happy.''

''Why do you not invite the pastor to dinner somewhere with my cousin? She would take me with her, for my uncle is fond of all those who love his niece.''

''I am very glad to know that. Has she some man who is in love with her?''

''Not one.''

''How is that possible? She is young, pretty, gay, and, what is more, highly intelligent.''

''You do not know Geneva. Her intelligence is precisely the reason why no young man dares declare himself her lover. Those who might be attracted by her person avoid her because of her mind, for they would be left with nothing to say in the middle of a conversation.''

''But are the young men of Geneva so ignorant?''

"Generally speaking. However, it is only right to say that many of them have received good educations and done well in their studies; but taken as a whole, they have a great many prejudices. No one likes to pass for a fool or an ignoramus; and then the young men here simply do not run after intelligence or a good education in a woman. Far from it. If a young lady is intelligent or well educated, she has to hide it carefully, at least if she hopes to marry."

"I see now, charming Helena, why you did not open your mouth during your uncle's dinner."

"I know that I have no talents to hide. So that was not the reason which made me silent that day, and I can tell you, without vanity as without shame, that it was pleasure which kept my mouth closed. I admired my cousin, who talked of Jesus Christ as I might talk of my father and who did not fear to show her knowledge of a subject which any other girl would have pretended not to understand."

"Pretended, even though she knew more about it than her grandmother."

"It is part of our ways, or rather of our prejudices."

"You reason admirably, my dear Helena, and I already sigh for the dinner party which your kindness has suggested to me."

"You will have the pleasure of being with my cousin."

"I know her merits, beautiful Helena; Hedwig is amiable and interesting; but, believe me, it is especially because you will be present that the thought of the dinner delights me."

"What if I did not believe you?"

"You would be wrong, and you would cause me great sorrow, for I love you dearly."

"Despite that, you tried to deceive me. I am sure that you have given tokens of your affection to the three young ladies, whom I greatly pity."

"Why?"

"Because none of them can suppose that you love only her."

"And do you think such delicacy of feeling makes you happier than they?"

"Yes, I do; though in this matter I am completely inexperienced. Tell me frankly if you think I am right."

"Yes, I think you are."

"You charm me; but if I am right, admit that by trying to associate me with them you do not give me such a proof of love as would convince me that you love me as I should wish to be convinced of it."

"Oh, I admit that too, and I sincerely ask your pardon. But now, divine Helena, tell me how I am to go about inviting the pastor to dinner."

"It is not difficult. Simply go to his house and invite him; and if you want to be sure that I shall be present, ask him to invite me with my mother."

"Why with your mother?"

"Because he was very much in love with her twenty years ago and still loves her."

"And where can I give the dinner?"

"Is not Monsieur Tronchin your banker?"

"Yes."

"He has a fine pleasure house on the lake; ask him for it for a day; he will lend it to you gladly. Do that, but say not a word about it to the Syndic or his three friends; we will tell them afterward."

"But do you think your learned cousin tolerates my company?"

"More than tolerates it, you may be sure."

"Very well, it will all be arranged tomorrow. You are to return to the city day after tomorrow, and I will set the dinner for two or three days later."

The Syndic joined us toward nightfall, and we spent the evening gaily. After supper, the young ladies having gone to bed as on the previous evening, I went into the room of the eldest while my friend went to see the two *younger sisters. I knew that whatever I might undertake in order to bring Helena to terms would be unavailing; so I confined myself to a few kisses, after which I wished them good night, then I went to pay the younger sisters a visit. I found them sleeping soundly, and the Syndic in solitary boredom. I did not cheer him when I told him I had not been able to obtain a single favor.*

"I see beyond doubt," he said, "that I shall be wasting my time with that little idiot, and in the end I shall have to make the best of it."

"I think," I replied, "that it is your most advisable course, and the sooner the better, for dangling after an insensible or capricious beauty is being her dupe. Good fortune should be neither too easy nor too difficult."

The next morning we went to Geneva together; and Monsieur Tronchin seemed delighted to be able to do me the favor I asked of him. The pastor accepted my invitation and said he was sure I would be glad to make the acquaintance of Helena's mother. It was easy to see that the worthy man cherished a tender feeling for the lady, and, if she reciprocated it a little, that could only be favorable to my plans.

I expected to go to supper that evening with the three friends and the charming Helena in the house on the lake, but a letter brought by an express messenger obliged me to leave for Lausanne at once; my former housekeeper, Madame Lebel, whom I still love, invited me to sup with her and her husband. She wrote me that she had no sooner received my letter than she had persuaded her husband to take her to Lausanne; she added that she was sure I would leave everything to give her the pleasure of seeing me again. She told me the hour at which she would arrive at her mother's.

Madame Lebel is one of the ten or twelve women whom I loved the most fondly in my happy youth. She had everything one could ask to make a happy marriage if it had been my destiny to enjoy that felicity. But with *my character I may have done well not to bind myself irrevocably, though at my present age my independence is a sort of slavery. If I had married a woman intelligent enough to guide me, to rule me without my feeling that I was ruled, I should have taken good care of my money, I should have had children, and I should not be, as now I am, alone in the world and possessing nothing.*

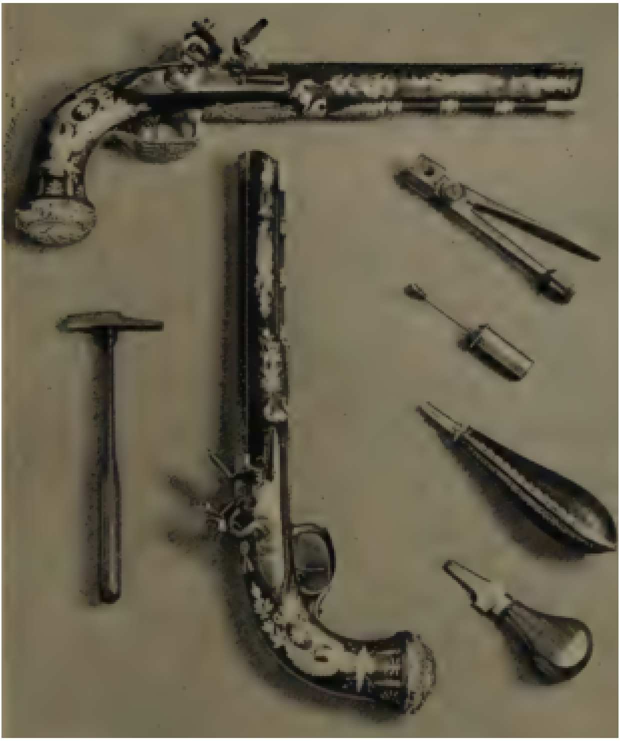
But let us renounce digressions on a past which cannot be recalled; since I am happy in my memories, I should be mad to create useless regrets.

Having calculated that, by leaving at once, I could reach Lausanne an hour before my dear Dubois, I did not hesitate to give her that proof of my esteem. I must tell my readers here that, though I loved the woman, occupied as I then was with another passion, no hope of amorous pleasure entered into my haste. My esteem for her would have sufficed to hold my love in check, but I also esteemed Lebel, and I should never have allowed myself to risk clouding the happiness of two such friends.

I hastily wrote the Syndic a note, saying that important and unexpected business obliged me to leave for Lausanne, but that on the next day but one I should have the pleasure of supping with him and the trio of friends in Geneva.

At five o'clock I reach the house of Madame Dubois, dying of hunger. The good woman's surprise at seeing me was extreme, for she did not know that her daughter was coming to visit her. Without spending much time on compliments, I gave her two louis to procure us a supper such as I needed.

At seven o'clock Madame Lebel arrived with her husband and an eighteen-months-old child, whom I had no difficulty in recognizing as mine without his mother's telling me so. Our interview was entirely happy. During the ten hours we spent at table we bathed in joy. At daybreak she set out for Soleure, where Lebel had business. Monsieur de Chavigny[28] *sent me countless compliments.*



Pair of Dueling Pistols with Accessory Implements

Lebel assured me that the Ambassador showed his wife innumerable kindnesses, and he thanked me for the present I had made him in relinquishing her to him. I could see for myself that he was happy and that he made his wife happy.

My dear housekeeper talked to me of my son. She said that no one suspected the truth, but that she knew the state of the case, as did Lebel, who had religiously observed the agreement not to consummate their marriage until the two stipulated months had passed.

"The secret," said Lebel, "will never be known, and your son will be my heir, either alone or with my children if I have any, which I doubt."

"My friend," his wife said to him, "there is someone who suspects the truth, and will suspect it the more as the child grows; but we have nothing to fear on that score; the person is paid to keep the secret."

"And who, my dear Lebel," I asked her, "is this person?"

"It is Madame de . . . ,[29] *who has not forgotten you, for she speaks of you often."*

"Will you be so good, my dear, as to convey my compliments to her?"

"Gladly, my friend, and I am sure she will be delighted."

Lebel showed me my ring, and I showed him her wedding ring,[30] *giving him a splendid watch with my portrait for my son.*

"You shall give it to him, my friends," I said, "when you consider that the time has come."

We shall meet this child again at Fontainebleau twenty-one years hence.[31]

I spent more than three hours giving them a detailed account of all that had happened to me during the twenty-seven months since we had seen one another. As for their story, it was not long; their life had the uniformity which befits untroubled happiness.

Madame Lebel was still beautiful; I did not find her changed at all; but I had changed. She declared that I was less fresh and less gay than I had been when we parted; she was right, the ill-omened Renaud had played havoc with me and the false Lascaris had caused me great concern.

After the tenderest embraces the couple set off for Soleure and I went back to dine in Geneva; but, badly needing rest, far from going to supper with the Syndic and his three friends, I wrote him that, being indisposed, I should not have the pleasure of seeing him until the morrow, and I went to bed.

The next day, which was the eve of the day I had set for my dinner at Tronchin's country house, I ordered the innkeeper to furnish me with a repast in which he was to spare no expense. I did not forget to stipulate the best wines, the finest liqueurs, ices, and everything needed for a punch. I told him that we should be six, for I foresaw that Monsieur Tronchin would be of the company. I was not mistaken, for he was there at his charming house to do us the honors of it, and I had no difficulty in persuading him to stay. In the evening I thought it best to let the Syndic and his three friends into the secret of the dinner in the presence of Helena, who pretended to know nothing about it, saying that her mother had told her that she would take her to dinner somewhere.

"I am delighted," she added, "to learn that it is to be nowhere but in Monsieur Tronchin's pretty house." [32]

My dinner was such that the greatest epicure could have asked nothing better, and Hedwig really furnished all its charm. The astonishing girl discoursed on theology so pleasantly, and made reason so attractive, that it was impossible not to feel the strongest persuasion even when one was not convinced. I have never seen a theologian able to attack and discuss the most abstruse points of that science with such facility, copiousness, and true *dignity as that young and beautiful girl, who set me completely on fire during the dinner. Monsieur Tronchin, who had never heard Hedwig, thanked me again and again for procuring him such a pleasure, and, obliged to leave just when we rose from table, he invited us to repeat the occasion on the next day but one.*

A thing which greatly interested me during dessert was the encomium which the pastor delivered in commemoration of his old fondness for Helena's mother. His amorous eloquence waxed in proportion as he moistened his throat with champagne and Cyprus wine or with liqueurs from the Indies. Her mother listened to him with satisfaction and matched him glass for glass; the young ladies, however, had drunk only sparingly, as had I. Nevertheless the variety of beverages and especially the punch had produced their effect, and my beauties were a little tipsy. Their gaiety was charming but extreme. I took advantage of this general well-being to ask the two superannuated lovers' permission to take the young ladies for a stroll in the garden at the edge of the lake, and it was granted with all cordiality. We went out arm in arm and a few minutes later were out of everyone's sight.

"Are you aware," I asked Hedwig, "that you have won Monsieur Tronchin's heart?"

"I should not know what to do with it. Besides, the honest banker asked me rather stupid questions."

"You must not suppose that everyone is able to ask them within your compass."

"I must tell you that no one ever asked me one which pleased me as much as yours did. A stupid and bigoted theologian who was at the end of the table appeared to be scandalized by your question and still more by my answer."

"Why, may I ask?"

"He insists that I should have answered you that Jesus Christ could not have impregnated the woman of

Samaria. He said he would explain the reason to me if I were a man, but that since I was a woman, and especially an unmarried girl, he could not permit himself to say things which might suggest ideas to me when I reflected on the composite God-man. I wish you would tell me what the fool would not."

"I am willing, but you must allow me to speak to you clearly and to suppose that you are acquainted with the construction of a man."

"Yes, speak clearly, for there's no one here to hear us; but I must confess that I know nothing about the construction of a man except from theory and reading. No practical knowledge, of course. I have seen statues, but I have never seen, still less examined, a real man. And you, Helena?"

"I have never wanted to."

"Why not? It is good to know everything."

"Very well, charming Hedwig, your theologian was trying to tell you that Jesus was not capable of an erection."

"What is that?"

"Give me your hand."

"I feel it, and it is as I had imagined it would be; for without this phenomenon of nature man could not impregnate his spouse. And that fool of a theologian maintains that it is an imperfection!"

"Yes, for the phenomenon arises from desire; witness the fact that it would not have taken place in me, beautiful Hedwig, if I had not found you charming, and if what I see of you did not give me the most seductive idea of the beauties I do not see. Tell me frankly if, on your side, feeling this stiffness does not cause you a pleasant excitation?"

"I admit it, and precisely in the place you are pressing. Do not you, my dear Helena, feel as I do a certain itching here while you listen to the very sound discourse to which Monsieur is treating us?"

"Yes, I feel it, but I feel it very often where there is no discourse to excite it."

"And then," I said, "does not Nature oblige you to relieve it in this fashion?"

"Certainly not."

"But it does!" said Hedwig. "Even in sleep our hand goes there instinctively; and without that relief, I have read, we should be subject to terrible maladies."

Continuing this philosophical discussion, which the young theologian sustained in a masterly manner and which gave her cousin's beautiful complexion all the animation of voluptuous feeling, we arrived at the edge of a superb basin of water with a flight of marble stairs down which one went to bathe. Though it was chilly our heads were heated, and it occurred to me to ask them to dip their feet in the water, assuring them that it would do them good and that, if they would permit me, I would have the honor of taking off their shoes and stockings.

"Why not?" said the niece. "I'd like it."

"So should I," said Helena.

"Then sit down, ladies, on the top step." And they sit, and I, placing myself on the fourth step below, fall to taking off their shoes and stockings, praising the beauty of their legs, and for the moment showing no interest in seeing anything above the knee. I took them down to the water, and then there was nothing for it but that they should pull up their dresses, and I encouraged them to do so.

"Well," said Hedwig, "men have thighs too."

Helena, who would have been ashamed to show less courage than her cousin, was not slow to follow her example.

"Come, my charming Naiads,"[33] *I said, "that is enough; you might catch cold if you stay in the water longer."*

They came up the stairs backward, still holding up their skirts for fear of wetting them; and it was my part *to dry them with all the handkerchiefs I had. This agreeable office allowed me to see and to touch in perfect freedom, and the reader will not need to have me swear that I made the most of the opportunity. The beautiful niece told me that I was too curious, but Helena accepted my ministrations in a manner so tender and languishing that I had to use all my will to keep from going further. Finally, when I had put on their shoes and stockings, I said that I was in raptures at having seen the secret beauties of the two most beautiful girls in Geneva.*

"What effect did it have on you?" Hedwig asked me.

"I do not dare tell you to look; but feel, both of you."

"You must bathe too."

"That is impossible, getting ready takes a man too long."

"But we still have two full hours to stay here with no fear of anyone coming to join us."

Her answer made me see all the good fortune which awaited me; but I did not choose to expose myself to an illness by entering the water in the state I was in. Seeing a garden house a short distance away and certain that Monsieur Tronchin would have left it unlocked, I took them there, not letting them guess my intention.

The garden house was full of pot-pourri jars, charming engravings, and so on; but what was best of all was a fine, large couch ready for repose and pleasure. Sitting on it between the two beauties and lavishing caresses on them, I told them I wanted to show them what they had never seen, and, so saying, I exposed to their gaze the principal effective cause of humanity. They stood up to admire me; whereupon, taking them each by one hand, I gave them a factitious consummation; but in the course of my labors an abundant emission of liquid threw them into the greatest astonishment.

"It is the word," [34] *I said, "the great creator of mankind."*

"How delicious!" cried Helena, laughing at the designation "word."

"But I too," said Hedwig, "have the word, and I will show it to you if you will wait a moment."

"Sit on my lap, beautiful Hedwig, and I will save you the trouble of making it come yourself, and I will do it better than you can."

"I believe you, but I have never done it with a man."

"Nor have I," said Helena.

Having made them stand in front of me with their arms around me, I made them faint again. Then we all sat down, and, while I explored their charms with my hands, I let them amuse themselves by touching me as they pleased, until I finally wet their hands with a second emission of the humid radical, which they curiously examined on their fingers.

After restoring ourselves to a state of decency, we spent another half hour exchanging kisses, then I told them they had made me half happy, but that to bring their work to completion I hoped they would think of a way to grant me their first favors. I then showed them the little protective bags which the English invented to free the fair sex from all fear. These little purses, whose use I explained to them, aroused their admiration, and the beautiful theologian told her cousin that she would think about it. Become intimate friends and well on the way to becoming something more, we made our way toward the house, where we found the pastor and Helena's mother strolling beside the lake.

Back in Geneva, I went to spend the night with the three friends, and I took care to keep my victory over Helena concealed from the Syndic; for the news would only have renewed his hopes, and he would have wasted his efforts and his time. Without the beautiful theologian, even I would have obtained nothing from her, but since she greatly admired her cousin she would have feared to *fall too far below her if she refused to imitate her in the freedoms which, in her, were the measure of her freedom of mind.*

Helena did not come that evening, but I saw her the next day at her mother's, for politeness demanded that I go to thank the widow for the honor she had done me. She received me in the friendliest fashion and introduced two very pretty young ladies who were boarding in her house and who would have interested me if I had intended to make a long stay in Geneva; but since I had only a few days to spend there, Helena deserved all my efforts.

"Tomorrow," the charming girl said, "I shall be able to tell you something at Monsieur Tronchin's dinner, and I think that Hedwig will have hit upon a scheme for satisfying your desires in perfect freedom."

The banker's dinner was admirable. He took great pride in showing me that the repast provided by an innkeeper can never rival one offered by a rich householder who has a good cook, a choice cellar, beautiful silver, and porcelain of the finest quality. We were twenty at table, and the occasion was in honor both of the learned theologian and of myself in my role of wealthy stranger who spent his money freely. Among the guests I found Monsieur de Ximénès, who had come from Ferney expressly to be present, and he told me that I was expected at Monsieur de Voltaire's; but I had stupidly made up my mind not to go there.

Hedwig shone. The guests gained consideration only by their questions. Monsieur de Ximénès asked her to do her best to justify our first mother for having deceived her husband into eating the fatal apple.

"Eve," she said, "did not deceive her husband; she only cajoled him, in the hope of giving him an added perfection. Besides, Eve did not receive the prohibition from God himself, she had received it from Adam; in

what she did there was only cajolery, not deceit; then, too, it is probable that her womanly good sense refused to let her think the prohibition serious."

At this answer, in my opinion full of sense, intelligence, and tact, two learned Genevans, and even the young prodigy's uncle, began muttering. Madame Tronchin gravely told Hedwig that Eve had received the prohibition from God himself, as had her husband; but the young lady replied only by a humble:

"I beg your pardon, Madame."

Madame Tronchin, turning to the pastor in alarm:

"What do you say, Monsieur?"

"Madame, my niece is not infallible."

"I beg your pardon, dear Uncle, but I am as infallible as Holy Scripture when I speak in accordance with it."

"Quick, a Bible! let us see!"

"Hedwig, my dear Hedwig . . . you are right after all. Here is the passage.[35] *The prohibition preceded the creation of the woman."*

Everyone applauded, but Hedwig, calm and modest, did not change her expression; only the two learned men and Madame Tronchin could not recover their calm. Another lady having asked her if, in good conscience, one could believe that the story of the apple was allegorical, she said:

"I do not think so, Madame, for the allegory could be applied only to copulation, and it is established that it did not take place between Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden."

"But the learned hold different opinions on that point."

"So much the worse for those who deny it, Madame; for Scripture speaks clearly on the point; it says in the first verse of the fourth chapter that Adam did not know Eve until after his expulsion from the terrestrial paradise, and that then she conceived Cain."

"Yes, but the verse does not say that Adam did not know Eve until then, hence he could have known her before."

"That I cannot admit, for if he had known her earlier she would have conceived, since I should find it absurd to suppose that the act of generation could take place between two creatures proceeding immediately from the hands of God, and hence as perfect as it is possible for a man and a woman to be, without its natural effect following."

This answer made the whole company clap, and everyone whispered words of commendation for Hedwig into his neighbor's ear.

Monsieur Tronchin asked her if one could establish the immortality of the soul by reading only the Old Testament.

"The Old Testament," she replied, "does not teach that doctrine; but without its being mentioned there, reason establishes it; for what exists must necessarily be immortal, since the destruction of a real substance is contrary to nature and reason."

"Then I will ask you," the banker resumed, "if the existence of the soul is established in the Bible."

"The idea of it is inescapable. Where there is smoke there is always fire."

"Tell me if matter can think."

"That I shall not tell you, for it is not within my competence; but I will tell you that, believing God to be all-powerful, I cannot find any adequate reason for inferring his inability to give matter the faculty of thinking."

"But what do you believe yourself?"

"I believe that I have a soul by means of which I think; but I do not know if after my death I shall remember through my soul that I had the honor of dining at your table today."

"Then you believe that your memory may not be a

part of your soul? But in that case you would no longer be a theologian."

"One can be a theologian and a philosopher, for philosophy harms nothing, and to say 'I do not know' does not mean 'I know.' "

Three quarters of the guests exclaimed in admiration, and the beautiful philosopher enjoyed seeing me smile with pleasure as I listened to the applause. The pastor wept for joy and whispered to Helena's mother. Suddenly, turning to me,

"I should like," he said, "to hear you ask my niece a question."

"Yes," said Hedwig; "but let it be new or none at all."

"You put me in a quandary," I replied, "for how am I to be sure that what I ask you is new? Nevertheless, tell me, Mademoiselle, if, to comprehend a thing, one must consider its principle."

"There is no comprehending it otherwise; and that is why God, having no principle, is incomprehensible."

"God be praised, Mademoiselle! your answer is what I hoped it would be. That being admitted, be so good as to tell me if God can know his own existence."

"Now I'm at the end of my rope; I don't know how to answer. What a cruel question, Monsieur!"

"Then why did you ask me for something really new?"

"But that's only natural."

"I thought, Mademoiselle, that the newest thing would be to put you in a quandary."

"What a compliment! Gentlemen, be so good as to answer for me and teach me."

Everyone beat about the bush, but no one said anything conclusive. Then Hedwig, entering into the discussion again, said:

"Nevertheless, I think that, since God knows all things, he must know his own existence; but please do not ask me how that is possible."

"Good," I said, "very good! and no one can say any more on the subject."

All the guests thought me a flattering atheist, so superficially are people of fashion accustomed to judge; but I did not care whether I was an atheist or a believer in their eyes.

Monsieur de Ximénès asked Hedwig if matter had been created.

"I do not recognize the word 'created,'" she said. "Ask me if matter was formed, and I will answer in the affirmative. The word 'created' cannot have existed, for the existence of the thing itself must precede the formation of the word which designates it."

"Then what meaning do you give to the verb 'to create'?"

"'To make out of nothing.' You see the absurdity, for you must suppose the precedent nothing. . . . I am delighted to see you laugh. Do you think that nothing *is susceptible of creation?"*

"You are right, Mademoiselle."

"Now, now," said a guest, frowning, "not entirely, not entirely."

Everyone burst into laughter, for the contradicter seemed not to know what to say.

"Tell me, please, Mademoiselle, who your teacher was in Geneva," said Monsieur de Ximénès.

"My uncle there."

"No, no, my dear niece, for may I die if I ever told you all that you have brought out today. But, gentlemen, my niece has nothing to do; she reads, thinks, and reasons, perhaps too boldly; but I love her because she always ends by saying she knows nothing."

A certain lady, who until then had not spoken, politely asked her to define "spirit."

"Madame, your question is purely philosophical; so I will tell you that I know neither spirit nor matter well enough to be able to define them satisfactorily."

"But in accordance with the abstract idea you must have of the real existence of spirit—since, admitting a God, you cannot but have an idea of what spirit is—tell me how you suppose that it can act on matter."

"One cannot build solidly on an abstract idea. Hobbes[36] *calls them 'empty ideas'; one can entertain them, but one should let them alone, for when one tries to explore them one ends in confusion. I know that God sees me, but I should make myself wretched if I tried to convince myself of it by reasoning, for, arguing from our perceptions, we must admit that one can do nothing without organs; now since God cannot have organs, for we conceive him as a pure spirit, philosophically speaking, God cannot see us any more than we can see him. But Moses and several others saw him, and I believe it without examining it."*

"You are well advised to do so," I said, "for if you examined it you would find it impossible. But if you read Hobbes you risk becoming an atheist."

"I have no fear of that, for I cannot even conceive the possibility of atheism."

After dinner everyone wanted to compliment the truly astonishing girl, so that I could not speak with her alone even for a moment to tell her of my love; but I went aside with Helena, who said that her cousin was to go to supper at her mother's with the pastor the next day.

"Hedwig," she added, "will stay, and we will sleep together, as we do every time she comes to sup with her Uncle. The question, then, is whether, for the sake of spending the night with us, you will be willing to hide in a place which I will show you tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock. Come at that hour to call on my mother, and I will find an opportunity to show you your hiding place. You will not be comfortable there, but you will be safe, and if you become bored, you can entertain yourself by remembering that we shall be thinking a great deal about you."

"Shall I stay hidden long?"

"Four hours at most, because at seven o'clock the street door is closed and is not opened again except to people who ring."

"And if I had to cough in the place where I shall be, would it be heard?"

"It is possible."

"That is a great difficulty. All the rest is nothing; but no matter, I will risk everything for the sake of the greatest happiness, which I accept with my whole heart."

The next day I called on the widow, and Helena, as she showed me out, pointed to a closed door between the two flights of stairs.

"At seven o'clock," she said, "you will find it unlocked, and when you are inside you must bolt it shut. When you come, take care to choose a moment to enter it when no one will see you."

At a quarter to seven I was already shut in the closet, where I found a chair—a piece of good luck, for otherwise I should have been able neither to lie down nor to stand erect. It was a miserable hole, and I knew from the smell that it was used to store hams and cheeses; but there were none in it at the time, for I took pains to grope to left and right to find my bearings a little in the thick darkness. Shuffling cautiously along in all directions, I felt something soft, I put my hand on it, and recognized linen. It was a napkin in which there was another and then two plates between which was a fine roast chicken and a piece of bread. Directly beside it I found a bottle and a glass. I was grateful to my beautiful friends for having thought of my stomach; but I had dined well, and rather late by way of precaution, so I put off paying my respects to the cold repast until the hour of fulfillment should be more nearly come.

At nine o'clock I set to work, and since I had neither a corkscrew nor a knife I had to break the neck of the bottle with a brick which I was luckily able to pull out of the rotting floor which supported me. It was an old Neuchâtel[37] wine, and delicious. In addition, my chicken was truffled to perfection, and the two stimulants showed me that my nymphs had some notion of physiology or that chance had seen fit to serve my turn. I should have spent my time patiently enough in this retreat had it not been for the rather frequent visits of one or another rat, which announced its presence by its loathsome smell and caused me nausea. I remembered that I had suffered the same annoyance at Cologne on a like occasion.[38]

At last ten o'clock struck, and a half hour later I heard the voice of the pastor as he went downstairs talking; he charged Helena not to play any tricks with his niece during the night and to sleep soundly. I then remembered Signor Rosa, who, twenty-two years earlier, left Signora Orio's[39] house in Venice at the same hour; and, reflecting upon myself, I found that I had changed greatly without becoming more reasonable; but if I was less sensible to pleasure I thought that the two beauties who awaited me were far superior to Signora Orio's nieces.[40]

In my long career as a libertine, during which my invincible inclination for the fair sex led me to employ every method of seduction, I turned the heads of several hundred women whose charms had overwhelmed my reason; but what was always my best safeguard is that I was always careful not to attack novices, girls whose moral principles or whose prejudices were an obstacle to success, except in the company of another woman. I early learned that what arouses resistance in a young girl, what makes it difficult to seduce her, is lack of courage; whereas when she is with a female friend she gives in quite easily; the weakness of the one brings about the fall of the other. Fathers and mothers believe the contrary, but they are mistaken. They commonly refuse to entrust their daughter to a young man, whether for a ball or a walk; but they yield if the girl has one of her friends as a chaperone. I repeat for their benefit:

they are mistaken; for if the young man knows how to go about it their daughter is lost. A false shame prevents both girls alike from offering an absolute resistance to seduction, and as soon as the first step has been taken the fall comes inevitably and quickly. If the friend permits the theft of the slightest favor in order to save herself from blushing, she will be the first to urge her friend to grant a greater one, and if the seducer is skillful the innocent novice will, without realizing it, have gone too far to turn back. Then, too, the more innocent a girl is, the more unacquainted she will be with the methods and the end of seduction. Without her being aware of it, the lure of pleasure draws her on, curiosity enters in, and opportunity does the rest.

It is possible, for example, that without Helena I should have succeeded in seducing the learned Hedwig; but I am sure that I should never have conquered Helena if she had not seen her cousin grant me freedoms and take liberties with me which they must have regarded as the very reverse of what modesty and decorum demanded of a well-brought-up girl.

Since, though I do not repent of my amorous exploits, I am far from wanting my example to contribute to the corruption of the fair sex, which deserves our homage for so many reasons, I hope that my observations will foster prudence in fathers and mothers and thus at least deserve their esteem.

Soon after the pastor left, I heard three soft knocks on the door of my hiding place. I opened it, and a hand as soft as satin took mine. All my senses reeled. It was Helena's hand, she had electrified me, and that moment of happiness had already repaid me for my long wait.

"Follow me quietly," she whispered as soon as she had closed the door again, but in my happy impatience I clasped her fondly in my arms, and, making her feel the effect which her mere presence produced on me, I also assured myself of her complete docility.

"Restrain yourself, my friend," she said, "and let us go up quietly."

I groped my way after her, and, at the end of a long, dark corridor, she led me into an unlighted room, closing the door behind us; then she opened the door to another room, where there was a light and in which I saw Hedwig almost undressed. She came to me with open arms as soon as she saw me, and, kissing me ardently, expressed the most lively gratitude for my having been so patient in so dreary a prison.

"My divine Hedwig," I said, "if I did not love you to distraction I would not have stayed a quarter of an hour in that dreadful hole; but you have only to say the word and I will spend four hours there every day as long as I remain here. But let us not waste time, my friends; let us go to bed."

"You two go to bed," said Helena; "I will spend the night on the couch."

"No, no, my cousin!" cried Hedwig, "you must not think of it. Our destinies must be one and the same."

"Yes, divine Helena, yes," I said, going to embrace her, "I love you both equally; and all this ceremoniousness only makes us lose precious time during which I could prove my fond ardor to you. Do as I do. I shall undress and get into the middle of the bed. Come quickly to my sides, and you will see if I love you as you deserve to be loved. If we are safe here I will keep you company until you tell me to leave; but I implore you not to put out the light."

Quick as a wink, philosophizing the while on shame with the beautiful theologian, I offered myself to their gaze in the nudity of a second Adam. Blushing, perhaps fearing to lose my esteem by too much holding back, Hedwig let the last veil of modesty fall, citing St. Clement of Alexandria,[41] *who says that shame resides only in the shift. I eulogized her beauties, the perfection of her forms, hoping thus to encourage Helena, who was un-*

dressing slowly; but an accusation of false modesty from her cousin had more effect than all my prodigal praises. And at last the Venus appears in the state of nature, at a loss how best to employ her hands, covering part of her most secret charms with one and a breast with the other, and seeming to be aghast at all that she cannot hide. Her bashful confusion, the struggle between expiring modesty and voluptuousness, held me spellbound.

Hedwig was taller than Helena, her skin was whiter, and her bosom twice as full; but Helena had more animation, smoother forms, and a bosom modeled after that of the Medicean Venus.[42]

When Helena, emboldened little by little, arrived at a parity with her cousin, we spent a few moments admiring one another, then we went to bed. Nature spoke imperiously, and we asked nothing better than to obey. Having donned a protective covering which I did not fear would break, I made Hedwig a woman, and, when the sacrifice was completed, she said, covering me with kisses, that the moment of pain was nothing in comparison with the pleasure.

Helena, six years younger than Hedwig, soon had her turn; but the finest fleece I have ever seen offered some resistance; she parted it with her two hands and, jealous of her cousin's success, though she could not be initiated into the mystery of love without a painful rupturing, she uttered only sighs of happiness, responding to my efforts and seeming to rival me in tenderness and ardor. Her charms and her motions made me shorten the sweet sacrifice, and when I left the sanctuary my two beauties saw that I needed rest.

The altar was cleansed of the victims' blood and we performed a salutary ablution together, delighting in serving one another.

My existence was renewed under their agile and curious hands, and the sight filled them with joy. I then told them how much I needed to renew my happiness during *all the time I was to remain in Geneva, but they sighed and said it was impossible.*

"In five or six days we may be able to arrange another such joyful meeting; but that will be all. Invite us," said Hedwig, "to supper at your inn tomorrow, and chance may give us the opportunity for a sweet theft."

I agreed to do so.

The mood taking us again, since I knew my nature and cheated them when I saw fit, I filled their cup of happiness for several hours, changing from one to the other five or six times before I exhausted my powers and reached the paroxysm of consummation. Between times, seeing them docile and eager, I made them assume all the most difficult of the Aretine's postures,[43] *which inexpressibly amused them. We lavished our kisses on whatever aroused our admiration, and once when Hedwig had her lips fastened to the mouth of the pistol the charge exploded and poured over her face and her bosom. She was completely delighted, and, in the role of eager student of physiology, entertained herself by watching out the end of the eruption, which they declared a wonder. The night seemed short to us, though we had not wasted a minute of it, and at daybreak the next morning we had to part. I left them in bed, and I had the good luck to leave the house without being seen.*

After sleeping until noon I got up and, having made my toilet, I went to call on the pastor, whom I treated to a fervent eulogy of his charming niece. It was the best way of getting him to come to supper the next day at the "Scales."

"We are in the city," I said, "so we can remain together as long as we wish; but try to bring the amiable widow and her charming daughter."

He promised to do no less.

That evening I went to see the Syndic and the three friends, who inevitably found me a trifle cold. I pretended I had a bad headache. I told them I was giving *a supper for the learned theologian, and I invited them to attend it with the Syndic; but I had foreseen that the latter would decline because it might give rise to talk.*

I saw to it that the most exquisite wines were the chief ingredient of my supper. The pastor and his lady drank heartily, and I encouraged their inclination to the best of my ability. When I saw that they had reached the point to which I wished to bring them, with their heads slightly muddled and entirely occupied with their old memories, I made a sign to the two beauties, who left the room as if in search of a place to which to retire. Pretending to show them the way to it by going out with them, I took them into another room, telling them to wait for me.

Going back and finding my two veterans completely occupied with each other and scarcely aware that I was there, I made punch, and, after serving them, I said I would take some to the young ladies, who were amusing themselves looking at engravings. I did not lose a minute, and I made several appearances which they found most interesting. Such stolen pleasures have an inexpressible charm. When we were more or less satisfied, we all went back together and I proceeded to mix another bowl of punch. Helena praised the engravings to her mother, urging her to go and look at them with us.

"I don't care to," she said.

"In that case," Helena resumed, "let us go and look at them again."

Finding her ruse delightful, I left with my two heroines, and we accomplished prodigies. Hedwig philosophized on pleasure, saying that she would never have known it if I had not chanced to make her uncle's acquaintance. Helena said nothing; but, more voluptuous than her cousin, she swooned like one of Venus's doves, and returned to life only to die an instant later. I admired this amazing capacity, though it is common enough; she passed from life to death fourteen times while I was *accomplishing a single operation. It is true that I was running my sixth race, and that, to enjoy her happiness, I sometimes slowed my own pace.*

Before we parted I promised I would call on Helena's mother every day for the sake of learning which night would be the one I could spend with them before I left Geneva. We parted at two o'clock in the morning.

Three or four days later Helena hurriedly told me that Hedwig would sleep with her that night and that she would leave her door open at the same hour.

"I will be there."

"And I will be there to lock you in, but you will be in the dark because the maid might notice a light."

I was prompt, and as ten o'clock struck I saw them come in full of joy.

"I forgot to tell you," said Helena, "that you would find a chicken here."

I was hungry, I devoured it in an instant, and then we gave ourselves to happiness.

I was to leave on the next day but one. I had received two letters from Signor Raiberti. In one of them he told me that he had followed my instructions in regard to La Corticelli; and in the other that she would probably be engaged to dance during the Carnival as first figurante. I had nothing more to do in Geneva, and, in accordance with our arrangement, Madame d'Urfé was waiting for me in Lyons. I had to go there. In this posture of affairs, the night that I was to spend with the two charming girls was my last business in Geneva.

My lessons had borne fruit, and my two pupils had become past mistresses in the art of receiving and giving pleasure. But during the intervals joy gave place to sadness.

"We shall be wretched, my friend," said Hedwig, "and we would be ready to follow you if you would provide for us."

"I promise you, my dears, that I will return before the

end of two years," I said; and they did not have to wait so long.[44] *We went to sleep at midnight and, waking at four o'clock, resumed our sports until six. A half hour later I left them, completely exhausted, and I spent the whole day in bed. In the evening I went to see the Syndic and his young friends. There I found Helena, who had the wit to pretend to be no more saddened by my departure than the others, and, the better to hide her stratagem, she let the Syndic kiss her as he did the three friends. For my part, imitating her trick, I begged her to convey my farewells to her learned cousin and ask her to excuse me for not going to take leave of her in person.*

I left very early the next morning and arrived at Lyons the following evening. I did not find Madame d'Urfé there; she had gone to Bresse,[45] *where she had an estate. I found a letter from her telling me that she would be very glad to see me there, and I went there without losing a moment.*

She received me in her usual fashion, and I at once informed her that I must go to Turin to wait for Federico Gualdo,[46] *then head of the Rosicrucian Order, and I made the oracle reveal to her that he would come to Marseilles with me and there would make her happy. It followed from this oracle that she must not think of returning to Paris before we had seen each other. The oracle further told her that, until she heard from me, she was to wait in Lyons with the little D'Aranda, who lavished caresses on me, begging me to take him to Turin. The reader can well imagine that I managed to put him off.*

Back in Lyons, it took Madame d'Urfé two weeks to get me fifty thousand francs which I might need for my auspicious journey. During the two weeks I became well acquainted with Madame Pernon,[47] *and I spent a considerable sum of money at the establishment of her husband, a rich manufacturer, for materials for an elegant wardrobe which I had made. Madame Pernon was beauti-*

ful and intelligent. She had a Milanese lover named Bono,[48] *who acted as agent for a Swiss banker by the name of Sacco.*[49] *It was through Madame Pernon that Bono arranged to have his banker give Madame d'Urfé the fifty thousand francs which she then gave me. She also gave me the three dresses which she had promised to La Lascaris, but which La Corticelli never saw. One of the dresses was of rarely beautiful sable. I left Lyons accoutered like a prince and set out for Turin, where I was to find the famous Gualdo, who was none other than the perfidious Ascanio Pogomas whom I had sent there from Bern. I thought it would be easy for me to make the clown play the role I had in mind for him. I was cruelly deceived, as my reader will see.*

I could not resist spending a day in Chambéry to see my beautiful nun. I found her beautiful, calm, and contented, but still grieving for the loss of her young boarder,[50] *who had been married.*

Arriving in Turin at the beginning of December,[51] *I found La Corticelli at Rivoli,*[52] *where Signor Raiberti had told her to expect me. She gave me a letter from that amiable man, in which he told me the address of the house which he had rented for me, since I did not want to stay at an inn, and in which I immediately installed myself and my possessions.*

CHAPTER V[n]

My old acquaintance. Signora Pacienza. Agata. Count Borromeo. A ball. Lord Percy.

WHEN WE arrived in Turin La Corticelli went to her lodging; I promised I would go to see her.

I found my apartment very comfortable and the rent reasonable, but I increased it by taking the kitchen too. Having a great deal of money, I wanted to invite my friends to suppers. Signor Raiberti at once found me a good cook. After accounting to me for the money he had spent for La Corticelli, he gave me the remainder and advised me to call on Count d'Aglié,[2] who already knew that La Corticelli belonged to me. He told me that Signora Pacienza,[3] who was boarding her, had orders never to leave me alone with her when I chose to pay her a visit. This struck me as odd, but since I did not care I refrained from complaining. He said that her behavior until then had been irreproachable, and I was very glad to hear it. He advised me to speak to the ballet master Dupré[4] and persuade him to give her lessons, for which I would pay, so that he would have her dance some *pas de deux* during the Carnival. I promised the worthy man, who supposed I was in love with her, that I would do as he said, and, leaving his house, I went to the Vicario.[5]

After smilingly welcoming me back to Turin, he said that he knew I was keeping a dancer.

"But I warn you that the respectable woman with whom she is boarding has been ordered not to let her receive visitors except in her presence, even though she is with her mother."

"This strictness pleases me, Signore, and the more so since I do not believe her mother is very scrupulous. The Cavaliere Raiberti, to whom I recommended her, knew my intentions, and I am delighted that he has fulfilled them so well. It is my wish that she shall make herself worthy of your protection."

"Do you expect to spend the Carnival here?"

"Possibly, if Your Excellency approves."

"It will depend entirely on your good behavior. Have you seen the Cavalier Ossorio?"[6]

"I shall pay him my respects today or tomorrow."

"Kindly convey my compliments to him."

He rang, and I left. The Cavalier Ossorio received me in his office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and greeted me most graciously. After I gave him an account of the visit I had just made to the Vicario he asked me, with a smile, if I willingly submitted to the decree which forbade me to see my mistress. I replied that I did not care, and, giving me a sly look, he replied that my indifference might not be to the taste of the respectable woman who had orders to watch over her.

He had said enough; but it was true that the constraint which prevented me from visiting the little vixen freely rather pleased me. I knew that it would start talk, and I was curious to see the consequences.

Back at my apartment I found the Genoese Passano,[7] the bad poet and bad painter, who had been in Turin a month waiting for me and whom I had destined to appear before Madame d'Urfé in the role of a Rosicrucian.

After having him sup with me, I gave him a room on the fourth floor, telling him to send out for his meals and not to come down to my apartment unless I sent for him. I found him an insipid storyteller, ignorant, ill-disposed, and given to drink. I was already sorry that I had taken him into my service; but it was done.

Curious to see how La Corticelli was lodged, I went there, taking with me a piece of material I had bought in Lyons to make her a winter dress. I found her with her mother in the room occupied by her hostess, who said she was very glad to see me and that she would be pleased to have me come to family dinner there as often as I liked. La Corticelli and her mother took me to her room, and the hostess followed us.

"Here," I said to the girl, "is something to make you a dress."

"Is it a present from the Marquise?"

"It is from me, if you will accept it."

"But I am supposed to have three dresses which she gave me."

"But you know on what conditions. We will discuss it another time."

She unfolds the material and finds it to her liking:

"But it must be trimmed," she says.

La Pacienza says she will send someone to tell the milliner to bring trimmings. She lived in the same street. No sooner is she gone than Signora Laura says that she is sorry she cannot receive me except in the hostess's rooms.

"You are certainly very glad not to have that privilege."

"I thank God for it morning and night."

I give her the look she deserves, and a few minutes later I see Vittorina[8] and another girl bringing trimmings. I ask her if she is still with La *R.*,[9] she blushes and says yes. La Corticelli chooses the trimming, I tell the girls that I will go to pay their mistress, and they leave. La Pacienza sends for a dressmaker, who comes to measure La Corticelli, and the latter says that she needs a corset, showing me her figure. After joking with her about her former big belly, the fruit of her affair with Count Nostitz,[10] I give her all the money she may need and take my leave. Escorting me to the stairway, she asks me when she will see me again, and I reply that I have no idea.

It is obvious that if I had been in love with the girl I would not have left her in the woman's house a single day; but what amazed me was that she should think me tolerant to such a degree, though my manner was just the reverse.

After having called on the bankers on whom I had bills of exchange, among them Monsieur Martin,[11] whose wife was well known for her beauty, I ran into Moses,[12] who took me to see Leah, who had married. As soon as she told her husband my name he put himself out to welcome me, but, finding Leah big with child, I felt no desire for her. I did not go back there again.

I could not wait to visit La R., and I found her no less impatient to see me, Vittorina having brought her news of me. Sitting at her counter facing her, I had the pleasure of listening to her account of all the amorous intrigues in Turin. She told me that, of all the girls she had when I left Turin, only Vittorina and Caton[13] were still with her, but that she heard from them. Vittorina was in the same state as that in which I had left her; but a nobleman who was in love with her was going to send her to Milan. The nobleman was Count de la Pérouse,[14] with whom I became well acquainted in Vienna three years later. I shall speak of him at the proper time and place. La R. told me mournfully that in consequence of some unfortunate incidents in which the police had been obliged to intervene she had been forced to promise

Count d'Aglié that in future she would send her girls only to ladies, and so, if I found that any of them pleased me, I could get to know them only by taking them somewhere on feast days and Sundays, after obtaining introductions to their parents. She showed them to me in her workroom, but I found none of them especially interesting. She talked to me about Signora Pacienza, and when I told her I was keeping La Corticelli and described the hard conditions to which I had submitted, her indignation was so vehement that it set me laughing.

"The woman," she said, "is not only a spy for Count d'Aglié but a bawd well known to the whole city; but I am surprised that the Cavaliere Raiberti did not send her to lodge with La Mazzoli." [15]

She stopped protesting when I told her that the Cavaliere had good reasons for doing as he had done, and that I had mine for being very glad that La Corticelli was where she was rather than anywhere else.

Our conversation was interrupted by a customer who came to ask for silk stockings. Hearing him speak of dancing, I asked him where the ballet master Dupré lived.

"I am he, at your service."

"I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak with you. Signor Raiberti told me that you would be kind enough to give some lessons to a dancer of my acquaintance."

"He mentioned it to me this morning. You must be the Chevalier de Seingalt."

"I am."

"The young lady can come to me every morning at nine o'clock."

"Certainly not; you will go to her at whatever hour you find convenient; and I will pay you, hoping that you will train her to the point of dancing in other than ensembles."

"I will go to see her today, and I will tell you tomorrow what I can make of her; but I shall have to speak frankly. I charge three Piedmontese lire per lesson."

"That is not much. I will call on you tomorrow."

"It will be an honor, here is my address. If you come in the afternoon you will find me rehearsing a ballet."

"Are rehearsals not held at the theater?"

"Yes, but at the theater no one may come in during a rehearsal. It is the Vicario's order."

"But you may receive whomever you please."

"Certainly; still, I could not receive the ballerinas if it were not for my wife, whom the Signor Vicario knows and trusts."

"You shall see me at the rehearsal."

Thus it was that the accursed old Vicario, with his rotten nose, exercised his tyranny wherever those who love pleasure go to seek it.

At the good Mazzoli's I found two notables, whom she introduced to me after telling me their names. The one, very old, very ugly, and wearing the Order of the White Eagle,[16] was Count Borromeo;[17] the other, youngish and lively, was a Count A. B.,[18] of Milan. I learned from her afterward that the two noblemen paid her assiduous court to please the Cavaliere Raiberti, whose good offices they needed in order to obtain certain rights or privileges with respect to their estates, which were under the jurisdiction of the King of Sardinia. The Milanese A. B. was penniless, and the lord of the Borromean Islands[19] was also very short of money. He had ruined himself over women, and, unable to live any longer in Milan, he had retired to the most beautiful of his islands in Lake Maggiore, where he enjoyed a perpetual spring. I paid him a visit when I returned from Spain, but I will give an account of it when I come to that time.

The conversation turning to my lodging, La Mazzoli, always the busybody, asked me if I was satisfied with my cook.

"I have not yet tried him; but I will do so tomorrow, if you will honor me by coming to supper with these gentlemen.''

The invitation was accepted, and she promised to bring her dear Cavaliere, who, if he were informed in advance, would not dine. His health obliged him to eat only once a day.

At the ballet master Dupré's I saw all the male dancers and all the ballerinas, with their mothers, who stood apart admiring them and watching over their mantles and muffs. Strangely enough, one of the mothers was beautiful and fresh. Dupré, after introducing me to his wife, who was young and pretty but, being consumptive, had given up dancing, told me that if Signorina Corticelli would apply herself he would do miracles with her. She came running up and, assuming an air of privilege, told me she needed ribbons and to have some bonnets made. All the ballerinas were looking her up and down,[20] whispering to one another. Not answering her by so much as a word, I took two Piedmontese pistoles from my pocket and gave them to Dupré, saying that they were for three months of lessons he was to give the young lady, for which I was glad to pay him in advance. I saw the general astonishment, and I enjoyed it, but without letting my enjoyment appear.

I sat down at a distance. Considering all the girls I saw there, I see one who is striking. Fine figure, delicate features, noble bearing, and a patience, which I find supremely interesting, toward a dancer who, when he was not satisfied with her, treated her to coarse language; she bore it all, but with unmistakable scorn depicted on her charming countenance. I approach the young and beautiful woman whom I had noticed taking care of a mantle when I entered, and I ask her where I can find the mother of the pretty ballerina who interested me.

''I am she,'' she replied.

''You? Your looks belie it.''

"I was very young when I had her."

"I have no doubt of that. Where are you from?"

"I am from Lucca, a widow and poor."

"How can you be poor when you have a daughter as pretty as yourself?"

She looks at me and makes no answer. A moment later Agata[21] (such was the girl's name) comes up and asks for a handkerchief to wipe her face. I give her mine, white and fresh and scented with attar of roses; she wipes off her sweat with it, praising the perfume, then offers to give it back to me, and I refuse it, saying that she should have it washed. She smiles and tells her mother to keep it. I ask her if I may take the liberty of calling on her, and she replies that her hostess does not allow her to receive visitors unless she is present. This cursed restriction was in force everywhere in Turin.

At my supper, which was the first, I was surprised by the excellence of my cook. I have always thought that nowhere in the world does one eat as well as in Turin; but it is also true that the countryside itself produces the exquisite viands which the skillful cooks there prepare with an art which makes them delectable. The wines, too, may be preferred by many epicures to those from elsewhere. Game, fish, fowl, veal, herbs, truffles—everything is exquisite. It is a crying shame that strangers in that fortunate country are restricted, and that its people are not the most honest in Italy. Obviously, the brilliant beauty of the fair sex there is due to the air of the place and even more to the good food. I easily prevailed upon Signorina Mazzoli and the two Milanese Counts to do me the same honor every day. The Cavaliere Raiberti could not make a definite engagement, but he promised he would take pot luck from time to time.

At the *opera buffa* at the Teatro Carignano,[22] I saw on the stage the Parmesan Redegonda[23] whose favors I had failed to obtain in Florence. She noticed me in the parterre and gave me a smile. I wrote her a note the next morning, offering her my services if her mother had changed her way of thinking. She replied that her mother was still of the same mind, but that if I could get La Corticelli to come to supper at my lodging she could come with her. Since their mothers would have been present, I did not answer her.

About this time I received a letter from Madame du Rumain, who sent me one from the Duke of Choiseul addressed to Monsieur de Chauvelin,[24] the French Ambassador in Turin, for which I had asked her. I had known that amiable man at Soleure, as my reader may remember, but I wanted to have better warrant for calling on him. So I delivered the letter, and, after reproaching me for having supposed that I needed it, he took me to see his charming wife,[25] who received me most graciously. Three or four days later he invited me to dinner, where I found the Venetian Resident, Imberti,[26] who said he was very sorry he could not present me at Court. Informed of the reason, Monsieur de Chauvelin offered to present me himself; but I thought it proper to decline. It would have been a great honor, but I should have been more noticed and hence less free.

Count Borromeo, who honored my table every day, maintained a certain dignity, and, since he always came with La Mazzoli, seemed neither to lower himself nor to need my hospitality; but Count A. B. availed himself of it more frankly. After a week or ten days he told me that my tolerance of his presence made him truly grateful to Eternal Providence, for, as his wife could not send him any money, he would not have had the means to pay for his dinner at the inn. He showed me her letters and, praising her merits, often said that he hoped to put me up in his house in Milan and that I would value her as she deserved. He had been in the Spanish service and, being garrisoned in Barcelona, had fallen in love with her and married her. She was twenty-six years of age, and he had no children.[27] Having written her that I had several times opened my purse to him and that I expected to spend half of the Carnival in Milan,[28] he had prevailed upon her to invite me to stay in their house. She wrote to me wittily, and I soon found the correspondence so interesting that I promised her I would go there, which I should never have done, for, knowing that he was poor, I ought to have seen that it was not right for me to become a burden to him and that, determined not to do so, I should have to pay a very high price for his hospitality; but in such a case a feeling of curiosity has much the nature of love. I imagined the Countess A. B. was born to make me happy, as I alone was destined to make her so and to arouse the jealousy of all the ladies in Milan. Having a great deal of money, I could not wait to seize the opportunity to shine by spending lavishly.

Meanwhile, going every morning to Dupré's, where I always found Agata, come to take her lesson, in less than two weeks I was desperately in love with her. Madame Dupré, won over by several presents I had given her, graciously received my avowal of my passion, and, by keeping Agata and her mother to dinner with her, had made it possible for me to be alone with the girl several times in her own room, where I had declared myself, and I had obtained a few favors; but they were so trifling, and our meetings were so brief, that my desires, far from being extinguished, had increased. Agata told me again and again that everyone knew I was keeping La Corticelli, and that not for anything in the world would she give people occasion to say that, prevented as I was from going to my mistress, she was only my second choice. In vain did I swear that I did not love her and that I was keeping her only because, if I abandoned her, I would compromise Signor Raiberti. She would not listen to reason; she insisted on a resounding break which would show all Turin that I loved only her and despised the other. On that condition she promised me her heart.

Determined to do what I could to satisfy her and to assure my own happiness, I asked Dupré to give a ball at my expense in some house outside the city and to arrange that all the dancers and singers of the fair sex who were engaged for the Carnival in Turin should be there. No one else was to dance. The male dancers were to be only escorts, among whom he would distribute tickets priced at one ducato, and each escort would have the right to bring a lady with him. But these ladies were not to dance. To prevail upon Dupré to carry out my scheme, and to assure him that his profits would be large and that the tickets would not be thought too dear, I told him I would pay whatever the supper and all the usual refreshments would cost him, together with the hire of the carriages or sedan chairs with which he was to furnish all the *virtuose* who would dance at the ball. No one was to know that it was I who was paying these expenses. He promised, and, certain of making a handsome profit, he set to work. He found a very suitable house for the ball, he invited the *virtuose,* he prepared fifty tickets, which he distributed in three or four days, and he chose a day when there were no performances in Turin. Only Agata and her mother knew that the project was of my invention and that I was paying the greater part of the expenses; but the day after the ball the whole city knew it.

Agata, declaring that she did not have a dress pretty enough to set her off, had one made under the direction of Dupré's wife, whom I gladly paid. She promised to dance all the contradances with me and to return to Turin with no one but Madame Dupré.

On the day of the ball I dined at the Duprés' in order to be present when she put on her dress. It was of stuff from Lyons manufactured that year, so the pattern was entirely new; but the trimming, of which Agata did not know the value, was of Alençon point.[29] La R., who had put it on the dress, had been ordered to say nothing, as had Madame Dupré, who was well versed in laces.

Just as she was about to leave I told her that the earrings she had on were not in keeping with the rest of her costume. Madame Dupré said that they really were not as pretty as they should be and that it was a pity. Agata's mother said she had no others.

"I have some paste girandoles[30] with me," I said to them, "which I could lend you. They are very brilliant."

I had purposely put in my pocket the earrings which were in the jewel case Madame d'Urfé had intended to give her niece, the young Countess Lascaris. I take them out, and the mother and daughter pronounce them very pretty. Madame Dupré adds that one would say they were genuine stones. I put them in Agata's ears, she looks at herself in the mirror, and, admiring their sparkle, she swears that real ones could not be any more brilliant. I say nothing.

They all go to the ball, and I go home, where I have my hair given a hasty combing, and, after putting on a handsome coat, which Pernon[31] had had embroidered for me, I go to the ball, which I find well begun. I see Agata dancing a minuet with Lord Percy.[32] He was a son of the Duchess of Northumberland who spent money lavishly but foolishly.

I see the most beautiful ladies in Turin, who, being spectators, could imagine that the ball was being given for them. I see all the foreign envoys, among them Monsieur de Chauvelin, who tells me that so charming an occasion lacked only the charming housekeeper I had had at Soleure. I see the Marquise de Prié[33] and the Marquis, who, not caring to dance, was playing quinze, with his mistress sitting opposite him and beside her an impolite player who would not let her see his card. She sees me and pretends not to know me. The trick I had played on her at Aix was not of a kind to be forgotten.

The minuets end, Dupré arranges the contradance, and I am glad to see the Cavaliere di Villa Faletta[34] take his place at the head of it with La Corticelli. I take Agata, who was warding off Lord Percy, telling him that she was engaged for the whole evening. She told me with a smile that everyone thought her girandoles were genuine, and that she let it pass.

After the contradance everyone took ices, then there was another contradance, then some minuets, and those who wanted to eat went to the well-stocked buffet, where I observed that Dupré had not been sparing. The Piedmontese, who are always calculating, said that Dupré would lose a great deal on it, for bottles of champagne were being emptied one after another.

Needing to rest, as did I, Agata had sat down beside me, and I was telling her of my love when Madame de Chauvelin came up with a foreign lady. I rise to give her my place, and Agata does likewise, but she makes her sit down beside her and praises her dress, especially the lace. The foreign lady praises the fire of the girandoles and says it is a pity that after a certain time such stones lose all their luster. Madame de Chauvelin says these will never lose it because they are genuine beyond the possibility of doubt; she questions Agata, who, not daring to say they are genuine, says they are paste and that it was I who had lent them to her. At that Madame de Chauvelin laughs and says I have deceived her, for no one lends earrings set with paste stones. Agata blushes, I say nothing either way, and, at Madame de Chauvelin's behest, I dance a minuet with Agata, who danced it to perfection. Madame de Chauvelin tells me that she still remembers our having danced together at Soleure, and that we shall dance again at her house on Twelfth Night.[35] I thanked her with a deep bow.

We danced contradances until four o'clock in the morning, and I went home after seeing Agata leave with La Dupré and her mother.

I was still in bed the next day when her mother was announced, with the addition that she demanded most urgently the "honor" of speaking with me. I had her shown in, and, making her sit down, prevailed on her to drink chocolate. Having thus broken her fast, and finding herself alone with me, she took from her pocket the earrings I had lent her daughter and said, with a laugh, that she had come to return them to me; but that she had just shown them to a jeweler, who had offered her a thousand zecchini for them. After laughing and telling her, as I took the earrings, that the jeweler was mad and that she ought to hold him to his word, for the earrings were worth only four louis, I began flirting with the pretty mother to such good purpose that I kept her with me for an hour, giving her, and myself receiving from her, all the tokens of a lively affection. After the act, which left us both looking somewhat surprised, she said with a laugh that she ought to tell her daughter what way I had taken to convince her that I loved her.

"I love you no less," I replied, "and, if you don't avoid being alone with me, I think it hardly possible that what has just happened between us will not always happen. The only favor I ask of you is not to stand in the way of my aspiring to the same favor from Agata, whom I adore."

"And I will ask you to do me a favor too. Tell me if these girandoles are really genuine, and what your intention was when you put them in Agata's ears."

"They are genuine, and my intention would be to leave them with her as a reminder of my love."

The good mother sighed and, rising to leave, told me to invite her to supper with Monsieur Dupré and his wife as often as I pleased. She departed, of course leaving me my earrings.

Such was this unexampled paragon of honesty among mothers of ballerinas. She could not tell me more than she had told me in a few words, or announce my good fortune with greater magnanimity.

The following day I invited Dupré and his wife, with Agata and her mother, to sup with me on the next day but one, in addition to my usual company. But now for an odd adventure which befell me that same day just as I was leaving Dupré's.

I run into my temporary lackey, a great scoundrel but a worthy fellow on this occasion, who, almost out of breath, triumphantly announces that he has come looking for me to tell me he had that very moment seen the Cavaliere di Villa Faletta enter the alley in which La Pacienza lived and that he could have gone there only to pay La Corticelli an amorous visit.

Curious to see if the restrictions laid upon me were in force for him, I go there, and I find the bawd with Signora Laura. They tried to stop me, but I push them away, I open the door, and I see the gallant rise, doing his best to restore himself to decency. She did not stir.

"Excuse me, Signora," I said, "if I came in without knocking."

"Wait a moment, wait a moment."

But I was already in the street. Full of the adventure, which made me the most contented of mortals, I go to tell it to the Cavaliere Raiberti, who, seeing me laugh, laughs at it too; but he agrees that I am right when I ask him to inform La Pacienza that La Corticelli is no longer at my charge and hence will receive not another soldo from my pocket.

"I imagine you will not complain to Count d'Aglié?"

"Only fools complain."

This little incident would have passed unnoticed if want of caution had not made it public. The first indiscretion was committed by Villa Faletta, who, remembering that he had met my valet in the street when he was on his way to La Pacienza's, supposed he had gone running to warn me. He found him toward noon and accused him of being a spy. The brazen fellow answered that his duty was to serve his master well, and the Cavaliere gave him a caning. Without saying anything to me, the valet went and complained to the Vicario, who at once sent for Villa Faletta and asked him what reason he had thought he had for caning the valet. Villa Faletta told him the whole story. Signor Raiberti lost no time in going to tell La Pacienza that La Corticelli was no longer at his charge or at mine, and, not stopping to hear what she began saying in her own defense, he left her. Reporting the incident to me the same evening, he said that, as he went down the stairs, he had met a police officer, who was apparently on his way to summon her at the Count's order.

The next day, just as I was leaving my apartment to go to the Marquis de Chauvelin's ball, I was surprised to receive a note from Count d'Aglié in which he asked me most politely to call on him in order to hear something he had to say to me. I immediately have my chairmen take me to the Count's house.

He received me privately, and, after making me sit down near him, he delivered a long discourse, of which the general purport was that I should forget the little incident, all the details of which were known to him.

"That is my intention, Signore. I shall never again in my life go to see La Corticelli, nor shall I give her another thought either for good or for evil, and I shall always be the Cavaliere di Villa Faletta's most humble servant."

"Oh, that is no reason for abandoning her. I will see that you receive what satisfaction you may require from La Pacienza, and I will send the girl to board with an honest woman of my acquaintance, where you will be very well received and perfectly free."

"I despise La Pacienza, La Corticelli, and her mother; they are swindlers whom I do not want to see again."

"You had no right to force your way into a room, the door of which was shut, in a house which was not yours."

"If I did not have it, I am in the wrong; but you will permit me to inform His Majesty of the whole affair and to abide by his judgment."

"La Corticelli claims that, far from her being in your debt, you owe her a great deal, and she says that the girandoles which you gave your new mistress belong to her. She maintains that they are a present she was given by the Marquise d'Urfé, whom I know."

"She is lying; but since you know the lady, write to her, she is in Lyons. If she answers you that I owe the wretched girl anything, I will do my duty. I have a hundred thousand francs in the hands of the bankers of this city to pay for the girandoles if it should appear that I had no right to dispose of them."

The Vicario then rose, and I made him a bow. At the French Ambassador's ball I found the thing so generally known that, in sheer boredom, I ceased to answer people who spoke to me about it. Everyone told me that it was a matter of no moment, to pay any attention to which was beneath my honor. The Cavaliere di Villa Faletta went so far as to say that, if I abandoned La Corticelli for such a trifle, he would consider it his duty to *give* me satisfaction.

"It will be enough," I replied, "if you do not *demand* it of me."

So saying, I shook his hand. He said no more.

But it was the Marquise de Prié, his sister, who, after we had danced together, really launched an attack on me. She had charms, and it would have lain entirely with her to conquer me, but fortunately, either she did not think of it or she did not realize what justice I did to her merits.

Three days later a lady who wielded great power in Turin and exercised a sort of supervision over all theatrical intrigues, and to whose patronage all the *virtuose* aspired, took it into her head to send for me, dispatching her command by a valet in livery. Guessing what she wanted to talk to me about, I went on foot and wearing a redingote. She began by mentioning the matter to me in the most affable manner, but since her face did not interest me, I told her in so many words that La Corticelli was a girl for whom I no longer felt the slightest inclination and that I abandoned her without regret to the gallant Cavaliere with whom I had found her *in flagrante delicto.* She left me, saying that I would be sorry, for she would publish a little story which she had already read and which would not be to my credit. The lady's name was De Saint-Gilles.[36]

A week later I read in manuscript[37] an account of all that had happened between La Corticelli, Madame d'Urfé, and myself, which everyone in Turin could have read but which was so badly written and so full of nonsense that no one could read it through. It had no effect on me, and I left Turin two weeks later without having troubled to see her again. But I saw her six months later in Paris, and we will speak of it when we come to that time.

The day after Monsieur de Chauvelin's ball I had my dear Agata and her mother, Dupré and his wife, La Mazzoli, and my two Milanese noblemen to supper, as I had arranged. It was for the mother to act in such a way that the girandoles would rightfully enter Agata's possession; hence, all ready for the sacrifice, I left it to the dear priestess to arrange the order of ceremonies.

So it was she who, as soon as she had sat down at the table, told the company that all Turin was saying I had made her daughter a present of two earrings which were worth five hundred louis and which, according to La Corticelli, were hers and hers alone.

"I do not know," she went on, "either if the earrings are genuine or if they belong to La Corticelli; but I know it is not true that Agata has been made a present of them by this gentleman here."

"No one will doubt it from now on, my dear friend," I said to her, taking the earrings from my pocket and putting them in Agata's ears, "for I now make her a present of them and I confirm the valuation placed on them, and the proof that they belong to me is that I give them to her."

The whole company applauded, and Agata, overcome with gratitude, promised me with her eyes all that I could desire. We then talked of La Corticelli's affair with Villa Faletta and of all that was being done to make me continue to support her. The Cavaliere Raiberti said that, in my place, he would have answered Madame de Saint-Gilles, and even the Vicario, by offering to continue paying for her board, but purely as an act of charity and giving the money to one or the other of them. I replied that I would be glad to do so, and that he could count on my promise. No later than the next morning the worthy man called on Madame de Saint-Gilles to settle the matter, and I put the necessary money in his hands; but the wretched manuscript containing the whole story was published nevertheless. The Vicario sent La Corticelli to the same house in which Redegonda was living, but he left La Pacienza in peace.

After supper we all put on black dominoes, except the Cavaliere, and went to the ball at the Teatro Carignano, from which I ran away with Agata, who gave herself to me that night, and to such good purpose that from then on we no longer subjected ourselves to any restraints. At the suppers I gave in my house I was perfectly free, and the Vicario could do nothing to trouble my love affair with that charming girl, whose fortune it was God's will that I should make, in a most extraordinary way, when she showed me that she was worthy of it six or seven years later, as the reader will see if I do not tire of writing my memoirs.

We were so much in love, and so perfectly at peace in our enjoyment of each other, that we could not possibly have parted of our own free will, had it not been for an event which compelled us to submit our mutual passion to the wholesome light of our reason. But for that event, I should have spent at least the whole Carnival in Turin, and I should have put off until Lent going to Milan to visit the Spanish Countess A. B., whom I imagined to be a wonder of nature. Just at this time her husband the Count, having finished his business at the Court of Turin, returned to Milan, embracing me and shedding tears of gratitude, for he could not have left Turin if I had not given him what he needed for the expenses of the journey after paying his debts, which, however, amounted to very little. So it is that vice often allies itself with virtue, or dons the mask of it; but in this instance the dupe was myself and I did not care to open my eyes. All my life long I have been absorbed in vice and at the same time a worshiper of virtue.

Lord Percy, whom I have mentioned, was in love with Agata, he followed her everywhere, he waited for her in the wings, he never missed a rehearsal, and he called on her every day, despite the fact that her hostess, a woman of the type of La Pacienza, never left her to him unchaperoned. Agata always refused his presents, but she could not prevent her hostess from accepting everything that the young Englishman sent her from the inn and all kinds of wines and liqueurs; by all which means he hoped to bribe her into finally getting him Agata, who, completely indifferent to him, told me everything. Sure of her heart, I laughed, and I was not displeased that the young man's fruitless assiduity should set off my success. The whole city knew that Agata was faithful to me, and the Englishman became so convinced of it that he believed the only way left him to attain his purpose was to become acquainted with me.

He came one morning to ask me for breakfast, and, reasoning like an Englishman, he thought he could declare his passion to me and propose an exchange which made me laugh.

"I know," he said, "that you have long loved the singer Redegonda and have never succeeded in having her; I offer her to you in exchange for Agata, and tell me what you want to boot."

After laughing heartily I say that I might consider the thing possible, but first of all we must see if the two pieces of merchandise would consent to the change of ownership:

> *Sì come amor si regga a questa guisa*
> *Che vender la sua donna o permutarla*
> *Possa l'amante, nè a ragion si attristi*
> *Se quando una ne perde una n'acquisti.*
>
> ("As if love's laws were such that the
> lover may sell his lady or exchange her
> and has no reason to be pained when,
> losing one, he gains another.")[38]

"For my part," His Lordship replies, "I am sure of Redegonda's consent."

"So far so good; but on mine, I am doubtful of Agata's."

"You need not doubt it."

"What grounds have you?"

"She will be reasonable."

"She loves me."

"And Redegonda loves me as much."

"And do you think she loves me?"

"I have no idea; but love you she will."

"Have you discussed it with her?"

"No, but that does not matter. I will see to it. What I must know now is if my scheme is agreeable to you, and what boot you will ask, for your Agata is worth more than my Redegonda."

"We will talk about that later. Allow me to begin by discussing it with her, and I will bring you my answer at your lodging tomorrow morning."

His scheme amused me, and I decided I would see what would come of it. I was surprised that the young Lord had gained possession of Redegonda, for her mother had always overawed me.

Agata laughed heartily that evening when I informed her of Lord Percy's proposal, and when I asked her if she would consent to the exchange she said she would do whatever I wished and that she advised me to accept it if he offered me boot enough to make it worth my while. I saw that she was joking, but we both became curious to see how he would go about settling the thing.

So I went to breakfast with him the next morning, and I told him that Agata accepted his proposal, but that, for my part, I wanted to be convinced that Redegonda accepted it too and to learn how she expected to arrange for us to live together. He said that the four of us should meet, well masked, at the first ball at the Teatro Carignano, which we would leave to sup together in a place which belonged to him, and that we would strike our bargain there.

Accordingly we masked, we went to the ball, and, as soon as we recognized one another, we left, and the four of us got into a carriage which belonged to Lord Percy and were driven to the door of a house which I knew; but my surprise was not small when I saw La Corticelli in the room we entered. I called the young coxcomb aside and told him that such behavior was unworthy of a gentleman. He replied, with a laugh, that he had thought he would be gratifying me, and that, La Corticelli being the boot, I could not but be satisfied.

I refused his carriage. Not wanting to go back to the ball, we took sedan chairs to return to my apartment.

CHAPTER VI

I relinquish Agata to Lord Percy. I leave for Milan. "The Pilgrim" at Pavia. The Countess A. B. Disappointment. The Marchese Triulzi. Zenobia. The two beautiful Marchese Q.[1] *Barbaro the Venetian.*

THUS IT was that Count d'Aglié had punished La Corticelli by sending her to board elsewhere. Soon become Redegonda's intimate friend, she did exactly as she pleased. The good part of it was that no one in Turin ever learned the story, and I took care not to tell it; but Lord Percy did not give up the idea of obtaining possession of Agata, and here is how he accomplished it. He was a prodigal who had a great deal of money and who, setting no value on it, used it to satisfy all his whims. In a country where it was scarce, it opened all doors to him.

Two or three days after this event Agata told me that the impresario of the opera at Alessandria[2] had come to her to engage her as second ballerina, offering her sixty zecchini[3] for the whole period of the Fair, and that she had promised to answer him the next day. She asked me if I advised her to accept the engagement.

"If you love me, my dear Agata, you will spend a whole year without engaging yourself to any theater. I will not let you want for anything, and I will pay for a teacher who will perfect you, and then you will not dance anywhere except as first ballerina, and you will demand at least five hundred zecchini."

"Mother says that accepting an engagement will not prevent me from studying, but that, on the contrary, the practice will make me better and better."

"You don't need sixty zecchini. If you accept the proposal you will dishonor me. If you love me you will tell the impresario that you want to spend a year without dancing."

"It seems to me I would do better to ask him for an exorbitant sum."

"You are right. Tell him that you insist on being first ballerina and that you demand five hundred zecchini."

"I will do it tomorrow morning."

She kept her word, and she told me, bursting out laughing, that the impresario had not seemed surprised at what she had demanded. After thinking it over for a few minutes, he left, telling her that he needed time to make up his mind and that she should see him again.

"It would be amusing if he took me at my word."

"If he does, we shall have to find out if he is either mad or a beggar thinking of declaring bankruptcy."

"And if he is solvent?"

"You must accept."

"And then? Have I talent enough to be first ballerina? There won't be a dancer who will want to dance with me."

"I will find you a dancer at once, and you will have talent enough; but you will see that nothing will come of this."

I was mistaken. The impresario came back, offered her a written engagement,[4] and at that she sent for me. I at once asked the man what security he could give to vouch for his own solvency. He answered that the banker

Martin would sign his undertaking, after which I could make no objection. He wrote out his agreement, she wrote out hers, which I signed, and I went to inform the Cavaliere Raiberti, who, knowing the impresario, was surprised that Monsieur Martin would answer for him; but we learned all the next day, though the thing was supposed to be kept secret.

The real impresario was Lord Percy, who wanted to obtain possession of Agata at any cost, and I could no longer oppose his scheme. I could have continued to live with her, and even have so arranged matters that the young man would never become her lover; but I had to meet Madame d'Urfé in France after Easter, and, peace having been made,[5] I was absolutely determined to visit England. I adopted the course of becoming the young Lord's friend, making him free of my society, and seeing how he would go about ingratiating himself with Agata, who simply could not bear him.

In less than a week we became intimate friends, supping together every evening either at his lodging or at mine, Agata always being present with her mother. I easily came to the conclusion that she could soon become his fond mistress, despite his not being handsome, and that, loving her as I did, I ought not to stand in the way of her good fortune. I decided to leave for Milan. Madly in love with her, the young Englishman did not let a day pass without making her some costly present, and I had to swallow this sort of insult; but I was tired of doing so. However, Agata never gave me any reason to complain or any ground for believing that her new lover's assiduity had diminished the feelings which made her so dear to me. She listened to all my advice, she promised to follow it, and she followed it. The Englishman made her rich; but she did not leave the theater until she was in Naples, where we shall find her again a few years hence.

Though I am of a character which forbids me to take presents from my equals, the Englishman made me one so unusual as to force me to accept it. On my telling him that I was about to go to England for the first time and that he would greatly honor me if he would give me a letter to his mother the Duchess,[6] he took a portrait of that lady from his pocket, saying:

"Here is the letter of introduction I give you, and tomorrow I will write her that you will deliver her portrait to her in person unless she will let you keep it."

"Her Ladyship will see that I aspire to that favor."

There are a number of ideas which can enter no heads but English ones. But Count A. B.[7] was summoning me to Milan, and his Countess had asked me to bring her two large pieces of taffeta.

After taking leave of all my acquaintances I set out for Milan with a letter of credit from the banker Zappata on Greppi.[8] At parting from Agata I shed tears, but less copiously than did she and her mother, who was always telling me that she could never have forgiven a rival if it had not been her own daughter. I sent Passano to Genoa, where his family was, giving him enough to live on until I arrived. Having dismissed my valet from Franche-Comté[9] for good reasons, I took another, and I set out in company with the Cavaliere di Rosignano,[10] traveling by way of Casale,[11] where there was opera buffa.

The Cavaliere di Rosignano, a handsome man and a good officer, fond of wine and women and even fonder of boys, amused me because, though not lettered, he knew Dante's *Divine Comedy* by heart. It was the only book he had read, and he quoted from it in season and out of season, interpreting the passages just as he pleased. It was an absurdity which often made him intolerable in society, but which afforded much amusement to those who knew the great poet well and admired his beauty. However, the proverb which warns us to beware of the man who has read only one book[12] remains true. The

Count of Grissella,[13] his brother, was not like him. He was a truly lettered man, and one whose erudition was allied with all the qualities of the wit, the statesman, and the affable companion. Berlin knew and admired him when he resided there as Ambassador for the King of Sardinia.

Having found nothing interesting at the opera, I went to Pavia, where, though I knew no one, I was immediately presented to the Marchesa Corti[14] in her great box at the theater, where she received all strangers who appeared to be of consequence. Here in the year 1786 [15] I made the acquaintance of her noble son, who honored me with his friendship and who died young in Flanders, a Major-General. My tears paid him unavailing homage. His virtues made him regretted by all who knew him. Had he lived, he would have attained the highest ranks, but *Vitae summa brevis spes nos vetat inchoare longas* ("The shortness of life forbids us to entertain distant hopes").[16]

I stopped in Pavia for only two days; but it was decreed that something should befall me there which would make me talked about.

During the second ballet of the opera a ballerina costumed as a pilgrim held out her hat toward the stage boxes in the course of her *pas de deux,* as if asking for alms. I was in the Marchesa Corti's box. When I saw the ballerina below me I dropped my purse into her hat. It contained eighteen or twenty ducati. She put it in her pocket, smiling, and the parterre applauded. I asked the Marchese Belcredi,[17] who was beside me, if she had anyone keeping her, and he replied that she had only a French officer, whom he pointed out to me in the parterre, who was penniless. He said that he constantly went to visit her.

Back at my inn, I was supping with Signor Basili,[18] a colonel in the service of Modena, when I saw the ballerina come in with an elderly woman and a young girl;

they were her mother and her sister. She came to thank me for having been the instrument of Divine Providence, for their poverty was extreme. As I had nearly finished supper, I invited them to supper on the next day, and they promised to come.

Delighted so easily to have conferred happiness on a girl upon whom I had no designs, the next day, just as I was dressing to dine at Basili's, I was told by Clairmont (such was my new valet's name) that a French officer was asking to speak to me. I have him shown in, and I ask him what I can do for him.

"I offer you three courses, Monsieur Venetian, and I leave the choice to you. Either countermand the supper tonight, or invite me too, or come out with me now to a place where we can measure swords."

Clairmont, who by then was making up my fire, does not give me time to answer; he seizes a half-burned and still blazing stick of wood and runs at the madman, who does not see fit to wait for him. At the noise he made getting down the stairs at full speed, the valet of the inn came running and stopped him, thinking he had stolen something; but Clairmont made the fellow release him and, still carrying his burning brand, returned to tell me the outcome of the farce, which at once became the talk of the city. My valet, proud of his exploit and sure of my approval, said that I could go about without apprehension, for the loud-mouthed coward had not drawn his sword against the waiter, who, dressed as he was and with only a knife in his hand, had sturdily taken him by the collar.

"But in any case," said Clairmont, *"I will go about with you."*

I told him that, this time, he had done well, but that henceforth he was not to interfere in my concern; he replied that my concerns were his, and to prove it he inspected my pocket pistols and, finding no powder in the pans, he looked at me with a smile and filled them.

The majority of French servants, who have a good reputation, are like Clairmont; but they always think they are more intelligent than their masters, and when they find they are right they become the master, they steal from him, tyrannize over him, and even show their disdain of him, which the fool thinks he must pretend not to notice. But when the master is the more intelligent, the Clairmonts are excellent.

As the Frenchman wore a uniform, the innkeeper of the "St. Mark" immediately sent a full report to the police, who expelled the desperate wretch from the city the same day. Colonel Basili said at dinner that only a Frenchman would think of going to attack a man in his own room for such a reason; but I proved to him that he was wrong. Poverty and love, combined with a mistaken notion of courage, breed inordinate conduct in every country in the universe.

At supper the "Pilgrim" thanked me for having delivered her from the penniless wretch, who bored and frightened her by constantly saying he would kill himself. The next day I dined at the celebrated Carthusian monastery,[19] and toward nightfall I arrived in Milan, going to stay at Count A. B.'s, where I was not expected until the following day. The Count presented me to his wife before I went to my room, in which I had to wait for a fire to be made. Signora A. B., pretty, though too short, would have pleased me had it not been for a gravity which was inappropriate for a first arrival at her house. After the customary compliments, I said that my valet would bring her the taffeta which her husband had asked me to get for her. She replied that her priest would at once reimburse me for what it had cost me. The Count showed me to my room, then left me until suppertime. The room was good enough, but I was determined to leave the next day if the Spanish Countess did not change her attitude. I could grant her only twenty-four hours to do so.

At supper, at which we were four, the Count, lively and eager to bring me out and to conceal his wife's distant manner from me, talked constantly. I answered him in kind, always addressing the Countess in order not to leave her in a silence which could not but injure her in my estimation; but she contributed only some smiles and dry monosyllables to the conversation, never raising her rather fine black eyes from the dishes, which she declared unappetizing. This observation she made to the priest, who was the fourth at table, and with whom she talked affably.

As I was very fond of the Count, I was distressed to find his wife morose. I examined her carefully to find at least some reason in her charms to forgive her for her ill-humor; but I felt offended when I noticed that whenever she was sure I was looking at her profile she deliberately avoided my scrutiny by turning her head toward the Abate and addressing him for no good reason. I laughed to myself both at her scorn and at her intention, for, since she had not impressed me, I felt safe from any pain which her calculated tyranny could have caused me. After supper my valet brought in the two pieces of taffeta, which were to be used to make her a domino on hoops, such as the fashion at the time demanded.

The Count, who saw me to my room, begged me when he left to excuse his wife's Spanish ways, assuring me that I would find her a good creature as soon as we had come to know each other. The Count was poor, his house was small, his furniture shabby, the livery of his only lackey was threadbare, his table linen was old, his dishes were of stoneware, and one of his Countess's two chambermaids did the cooking. He had no carriage. Clairmont informed me of all this in the course of telling me that he was lodged in a small room next to the kitchen together with the lackey who had served at table.

For my part, having only one room and having three trunks, I was very uncomfortable. It was on waking that I decided to find a good apartment. As soon as the Count came to bid me good morning and ask me what I took for breakfast, I said that I had enough Turinese chocolate for his whole family; he said that his wife liked it but that she took it only when it was prepared by her maid. I immediately gave him six pounds of it, asking him to persuade her to accept it and to swear to her that if she wanted to pay me for it I would keep it for myself. He said she would accept it and thank me for it. He undertook to have my carriage put in a carriage house, to rent me a good coach, and to answer for the fidelity of a temporary lackey he would find for me.

A moment after the Count left, I see the Abate who had supped with us. He was a man forty years of age, who, in return for seeing to the running of the house, lived in it and ate with his masters. He said mass every day at San Giovanni in Conca.[20] As soon as he was alone with me the priest asked me point-blank to say that he had paid me the three hundred Milanese lire,[21] which were the price of the two pieces of taffeta, when the Countess asked me if I had received them.

"Signor Abate," I replied, laughing heartily, "if Her Ladyship asks me that impertinent question I shall tell her the truth, and it will amuse me."

"She will ask you, I am sure, and you will be the cause of her ill-treating me."

"Will she have any reason?"

"None."

"Then go and tell her that I make her a present of them, and that if she wants to pay me I am in no hurry."

"I see that you know neither her nor the circumstances of this house. I will speak to the Count."

A quarter of an hour later the Count comes to tell me sadly that he owes me a great deal of money, which he hopes to repay during Lent, and that I will be doing him a favor if I add the value of the pieces of taffeta to his account. I answered, embracing him, that he had only to add them to it himself, for it was my habit never to write down the sums of money with which I was only too happy to be able to oblige my friends. I assured him that if his lady asked me if I had received the money for the taffeta I would tell her that he had paid me himself.

While waiting for dinnertime, having been told that the Countess was not receiving, I sat down at a small table to write my letters. On a large table Clairmont laid out several of my coats to air, together with some women's cloaks and a magnificent dress of red *gros de Tours*[22] trimmed with sable which Madame d'Urfé had intended for the wretched Corticelli. I should have given it to Agata[23] if I had continued to live with her, and I should have made a great mistake, for such a dress was suitable only for a woman of rank.

At one o'clock in comes the Count to announce his wife, who was coming to present the best friend of the house; he was a Marchese Triulzi,[24] of about my age, tall, well built, with a slight squint, easy in his manner, and in short with the bearing of a nobleman. He said that he had come both to have the pleasure of making my acquaintance and to warm himself at the fire, for in the whole house there was a fireplace only in my room.

All the chairs being littered, the Marchese takes the Countess and sets her on his knees like a marionette; but she resists, she blushes, she wrests herself away from him, and, seeing him burst out laughing, she says that, old as he is, he has not yet learned to respect women of her kind. While waiting for Clairmont to clear the chairs, the Marchese, noticing women's clothes and the beautiful dress, asked me if I was expecting a woman. I replied that I hoped to find ladies in Milan whom I should think worthy to receive these presents.

"In Venice," I said, "I knew Prince Triulzi.[25] I suppose he belongs to your family."

"He says so, and it is possible; but I do not believe that I belong to his."

Enlightened by this witticism, I did not mention the Prince again.

"You ought," the Count said to him, "to stay to dinner with us, and, since you do not like anything which is not prepared by your own cook, to send out for your dinner."

The Marchese assented, and we ate well. I saw fine china, fine linen, bottles, and adroit servants. I understood everything, and I almost never spoke. The Marchese bore almost the whole burden of the conversation with wit and liveliness, infuriating the Countess, who constantly complained of the familiarity of his address. Yet the Marchese did not intend to humiliate her, for he loved her; he only wanted to make her less haughty. He soothed her by saying that there was not a man in Milan who was more devoted to her than he and who more greatly respected her charms and her birth.

After dinner a tailor came to measure the Countess for the domino, which was to be ready for the ball to be given on the next day but one. To the Marchese's praise of the colors and the fine quality of the two pieces of taffeta, the Countess replied that it was I who had brought them from Turin, and she asked me if I had received my money. I answered that her husband had reimbursed me, and that she had taught me a good lesson.

"What lesson?" the Marchese asked me.

"I flattered myself," I replied, "that Her Ladyship would have considered me worthy to make her so small a present."

"And she would not accept it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"That shouldn't make you laugh," the Countess said to him angrily; "but you laugh at everything."

Still undressed down to her corset, she showed her beautiful bosom and, when she said that she was cold, the Marchese passed his hand over it; but at that she treated him to outrageous insults, which he received with fits of laughter. Toward nightfall she went to the opera[26] with him, but followed by her own lackey in her livery, who got up behind the Marchese's carriage with his two footmen. A quarter of an hour later I got into mine with the Count, and I was pleasantly surprised to see that the leading actress was my dear Teresa Palesi.[27] I was tactful enough not to mention either his wife's charms or the state of his household to the Count. During the second act I went with him to the gaming room, where there were ten or twelve banks at faro. I played, and after losing about a hundred gold ducati, I stopped.

At supper I thought the Countess less unapproachable. She condoled with me on my losses. I replied that they were not worth her condolences.

The next morning Clairmont enters my room with a tall girl who reminds me of the Jewess Leah, as beautiful as she, but with fewer pretensions, for she had come only to offer me her services in the way of looking after my linen and laces. She charms me on the instant. I was in bed, taking my chocolate, I ask her to sit down, and she replies that she will come back when I am up. I ask her if she lives far away, and she answers that she lodges in the same house, on the ground floor, with her father and mother, and that her name is Zenobia.[28] After telling her that I think her beautiful, I ask for her hand to kiss, and, all smiles, she refuses it, saying that her hand is pledged.

"Then you are engaged?"

"To a tailor who will marry me before the Carnival ends."

"Is he handsome and rich?"

"Neither."

"Then why are you marrying him?"

"To be mistress in my own house."

"You are very sensible, and I declare myself your friend. Bring your intended here, I will give him work."

I rise, I order Clairmont to get my soiled linen together, I have him dress my hair hastily in order to go to see La Palesi, and in comes Zenobia with the tailor. I see a dwarf of a fellow whose face makes me want to laugh.

"So you," I said, "are going to marry this charming girl, are you?"

"*Illustrissimo si* ['Yes, my lord']. The banns are already published."

"You are fortunate. When are you to marry her?"

"In ten or twelve days."

"Why don't you marry her tomorrow?"

"You are in a great hurry."

At this answer I burst out laughing. I gave him an embroidered waistcoat, and I told him to measure me for a black domino for the ball the next evening. He said I must give him the taffeta, for he had neither money nor credit, and I give him ten zecchini, saying that he will have both when he is married, and he leaves.

After giving Zenobia some soiled ruffles, which she undertook to wash as good as new, I asked her if she hoped that her husband would not be jealous.

"He is neither jealous nor in love, and he is marrying me only because I earn more than he does."

"With the charms I see that you possess, you could have aspired to wealth."

"I am twenty-two years old and I have waited long enough. I am tired of single life. Besides, the man you saw is intelligent."

"So I observed. But why does he put off marrying you?"

"Because he has no money; and, having relatives, he wants a fine wedding. And to tell you the truth, I like the idea."

"You are right; but I disapprove of the prejudice which prevents you from giving a gentleman who asks for it your hand to kiss."

"It was only to let you know I am to be married. I am not so scrupulous."

"Well and good. I think all the better of you now. Tell your intended that if he will have me as his sponsor your wedding party will be at my expense."

"Really and truly?"

"Really and truly. I will give him twenty-four zecchini, but on condition that he will spend them."

"It will make people talk; but we won't let that trouble us. I will give you his answer tomorrow."

"And a loving kiss now."

"That too."

Zenobia skipped down the stairs, and I went out to present myself to my banker, who at once accepted my letter of credit. After this necessary visit I went to see Teresa, my old passion. As soon as her chambermaid, the same one she had had in Florence, saw me she took me by the hand and led me to her mistress's bed, from which she was about to rise. She received me with tokens of that sincere friendship which strikes those who feel it dumb for the first moments. After we had embraced each other several times she said that six months earlier she had stopped living with her husband Palesi. He having become insupportable, she had settled an income on him which enabled him to live in Rome. She told me that Don Cesarino, our son, was still with her, that she had sent him to board and would show him to me whenever I wished. She said that she was happy, that gossip gave her a lover, but it was not true, and that I could come to see her in perfect freedom and at any time. We recounted our brief stories to each other, but we spent no less than two hours over it. Finding her as beautiful and fresh as she had been when she had made me fall in love with her at Ancona, I asked her if she considered it her duty to remain true to her husband, and she replied that in Florence she had still been in love with him and that if she still pleased me we could renew our ties and live together until death. Upon hearing this I convinced her that I could prove my love to her on the instant. Surrendering to all my caresses, she replied that we would talk of it at our second interview; but she had to put up with seeing herself become the accomplice of my incontinence. After the act I reproached her with being cold. She swore that I was mistaken and that she was delighted to have found me full of fire. I went home in love with her; but my ardor found too many diversions to last long.

The Countess A. B. began to take a milder tone. She told me complacently that she knew where I had spent two hours; but that if I loved the person I ought to give up my visits, for her lover would leave her.

"If he leaves her I will take his place."

"You do well to amuse yourself looking for women who know how to earn your presents. I have been told that you do not give any until you have received obvious proofs of their love."

"That is my principle."

"It is the best way for you to avoid being duped. The lover of the person whom you went to see had one of our ladies, whom he put in very comfortable circumstances. We despise her."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Do you not consider that she made a misalliance? Greppi[29] is a man of no birth."

Showing no surprise at the name Greppi, I replied that ladies who despise another for such a reason can only be absurdly steeped in pride and devoured by envy.

"I am convinced that if they found Greppis, they would all contract misalliances."

The Marchese's arrival prevented her from answering me; she went out with him and I with her husband, who introduced me to a house where I saw a man dealing at faro with a hundred zecchini before him. I played at small stakes, to do as the others were doing, and after losing twenty ducati I stopped. On the way to the opera my poor Count told me that I was the cause of his having lost ten ducati on his word and that he did not know how to pay them the next day. I gave them to him. At the opera I lost two hundred at the same bank at which I had lost a hundred the evening before. I laughed at the distress of my dear Count, who did not know that I had a hundred thousand lire in Greppi's hands besides a hundred thousand in jewels. The Countess, who had seen me lose, thought it the moment to ask me if I would sell my sable dress.

"I have been told," she said, "that it is worth a thousand zecchini."

"That is true, Signora; but I will sell everything before I will touch the ornaments which I have reserved for your fair sex."

"It is the Marchese Triulzi who wants to buy it to give to someone."

"I am sorry, Signora, that I cannot sell it to him."

She did not answer. Near the door of the theater after the opera I saw Teresa about to enter a sedan chair. I leave the Count long enough to tell her that I am sure she is going to sup with her lover. She whispered in reply that she would sup by herself, or alone with me if I had the courage to go there. I saw that she was astonished when I agreed. She said she would wait for me. After telling the Count to use my carriage, I took a sedan chair and went to Teresa's, who arrived just as I did.

Oh, how we laughed when, sitting side by side, we exchanged our thoughts.

"Knowing," she said, "that you are in love with the Countess A. B., I was certain you would not come to sup with me."

"And I, knowing that Greppi is your lover, thought I would confound you by accepting your invitation."

"Greppi is my friend; if he loves me, I am sorry for him. He has not yet found the secret of seducing me."

"Do you think he can find it?"

"That is most unlikely, for I am rich."

"And Greppi is still richer."

"Yes, but I do not believe he loves me more than he does his money."

"I understand you, my charmer; you will make him happy if he is brave enough to ruin himself."

"You have guessed it; but it will not happen. Meanwhile, here we are together after twenty years of divorce. You will find me the same, I am sure."

"That is a privilege which nature has granted to your sex alone. You will find me different; and my heart, which is the same, will weep for it; but you will perform miracles."

Teresa did not perform one. After an appetizing but very brief supper we went to bed and surrendered to love; but after two hours filled with amorous furies Morpheus seized on our senses. When we woke our furies were renewed, and I did not leave her until I had wished her good morning with an ardor equal to that with which I had won a sleep of four hours. I went home, and I was pleased to see the beautiful Zenobia in my room; she told me that the tailor was ready to marry her on the following Sunday if I had not been joking in the offer I had made her. To convince her that I had not been joking I immediately gave her twenty-four zecchini. Filled with gratitude, she came to my arms and let me devour her with kisses. She must have attributed it to my open door that she did not see me as she would have seen me if I had not been exhausted by Teresa. However, a long toilet restored me to freshness. After a pleasant drive in my carriage I returned to the Count's, where I found the Marchese Triulzi, who, as usual, was putting the Countess in a fury. He had his own dinner brought in for six, and we dined in high spirits.

The conversation having turned to my dress, the

Countess, like a fool, told him that I was saving it to give to the lady who would captivate me and make me happy. The Marchese politely told me that I deserved favors at a cheaper rate.

"It seems," the Countess said to me, "that you will give your dress to the person with whom you spent the night."

I reply that I had spent the night at cards; and just then Clairmont comes in to tell me that there is an officer outside who wishes to speak with me. I go out, and I see a handsome young man who comes to embrace me. I recognize him as Barbaro,[30] son of a Venetian nobleman and brother of the beautiful and famous Signora Gritti,[31] wife of the Gritti Sgombro[32] who was sentenced to imprisonment in the citadel of Cattaro,[33] where he died at the end of a year. I spoke of her ten years ago, as my reader may remember.[34] Signor Barbaro, her brother, who had come to see me, had also incurred the disfavor of the State Inquisitors. We had been good friends in Venice the year before my imprisonment. After telling me that he was in the service of the Duke of Modena,[35] Governor of Milan, he said that, having seen me lose at Carcano's[36] bank, he had come because of our old friendship to tell me of a sure way for me to make a great deal of money if I would let him introduce me at a house where the usual company consisted of young men who liked play and who could not but lose. He said that he would deal himself, and that he knew so well what good luck he had when he held the cards that he was sure of winning. He ended by saying that he needed me only to furnish the money for the bank and would ask me for no more than twenty-five per cent interest. I see that he does not dare tell me he is an accomplished sharper. In addition he says that in the house I will find objects worthy to please me and such that their seduction would be a delight. I replied that I would make up my mind after I had seen the company and the young ladies to whom he wished to introduce me. I engage to meet him at a coffeehouse the next day at three o'clock. He leaves, saying that he hopes he will see me at the ball.

Zenobia's fiancé brought me my domino, and the Countess's tailor had brought her hers. As the ball was to begin after the opera, I went to it to hear Teresa sing; and after losing another two hundred zecchini at Carcano's bank, I go back to the house to undress and put on my domino. The Countess, who was already dressed, tells me that if I will be so kind as to take her to the ball and home again in my carriage she will not send to the Marchese Triulzi's for one, and I reply that I will escort her with the greatest pleasure.

It was on the way to the ball with her that I told her my dress would be hers if she would grant me the honor of sleeping with her.

"You insult me barbarously, and it astonishes me, for it cannot be from ignorance."

"I know everything; but with a little of the proper spirit you can disregard the insult and even pretend to forgive me for it, thus conquering prejudice."

"One can do that when one loves; but admit that your very coarse style of address is more apt to make you hated."

"I employ it because I dislike dragging things out; admit, on your side, that you would be delighted to see me in love and timid."

"I should not care at all, for, such as I know you to be, I feel that I could never love you."

"In that we are perfectly at one, for I do not love you either."

"Bravo! But you would spend a thousand zecchini to go to bed with me. Ha, ha, ha! Is not that ridiculous?"

"Not so very. I want to go to bed with you only to humiliate you, to mortify your pride."

God knows what she would have replied if we had not just then arrived at the theater. We parted, and after boring myself walking about in the crowd I went to the gaming room, hoping to make up my losses. I had in my pocket two hundred Piedmontese gold pistoles, which came to more than five hundred zecchini. I was well supplied with money; but at the rate I was going I was headed for ruin. I sat down at Carcano's bank, and I thought it a good augury when I saw that no one knew me except my poor Count, who followed me everywhere. Punting on only one card, and playing prudently, I spent four hours without being able either to lose all the money I had in front of me or to win a thousand zecchini, which was the sum I had decided on. It was at the last deal that, determined either to win or to lose, I lost all my gold. In the ballroom I found the Countess, who followed me as soon as she saw me, and we went home. On the way she said she had seen me lose a great sum, and that she was very glad of it.

"The Marchese Triulzi," she said, "will give you a thousand zecchini for your dress, and the money will bring you luck."

"And you will have my dress."

"Possibly."

"Signora, you shall never have it in that way, and you know the other. I scorn a thousand zecchini."

"And I your presents and your person."

In my room I found my poor Count, looking mournful and wanting but not daring to condole with me. My good humor gave him the courage to tell me that I could get a thousand zecchini at once for my sable dress from the Marchese Triulzi.

"I would rather give it to your Countess; but she has told me that she would despise it if she had to accept it from me."

"She is mad about it; but, I don't know quite how, you have wounded her pride. Sell it, my friend, and take the thousand zecchini."

"I will answer you tomorrow."

After sleeping for four or five hours I put on morning dress to go to Greppi's, for I had no more cash. I got a thousand zecchini, asking him to talk to no one about my affairs; he replied that my affairs were his and that I could be sure of his discretion. He complimented me on the esteem in which Signora Palesi held me, saying that he hoped we should sup together at her house. I replied that such an occasion would give me the greatest pleasure. Leaving Greppi's, I paid her a visit, which was very short because she had company. I was pleased to find that she knew nothing of my losses at cards or of the money I had in her friend's hands. She said she wanted us to sup together and that she would send me word. I went back to the house, where I found the Count in my room before the fire.

"My wife," he said, "is furious with you, and she will not tell me the reason."

"The reason is that I insist that she shall have my dress only from my hands and purely as a gift. She told me in so many words that if she had to receive it from me she would despise it. Do you think she has reason to be furious?"

"Either it is madness or I fail to understand it; but be so good as to listen to what I have to say. You despise a thousand zecchini, and I congratulate you if you are in a position to despise a sum which would make me happy. Sacrifice a vanity, which seems to me mistaken, to friendship, get a thousand zecchini from the Marchese to lend to me, and let my wife have the dress, which he will certainly give her."

I could not help laughing again and again, grasping all the beauty of the arrangement; but I stopped laughing when I saw the Count red with shame. I embraced him affectionately; then I was cruel enough to say that, all vanity aside, I should be glad to do as he had suggested.

"I will sell my dress to the Marchese whenever you wish," I said, "and I will take his five thousand lire; but on condition that I shall not lend them to you but will give them to your beautiful Countess at a private meeting; but not by force, and I beg you to make that clear to her, but freely, for in receiving the sum she must prepare herself to be not only polite to me but gentle as a lamb. That is my last word."

"I will see."

He left me. An hour later we dined badly—he, the Abate, and I; then I drove in my carriage to the place where Barbaro was to meet me. Tired from the ball, the Countess had not left her bed. I had never seen her room.

Barbaro was punctually waiting for me. He at once got into my carriage and had us driven to a house at the far end of Milan. We go up to the second floor, and he introduces me to a handsome elderly man, a respectable-looking woman, and two young ladies, cousins, of whom it was hard to decide which one deserved to be preferred. He announces me as a Venetian who, like himself, has the misfortune to be out of favor with the State Inquisitors. But he adds that, being rich and a bachelor, I can take the misfortune lightly.

He announced me as wealthy, and I looked the part. The richness of my attire was dazzling. My rings, my snuffboxes, my watch-chains studded with diamonds, together with my diamond and ruby cross which I wore hanging from my neck on a bright red ribbon, made me an imposing personage. It was the Order of the Golden Spur, which I had received from the Pope himself, but at the foot of my cross there was no spur to be seen. No one knew what it was, which pleased me. Those who were curious and who did not dare to ask me were well advised. I stopped wearing the cross in Warsaw in the year 1765, when the Prince Palatine of Russia[37] told me, the first time we were alone together, that I would do well to get rid of such a piece of trash.

"You do not need it," he said, "except to dazzle fools, and here you can enjoy the privilege of not dealing with them."

I followed the advice of a nobleman whose intelligence was profound and who, nevertheless, was the man who removed the first stone from the pedestal which supported the Kingdom of Poland. He ruined it by the very means by which he tried to make it greater.[38]

The old Marchese to whom Barbaro introduced me said that he knew Venice and that, since I was not a patrician, I could not live more happily than by living abroad; he offered me his house and to serve me in whatever way he could. But the two Marchesine seemed to me something above nature. I could not wait to inquire about them from someone who could tell me all, for I could not trust Barbaro.

A half hour later the guests began arriving, on foot and by carriage. I saw well-dressed young ladies and gentlemen, the latter all rivaling one another in paying court to the lady to whom love or politeness bade them give the preference. When the company numbered eighteen or twenty they all sat down at a large table and fell to playing a game called "bankruptcy."[39] After spending two hours over it and losing a few zecchini I went to the opera with Barbaro. I told my fellow countryman that the two Marchesine seemed to me angels incarnate, and that, after offering them my homage, I should see in a few days if they were within my reach; as for the game, I said that I would lend him two hundred zecchini which I did not want to lose and that hence he must guarantee them to me in the most legal form. I said that instead of the twenty-five per cent which he asked of me on the profits from the bank I would give him fifty, that is to say half, which no one was to know, for when I was there I should also punt in all honesty. I told him to come to see me early the next morning, bringing me good written security, if he wanted the money. He embraced me joyously.

With my mind running on the two young ladies who had struck me, I was thinking of going to ask Greppi about them, when I saw the Marchese Triulzi, who was talking with someone. It was in the parterre at the opera. It was he who, seeing me alone, came to me, saying cheerfully that he was sure I had dined badly and that he would be pleased if I would dine at his house every day. Feeling really ashamed, I asked him a thousand pardons if I had not yet gone to pay my respects to him. He said, with a laugh, that he had heard I had made up my mind to sell him my dress, that he was very glad of it, and that he would give me the fifteen thousand lire it was worth whenever I wished. I said he had only to send someone for it the next day. He briefly told me several interesting stories about ladies who were in the first-tier boxes and whose beauty had led me to ask him who they were.

"In such-and-such a church," I said, "I saw two beauties according to all the canons. A person who was beside me said that they were cousins and that their names were the Marchesa Q . . . and the Marchesa F. . . . Do you know them? I am very curious about them."

"They are both charming. It is not difficult to gain admittance to their house, and I believe they are virtuous, for until now there has not been a single story told about them in Milan. However, I know that Signorina F. has a lover, but in the utmost secrecy, for he is the only son of one of our first families. The young ladies unfortunately are not rich, but being, I am assured, highly intelligent, they can hope to make wealthy matches. If you are curious about them I will find someone to take you there."

"Please do not trouble yourself."

After the ballet I went to the gaming room. I heard three or four voices say: ''There he is.'' Carcano bowed to me, made me sit beside him, gave me a pack of cards instead of a *livret,* and I began punting with such constant bad luck that in less than an hour I lost seven hundred zecchini. I should have lost the rest if Carcano, having to go somewhere, had not risen and given the cards to a man whose face I did not like. I went home, and, in order not to be forced to hide my bad humor, I retired to bed.

The next morning Barbaro came for the two hundred zecchini I had promised him. He guaranteed to repay my money, giving me the right to sequestrate his income until his indebtedness was cleared. I went to Greppi's, where I drew two thousand zecchini, in gold and in notes payable to the bearer.

CHAPTER VII[1]

The Countess humiliated. Zenobia's wedding at the Cascina dei Pomi. Faro. Conquest of the beautiful Irene. Plans for a masquerade.

BACK AT the house, I found the Count with one of the Marchese Triulzi's menservants, who handed me a letter in which he said that he was ready to receive the dress. I sent it to him at once. The Count said that the Marchese would dine with us and that he would certainly pay me for it. I replied that I had no doubt of it, and that I could not wait to receive the sum in order to give it to the Countess. He said that he had spoken to her, and that my proposal had set her laughing, but that he was sure she would make up her mind as soon as the dress was in her possession. It was a Friday, there was no opera, and fast-day food was in order. The Marquese sent his excellent fish dinner, then he came himself, and after dinner the dress arrived in a pretty basket, and we saw the Signora very well pleased; she outdid herself in thanks, which the Marchese turned away with a jest, adding that if she were wise she would sell it because, since everyone knew she was not rich, such a fine dress was not suitable for her. He told her in so many words that she would be laughed at. To this advice the Countess replied with insults, saying, among other things, that if such was his opinion he must be mad, for if the dress was unsuitable he ought not to give it to her.

At the height of the quarrel a visitor is announced. It was the Marchesa Menafoglio.[2] She sees the dress, which was laid out on a table, she declares it magnificent, she assumes it is for sale, and she says she would be glad to buy it. The Countess replies tartly that she had not bought it to sell it again, and the other begs her pardon for her mistake. The Marchese cannot refrain from laughing, the Countess becomes furious but conceals it, and the conversation continues. But after Signora Menafoglio leaves, the Countess gives vent to her anger, heaping insults on the Marchese for having laughed. She ends at last by saying she has a headache and is going to bed. The Marchese then gives me fifteen thousand lire, saying that he is sure they will bring me luck at Carcano's bank, who, he adds, adores me and has asked him to bring me to dinner at his house, for, having to spend his nights in the gaming room, he cannot invite me to supper. I ask him to tell him that I will dine with him whenever he pleases except on the next day but one, since I had promised to attend a wedding party at the Cascina dei Pomi.[3] The two gentlemen congratulate me, they make it clear that they would like to be of the party, and I promise to have the beautiful bride invite them, together with the Countess, provided she is willing to do so much honor to the company, which will consist only of townspeople. The Marchese undertakes to persuade her to go, and he is sure that he can when he learns that the bride is Zenobia. The Count goes out to see if she is in the house, he finds her and comes back with her. The Marchese congratulates her, and, encouraging her to invite the Countess, takes her by the hand and leads her to her room; and a half hour later he comes out again, telling us that the Countess has promised to go.

The Marchese having left a quarter of an hour later, the Count says to me that if I have nothing better to do I can keep his wife company, for, having business, he unfortunately has to leave her alone. I reply that I have the thousand zecchini in my pocket and that I am prepared to give them to her if I find her kind. He tells me to wait while he goes to speak with her. I went to my room, where, waiting while the Count was with the Countess, I took fifteen thousand lire in notes to the bearer, which I had received from Greppi, putting away all the gold the Marchese Triulzi had given me.

Just then I see Zenobia bringing me my ruffles. She asks me if I want to buy a piece of fine linen which is not dear, and I say yes. She goes downstairs and comes up again with candles and the linen. I find it fine enough, she says there is enough of it to make a dozen shirts and that it costs only eighteen zecchini. I say I will give it to her if she will grant me her final favors then and there. She says that she loves me but that she will be obliged to me if I will wait until after the wedding.

"No, my dear, I am in a great hurry. Now or never, for I am dying. There, look at the state I am in."

"I see, but it is impossible."

"Why impossible? Do you suppose your dwarf of a fiancé will notice anything?"

"Oh, no! And even if he did, I should think it very funny if he dared open his mouth to reproach me with it."

"He would certainly be in the wrong. So come to my arms."

"I think we should at least lock the door from inside."

"I think not, for we might be heard, and God knows what people would suspect. You can be certain that no one will come."

The charming Zenobia fell into my arms with an amorousness in which there was no play-acting. In the extremity of my pleasure I said again and again that she was made for me and not for her fiancé, who could not possibly appreciate her charms. I told her frankly to send him to the devil and take me in his place, but I had the good luck that she did not believe me. A half hour later I called a halt, surprised and delighted that the Count had not come to interrupt my enjoyment. I suppose that, not knowing I am in my room, he has gone out, and I see Zenobia very well pleased when she sees me ready to begin again. She knew that the festival would last longer. I make myself more comfortable, I display her charms before me in a more seductive light, and I care not that my hair is disarranged by it. A whole hour of encounters at last calmed my fury. During the sweet ecstasy I hear the Count's voice, I tell Zenobia so, I put myself to rights, I give her eighteen zecchini, she leaves, and the Count comes in, laughing and saying that he had seen everything through a crack, which he shows me, and that he had not been bored. He says that his wife is willing to let me keep her company, and, after laughing loud and long, that he is willing too. I smiled and, setting out for her room, begged him to make what use he pleased of my carriage, which was at the door, for I should not go out again.

I enter the Countess's room, where I find her in bed, I go to her, I ask her how she is feeling, she replies "very well," smiling and saying that her husband has restored her to health. I sit down on her bed, and she does not scold me.

"Are you not going out again?" she asks; "you have on your dressing gown and your hair is disarranged."

"I fell asleep and I decided to keep you company, if you will put up with me and be kind and gentle."

"If your behavior toward me is such as it should be, you may be sure that you will always find me polite."

"And you will love me."

"That will depend upon you; this evening you are sacrificing Count Carcano to me."

"He has won a great deal of money from me, and I foresee that tomorrow he will win fifteen thousand lire I have with me, which the Marchese Triulzi gave me for the dress you would not accept from my unworthy hands."

"You would be very ill advised to go and lose them."

"Of course. And that will not happen if I find you kindly disposed, for I shall give them to you. Will you permit me to lock your door?"

"Why?"

"Because I wish to have the honor of getting under these covers. I am dying of cold, beautiful Countess, and burning with desire."

"Signore, I will never permit that."

"Then good-by. I shall sit in front of a good fire, and tomorrow I will launch an attack on Carcano."

She called me back, saying that I was a horrid man; and at that I locked the door, and I undressed without her seeing me, for she turned her back to me completely. I got into bed beside her, and she, having made up her mind, let me do whatever I wished; but never was an eclipse of nature so favorable to my intentions, I could never get an erection. Keeping her eyes closed, she submitted to my putting her in every possible position and allowed me to use her hand as much as I liked to accomplish the miracle of resurrection. All was in vain.

Pretending to be asleep, she let me do whatever I pleased with her head, and at that she made me feel so sorry for her that I regretted I could not return to life. I left her at last, giving the last thrust of the dagger with these terrible words:

"It is not my fault, Signora, if your charms have no power over me. I leave you your fifteen thousand lire."

After playing out this scene, I went to my room and to bed.

My reader must despise me, I know, but I advise him to withhold his disapproval for a moment. Very early the next morning the Count entered my room, with his face the picture of satisfaction. He said that his wife felt very well and wished me good morning. I did not expect as much. He said he had been delighted to see that the fifteen thousand lire I had left her were not those which I had received from the Marchese Triulzi, and that he hoped that, as the Marchese had said, his money would bring me luck the following evening. I had not known that there was to be a ball. I told him that I would not go to the opera, but would go instead to the ball and the gaming room, doing my best to make myself unrecognizable. I asked him to buy me a brand-new domino and never to come near me, for I hoped that no one but he would know me. I asked him to let me write, my correspondence being greatly in arrears.

At noon he brought me the domino, which I immediately hid, and we dined with the Countess, whose expression and manner amazed me. Her serenity, her calm, her affability, made me think her a beauty. I was in despair that I had so dreadfully mistreated her. I thought her insensibility inconceivable, it astounded me; I concluded that she must have been asleep during the time I had insulted her so barbarously. Her husband having left us alone together, I told her that I pleaded guilty to being a monster whom she must despise. She replied that she felt she was profoundly indebted to me, and that she did not know in what way I could think I had failed in respect to her and why I called myself a monster. I asked for her hand, but she withdrew it and gave me a very sweet kiss. Repentance gnawed my soul.

After sealing all my letters I masked and I went to the ball, wearing nothing by which I could be recognized.

I took a watch and two snuffboxes which no one had seen, and I even changed the purses in which I carried my money. I sat down at Carcano's bank, and to maintain my incognito I played in an entirely different way. In one purse I had a hundred Spanish quadruples,[4] which amounted to seven hundred zecchini, and in another three hundred Venetian zecchini.[5] It was the gold I had received from Greppi. I began by emptying before me the purse in which I had the hundred quadruples.

In less than an hour I lost all my gold. I rose, and everyone, thinking that I was leaving, was making room for me, when I took out the purse in which I had the three hundred Venetian zecchini. Refusing to sit down again, I stake a hundred of them on a card, which I find second with *paroli* and *sept et la va,* and the banker, with a very satisfied expression, gives me back all my hundred doblones de a ocho. At that, taking a place beside him again, I resume playing, and Carcano seems well pleased. He studied me. I had the snuffbox which the Elector of Cologne had given me with his portrait on it. The banker, in pantomime, asks my permission to take a pinch of snuff, and everyone around the bank examines the portrait. I hear a woman's voice say:

"It is the deceased Elector of Cologne[6] in the robes of Grand Master of the Teutonic Order."

My snuffbox is returned to me. I play by a new system. A single card at fifty zecchini *paroli* and *paix de paroli.* An hour before dawn the bank gave up the ghost. Carcano politely says that if I want to leave all my gold there he will have it weighed, giving me a note to bearer for which his cashier will pay me the entire sum at sight, and I agree, adding my hundred quadruples to the rest. A pair of scales is brought. The gold is weighed, and I am given a receipt for thirty-four pounds of gold, which came to two thousand eight hundred and fifty-six zecchini. Carcano signs the note, and I slowly make my way to the ballroom.

Barbaro, having the practiced eye of any Venetian, recognizes me, comes up, and congratulates me; but seeing that I do not answer, he leaves me. A woman masker, clad in the Greek fashion, with an oriental headdress covered with fine brilliants and a rich girdle below her bosom, which offered a foretaste of its beauties, says to me in falsetto that she wants to dance the contradance with me. I accept. She takes off her gloves, and I see an alabaster hand and feel its softness. I tried in vain to guess who she could be. After the contradance, which had made me sweat profusely, she said that I could go to dry myself in her box; I follow her, and, seeing the banker Greppi, I feel sure that I have danced with Teresa, who, unmasking, congratulates me on my triumph. She says that if she had not seen my snuffbox she would not have known who I was, but that she had revealed my identity only to her friend there. Nevertheless she assures me that I had been recognized by others. I gave Signor Greppi the note to bearer and he immediately gave me a receipt for it. She invited him to supper with me at her house the next day, telling me that we should be four; Greppi wondered who the fourth would be, but not I. I was sure that I should find my dear Cesarino there.

I went down to the ball again, where two female dominoes attacked me from right and left, saying in their falsetto that Messer Grande[7] was waiting for me outside. They ask me for snuff; I give them some from a snuffbox with a secret device which exposed an indecent miniature. I have the impudence to show it, and one of them, after thoroughly examining it, hands me back my box, saying that in punishment for my crime I shall never know who they are; after which they leave me. Very sorry that I have given them reason to take offense, I follow them, and, seeing Barbaro, who knew everyone, I point them out to him, and he tells me they are the Marchesine Q. and F. I am delighted, and I promise him I will go there on the next day but one. He says that everyone at the ball knows me, and that the bank has been doing well, though I must scorn such trifles.

Toward the end of the ball a masker dressed as a Venetian gondolier was accosted by a very charming female masker wearing a *bautta* and a black cloak in the most authentic Venetian style. The female masker challenged the gondolier to convince her he was a Venetian by dancing the furlana[8] with her. The gondolier accepts the challenge, the orchestra is ordered to play a furlana; but the gondolier, who was obviously Milanese, was hissed. The pretty female masker, on the contrary, danced to perfection. The dance being among my lesser passions, I invite the unknown woman to dance it with me; and, all the onlookers having applauded us, we dance another, and that would have been enough if a girl dressed as a shepherdess but not wearing a mask, and pretty as a Cupid, had not persuaded me to dance yet one more. She danced it superlatively. She executed a double *grand cercle* three times, gliding so perfectly that she seemed not to touch the floor. She left me panting. She whispered my name into my ear, I asked her hers, and she replied that I would learn it if I came to see her at the "Three Kings,"[9] in such-and-such a room.

"Are you alone?"

"I am with my father and mother, your old friends."

So many adventures! Tired to the point of exhaustion, I go home, but I am allowed to sleep only three hours. I am waked and told to hurry. The Count, the Countess, and the Marchese, all ready for Zenobia's wedding party, tell me that it is not polite to make a bride and groom wait. All three of them congratulate me in the highest terms on the boldness with which I had conquered Fortune. I answer the Marchese that it was his money which had brought me luck; I could no longer keep up a pretense. He said that he knew where his money had gone.

This indiscretion of the Countess's or the Count's surprised me, for I thought it broke the most rudimentary rules of this sort of intrigue. The Marchese said that Carcano had recognized me by the way I opened my snuffbox and that he expected us for dinner.

''He wants,'' he said, ''to lose all his money to you.''

''Tell him that I want the same.''

We all went to the Cascina dei Pomi, where we found eighteen or twenty townspeople waiting for us, and the bride and groom, who outdid themselves in compliments. We had no difficulty in putting the whole company, whom our arrival had thrown into a state of embarrassment, at their ease. We sat down at table. The bride was seated between the groom and myself. We were twenty-four, and I saw some very pretty ''pullets''; but I was too much preoccupied. The dinner, which lasted three hours, was so abundant, and the foreign wines were so exquisite, that I felt certain my twenty-four zecchini had not been enough to pay for it. What made us laugh was the *brindisi* (''toasts''). Everyone proposed rarely ingenious healths in verses improvised on the spur of the moment, and everyone felt called upon to sing. We laughed, but we made them laugh too with our impromptus and our songs, which we succeeded in making no less nonsensical than those which came from the mouths of all these excellent people.

When we rose from the table embraces became the rule; but the Countess could not keep from laughing when she had to embrace the tailor. He took her laughter as a particular favor. A very good orchestra striking up, dancing began. Etiquette demanded that it begin with a minuet by the bride and groom. Zenobia danced it in time, but the tailor made the Countess laugh so hard that we thought she would be ill; however, she had to dance with him while the bride danced with me. In less than an hour there was an end to the minuets, and the contradances began, to last until the end of the ball, when coffee was served to everyone five or six times, together with *confetti.* These are sweets of various kinds, which are made to perfection in Milan.

After I had duly congratulated the groom, he thought it the perfection of good manners when he saw me give my hand to his bride, asking her to grant me the honor of seeing her home. After telling the coachman where he was to go, I took the charming woman in the "extinguisher" position[10] and so kept her till we arrived at her door. Zenobia got out first, but, noticing that testimony of the grossest kind to our crime, which would leave a terrible stain, remained on the most visible part of my gray linen-velvet breeches, I told Zenobia to go up, assuring her that I would come back immediately. I went home, where I quickly put on black breeches. I returned to Zenobia's before her husband had arrived. I saw a large bed in one room, a large tailor's table in another, and a kitchen.

"I am delighted, my dear gossip,[11] to see you well lodged."

"You have changed your breeches."

"Yes. A great stain caused by our exploit made them indecent."

"You did well."

The tailor arrives with his sister. He thanks me, addressing me as "gossip," and he at once asks me how I managed to change my breeches.

"By going home," I replied, "and leaving your wife alone, for which I beg you to forgive me."

"Didn't you see," she asked him, "that the Signore spilled coffee on himself?"

"You should," he said, "have gone home with him." Then he laughed at his witticism.

"Were you pleased with the wedding party?" he asked me.

"Very much so, but I must reimburse you, dear gossip, for what it cost you in addition."

"Not much, not much, I will send you the account by Zenobia."

I returned home, angry with myself for not having seen that people would notice I had changed my breeches. After saying good-by to the Count, the Countess, and the Marchese, who thanked me for the laughable entertainment which I had provided for them, I went off to bed.

The next morning I set out on foot to see who the girl could possibly be who, after dancing the furlana so well, had told me she was staying at the "Three Kings" with her father and mother, my "old friends."

I arrive at the inn of that name and, speaking to no one, go up to the room for which the girl had given me such exact directions. I enter, and I am very much surprised to see Countess Rinaldi,[12] to whom Zawoiski[13] had introduced me at the Locanda del Castelletto[14] sixteen years earlier. My reader may remember how Signor Bragadin had paid her husband the amount which he had won from me at cards.[15] Signora Rinaldi had aged, but I recognized her instantly. As I had felt only a passing fancy for her, I refrain from dwelling upon memories which do us no honor. I tell her that I am delighted to see her again, and I ask her if she is still living with her husband.

"You shall see him in half an hour."

"Signora, I shall leave, for there are old scores between us which I do not care to recall."

"No, no, be seated."

"Pray excuse me."

"Irene,[16] stop the Signore."

So commanded, the pretty Irene stood at the door, not like a mastiff which, grinding its teeth, threatens death to anyone who thinks of opposing its fury, but like an angel who, with a bewitching look, soothes him whom she stops with a promise of happiness. She struck me motionless.

"Let me go," I say, "we can meet elsewhere, let me go."

"Oh, I beg you, wait for Papa."

So saying, she looks at me so tenderly that her lips draw mine. Irene has conquered; I take a chair, in which, proud of her victory, she comes and sits on my lap, and I give her caresses which she returns with delight. I ask the Signora where she was born, and she replies:

"In Mantua, three months after I left Venice."

"When did you leave Venice?"

"Six months after I made your acquaintance."

"That is odd; if I had had an affair of the heart with you, you could tell me I am her father; and I would believe it, taking the passion she inspires in me to be blood speaking."

"I am amazed that you forget certain things so easily."

"Far from it! I reply that I do not forget those things; but I see all. You want me to renounce the feelings she inspires in me, and I will do so; but she will lose by it."

Irene, whom this brief dialogue has struck dumb, recovers her courage after a moment and says that she looks like me.

"Stay for dinner with us," she says.

"No, for I might well fall in love with you, and a divine law forbids it, according to what your mother claims to be the fact."

"I was joking," her mother replies. "You can love Irene with a clear conscience."

"I believe it."

Irene leaves the room, and, alone with the mother, I tell her that her daughter attracts me, but that I am unwilling either to languish or to be made a dupe.

"Discuss it with my husband. We are in straits, and we are expected at Cremona."

"But your daughter has a lover, and has had others."

"It has never come to anything serious."

"That seems impossible."

"Nevertheless it is true."

But in comes Count Rinaldi[17] with his daughter. He had aged so greatly that I should not have recognized him. He embraces me, and he begs me not to mention the past.

"You alone," he says, "can help me out of my difficulties, by giving me the means to leave for Cremona. I have pawned everything, I am in debt and on the verge of going to prison. No one comes to see me except wretches who are after my daughter, who is the only thing of value that I possess. Here is a pinchbeck[18] watch I went out to sell; it is well worth six zecchini, and I am offered only two."

I take the watch, I give him six zecchini, and I present it to Irene. She says with a laugh that she cannot thank me, for it is her own watch, to which she could lay claim if her father had sold it.

"As it is," she says to him without laughing, "you can sell it again."

After laughing heartily at her repartee, I gave Signor Rinaldi ten zecchini, saying that I was pressed for time and would see him again in three or four days.

Irene, having shown me to the foot of the first staircase, and having convinced me with the sweetest submissiveness that her fair flower had not been picked, received ten more zecchini. I told her that the first time she would come to the ball with me alone I would give her a hundred. She replied that she would tell her papa so.

Returning to the house, and feeling sure that the wretched man would sell me his daughter's first fruits before the next ball, and that I would not know where to take her to possess her in perfect freedom, I see a notice on a door beside a pastry shop. The street was unfrequented; that pleases me, and I decide to rent a room. I speak to the pastry cook, he says the house is his; and his wife, with an infant at her breast, tells me to go upstairs with her and choose. She takes me to the fourth floor, where I see only wretched garrets. I refuse them all. She says that her second floor has four rooms opening into one another, and that she cannot let one of them separately. I go to see them, and I at once rent them all. I go downstairs, I pay the pastry cook the month in advance which he demanded, and he gives me a receipt, then he tells me he will prepare meals for myself alone or with company at whatever price I fix. This is just as I would have it. I gave him some ordinary name; he did not learn to whom he had rented his apartment.

I went home, and, having arranged with Barbaro to spend the afternoon calling on the beautiful Marchesine, I made a lengthy toilet. After dining poorly enough with the Countess, who I thought had become affability itself, but who nevertheless did not attract me, I went to meet Barbaro. We went on together.

"I have come," I said to them, "to beg your pardon for having revealed the secret of my snuffbox."

They blushed, and accused Barbaro of indiscretion. I contemplated the two girls, whom, all prejudice aside, I thought far superior to Irene, who at the time filled my mind; but their bearing and the respect which they seemed to demand terrified me. Irene's situation had opened the possibility of my asking for everything and being sure that I would obtain everything; but here I saw two young ladies of station who displayed all the haughtiness of noble blood and whom I feared my appearance did not have the power to impress. To judge from what the Marchese Triulzi had told me, I was sure that when Barbaro had said they could be had for money he had been only making a guess.

When a sufficient company had arrived there was talk of play, and I prepared to punt at small stakes, like Signorina Q., beside whom I seated myself. Her aunt, who was the mistress of the house, had introduced me to a very handsome young man in the Austrian uniform,[19] who sat down at my other side.

My dear Barbaro held the cards like a sharper, and it began to annoy me. At the end of play, which went on for four hours, the Signorina beside me was the winner by a few zecchini; and her brother, my neighbor on the other side, who, after losing his money, had played on his word, was in debt by twenty zecchini. The bank won fifty, including the young Lieutenant's twenty. We all left, and, since the handsome young man lived at a distance, he did me the honor of getting into my carriage.

On the way Barbaro says that he wants to introduce us to a Venetian girl who has just arrived; and, the young officer urging him to do so at once, we go there. I do not find her pretty, and she does not interest the young officer either. I pick up a pack of cards and, while coffee is being made and Barbaro is flirting with the Venetian girl, I take twenty zecchini from my pocket, and I invite the young man to lose another twenty to me on his word. I had no difficulty in persuading him. While he played, I talked to him of the passion which his sister the Marchesina had inspired in me, saying that, since I dared not declare myself, there was no one else to whom I could turn. My urgency, which in the beginning he took for a joke, made him laugh. Preoccupied with his play, he answered me vaguely. But when he observed that, speaking of love, I did not notice the cards he lost, he began promising me he would speak in my favor. He won the twenty zecchini from me, immediately paying them to Barbaro, then he embraced me as affectionately as he would have done if I had made him a present of the small sum. He promised to use all his influence on my behalf, and when we parted he assured me he would be able to tell me something the next time we met.

Since I had promised to sup at Teresa's, I went to the opera, which had reached the third act. Having entered the gaming room, I could not resist the temptation to play. I lost two hundred zecchini in a single deal, losing four cards in succession. I stopped, looking very much as if I were trying to save my skin. Carcano said that he hoped every day he would see me arrive with the Marchese Triulzi at his dinner hour.

At La Palesi's I found Greppi waiting for her. A quarter of an hour later she arrived with Don Cesarino, whom I covered with kisses, while Greppi, in the utmost surprise, stared at the boy, whom he could only suppose to be my brother or my son; but when Teresa told him that he was her own brother, he asked me, with a laugh, if I had known her mother well, and I replied that I had. He seemed satisfied.

At the supper, which was very choice, nothing interested me but Cesarino. I found him sensible and well educated, and since the last time I had seen him at Florence he had grown to the point of being very well formed. I rejoiced when I learned that she would keep him with her for the rest of the Carnival. The youth's presence cast a seriousness over our supper, but his mother and Greppi enjoyed it none the less. We left Teresa and Cesarino at one o'clock in the morning, and I went to bed very well pleased with my day, for the loss of two hundred zecchini troubled me not at all.

The next day I received a note from Irene begging me to come to see her. Her father would let her go to the ball with me; she had a domino; but she needed to speak with me. I replied that she would see me in the course of the day. I had promised to dine at Carcano's, and the Marchese had sent word that he expected me at his house, whence we would go together.

I found that admirable gamester in a pretty house tastefully furnished, with two pretty women, one of whom was his mistress, and five or six Marchesi, for in Milan a nobleman cannot be less than a Marchese, just as in Vicenza they are all Counts.[20] In the high spirits which reigned at the dinner he told me that he had first heard of me seventeen years earlier in connection with an encounter I had had at the Cascina dei Pomi with a self-styled Count Celi, a cardsharper from whom I had stolen a dancer whom I had taken to Mantua.[21] I confirmed the story, and I enlivened the company with a detailed account of what had befallen me in Milan with O'Neilan,[22] and at Cesena, where I found Count Celi transformed into Count Alfani. The conversation turned to the ball which was to be given the next day, and when I said I should not go to it everyone laughed. Carcano offered to wager me that he would recognize me if I went to play at his bank. I replied that I would play no more, and he congratulated himself, saying that, though unlucky at punting, I won from him all the same; yet, he added, he would gladly lose everything he possessed to me.

He had a ring with a straw-colored stone almost as beautiful as mine. It had cost him two thousand zecchini; mine had cost me three thousand. He asked me if I would stake it against his, first having them removed from their settings and valued, before going to the opera. I replied that I should be glad to do so, each of us dealing once.

"No, I never punt."

"Make the chances equal for me. Doublets will count nothing, as will the two last cards."

"That would give you the advantage."

"If you can prove that to me I will lose a hundred zecchini. On the contrary, I wager a hundred zecchini that, despite the doublets counting for nothing, and the two last cards likewise, the chances are still in the banker's favor. I will prove it to you beyond doubt, and I will leave it to the decision of the Marchese Triulzi."

I was asked to prove it without wagering.

"The banker's advantages," I said to Carcano, "would be two. The first, which is the lesser, is that, holding the cards in your hand, you need concentrate on nothing except, as is always the case, on never making a misdeal, a concentration which leaves your mind perfectly calm and at ease, whereas the punter loses his head in chimerical speculations in his search for cards whose probability of coming out is more equal than unequal. The second advantage is that of time. The banker necessarily draws the card which is for him a second before he draws the one for the punter. So your luck is determined before your opponent's.''

No one answered me. Only Triulzi said that to establish absolute equality in a game of chance the two players would have to be equal, which is almost an impossibility. Carcano said that to him all this sort of thing was abstraction.

Leaving his house, I went to the ''Three Kings'' to see what Irene wanted to say to me, and to enjoy her presence and desire her before possessing her. When she saw me she fell on my neck, but too eagerly for me to take it for genuine; but when one values pleasure one should not lessen it by philosophizing. If Irene had struck me when she danced the furlana, why could I not have attracted her too, despite my being twenty years older than she was? Her father and mother received me as their savior. The father asked me to go out with him for a moment.

''I beg you,'' he said, ''to forgive an old man whom Fortune has ill-used an impertinent question I shall put to you. Answer me yes or no, and then we will go back. Is it true that you promised Irene a hundred zecchini if she will go to the ball with you tomorrow?''

''It is perfectly true.''

At that the poor old scoundrel took me by the head in a way which almost frightened me; but it was only to kiss me. We went in again, I laughing and he shedding tears of joy. He at once went to relieve his wife's mind, who could not believe him.

But it was Irene who made me laugh, by saying in a feeling tone that I must not suppose they thought her a liar.

"They thought," she said, "that I had misunderstood 'fifty' for a 'hundred'; they don't think I am worth more."

"You are worth a thousand, charming Irene. You stood at the door to keep me from leaving, and your courage pleased me. I want to see you in your domino, for I fear you will be criticized."

"Oh, I'll look well—you'll see!"

"Are those your shoes and your earrings? Have you no other stockings? Have you gloves?"

"I have nothing."

"Send for everything. Have the shopkeepers come here. You shall choose, and I will pay for it all."

It was Signor Rinaldi who left at once to send up a jeweler, a stocking seller, a shoemaker, and a perfumer. I spent some thirty zecchini buying her everything for which she asked and which I thought she needed.

But when I saw her mask without a border of English lace[23] I threw up my hands. Her father at once sent up a milliner, and I gave her an ell of stiffened needlepoint to be sewn around her mask in a frill. It cost me ten or twelve zecchini. Irene was beside herself; and her father and mother looked gloomy, for they thought so much money thrown away.

When I saw her dressed I found her charming. I told her to be ready the next day at the hour of the opera, for before going to the ball we would sup somewhere. When I was about to take leave of them, Rinaldi asked me where I intended to go when I left Milan.

"To Genoa," I replied, "then to Marseilles, then to Paris, then to England for a year."

"Lucky escape from the Leads!"

"I risked my life."

"You certainly deserve your good fortune."

"Do you think so? I use what fortune I have only for my pleasures."

"It shows some restraint that you do not take a mistress with you."

"She would prevent me from enjoying fifty intrigues in every city in which I stay. If I had a mistress with me she would prevent me from taking your charming Irene to the ball tomorrow."

"That is very true."

I went to the opera, where I would have played; but finding Cesarino in the parterre, I spent two delightful hours with him. He opened his heart to me, he begged me to speak to his sister to persuade her to consent to his vocation. He felt invincibly drawn to ships and the sea, and he said that if he could become a merchant his leaning might bring him a great fortune. I promised him I would speak to her.

I ate something with him, and then I went home to bed. The next morning Signorina Q.'s brother came to ask me for breakfast and to tell me that he had spoken to his sister and that she had answered that I must have been making a fool of him, since the life I led made it unthinkable that I should marry.

"I did not tell you I aspired to the honor of becoming her husband."

"You did not tell me so, and I did not tell her so; however, that was her reply."

"Honor demands that I disabuse her this very day."

"You will do well. Go at two o'clock, I am dining there, and, having something to discuss with my cousin, I will leave you alone."

The arrangement pleased me. Seeing him admire a small gold case which was on my night table, I told him that it was a trifle which I made bold to offer him and which he could accept in friendship without the least scruple. He embraced me and put it in his pocket, assuring me he would keep it until the day of his death.

Certain that I should sup with Irene, I went without dinner. The Count having gone the day before to Sant'Angelo,[24] fifteen miles from Milan, leaving the Countess alone, I could not avoid going to her room to ask her to excuse me if I could not have the honor of dining with her. She replied as sweetly as possible that I must feel under no constraint. I clearly saw all the falsity of the role she was playing; but I wanted her to believe that I was taken in by it. It was to my advantage. Prepared to pass for a fool, I told her that I was not ungrateful, and that I could assure her I would make up to her during Lent for the dissipations which prevented me from paying her more assiduous court during the Carnival which was hastening to its end. Replying with a smile that she hoped it would be so, she gave me a pinch of snuff after enjoying one herself; but it was not snuff. She said it was an excellent powder which brought on nosebleed. Sorry that I had taken it, I said with a laugh that since I did not have a headache I should not enjoy it. She replied with a laugh that one did not bleed very much and that it could only do good, and we instantly fell to sneezing together five or six times in succession; I should really have become angry if I had not seen her laugh. However, knowing the properties of sternutatives, I did not think we should bleed, but I was mistaken. She held a large silver bowl close to her head, and I saw her blood. A moment later I had to yield to her insistence that I do the same thing, for she prevented me from catching my blood in my handkerchief. After I had bled twenty or thirty drops the scene was over. Seeing her still laughing, I had to laugh too. We washed with cold water.

"Our mingled blood," she said, still laughing, "will bring an eternal friendship to birth between us."

I asked her for some of the powder, but she refused to give it to me; I asked her what it was called, and she said she did not know. On leaving her, the first thing

I did was to go to an apothecary's to inquire about the powder, of which I had never heard, and which, but for what had just happened to me, I should have thought a fable; but the apothecary knew no more than I did. However, he told me that euphorbia could sometimes cause bleeding; but it was not a case of sometimes; the effect must be certain and infallible, as I was more than convinced. This little episode gave me cause for serious thought. The lady was Spanish and must hate me. The reader will see what was afoot.

I found the handsome officer in the drawing room off the garden with his cousin, who was writing. Signorina Q. was in the garden. They had already dined. On the excuse of leaving them to write, I joined her.

"I am in despair," I said, "over a misunderstanding which could rightly lead you to think me a tactless fool. I have come to justify myself, Signorina."

"I guess what you have in mind; but be sure that my brother means no harm. Indeed, we had better let him go on believing what he does. Do you think it likely that I could have supposed you capable of taking such a step when we do not know each other? I thought it best to give a matrimonial turn to a courtship on which my very young brother might otherwise have put an unfavorable interpretation."

"I admire your quickness of mind, and I have nothing more to say; but I am none the less obliged to your brother for having had the kindness to let you know that your charms have captivated me and that there is nothing in the world I am not prepared to do to convince you of my enduring affection."

"Your declaration does not displease me; but you would have done better not to acquaint my brother with your feelings, and even, permit me to say, not to declare them to me. You could have loved me, I should have become aware of it and should have pretended not to be so; under those circumstances, I should have been justified in putting no constraint upon myself. But as things are now, I must be on my guard. Do you not agree?"

"You transfix me, beautiful Marchesa; never in my life has anyone so thoroughly convinced me of my stupidity. But what I find amusing is that I already knew all that you have told me. You have made me lose my head; but I hope you will not be so cruel as to punish me for it."

"How could I punish you?"

"By not loving me."

"Alas! Does that depend on ourselves? We are forced to love, and then there is no escape."

Interpreting these words to my own advantage, I thought it best to talk of something else. I asked her if she was going to the ball. She answered no.

"You and your cousin will perhaps go incognito."

"We should like to, but it is impossible. There is always someone to recognize us."

"If I might have the honor of serving you, I would wager my life that no one would recognize you."

"I doubt if you would want to trouble yourself over us."

"I like your being a little skeptical. Put me to the test. If you and she can go out alone we will disguise ourselves in a way which will arouse the greatest curiosity, but to no purpose."

"We could go out with my brother and a young lady whom he loves, and we are certain he will say nothing."

"It is a delight to obey you; but it can be only for the ball on Sunday. So I will make arrangements with your brother. Tell him to come to see me, and warn him that even Barbaro must not hear a word of it. You will come to mask in a place to which I will direct you; but we will discuss that later. Now I must be off quietly, to give my instant attention to this most important business."

Sure of succeeding, and having no plan ready for a masquerade for five persons, I put off racking my brains to a quieter moment, for just then Irene was too much on my mind.

I went home and put on my domino, then I called for her at the "Three Kings." I did not have to go upstairs; she came down immediately, and I took her to my fine apartment, where I ordered the pastry cook to give us a good supper at midnight. We had six hours before us, which the reader can imagine were well employed. We got out of bed thoroughly satisfied, and laughing because we were dying of hunger. Our supper was as choice as it was gay. Irene told me that her father had taught her to deal at faro in a way which made it impossible for her to lose. My curiosity aroused, I give her a new pack of cards, and in five or six minutes she arranges them as she had been taught to do, meanwhile talking and looking at me to keep me from seeing what she is doing. After that I give her the hundred zecchini I owed her, and I tell her to win from me as if she really had to do it. She said very sweetly that, if I always staked on only one card, she was certain always to make me lose it, and she kept her word. I admitted that if she had not told me beforehand I should have noticed nothing. I then saw what great store the old cheat Rinaldi must set by his daughter, who was a real treasure. With her air of gay innocence, timidity, and candor, she was bound to take in even seasoned sharpers.[25] She said in a mortified tone that her talent was of no use to her, because she never found herself in any company but that of beggars; and then, in a feeling tone, at which I could not help laughing, that she loved me so dearly that, if I would take her with me, she would leave her parents to shift for themselves and would win me great sums. She said she was also very skillful at punting when she was not playing against sharpers; whereupon I told her to stake the hundred ducati I had given her at Carcano's bank, to which I would take her.

"You are to stake twenty zecchini on your card," I said, "and, if you win on it, you will stake *paroli* and *sept et le va,* and you will stop playing as soon as you get it. If three second cards in succession won't come out for you, you will have lost the hundred ducati; but I will reimburse you."

At that she threw herself on my neck and asked if she should give me half if she won, and I thought she would eat me up with kisses when I said it would be all hers.

We left at once in sedan chairs, and we had no sooner arrived at the ball, which had not yet begun, than we went to the gaming room. Carcano, who was doing nothing, at once sent for a pack of cards, pretending not to recognize me. I saw him smile when he saw that the pretty masker who was with me was going to play in my stead. Irene made a deep curtsy when he offered her the place beside him. She put her hundred zecchini in front of her, and she began by winning a hundred and twenty, because, instead of staking *sept et le va,* she staked *paix de paroli.* Her method pleased me, and I let her go on playing. At the next deal she lost three cards in succession, then she won another *paix de paroli.* After that she lost two more cards, and, after gathering up her coins, she curtsied to the banker, and we left. But no sooner were we out of the room than I turned around to discover the source of heart-rending sobs. I saw the weeping masker moving away. Irene whispered to me that she was sure it was her father, who had watched her play and was weeping for joy. She had two hundred and forty zecchini in her pocket, and she took them home to him after amusing herself for three hours. I danced only one minuet with her. Amorous enjoyment and the supper had so tired me that I was not capable of more. Waiting while Irene danced, I sat down in a corner and fell asleep. I was astonished, on waking, to see that Irene was looking for me everywhere. I had slept for three hours. I escorted her to the "Three Kings," where I

Matching Knife, Fork, and Spoon,
ca. 1750

restored her to her father and mother. The poor man, beside himself with joy when his daughter gave him the money she had won, told me to wish him a good journey, for he would leave at daybreak. I could not object, and I did not want to, and perhaps he expected the contrary. But at his announcement Irene went into a fury; she told him she wanted to stay with me, and reproached him with always snatching her away as soon as she made a friend. When she saw that I was not taking her side against her father, she wept, then she kissed me, and I left them. The reader will see where I met them again. I went home to bed.

The next morning at eight o'clock I saw in my room the handsome Lieutenant, who, after saying that his sister had told him about the masquerade which I had promised to arrange, said that he had a great secret to confide to me.

"One of the most agreeable noblemen in this city," he said, "my intimate friend, who loves my cousin, and who has more cause to be discreet than all the rest of us, is to be of the party if you have no objection. My sister and my cousin will be delighted if you consent."

"How can you possibly doubt my consent? I have thought about five; now I will think about six. Sunday at nightfall you shall be where I will tell you, we will sup, we will mask, and we will go to the ball. You and I will meet at your sister's tomorrow at five o'clock. Just give me your mistress's measurements and those of your charming cousin's lover."

"My dear mistress is two inches shorter than my sister and my cousin, and she is slender; and my friend is of exactly your build, so that I take you for him every time I see you from behind."

"That will do. Leave everything to me, and now go, for I am curious to know what the Capuchin who is waiting outside wants of me."

I had told Clairmont to give him alms; but he said he needed to speak to me privately. I could not imagine what a Capuchin could have to say to me privately. I had him shown in, and I shut my door.

"Signore," he said, "pay attention to what I shall tell you, and profit by it. Beware of scorning my words, for you might pay for your scorn with your life. You would repent of it, but your repentance would come too late. After hearing me out, do what I shall have advised you to do, and do not ask me the least question, for I shall not answer you. What will make it impossible for me to answer you is a duty which is laid upon me, and which every Christian must respect. It is the inviolable seal of confession. Consider that my good faith and my words cannot be suspect, since no base interest brings me into your presence. A powerful inspiration alone obliges me to speak to you as I do. It can only be your guardian angel, who, unable to speak to you himself, uses me as the instrument to preserve your life. God in his goodness will not abandon you. Tell me if you feel touched and if I may give you the salutary advice which is in my heart."

"Never doubt it, Reverend Father, speak, give me your advice; your words have not only touched me but filled me with a kind of terror. I promise you I will follow your advice, if acting upon it proves to be contrary neither to my honor nor to the light of my reason."

"Very good. Charity will also prevent you, whatever be the outcome of the matter of which you will acquire knowledge, from compromising me. You will mention me to no one, or say either that you know me or do not know me."

"I promise. Speak, I beg you."

"Before noon today go alone to the Piazza ——— and to such-and-such a house, go up to the third floor, and ring at a door which you will see to your left. Tell the person who will open it to you that you wish to speak to Signora . . . . You will be taken to her room without any difficulty; I am sure that you will not be asked to give your name. When you are in the woman's presence ask her gently to hear you out and to keep what you will confide to her a secret. As you say this, gain her confidence by putting one or two zecchini into her hand. She is poor, and I am sure that your generosity will instantly win you her good will. She will lock her door and will of course tell you to speak. You will then tell her gravely that you will not leave her room until she gives you the little bottle which a maidservant must have delivered to her at nightfall together with a certain note. Remain firm if she resists, make no noise, do not let her leave the room, prevent her from calling anyone, and win her over completely by telling her that you are ready to give her twice the sum of money she will lose by giving you the bottle *and everything that goes with it.* Remember that. *Everything that goes with it.* She will do whatever you want. The amount it will cost you will not be great; but even if it were, your life should be dearer to you than all the gold of Peru. I cannot tell you more. Before I leave, tell me if I may hope that you will go."

"I will be guided by the inspiration of the same angel who sent you here."

After he left I was in no mood to laugh. Reason told me to dismiss all this rigmarole and to go nowhere, and a residue of superstition which was always part of my nature prevented me from listening to reason. In addition, the Capuchin had impressed me favorably. He looked honest and worthy of respect. He had convinced me, and I thought I should be a fool if I went against my conviction. At last I suddenly make up my mind, I take the slip of paper on which I had written the names he had given me, I put a pair of infallible pistols in my pocket, and I go to the place, telling Clairmont to wait for me at the Piazza to which I was to go. This was by way of precaution.

Everything happened as the Capuchin had told me it would. The ugly old woman plucked up courage at the sight of the two zecchini, and bolted her door. She said with a laugh that she knew I was in love, and that it was my own fault if I was not successful; but that she would give me the means. At these words I at once saw that I was dealing with a witch. La Bontemps[26] in Paris had talked to me in the same strain. But upon my telling her I would not leave her room without the bottle and everything that went with it, her countenance became horrible, and she trembled when, holding a pocket knife in my hand, I prevented her from rising. When I finally said that I would give her twice the money she would lose by giving me what I wanted, I saw her become calm and at ease. She said she would lose six zecchini, but that I would be glad to give her twelve when I saw myself, for she had just recognized me. I ask her who I am, and she astonishes me by telling me my name. I then feel called upon to take twelve zecchini from my purse, and when she sees them the old woman is softened to tears. She assures me that she would not have killed me, but that she would certainly have made me in love and unhappy.

"Explain yourself."

"Follow me."

I go with her into a closet in which, in utter astonishment, I see a thousand things whose use it is beyond common sense to explain. Vials, stones, metals, minerals, small nails, spikes, tongs, furnaces, coals, misshapen statues, and I know not what.

"There," she said, "is your bottle."

"What is in it?"

"Your blood mixed with the Countess's, as you can read in this note."

It was then that I understood what was afoot, and I am amazed today that I did not burst out laughing.

Instead, my hair stood on end, and I was suddenly bathed in cold sweat.

"What would you have done with this blood?"

"I would have applied it to you."

"What do you mean by 'applied'? How? I do not understand you."

"You shall see."

I was aghast; but instantly the scene changed. The witch opened a box a yard long, and I see a wax statue lying on its back and stark naked; I read my name on it, and, though they are crudely executed, I recognize my features, I see my cross on a ribbon around the idol's neck. The image was like a monstrous Priapus[27] in the parts which are characteristic of that god. The sight is too comical; I succumb to hysterical laughter and sink into a chair until I have recovered my breath.

"You laugh?" said the sorceress. "Woe to you if I had bathed you in those bloods according to my lore! And woe and again woe if afterward I had put the portrait of yourself which you see into the fire."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"All this is mine, here are your twelve zecchini. Now light me a fire, for I am going to melt this statue; and as for the blood, permit me to throw it out of the window."

It was accomplished instantly.

The old woman, who was afraid that I would take everything with me, said that I was as good as an angel and, kissing my hand, begged me to forgive her and to tell no one what had taken place between us. I swore to her that the Countess herself should never hear a word of it. What surprised me was that the impenitent witch said that if I would promise her another twelve zecchini[28] she would make the Countess madly in love. I declined, and I left her, advising her to give up her accursed trade, which justly condemned her to be burned alive.

In the Piazza I saw Clairmont and told him to go home. Despite all the money the foul business had cost me, I was not sorry to have learned the whole story and to have followed the advice of the good Capuchin, who honestly believed that I was done for. He must have learned the thing in confession from the person who had taken the blood to the witch. Such are the miracles which auricular confession very often performs in the Roman Catholic religion.

Thoroughly determined never to let the Countess know that I had discovered her horrible crime, I prepared to take the opposite course of treating her in a manner calculated to soothe her and make her forget the barbarous injury I had done her. It was for me to thank Providence that she believed in witchcraft, for otherwise she would have hired assassins, who would have avenged her to the full.

As soon as I got home I took the handsomer of two mantles I had and went to make her a present of it, kissing her hand. It was lined with ermine. Accepting it, she asked me most graciously what the occasion for my making her so fine a present might be. I replied that I had dreamed she was so angry with me that she had bargained with cutthroats to murder me. She blushed and replied that she had not gone mad. I left her when I saw that she was sunk in dark thought. Nevertheless, whether because she decided to forget everything, or because she found no way to avenge herself, I had no cause to complain of her during all the rest of the time I spent in Milan. The Count had come back from his estate. He said that we really must make a visit there at the beginning of Lent. I promised him I would go. The Countess said she would stay in Milan. I went to dress and to think about my masquerade.

CHAPTER VIII

Unique masquerade. My amour with the beautiful Marchesa Q. . . . The deserted girl from Marseilles; I become her rescuer. My departure for Sant'Angelo.

MY PLAN requiring trustworthy accomplices, I thought of two people on whom I could unhesitatingly rely. They were Zenobia's husband, for I needed a tailor, and Zenobia herself, who must be prepared to do whatever might be necessary for the three young ladies whom I wanted to disguise. So, setting out on foot, I went to see the tailor, whom I forced to drop all his work and take me to the most well-stocked secondhand-clothes dealer in Milan. The dealer asked me if the clothes I wanted were to be old or brand-new.

"You have new ones?"

"Yes, Signore, for both men and women."

"First find me a handsome new velvet coat for myself which no one has seen, without silver or gold, and perfectly plain."

He shows me several, and I choose a blue coat lined with white satin. He tells me the price of it, the tailor haggles, and we come to terms; I set it aside, making him write down the price. It was the coat I intended for the cousin's lover.

''Find me another handsome coat for a well-built man three inches shorter than I am.''

''Here is a sulphur-yellow one, of short-nap velvet, lined with satin of the same color.''

''I will keep it. Put it there, and write down the price.''

It was the coat which I intended for the officer.

''Find me two women's dresses with petticoats and brand-new. The ladies are very well built and six inches shorter than I am.''

''Here are two winter ones in different styles, but both charming.''

''I like them. Name the price and set them aside.''

One of the dresses was of flame-colored satin, the other of lilac floss silk. The cousins were of the same height. I then ask him for a dress for the officer's mistress, two inches shorter than the other two, and he gives me a charming striped one. I ask him for fine shirts and shifts, and he shows me some of batiste. I buy two shirts and three shifts, trimmed with beautiful lace. I also buy batiste handkerchiefs and several half-ells of velvet of different colors, of satin, and of silk, all in small pieces. I pay about two hundred gold ducati for all his wares; but on condition that if it becomes known that I bought them from him, and it can be proven that the information came from him, he shall give me back all my money and take his merchandise, no matter in what condition it may be. He agrees to the stipulation, the tailor takes the lot and accompanies me with it to the furnished apartment I had rented. After threatening him with death if he tells anyone a word of what I am about to have him do, I lock myself into a room with him, I put the men's clothes on a table, I take a knife from my pocket, I begin cutting holes in them and then putting my fingers in and tearing them two or three inches in one place, two or three inches in another—breeches, waistcoats, coats, linings—meanwhile having all I can do to keep from laughing at the tailor, who thought I had gone mad and expected me to cut his throat.

After giving the two coats sixty wounds of this sort, I placed before the tailor all the half-ells and pieces of velvet and silk of twenty different qualities which I had bought:

"It is your part," I said, "to sharpen your fine wits and mend these clothes, patching the ripped places as badly as possible and using the most ill-matching materials you can wherever you think it best to put them. You see that you have much work to do. I will have food brought to you in another room, and you shall not leave here until your work is finished. I am going to fetch your wife; she will have work too, and she will spend the night with you."

"Are you going to rip the three beautiful dresses to pieces too?"

"Certainly."

"It is murder. My wife will weep."

Before going to fetch Zenobia I bought five pairs of pearl silk stockings, men's and women's gloves, two hats of the finest beaver, caricature masks for men, and three women's masks with beautiful natural faces but serious-looking. I also bought some china plates. I put all this into a sedan chair, into which I handed Zenobia and took her to the pastry cook's.

I found her husband busy choosing the pieces to make patches. Zenobia was aghast, but when she saw me treat the women's dresses as I had treated the men's coats she took fright in good earnest. Her husband restored her courage, and when she saw my intention she understood that I might be in my right mind in terms of the fantastic idea which had come to me. Zenobia even carried my idea further when I told her to put the dresses in such a state that the ladies who would wear them would inspire love even more than they would do if they had suffered no injury.

Zenobia tore them at the bosom, at the shoulders, and she wreaked havoc on the petticoats to the point that the shift, together with more than half the leg, would be visible somewhere. I left them to labor, having them served excellent meals and going to look at their work three or four times a day, always leaving better satisfied. The work was not finished until Saturday after dinner. I dismissed the tailor, giving him six zecchini; but I keep Zenobia, for the young ladies would need her. I took care to put in one room powder, pomades and combs, and whatever well-brought-up young ladies could wish for. I also left thread and linen ribbons.

The next day at five o'clock I found play well under way; and, not seeing the young ladies, I went to their aunt's room, where I found them. They said they were not playing because Signor Barbaro was too lucky.

"But my brother is winning," said Signorina Q. . . .

The aunt having gone out, they asked me if the Lieutenant had told me that there would be another girl too, and I assured them that they would be pleased, but not more than I. I said that I needed to speak to the officer the next morning.

"Tell us how we shall be disguised."

"In accordance with the orders you gave me."

"I said nothing about it."

"Did you not say that you wanted to be sure that none of you would be recognized? You will not be recognized."

"But how dressed?"

"In a way to surprise, to arouse the greatest curiosity, to have followers from the beginning to the end of the ball. But do not ask me how, for I want to enjoy the beauty of your surprise. Bolts from the blue are my passion. You shall learn nothing until after supper."

"You want us to sup?"

"If such is your pleasure. I am a great eater, and I hope you will not be cruel enough to leave me to eat alone."

"No, of course not, since you wish it. We will even eat sparingly at dinner. I am only sorry that you are being put to expense for us."

"It is nothing. When I leave Milan I shall congratulate myself on having enjoyed a pleasure in the company of the two most charming young ladies to be seen in the city."[1]

"How is luck treating you?"

"Carcano wins two hundred zecchini from me every day."

"And you win two thousand from him in one."

"Nevertheless, I am behind."

"You will break his bank on Sunday."

"Would you like me to offer you that spectacle?"

"I should be very glad to see it. My brother told me you do not want to be with us."

"No, for I should be recognized. However, he told me that the person who will be with you resembles me."

"Exactly, except for his complexion, for he is fair."

"He is very lucky. Light wins over dark."

"Not always," said her sister. "You might at least tell us if you are having us dress as men."

"Fie, fie! I never thought of it. I cannot bear a pretty girl dressed as a man."

"That is strange. Tell us why."

"Gladly. If a girl dressed as a man really seems to be a man she disgusts me, for I see that she lacks the charming beauty which is proper to a woman, whose form should be different from a well-built man's."

"And if the girl dressed as a man shows you that she has the beauties which you demand in a beautiful girl?"

"Then I am sorry that she robs me of an illusion, for I like to look only at the face and to imagine the rest."

"But the imagination often deceives."

"I agree. I always fall in love with the face, prepared to forgive all the rest if I am ever granted the favor of seeing it. You laugh."

"I am laughing at the vigor with which you argue."

"Would you like to be dressed as a man?"

"Ah-ha! I expected you would ask us that. After all you have said we can no longer answer you."

After paying my court to them for a good two hours, I left them and went to the pastry cook's, then to the opera, then to lose my money, then to sup with the Countess, who had become gracious, but who, seeing that I did not lie in wait to enter her bedroom, began to relapse into her ill-humor. On Saturday morning I told the officer that I laid only one task on him, but that it must be carried out to the letter and that I must be sure of it beforehand.

"You must, Signore, have a carriage and four horses in the courtyard, which, as soon as all five of you have got into it, will take you at full gallop out one of the gates of Milan, bring you back by another, and take you to the door of the house where you will find me and where you will undress to return home without anyone's seeing you. The carriage and four must leave as soon as you have left it. You will go home by sedan chair. I am sure you will create such an effect at the ball that everyone will want to find out who you are at all costs."

"I give you my word that the instructions you have given me will be faithfully carried out. The person who will see to it is my friend the Marchese F . . . , who is impatient to make your acquaintance."

"Then I will expect you tomorrow at seven o'clock at the house of which you know. You shall all come by sedan chair, and all go to the ball by sedan chair. The carriage and four will be used only for you to make your escape. The thing you must see to is that the coachman is not known; you will not need any servant."

I gave him the key to a box, to which they could go for a rest whenever they saw fit.

For my part, I decided to dress as Pierrot.[2] There is no costume which is a more perfect disguise, for it hides the entire person, not letting even the color of the skin be seen anywhere. The reader may remember what happened to me ten years earlier disguised as Pierrot.[3] The tailor found me a costume, which I had him put with the others, and, provided with a thousand zecchini in two purses, I arrived at the pastry cook's at half past five o'clock, where I found the table laid for supper as soon as the company should arrive. I shut Zenobia up in the room which contained everything necessary for the masquerade.

At exactly seven o'clock I saw the company, and I was delighted to make the acquaintance of the Marchese F . . . , whom I found accomplished. He was handsome, young, and rich, and very much in love with the cousin, whose hand he kissed most respectfully. The Lieutenant's mistress was a jewel; she was mad about him. As they knew that I did not want to show them their disguises until after supper, we immediately sat down at table, and we supped deliciously, for everything was excellent. The Marchese did not know that such a caterer existed. When we were ready to rise I treated them to a little preamble:

"Your masquerade," I said, "for I do not wish to be with you, will represent five beggars in rags, two men and three women. You will each hold a plate as if asking for charity, and, thus clad, you will walk about the ball together. Come with me into this room, and you shall see your beggar's rags."

My pleasure was intense when I saw the disgust with which all five of them received my announcement. They follow me; I open the door of the room, and they see the beautiful Zenobia, who drops them a curtsy, standing in front of the table on which were the magnificent dresses reduced to tatters.

"There," I said to the two cousins, "are your dresses; and there, Signorina, is yours, a little shorter. There are your shifts, your handkerchiefs, your stockings, and there is a toilet table at which, with your permission, your most humble servant there will dress your hair in true beggar-maid fashion. There are your masks, though their faces are not as beautiful as yours, and there are three plates into which the alms for which you beg will be put; these garters which cost only a soldo will prove your poverty if anyone chances to see the upper part of your legs, and these stockings with their holes will show that you have not a soldo to buy silk to mend them with. These cords will serve you for buckles, and we will make holes in your shoes, the backs of which will be trodden under your heels. These gloves will be in holes too, and as soon as you have changed shifts the lace around the neck will be torn here and there."

The three young ladies at once saw the richness of their disguise. They saw the beauty of the dresses which had been reduced to rags, and they did not dare to say, "What a pity!"

"Come and see the clothes of your beggar escorts. Here they are; I forgot to make holes in the hats. What do you think of it all? And now, Signorine, close your door, for you have to change shifts. Let us get dressed too."

The Marchese F . . . was beside himself at the thought of the effect the masquerade was bound to produce, for no one could have devised anything more lavish. It was impossible not to see that the splendid brand-new garments had been torn on purpose and then patched so comically that they were a delight. In a half hour we were dressed. The stockings in holes, the shoes deliberately slashed, the batiste shirts, with their fine lace cuffs, deliberately torn, the uncombed hair, the masks expressing desperation, and the plates deliberately cracked around the edges, all together composed the most striking picture. As for me, it was agreed that my Pierrot costume made me unrecognizable. The young ladies took longer dressing because of their hair. It hung down their backs as far as it could go; Signorina Q . . .'s reached halfway down her legs. They finally opened the door, and we saw all that a charming girl can display to attract and yet remain within the bounds of decency. I admired Zenobia's skill in dressing them. The torn petticoats showed their legs, whose whiteness appeared through the big holes in their stockings; their shifts, purposely torn under imperfectly patched rents in their dresses, revealed bits of their beautiful breasts. But the length to which her hair hung down gave the prize to Signorina Q. . . .

I showed them how they should walk, how to hold their heads to arouse pity, and how to hold their fine handkerchiefs so that the holes in them would prove their poverty. Beside themselves with delight, they could not wait to be at the ball; but I wanted to go first in order to enjoy the pleasure of watching their entrance. I quickly put on my Pierrot mask, after telling Zenobia to go to bed, since we should not be back until daybreak.

I enter the ball, and since there are more than a score of Pierrots, no one looks at me. Five minutes later I see everyone hurrying to see some arriving maskers, and I find a place where I am sure I shall see them well. The Marchese was between the two cousins. Their slow, pitiable walk awoke interest. Signorina Q . . . , with her dress of flame-colored satin torn to rags and her hair which cloaked her, struck the company silent. It was not until a quarter of an hour later that people began talking again. "What a masquerade! what a masquerade! Who are they? who are they? I have no idea. I'll find out." What filled my cup of joy was their bearing.

The orchestra strikes up. Three maskers in dominoes come to ask my beggar maids to dance a minuet; but they decline, showing them their torn shoes. The touch pleased me greatly. After following them about the ball for more than an hour, rejoicing at the success of my masquerade and assured that the general curiosity would only increase, I went to see Carcano, where the play was high. A masker in a *bautta* and cloak in the Venetian fashion punted on a single card, staking fifty zecchini *paroli* and *paix de paroli,* as I had been doing, and lost three hundred; the masker was of my build, and everyone said he was I. Carcano said no. I stake three or four zecchini on a card to have the right to remain, and at the next deal the Venetian masker puts fifty zecchini on one card, gets the *paroli* and the *paix,* and recovers all the gold he had lost, which was there in six piles.

At the deal after that he has the same good luck, he collects his money and goes. The chair being left empty, I take it, and I hear a lady name me and say that I am in the ballroom dressed as a beggar, with four other maskers whom no one knows.

"How as a beggar?" Carcano asks.

"Like beggars, all in rags and tatters, and nevertheless magnificent and at the same time comical. All five of them are asking for alms."

"They ought to be turned out."

I begin putting zecchini on a card chosen at random, and I lose five or six cards in succession; in less than an hour I lose five hundred zecchini. Carcano studied me, everyone said it was not I because I was at the ball dressed as a beggar. In three lucky deals I win all that I had lost, and I go on with the whole pile of gold before me. I stake a good handful of zecchini; I win the card, I go *paroli,* I win, I go *paix,* and there I stop, for the bank is at its last gasp. He pays me, and he sends to the cashier for a thousand zecchini; while he shuffles, I hear voices: "Here come the beggars, here come the beggars." They stand at Carcano's bank, and he looks at the Marchese F . . . and asks him for a pinch of snuff. I then admired a fine bit of characterization which I had not foreseen. The Marchese takes from his pocket a paper in which there are two coppers' worth of snuff, gives him a pinch, and everyone laughs. Signorina Q . . . holds out her plate asking him for alms; he tells her that with such beautiful hair she rouses no pity in him; but that if she wants to stake it on a card he will rate it at a thousand zecchini. Signorina Q . . . holds out her plate to me, I drop as many zecchini as I can gather up with the tips of my fingers into it, and I do the same for the two others.

"Pierrot," said Carcano, "likes beggar maids."

They left. Triulzi said to Carcano that the beggar in the straw-colored coat was certainly I.

"I recognized him immediately," said Carcano, "but who are the women?"

"We'll find out."

"The masquerade is the most expensive anyone could devise, for all the clothes are new."

While waiting for the money, he shuffled. The thousand zecchini arrive. I punt at a hundred, and at the second deal I win everything. He asks me if I want to go on playing, I shake my head, and I show him in pantomime that I will take a note from the cashier. He comes with his scales, and, wanting to go and dance, I give him all the gold I have except some fifty zecchini; he writes a receipt, which Carcano signs, for twenty-nine pounds and some ounces of gold, which came to more than two thousand four hundred zecchini. I get up and, walking lopsidedly after the fashion of Pierrot, I go to the parterre, then to my box in the third tier, where my beggars were, to dry myself, for I was dripping with sweat. I knock, making them understand that it is I, and we fall delightedly to talking of all our adventures. We had all unmasked, but we had nothing to fear, for the boxes on either side of ours were empty. The three beggar maids talk of returning me the alms I had given them; but I replied in such a way that they did not insist. The Marchese F . . . said that he had been taken for me, and that the mistake might lead to something being guessed; I told him that toward the end of the ball I would unmask.

The beggar maids told me that they had their pockets full of sweetmeats, that all the ladies left their boxes to go and look at them, and that they all said that no one could devise a more magnificent masquerade.

"Then you have enjoyed yourselves?"

"Extremely. But we will go down."

"I too, for I want to dance; and as Pierrot I am sure to raise a laugh."

"Do you know how much you gave us in alms?"

"I have no way of knowing exactly; but I am sure that I treated the three of you alike."

"That is true, but it is astonishing."

"I have made the experiment countless times in my life. When someone wins a *paroli* of ten zecchini from me, I put out three fingers; and I am sure to gather up thirty zecchini. I would wager that I gave each of you thirty-eight or forty zecchini."

"Forty, but it's astonishing. We shall remember this masquerade."

"I would wager," said the Marchese, "that no one will imitate us."

"But we ourselves," said the cousin, "wouldn't dare do it a second time."

We resumed our masks, and I preceded them. After making some impertinent exchanges with the Harlequins and Harlequinesses, I saw Teresa[4] in a domino, and, in the most awkward way possible, invited her for the contradance.

"You are," she said, "the Pierrot who broke the bank."

I assented in pantomime. I danced like a demon; I seemed always on the verge of falling, and I always kept my feet.

The contradance over, I escorted her to her box, where Greppi was alone, and she let me go in. They were astonished when I took off my mask, for they thought I was with the beggar maids. I gave Signor Greppi the note to bearer, for which he at once gave me a receipt, and I went down again with my face unmasked, which confounded all the busybodies who thought the Marchese F . . . was I.

Toward the end I left, taking a sedan chair as far as the Piazza Cordusio;[5] then, going through a house, I took another, which carried me to the pastry cook's, where I found Zenobia in bed; she told me she was sure I would come back before the others did. It was the first time I really had her in my arms. I remained there until the trot of four horses told me that my beggars were returning. Zenobia put on her clothes again in a flash. The Marchese and the Lieutenant went to undress, and, when I told the three beggar maids that I might stay because they did not have to change their shifts and stockings, they made no objection. I confined my attention to Signorina Q . . . , admiring all her beauties, of which she saw fit not to be stingy. After dressing her hair Zenobia left to do the same service for the others, whereupon she let me help her put on her dress, allowing my eyes to enjoy the advantage of a great rent in her chemise over her bosom.

"What will you do with your shift, Signorina?"

"It's childish, but we've decided to keep all our things as reminders. With your permission, my brother will see to our receiving whatever we leave here. We are going to bed. Will you come to us this evening?"

"If I were prudent I should shun your presence."

"And if I were really prudent I should not urge you to come."

"What a reply! You shall certainly see me. Dare I ask you for a kiss?"

"Two."

Her brother and the Marchese F . . . left. Two sedan chairs which I had had brought to the door carried the cousins home, and two others for which I sent afterward left with the Lieutenant and his mistress, and the Marchese, left alone with me, said most politely that he wanted to pay me for half of what the masquerade had cost me.

"I foresaw that you would humiliate me."

"I have no such intention, and I will not insist; but you must see that now it is I who am humiliated."

"No, for I count on your intelligence. You see that money costs me nothing. I give you my word of honor that I will let you pay my share in all the diversions at which we may happen to be together during the rest of the Carnival. We will sup here whenever you please; I am at home here. You shall choose the guests, and I will let you pay the bill."

"Excellent. The arrangement is to my taste. Let us be good friends, and I leave you with this charming chambermaid, whose being in Milan unknown to anyone but you I am at an utter loss to understand."

"She is a townswoman, who knows how to keep a secret. Is that not so, Signora?"

"I will die before I will tell anyone that the Signore is the Marchese F. . . ."

"Well spoken. Now see to it that you never break your word. Here is a trifle to remember me by."

He gave her a pretty ring, which she readily accepted, and he left. It was a small rose-cut stone which might be worth fifty zecchini. She put me to bed, and an hour later I sent her off with twenty-four zecchini. I slept until two o'clock, I dined well, I went home to dress, then I went to see La Q . . . , whom, to judge from what she had said to me, I need not expect to find very prudent. Everyone else was playing; she, leaning against a window absorbed in reading, did not notice my arrival. She put the book in her pocket as soon as she saw me and blushed fiery red.

"Oh, I am not indiscreet. I will not tell anyone that I caught you reading a prayer book."

"Pray do not. My reputation would be ruined if people knew that I am devout."

"Have you heard talk of our masquerade? Do people say who the maskers were?"

"No one talks of anything else; and people are sorry for us because we were not at the ball. All hope of finding out who the maskers were is gone, for it is known that a strange carriage, with four horses which went like the wind, conveyed them to the first post, where God knows what road they took. My hair is declared to have been false, which tempts me to prove the contrary; everyone says, too, that you must know them, for otherwise you would not have given them handfuls of zecchini. What is true is that we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. If you carry out all the tasks that are laid on you so well, you are one in a thousand."

"But it is only from you that I could have accepted such a task."

"Today from me, and tomorrow from some other woman."

"Yes, I see; you must think I am inconstant; but I swear to you that if you found me worthy of your heart your image in mine would never be effaced."

"I am sure you have said that to a thousand girls, and that you scorned them after they had found you worthy of their hearts."

"Oh, I beg of you—do not use the word 'scorn,' or you make me a monster. Beauty captivates me, I aspire to enjoy it. So you see it is impossible that I should scorn a beauty who has given herself to me only for love; I should have to begin by scorning myself. You are beautiful, and I adore you, but you are very much mistaken if you think I could be content to possess you only because of your kindness.''

''You want my heart ''

''Exactly. It is my only object.''

''To make me wretched in two weeks.''

''To love you until death. To subscribe to all your commands.''

''Would you settle in Milan?''

''Have no doubt of it, if you would make me happy upon that condition.''

''The amusing thing is that you deceive me without knowing it, if it is true that you love me.''

''Deceiving someone without knowing it is something new for me. If I do not know it, I am innocent.''

''But you deceive me none the less if I believe you, for it will not be in your power to love me when you love me no longer ''

''It is among possible things, but I reject the poisonous idea. I prefer to believe myself in love with you for ever and ever. Ever since I first met you not a girl in Milan has struck me as pretty.''

''Not even the charming one who waited on us, and whom you may have had in your arms until this moment?''

''What are you saying, divine Marchesa! She is the wife of the tailor who worked on your clothes; she went away a half hour after you did, and her husband would not have left her in my house if he had not seen that I needed her to wait on three ladies.''

''She is as pretty as a Cupid. Is it possible that you do not love her?''

''How can one love a person whom one knows that a dwarf enjoys whenever he sees fit? The only pleasure the young woman gave me this morning was when she talked to me of you.''

''Of me?''

"Will you forgive me if I confess that, being curious, I asked her which of the three girls she must have seen without their shifts was the most beautiful?"

"A libertine's question. Well, what was her answer?"

"That the one with the long chestnut hair was matchlessly beautiful."

"I don't believe a word of it, for I have learned to change my shift modestly, she cannot have seen anything but what even a man might have seen, she was trying to play up to your indiscreet curiosity; if I had such a chambermaid I would turn her out of the house."

"You are angry."

"No."

"Say no as much as you please; I saw your soul in your little outburst. I am in despair that I told you such a thing."

"Oh, it is of no consequence. But I know that men ask chambermaids such questions, and that they answer just as your beauty did, perhaps trying to make you curious about her."

"How could she think she was playing up to me by praising you above the two others, when she did not know you were the one I preferred?"

"If she didn't know it, I am wrong; but she lied none the less."

"She may have made it up; but I do not believe she lied. You laugh, and you enchant me."

"I laugh because I like letting you believe whatever you please. I want to ask you for a favor. Here are two zecchini. Put them on an *ambo*[6] in the lottery, and give me the ticket when you come to see me, or send it to me. No one is to know about it."

"You shall have it tomorrow. Why do you tell me to send it?"

"Because you may find my company boring."

"Do I seem to? I am very unfortunate. What are your numbers?"

"Three and forty. It was you who gave them to me. Three fingers three times, and each time forty zecchini. I am superstitious. It seems to me you have come to Milan to bring me good fortune."

"Those words from you fill me with joy. You have a little the look of a witch; but at least don't take it into your head, if you don't win the *ambo,* to draw the conclusion that I do not love you, for that would be a monstrous sophism."

"I do not reason as badly as that."

"Do you believe that I love you?"

"Yes."

"May I tell you so a hundred times?"

"Yes."

"And prove it to you in all ways?"

"As for that, I want to know in advance what they are, for those which you might think the most efficacious I might consider perfectly useless."

"I foresee that you will make me languish for a long time."

"As long as I can."

"And when the time comes that you cannot?"

"I will surrender. Does that satisfy you?"

"Yes. But I shall use all my powers to wear you out."

"Do so. Your efforts will please me."

"Will you help me to succeed?"

"Even that."

"Ah, charming Marchesa, you need only speak to make a man happy. I leave your presence all on fire and really happy, not in imagination but really."

I went to the theater, and at Carcano's bank I saw the masker who had won the three hundred zecchini from him the previous evening; he was playing with very bad luck. He was behind by more than two thousand zecchini in counters, and in less than an hour he increased it to four thousand, whereupon Carcano laid down the cards, saying it was enough. He rose, and the masker left. He was a certain Spinola,[7] from Genoa.

"Now tell me," I said, "if I would not have won a wager against you. Admit that you would not have recognized me as Pierrot."

"It is true. But it happened that I had before me the beggar-masker whom I took to be you. You know who he is."

"Absolutely not."

"Everyone says they are all Venetians and that when they left here they went to Bergamo."

I went to sup with the Countess A. B., her husband, and Triulzi, who all believed the same story. Triulzi told me that all the wiseacres had condemned me when I gave the maskers the handfuls of zecchini. I retorted that my action was intended to win the approval of none but fools.

The next day I played the *ambo,* and after dinner I took the superstitious Marchesa the ticket. I was as much in love with her as possible, because I thought she was in love. Her cousin was not playing, so I spent three hours conversing with them on nothing but amorous subjects, holding my own against the pair of cousins, whose beauty and intelligence were of the rarest. I realized, when I left them, that if chance had first put me in the other's company I should have fallen as much in love with her.

We were nearing the end of the Carnival, which in Milan lasts four days longer than in all Christendom.[8] There were three more balls. I played, I lost two or three hundred zecchini each time, and everyone admired my prudence more than my luck. I called on the cousins every day, and every day I hoped for more, though I never obtained anything. She gave me no more than a few kisses, I had never asked her for a meeting. Only three days before the ball I asked her if I might hope to have her to supper in the same company. She said that her brother would come to see me the next morning to tell me what had been arranged. So the Lieutenant arrived, just as I was rejoicing to see the three and the forty among the five numbers of the drawing. I did not mention it to him, for his sister had forbidden it.

"The Marchese F . . . ," he said, "invites you to supper at your place on the night of the ball, with the same company; but needing to have the masking costumes got ready, and not wanting you to know what they will be, he asks you to lend him your apartment and, so that other people will not be let into the secret, he asks you to engage the same chambermaid you had before."

"Gladly, gladly."

"Arrange to have her there today about three o'clock, and let the pastry cook know that you have given him full powers."

I saw that my dear Marchese F . . . wanted to have a taste of Zenobia, and I was not displeased. *Fovet et Favet* ("He forwards and fosters")[9] was my favorite maxim, and thanks to my kindly nature it still is so and will be until I die. I went at once to inform the pastry cook, and I stopped in at the tailor's, who did not take it at all amiss when I said I had no need of him and asked him only for my gossip his wife. He said that at three o'clock he would give her leave for three days.

In the afternoon I found La Q . . . beside herself with joy. The winning *ambo* would bring her five hundred zecchini.

"What delights me," she said, "is not the money, though I am not rich, but the beauty of the idea which came to me and which I adopted; it is the pleasure I feel at the thought that this piece of luck comes to me from you; it is the concatenation of events which imperiously speaks to me in your favor."

"What does it tell you?"

"That I should love you."

"Does it tell you, too, that you should prove it to me?"

"Ah, my dear friend, you may well believe it."

She gave me her hand for the first time, and I covered it with kisses.

"Know," she said, "that my first idea was to put all the forty zecchini on the *ambo.*"

"And you didn't have the courage?"

"It is not that. I was ashamed. I was afraid of a thought which might have come to you and which you would not have expressed to me. You might have thought that, by giving you all the forty zecchini as my stake, I wanted to let you know that I scorned them, and that would have given you a wrong impression of my character. If you had encouraged me I should have assented at once."

"It never occurred to me! You would now have ten thousand zecchini. Your brother has told me that we shall go to the next ball under the Marchese's direction, and you can imagine how greatly I rejoice when I think that I shall be spending a whole night with you; but one thing troubles me. I am afraid the masquerade will not go off as well as mine did."

"Never fear; he is very intelligent and he loves my sister[10] as he does his own honor. He is certain we shall not be recognized."

"I hope not. He insists on paying for everything, even the supper."

"He is right."

At nightfall on the day of the ball I went to the pastry cook's, where I found the Marchese well pleased that everything was as he wished to have it. The room containing the clothes was shut. I asked him if he was satisfied with Zenobia, and he replied that he was, but only with her work, for he had asked no more of her.

"I believe you," I said, "but I fear that Signorina F . . . may harbor some doubts on the subject."

"No. She knows that I can love none but her."

The rest of the company arriving, the Marchese tells us that the masquerade is such that we shall enjoy it more if we dress before supper instead of after. We assent. So he takes us into the room, where we see two rather bulky packages on a large table.

"This one," he said, "is for us, and that one, Signorine, for you. So stay here and let the maid help you to dress, while we go to do the same in the other room."

He takes the larger package, we follow him, he locks the door, he opens the package, which contained three smaller ones. He hands me mine, gives the Lieutenant his, keeps the third for himself, and says:

"Let us dress."

We could not but laugh heartily when we each found a complete woman's costume even to the shoes. The frocks were of fine, pure white linen. There were women's shifts, and I noticed some very gay garters. There were nightcaps, to save us the trouble of having our hair done up, but they were trimmed with Venetian point lace.[11] There were also stockings, which we did not need, for we could keep on our own; but there were buckles, because ours could reveal who we were. I was surprised to find that the women's shoes fitted me well; but I learned that my shoemaker was also his. Corset, petticoat, underskirt, dress, fichu, fan, workbag, rouge box, full masks—he had forgotten nothing. We dressed, helping one another only when it came to putting our hair under the ample nightcaps. The Lieutenant really looked like a very pretty, rather tall girl; but the Marchese and I were something surprising. Two girls five feet ten inches in height were really too unusual a phenomenon. The amusing thing is that, without saying anything to one another, we none of us put on underdrawers. I told the Marchese that the gay garters had seemed to indicate that underdrawers were not to be worn.

"The trouble is," he replied, "that no one will try to find it out."

All three of us had large women's reticules, into which we put whatever we needed.

The young ladies were already dressed. We open the door, and we see the three beauties, with their backs to the fireplace, looking a little nonplussed at being costumed as they were, though they tried to make us believe they felt at their ease. We approached them with feminine curtsies and with the modest reserve appropriate to the part we were playing. This made them think they must imitate the manners of men; but their costume was not one in which they could show due respect to women. They were dressed as couriers, all in fine linen as we were; tight breeches, close fitting waistcoats, very short jackets, small caps with conventional arms of gilded and silvered cardboard. However, their shirts were trimmed with long ruffles of fine lace. Dressed in this fashion, the three girls could not fail to awaken inordinate desires in us, but we loved them too much to frighten them. All of us speaking out of our roles until we were served, the cousins and the Lieutenant's mistress assured us that they had never in their lives dressed as men, and confessed their fear of the risk they ran in daring to go to the ball dressed in that fashion if by ill luck anyone should succeed in recognizing them. They were right; nevertheless, we employed all our eloquence to reassure them.

We sat down at table, each gentleman beside his lady, and, contrary to my expectation, the first to enliven the occasion was the Lieutenant's mistress, who thought that the part of a man demanded that she be bold; the Lieutenant defended himself, slapping her hands, but that did not stop her from grappling with him. The two cousins, ashamed to show less spirit than she, began treating us no less brazenly. Zenobia, who was waiting on us at table, could not keep from laughing when my adorable Q . . . , reproaching her with having made my dress too tight in the bosom, reached out, and I responded by giving her a light slap, whereupon she asked me to forgive her and kissed my hand. The Marchese having said that he felt cold, his pretended cavalier asked him if "she" had on underdrawers, and felt for them; but she quickly withdrew her hand in dismay, which made us laugh; however, she recovered her composure and played the role of lover very well. The supper had been as choice as mine. We were heated with love and Bacchus. We had been at table for two hours. We rose, and we saw the cousins downcast. They could not prevail upon themselves to go to the ball dressed as they were. Both the Marchese and I saw that they were right and admitted that their reluctance was perfectly reasonable.

"But we must decide on something," said the Lieutenant. "Either to go to the ball or to go home."

"Neither," said the Marchese; "let us dance here."

"Where are the violins?" asked his mistress.

"You couldn't get any tonight for love or money."

"Well then," I said, "let us drink some punch and sing. We will play children's games, and when we are tired we will sleep. We have three beds."

"Two are enough," said the Marchese's mistress.

"Very true, Signorina, but the more there are, the more comfortable we shall be."

Zenobia having gone to sup with the pastry cook's wife, I had told her not to come up again until she was called. After two hours of harmless amusement, the Lieutenant's mistress had gone to lie down on a bed in a room above the one in which the young ladies' dresses were, and the Lieutenant had followed her. Signorina Q . . . said to me that, having drunk a little too much punch, she would be glad to lie down, and I showed her to a room into which she could even lock herself and offered her the privilege. She replied that she did not think she need fear anyone. So we left the Marchese alone with her cousin in the room where we had danced, in which there was a bed in an alcove.

La Q . . . , after spending a few minutes in the dressing room, asked me, as she came out, to go for her frock, and when I brought it to her she returned to the dressing room; coming out again after putting it on, she said that she could breathe again, for the breeches were too tight and had hurt her. She lay down on the bed.

"Where did the breeches hurt you, my beautiful angel?" I said, clasping her in my arms and then lying down beside her, neither of us speaking another word for a good quarter of an hour. I left her only to go to the dressing room, for one must never neglect what is owed to decency. When I came out I found her under the covers. She said she had undressed to go to sleep, and at once pretended to do so. I quickly got rid of all my women's trappings and lay down beside her, where I received every recompense due to my love and my chivalry. She let me spread all her beauties before me. She said that she wished for this moment, and that if we were sensible we would in future go to no balls but only wherever we could be happy and satisfied. I bestowed countless kisses on the beautiful mouth which so clearly foretold my happiness, and by my transports I more than convinced her that no man on earth had ever loved her more than I did. I had no difficulty in keeping her from sleeping, for sleep never visited her eyelids. On my side, her charms, her sweetness, and her fond transports made me insatiable. We did not stop until we saw the dawn.

There was no need for us to hide anything from the others, for we had all enjoyed what was ours to enjoy. A mutual modesty prevented us from congratulating one another. By this silence we did not deny that we had satisfied our desires, but we did not admit it either.

As soon as we were dressed I thanked the Marchese and invited him to supper in the same place, without any pretense at masking, on the night of the next ball, if the young ladies would accept. The Lieutenant said yes for them, and his mistress kissed him ardently, reproaching him with having slept all night. The Marchese and I said together that we had done exactly the same, and the cousins praised our chivalry. We left as we had done the first time, and the Marchese remained alone with Zenobia.

I went home to bed and slept until three o'clock, when, there being no one in the house, I went to eat at my apartment at the pastry cook's, where I found Zenobia with her husband, who had come to enjoy the remains of the supper. Her husband said that I had made his fortune, for his wife had received twenty-four zecchini and his woman's dress from the Marchese, just as I had given her mine. After eating something I went to see La Q . . . , whom I loved more than ever since the blissful night I had spent with her. I could not wait to find out what effect she would have on me after having made me so thoroughly happy. I found her more beautiful; she received me as a lover over whom she had gained rights. She told me she had been sure I would come to see her, and she exchanged ardent kisses with me even in her cousin's presence. I spent five hours with her which passed like five minutes, doing nothing but talk of love in terms of ourselves. In such cases self-esteem makes the subject inexhaustible. This five-hour visit on the day after our nuptials showed me that I was really in love with La Q . . . and convinced her that I was worthy of her affection.

I had had a note from the Countess asking me to sup with herself, her husband, and the Marchese Triulzi, who had invited all the friends of the house. For this reason I did not go to see Carcano, who, since my victory in the guise of Pierrot, had already won a thousand zecchini from me two or three hundred at a time. I knew he was saying he was sure he would break me. At Triulzi's supper the Countess took me to task: I slept out, they seldom saw me; and she did her utmost to wrest the secrets of my successful amours from me. It was known that I supped at Teresa's[12] with Greppi, and everyone laughed at Greppi, who said that I was of no consequence. I replied that he was right, and that there could not be a happier life than the one I was leading.

The next day Barbaro, with the honesty of all sharpers who correct the mistakes of Fortune, came to bring me my two hundred zecchini, and more than two hundred from my half share in the bank because, having quarreled with La Q . . .'s brother, he declined to deal any longer. I thanked him for everything, and above all for having introduced me to his sister, who had chained my heart and whose severity I hoped to conquer. He laughed, and he praised my discretion. That afternoon at three o'clock I went to her house, and I stayed there until nine, as on the day before. There being no play, the porter had been ordered to tell all callers that no one was at home. Since I had become the declared lover of La Q . . . her cousin treated me as a friend; she begged me to stay in Milan as long as I could, for, aside from making her cousin happy by staying, I made her happy too, for without me she could not spend hours with the Marchese F . . . , who could not see her freely so long as his father lived; but she said she was sure that on his father's death he would marry her. Her hope was vain; the Marchese soon afterward fell into bad habits which ruined him.

The next evening the agreeable company of five, instead of going to the ball, came to supper at my apartment, where, after a delicious repast, we simply went off to bed. A charming night, during which, however, our joy was often interrupted by the sadly true thought that the Carnival would very soon be over.

On the next day but one before the Carnival ended, there being no opera, I sat down to play, and, never getting three winning cards in succession, I lost all the gold I had, and I should have left as usual if a woman masker in men's clothes had not given me a card, urging me in pantomime to stake on it. I put it in front of the banker for a hundred zecchini on my word. I lost, and, to win back the hundred, I lost a thousand, which I sent him the next morning. Wanting to leave to go to La Q . . .'s, I see the same ill-omened masker with a male companion, also masked, who comes up to me, shakes my hand, and tells me in a whisper to go to the "Three Kings" at ten o'clock to such-and-such a room if the honor of an old friend is dear to me.

"What friend?"

"I myself."

"Who are you?"

"I cannot say."

"I will not come, for if you are my friend nothing can prevent you from telling me your name."

I go out, he follows, asking me to go beyond the arcade we saw, where he would take off his mask. I go there, he unmasks, and I see Croce,[13] whom my reader may remember. I knew that he was banished from Milan, I was surprised to see him there, and, understanding why he had not wanted to tell me his name, I was very glad indeed to have refused him the favor of going to his inn.

"I am surprised," I said, "to see you here."

"I came, under cover of this season when masking is permitted, to force my relatives to give me the money they owe me, and they keep putting me off in order to give me nothing, being certain that, for fear of being recognized, I shall have to leave in Lent."

"And do you intend to leave in Lent, even if you get no money?"

"I shall have to; but since you are unwilling to come to see me, save me by giving me only twenty zecchini, which will enable me to leave for certain on Sunday, even if my cousin who owes me ten thousand lire refuses the thousand for which I have asked him; but before I leave I will kill him.''

''I haven't a soldo, and your masker there has cost me a thousand zecchini.''

''I know it. I am an unlucky wretch who brings bad luck to all my friends. It was I who told her to give you a card.''

''Is she Milanese?''

''No. She is from Marseilles, whence I carried her off. She is the daughter of a rich agent; I fell in love with her, I seduced her, and she ran away with me. I had plenty of money; but, unlucky as I am, I lost it all in Genoa, I sold everything I had, and I came here; I have been here a week. Make me sure that I can escape, ask someone for twenty zecchini.''

Moved to pity, I retraced my steps to ask Carcano for them; I gave them to him, telling him to write to me, and I left him. I went to La Q . . .'s, I spent the evening and arranged that we should sup together the next day for the last time in Carnival. We made the occasion as happy a one as we had the others. I spent the first day of Lent in bed, and very early on Monday Clairmont gave me a letter which a hire valet had delivered to him. I read it, and, seeing no name signed to it, I find: ''Alas, Monsieur, take pity on the most unhappy creature on earth. Monsieur de la Croix[14] has certainly gone away in despair. He has abandoned me in this inn, he paid for nothing, what will become of me? Come to give me at least your advice.''

I did not hesitate for a moment. It was neither love nor profligacy which impelled me to help the poor girl, but compassion, virtue. I quickly put on a redingote; I hurry to the ''Three Kings,'' to the same room where Irene had been; and I see a girl with a face worthy to interest anyone. I believe I see wronged innocence and candor. She rises and sadly begs me to excuse her for having inconvenienced me, asking me at the same time to speak in Italian to a woman who was there and tell her to go away.

"She has been troubling me," she said, "for an hour; I do not know her language, but I gathered that she wants to be of use to me. I do not feel inclined to beg for her help—"

"Who told you," I said to the woman, "to come to the Signorina's room?"

"A hire valet told me yesterday that a foreign girl had been left here alone and that she was to be pitied. I came, in the goodness of my heart, to see if I could be of any use to her. I leave very glad to be rid of the matter at no cost beyond my kind intentions. I leave her in good hands, and I congratulate her."

This language so clearly marked her a bawd [15] that I laughed.

The forsaken girl then told me in a few words what I already knew, and she added that her lover, having immediately lost the twenty zecchini I had given him, had taken her to the inn in despair and had spent all of the next day there, not daring to go out by daylight. He had gone out masked toward evening, and toward daybreak he had come in, put on a hooded greatcoat, saying that if he did not come back he would communicate with her through me. He had left her my address.

"If you have not seen him," she said, "I am sure he set out on foot and without a copper. The innkeeper will demand payment, and I have enough if I sell everything; but what am I to do after that?"

"Would you dare go home?"

"Certainly I should. My father will forgive me when I tell him, with tears in my eyes, that I am ready to enter a convent."

"I will take you to Marseilles myself, and in the meanwhile I will find you a room in the house of respectable people here. Until I find it for you, lock yourself in your room and admit no one."

I summon the innkeeper and tell him to bring his bill, which came to very little; I pay it, and I leave her beside herself with surprise at what I had done and what I had said to her. I think it best to confide her to Zenobia, if she can lodge her, and I go there. I tell her the state of the case in her husband's presence, and he says that he will give up his place to her if she is willing to sleep with his wife, and that he will rent a small room near his house for himself and will stay there as long as the young lady remains.

"For her meals," he said, "she may do as she chooses."

I thought it an excellent arrangement; I wrote the forsaken girl a note, and I instructed Zenobia to take it to her and to do everything necessary. In my note I told her that the bearer of it had orders from me to take care of all her needs. I saw her the next day at Zenobia's, poorly lodged but content, and as pretty as possible. I was on my good behavior; but I sighed to think how impossible it would be for me to maintain it during the journey.

I had nothing more to do in Milan; but I had promised the Count that I would spend two weeks with him at Sant'Angelo. It was an estate belonging to his family, fifteen miles from Milan, of which he talked with enthusiasm. I should have mortified him too greatly if I had left without giving him the satisfaction of going there. He had a married brother who lived there, and who could not but be delighted, he said, to make my acquaintance. When we came back from the estate he would be perfectly content to wish me a good journey. So, having made up my mind to satisfy him, on the fourth day in Lent I took leave of Teresa, of Greppi, and of the fond Q . . . for two weeks. The Countess did not care to make the journey; she much preferred to remain in Milan, where the Marchese Triulzi let her want for nothing We left Milan at nine o'clock, and at noon arrived at Sant'Angelo, where we were expected for dinner.

CHAPTER IX

Ancient castle. Clementina. The Beautiful Penitent. Lodi. Declaration of mutual love, without fear of consequences.

THE SEIGNORIAL castle of the little town of S. A.[1] was enormous, at least eight centuries old, and without architecture of any sort, for neither outside nor inside did it exhibit even a trace of regularity. Vast rooms, all on one floor, and small ones on the ground floor and in the attic. The thick walls were full of cracks, the stone staircases lacked a step here and there, the floors of the rooms were of brick and far from level, the windows were open because they lacked panes, and not one of them had blinds; the beamed ceilings were full of the nests of various species of night-flying and domestic birds.

In this Gothic[2] palace, a monument to the ancient nobility of the Counts A. B., which was dearer to them than some very fine palace in Milan which they might have bought with their money, there were, however, in three of its corners, suites of four or five rooms. These were the apartments of the lords of the castle. In addition to his married brother, who always lived there, my dear Count had another brother,[3] who was serving in Spain with the Walloon Guards.[4] It was the apartment of this absent brother which was bestowed upon me. But let us turn to the reception I was given.

Count Ambrosio,[5] for he was called by his baptismal name, received me at the door of the castle, a door which could not be shut, for half of it was missing. Cap in hand, a respectable but unkempt figure, perhaps forty years of age, he told me in a tone of lofty politeness that his brother had been ill-advised to persuade me to come to see their insufficiencies, that I should find none of the comforts of life in their house, but, to make up for that, "the Milanese heart." This is an expression which they are forever using, and rightly. The Milanese are in general kindly and honest; the frankness of their character seems to condemn the Piedmontese and the Genoese, whom they have at an equal distance on the two opposite borders of their beautiful country.

Count Ambrosio presented me to the Countess[6] his wife and her two sisters, one of whom was of the most delicate beauty, with an air of intelligence, though a little ill at ease. The other was neither beautiful nor ugly. The Countess's very sweet countenance bore the imprint of dignity and candor; it was only two years since the Count had married her at Lodi, her native city. The three sisters were all very young, very highly born, but without fortunes. Toward the end of dinner the Count told me that he had married her more for the sake of her character than of her birth, that she made him happy, and that, though she had brought him nothing, he felt that she had made him richer, for she had taught him to reckon as superfluous whatever he did not possess.

At that the Countess, smiling with delight at the praise which her husband had just bestowed on her, took into her arms a pretty infant of six months[7] which an old woman brought to her, and stopped eating to unlace her corset and put between the baby's lips a nipple which marked the center of a perfectly chiseled breast as white as snow. Such is the privilege of every nursing mother. She has learned, without being told, that in this respect she is excused from all modesty. Her bosom, become the sacred spring of life, is supposed to awaken in the beholder no feeling but that of respect.

The dinner which Count Ambrosio gave us would have been excellent had it not been for the ragouts, since the good soup, the boiled beef, the salt pork, the sausages, the mortadella, the fresh cheeses, the vegetables, the game, the greens, and the mascarpone cheese[8] were exquisite; but warned by his brother that I set up for an epicure and loved to eat, he had insisted on having made dishes, than which one could not imagine anything worse. Politeness compelling me to taste them, my stomach was turned against the natural and solid viands; but I quickly righted things, having it out with my friend after dinner. I convinced him that the menu would be excellent and appetizing with ten simple dishes and not one ragout, and he easily persuaded his brother to listen to reason. During all the time I spent there I enjoyed delicious fare.

We were six at table, all in high spirits and talkative, except the prettier and younger Countess, named Clementina,[9] who had already struck me; she spoke only when she was obliged to answer, but always with a blush. Having no way to see her eyes except by addressing her, I asked her questions, and she replied; but, her blushing leading me to suppose I was making her uncomfortable, I thought it best to leave her alone and to wait for an opportunity to become better acquainted with her.

After dinner I was shown to my apartment and left there; I saw, as in the room in which we had dined, glazed windows and curtains; but Clairmont said he did not dare to unpack my trunks, since there were keys neither to the doors of the room nor to the chests of drawers, unless I would absolve him of all responsibility. He was right; I go to consult my friend; he replies that there is not a key anywhere in the castle except to the cellar, despite which everything was perfectly safe.

"There are no thieves in S. A." he said, "and if there are, they do not dare to enter our house."

"I believe you; but you must understand that it is my duty to assume they are everywhere, that my valet himself might seize the opportunity to steal from me without my being able to convict him of it, and that I should have to say nothing if it happened that I was robbed."

"I understand all that. Tomorrow morning a locksmith will put locks on your doors. You will be the only person in the house who thinks of taking precautions against thieves."

I could have answered him with Juvenal, *cantat vacuus coram latrone viator* ("the traveler with an empty purse sings when he meets a robber"),[10] but it would have mortified him. I told my valet to wait until the next day to open my boxes. We went out with his two sisters-in-law to take a walk through the town; Count Ambrosio stayed at home with the Countess, who never left her precious son. She was twenty-two years of age; her sister Clementina was eighteen, and she took my arm; my friend gave his to the Countess Eleonora.[11]

"We shall see," he said, "the Beautiful Penitent. She is a prostitute who lived for two years in Milan with such a reputation for beauty that people came from the nearby towns on purpose to see her. Her house door opened and shut a hundred times a day to satisfy all those who were drawn by her rare beauty; but an end was put to the charming spectacle a year ago. Count Firmian,[12] a man of learning and intelligence, was obliged, on his return from Vienna, to have the unfortunate beauty shut up in the convent to which we are going, in consequence of an absolute order given him by the august Maria Teresa, who could never in her life forgive mercenary beauty.

"The girl was seized, she was shut up, she was told that she was guilty, it was adjudged that she should make a general confession and be sentenced to lifelong penitence. She received absolution from her sins from Cardinal Pozzobonelli,[13] the grand pontiff of the Ambrosian rite,[14] who, bestowing the sacrament of confirmation on her, changed the name of Teresa, which she had received at the baptismal font, to Maria Maddalena,[15] intending thereby to set her on the sure road to eternal salvation by imitating the penitence of her new patron saint, whose life she had led until then. She was shut up in the Convent of the Penitents in this city, of which our family holds the right of patronage. It is an inaccessible convent, where the nuns live in community under the direction of a mother superior whose mildness of character in some measure offsets the sufferings they must endure in passing from the delights of this world to the greatest privations. They can only work and pray to God, and they see no man but the priest, their confessor, whose mass they hear every day. We are the only persons to whom the Mother Superior cannot refuse entrance to this holy prison; and it would not occur to her to exclude those who are in our company."

Poor Maria Maddalena! Oh, what barbarians! The story had made me go pale. As soon as the Count was announced the Mother Superior herself came to receive him at the portal. We enter a great room, where I was easily able to distinguish the celebrated young woman among five or six others, all of them Penitents but who could not have much to repent of, for I thought them ugly. They rose, stopping their sewing or knitting. Only Maria Maddalena, despite the austere woolen habit in which she was garbed, surprised me. I saw beauty and majesty in distress, and, with my profane eyes, instead of seeing dread and hideous sin, I thought I saw holy innocence; she kept her beautiful eyes turned toward the floor. But what was not my surprise when, having raised them and fixed them on my face, she cried out:

"God, what do I see! Holy Virgin, come to my aid! Go, evil sinner, though you deserve more than I do to be here."

I did not feel any desire to laugh. The Mother Superior immediately told me that the poor creature had gone mad, unless she had recognized me.

"No, Signora, for she can never have seen me."

"I believe it, but she is mad."

The fact is that in her outburst I was more inclined to see indignant good sense than madness. She touched me, I could hardly hold back my tears. I begged the Count not to laugh; but a moment later Maria Maddalena went further, and with that I saw the symptoms of a rage on the verge of insanity. She begged the Mother Superior to make me leave, saying that I had come there only to damn her. That lady, after gently chiding her, sent her away, saying that she was mistaken and that those who came to see her could wish only to contribute to her eternal salvation. She had the sternness to tell her that no one on earth had been a greater sinner than she. The poor creature left us, shedding tears in torrents and rending my soul with her sobs.

For my part, had I been the commanding general of a victorious army in that city, it is more than certain that in such a situation I would have taken Maria Maddalena by the hand and led her away with me, raining blows from my cane on the honey-tongued Abbess if she had tried to oppose my will. She told us that the girl had angelic qualities, and that she would certainly become a saint if she did not first go mad. She said that she had asked her to remove two paintings from the oratory, one representing St. Louis Gonzaga and the other St. Anthony, because their holy images irresistibly distracted her, and that she had thought it best to satisfy her wish, despite their confessor, who would not listen to reason in the matter.

The priest was an oaf, and the Mother Superior was intelligent. We left that inhuman house, all four of us saddened by having seen victims of tyranny. If in the truth of our holy religion the soul of the great Maria Teresa is destined to have a place in what is called eternity, or the other life, she must inevitably be damned, unless she has repented, even if she did no wrong but the one she did in countless different ways by persecuting poor girls who trafficked in their charms. Poor Maria Maddalena went mad and suffered the pains of hell in this world because nature, the God of all, had favored her with the most precious of all gifts. It may be that she had abused it; but for that crime, which is incontestably the least of crimes, was it necessary to inflict the greatest of punishments on her?

On our way back to the castle the Countess Clementina, to whom I had offered my arm, gave little bursts of laughter from time to time. It pleased me.

"Dare I ask you, beautiful Countess, why you keep laughing to yourself?"

"Pray forgive me. I am not laughing at her having recognized you, for she must have been mistaken; I am laughing at the surprise you showed when she told you you deserved to be shut up far more than she did."

"And perhaps you think so too?"

"I? God forbid! But tell me why it was that the madwoman did not attack my brother-in-law."

"Apparently she thought that I looked more of a sinner."

"It can be the only reason; and that is why one must never pay attention to what mad people say."

"Beautiful Countess, you are pleased to speak ironically; but I take it in good part. I am perhaps a great sinner, as I appear to be; but consider that beauty should be indulgent to me, for I am not often led astray by anything else.''

''I cannot understand why the Empress does not amuse herself locking up men too.''

''Because she hopes to see them at her feet when they can find no more girls.''

''Oh, you are joking! Say, rather, that it is because she is unwilling to forgive her sex the lack of that virtue which she possesses in the highest degree and which, furthermore, is so easy to practice.''

''I have no doubt, Signorina, of the Empress's virtue, but with your permission, and speaking generally, I very much doubt that the virtue called continence is as easy to practice as you suppose.''

''Everyone speaks and thinks in accordance with the ideas which he discovers by examining himself. Sobriety is often taken to be a virtue in one in whom it is no merit. You may find difficult what to me seems very easy, and *vice versa.* We may both be right.''

At that, the girl seemed to me a second Q . . . , with the difference that the latter was proud of her reasoning, whereas Clementina set forth her doctrine with the nonchalance of complete indifference. She stopped my mouth. What an example of sound intelligence! I felt mortified that I had judged her wrongly at table. Her silence, and the rapidity with which her blood rose to her face when she had to answer, had made me suppose that her mind harbored a confusion of complicated ideas which did little honor to her good sense. Excessive shyness is often only stupidity. The Marchesa Q . . . , more experienced than Clementina, if for no other reason than her age, was perhaps a better dialectician; but Clementina had twice eluded my questioning, which is the supreme accomplishment of that graceful parrying which becomes a well-educated girl of rank, whose duty it is not to reveal her treasures to one who may not be worthy to know them.

Back at the castle, we found a lady with her son and daughter and an abate, a relative of the Count's, who displeased me from the beginning. A merciless talker, who, saying that he had seen me in Milan, bored me to death with the most tiresome praise, he also kept looking at Clementina, and I was sure that I did not want this chatterer either as a companion or as a rival. I told him shortly that I did not remember having seen him, and this answer, calculated to abash, abashed him not at all. He sat down beside Clementina and, taking her hand and paying her stale compliments, urged her to conquer me; it was flat, and, since she could only laugh at it, she laughed; but her laughter displeased me. I thought she should have answered him at least by some impertinence. He whispered something into her ear, and, she having replied, I almost lost countenance; I thought it horrible. Some opinion was advanced, everyone made his comment, and the Abate contributed his, urging me to support him; but, angry with him as I was, I told him caustically that he was talking nonsense, hoping that he would hold his tongue; but he was tough-skinned; he appealed to Clementina, who supported him, blushing, and at that the conceited fool kissed her hand. Unable to bear more, I got up and went to a window. A window enables a man at the end of his patience to turn his back on a bore without laying himself open to a direct accusation of rudeness; but everyone sees what he is about. I pretended to contemplate the horizon. I could not bear the Abate, and I was wrong, for, far from having treated me offensively, he had tried to please me.

This irritability in cases of the kind was a characteristic of mine all my life, and it is too late today for me to try to cure myself of it. I even think I no longer need to do so, for those who listen to me relegate me politely, though silently, to a former age forty years ago.

Clementina had undone me, and to make so devastating an impression on me had taken her only seven hours. Feeling that I was wholly hers, I thought I must employ every means to make her wholly mine. I had no doubt that I should succeed, and in my conviction there was certainly some fatuousness; but there was also a becoming modesty, for, believing that I should have to overcome all possible difficulties in order to touch her heart, I thought that the slightest obstacle would suffice to defeat me. Now, the tonsured fool seemed to me a wasp whom I must crush. Cold jealousy also entered in, to wrong the object which had already captivated me; I imagined that Clementina was, if not in love, at least indulgent to the monkey, and this idea filled me with a thirst for a revenge of which she could not but be the object. Love is the god of nature; but what is nature if its god is a spoiled child? We know him for what he is, and yet we adore him.

My friend the Count interrupted my train of thought by coming to ask me if I needed anything. I replied that I would go to my room to write some letters until supper-time. He begs me not to leave, and he calls Clementina, charging her to keep me from going off to write. She shyly replies that if I have business to attend to it would be impolite to detain me. The Abate comes up and tells me in so many words that, instead of going to write, I should make them a bank at faro. A general "yes" insists that I give in. I consent.

Cards are brought, together with small baskets filled with counters in different colors, and I sit down, putting twenty or thirty zecchini before me. It was a large bank for the company, who only wanted to amuse themselves; losing fifteen counters amounted to losing no more than a zecchini. Everyone sat down. The Countess Ambrosio took the place on my right, and the Abate saw fit to take that on my left. It was Clementina who made way for him. Considering his action insolent, I said that I never dealt except between two ladies, whereupon Clementina resumed her seat. After three hours supper was served, and I stopped. Everyone had won except the Abate, who had lost twenty zecchini in counters. What a pleasure! As a relative, he stayed for supper; the lady took her leave with her son and daughter; no one could persuade her to stay.

Pleased enough with my evening, for I think the Abate is in despair, I am in a humor to be amused; I cajole the beauty beside me into talking by saying things to her which force her to defend herself. She shines, and she is grateful to me. Seeing the Abate in full defeat, I take it into my head to ease his discomfiture; I ask his opinion on a question; he replies that he has not been listening and that he hopes I will give him his revenge after supper.

"After supper, Signor Abate, I shall go to bed; but I promise you your revenge tomorrow, delighted that this little game amuses my kind hostess and her sisters; luck is against you today; tomorrow it will favor you."

After supper he left in great gloom. The Count saw me to my room and, wishing me good night, said that I need have no fear if there were no keys to my doors, since his sisters-in-law, whose room adjoined mine, had none either.

Greatly astonished by a hospitality so lavish, I tell Clairmont to put my hair in curl papers quickly, for I badly needed sleep; but halfway through the proceeding in comes Clementina and surprises me by saying that there is not a chambermaid in the castle to take care of my linen, so she begs my permission to perform the office for me without further ado.

"You, Countess?"

"I, and pray do not object. It will be a pleasure for me; and, what is more, I am sure that you will be satisfied. Have your man give me the shirt you will wear tomorrow; and say no more about it.''

I at once have Clairmont help me drag my trunk of linens into her room, and I tell her that I need a shirt, a waistcoat, a collar, underdrawers, and two handkerchiefs every day, and that I leave the choice to her. I am more fortunate than Jupiter. Farewell. Good night, charming Hebe.[16]

Her sister Eleonora, who was already in bed, outdid herself asking me to excuse her. I immediately ordered Clairmont to go and inform the Count that I no longer wanted him to have locks put on my doors. I felt ashamed. Was I to fear for my rags, when these living treasures did not fear my cupidity?

Having found my bed excellent, I slept very well. Clairmont was dressing my hair when I saw my Hebe come in carrying a basket. With great dignity she said she was sure I would be satisfied. On her beautiful countenance I see not the slightest trace of self-consciousness, of an unbecoming shame arising from the mistaken idea that to do me this service has detracted from her nobility. She had blushed, but without making any effort to hide it from me, for what had brought the blush to her cheeks was a satisfaction which bore witness to the beauty of her soul, unfettered as it was by the vulgar prejudices of narrow minds. Never had a shirt so greatly pleased me as the one I saw.

Just then my friend the Count arrives. He thanks Clementina for the kindness she has shown me, and he embraces her; I thought the embrace unnecessary. Oh, she is his sister-in-law, he is her brother-in-law, whatever you please; but if I am roused to jealousy, that suffices; nature, who knows more than you do, tells me that I am in the right. It is impossible not to be jealous of what one loves dearly and has not yet conquered; for one must always fear that what one wants to conquer may be carried off by another.

The Count asked me to read a note which he took from his pocket. The Abate, his cousin, asked him to tender me his apologies for not being able to pay me the twenty zecchini he had lost, within the time prescribed by the gamester's code. He would, he told him, pay his debt before the end of the week.

"Very good," I said. "But tell him not to punt at my bank this evening, for I will not carry him."

"You are right, but he can play for cash."

"Not that either, for he would be playing against me with my money. He may do what he pleases after he has paid me. You may even tell him to take all the time he wants, and assure him that I will never press him to pay me this insignificant sum."

"He will be mortified."

"So much the better," said Clementina; "why does he presume to lose on his word what he is not sure he can pay today?"

"Charming Countess," I said when I was left alone with her, "tell me frankly if the rather harsh treatment I accord this Abate pains you, and I will this moment give you twenty zecchini you can send to him, which he can pay me this evening, and so cut a good figure. I promise you that no one shall hear a word of it."

"I thank you, but no; I am not concerned enough for his honor to accept your offer. Let him feel the shame of his wrongdoing and learn how to live."

"You will see that he will not come this evening."

"That may well be; but do you think I should be sorry?"

"I might have supposed so."

"What! Because he confined his silly attentions to me? He is a scatterbrain on whom I set no value."

"He is as unfortunate as a man whom you value is fortunate."

"That man has perhaps not yet been born."

"What! You have not yet met a mortal worthy of your attention?"

"Many worthy of attention; but valuing is something more. I could value only someone whom I loved."

"Then you have never loved? Your heart is empty."

"Your word 'empty' makes me laugh. Is it fortunate or unfortunate? If it is fortunate, I congratulate myself; if it is unfortunate, I do not care, for I am not aware of it."

"It is none the less a misfortune, and you will know it when you love."

"But if, when I love, I am unhappy, I will know that my empty heart was my good fortune."

"That is true, but it seems to me impossible that you should be unhappy in love."

"It is only too possible. Love requires a mutual harmony which is difficult, and it is even more difficult to make it last."

"I agree; but God put us on earth to take the risk."

"A man may need to do that, and find it amusing; but a girl is bound by other laws."

Just then we were interrupted by the reappearance of the Count, who was surprised to find us still there. He said that he would like to see us in love with each other, and she replied that in that case he wished to see us unhappy—she because she would love an inconstant man, and I because my soul would feel the pangs of remorse. After delivering this dictum, she fled.

I was left as if turned to stone; but the Count, who had never had a thought in his life, said with a laugh that his sister-in-law Clementina was inclined to be romantic. We went to the Countess's apartment, finding her with her baby at her breast.

"The Cavaliere," he said, "is in love with your sister, and she with him."

"I should be glad," she replied, "if a good marriage made us relatives."

The word "marriage" serves only to mask the most flattering of all ideas. Her reply pleased me so greatly that I responded to it only with a bow.

We went out to take the air and to call on the lady who had declined to stay for supper, where we found a Canon Regular[17] who, after saying some gracious things to me and praising my native country, which he thought he knew because he had read its history, asked me what order of knighthood was indicated by the cross which I wore hanging from my neck on a red ribbon. I could not but reply, modestly proud, that it was a sign of the good will with which Our Most Holy Father the Pope honored me when, of his own motion, he had made me a Knight of San Giovanni in Laterano[18] and an Apostolic Prothonotary.

The monk had not traveled. If he had acquired the manners of good society he would not have asked me what my order was; but he innocently thought he flattered me by his inquiry, for at the same time that he did his best to convince me that he found me interesting he gave me leave to make a show of my dignities.

There are a great many questions which do not seem indiscreet among well-meaning people untouched by the corruption of manners, but which nevertheless are so. The order known as the Golden Spur was so little esteemed that it greatly annoyed me when I was questioned about my cross. I should have been pleased, no doubt, if I could have answered simply, "It is the Fleece,"[19] but, after I had told the truth, my self-esteem demanded that I add a commentary, which at bottom was a gloss in justification; it was a burden; in short, my cross embarrassed me, it was truly a cross; but since it was a magnificent decoration and impressed fools, whose number is immense, I wore it even when I was not in full dress. The order of Christ,[20] which is the order of Portugal, is in the same situation, because the Pope shares with His Most Faithful Majesty[21] the privilege of conferring it. The order of the Red Eagle[22] has been held in estimation only since the King of Prussia became its Grand Master; thirty years ago a gentleman refused it because the Margrave of Bayreuth allowed it to be sold. The blue ribbon of St. Michael [23] is honorable today because it is now conferred by the Elector of Bavaria; no one wanted it because the Elector of Cologne conferred it broadcast. I saw a knight of the order at Prague five years ago; but asking him from whom he received it would have been a mistake. The madness for stars increases daily, and now no one can claim, when he sees the devices, that he recognizes them, for, aside from the symbols of a quantity of obscure chapters, there are the fanciful devices of private associations of hunters, academicians, musicians, bigots, lovers, into the nature of which it could even be dangerous to inquire, for they might be those of conspirators. As for women, common sense is enough to make any intelligent man refrain from asking the significance of a concealed medallion, or an aigrette worn in an odd way, or a portrait in a bracelet or a ring. Let us love them and not seek to penetrate their mysteries, the more so since more often than not the thing turns out to be some bauble or grotesque which they wear only to get themselves looked at and to arouse curiosity.

Things have come to such a point in good society that, if you want to be polite, you can no longer ask a man from what country he comes, for if he is a Norman or a Calabrian he has, when he tells you so, to beg your pardon, or, if he is from the Pays de Vaud,[24] to say that he is Swiss. Nor will you ask a nobleman what his arms are, for if he does not know the jargon of heraldry you will embarrass him. You must not compliment a gentleman on his fine hair, for if it is a wig he may think you are mocking him, nor praise a man or a woman for their fine teeth, for they may be false. I was set down as impolite in France fifty years ago because I asked

Countesses and Marquises their baptismal names. They did not know them.[25] And a dandy who had the misfortune to be named Jean replied to my indiscreet curiosity, but at the same time offered to fight me.

The height of bad manners in London is to ask someone what his religion is, and so too in Germany, for if he is a Herrnhuter[26] or an Anabaptist[27] he will not want to admit it. In short, if one wants to be liked the safest thing is to ask nobody anything, not even if he has change for a louis.

At table Clementina answered all my remarks with wit and grace, but no one realized it. In some companies intelligence is overwhelmed by stupidity.

Clementina filling my glass too often, I treated her to reproaches which occasioned a brief dialogue which gave me the finishing stroke. I rose from the table mortally in love. Here is the dialogue:

"You have no right," she said, "to complain, for it is Hebe's duty always to keep her lord's glass full."

"But you know that Jupiter dismissed her."

"Yes, but I know why. I shall never fall so awkwardly.[28] That will never be the reason for some Ganymede[29] to supplant me."

"That is very sensible. Jupiter was in the wrong; and I now assume the name of Hercules.[30] Does that please you, beautiful Hebe?"

"No, because he didn't marry me until after he was dead."

"You are right about that, too. I can only be Iolaus,[31] for—"

"Say no more. Iolaus was old."

"That is true; I was old yesterday; but I am so no longer; you have given me youth."

"I am very glad of that, dear Iolaus; but do you remember what I did to him when he left me?"

"For pity's sake, what was it? I don't remember."

"That I do not believe."

"Believe it."

"I took away the gift I had made him."

It was at these last words that the conflagration broke out in the charming girl's face; I should have been afraid I would scorch my hand if I had dared to touch her forehead; but the blazing sparks which visibly shot from her eyes darted through my heart and froze me. Be not angry, you modern physicists who read me, for I do not present this phenomenon to you as a miracle; yes, they froze me. A great love which raises a man above his being is a most powerful fire which can only begin with its exact contrary, a cold of the same power, such as I felt at that moment and which would have killed me if it had lasted more than a minute. The superior ingenuity with which she had applied the fable of Hebe had not only shown me a Clementina versed in mythology but had given me a sample of a sound and deep intelligence. It had done more: it had convinced me that I had interested her, that she had thought about me, that she had wanted to surprise and please me. All these ideas need no more than a minute to spring up in the soul of a man already predisposed. They are incendiary. I had no more doubt. "Clementina," I said to myself, "loves me, and she has made me sure of it. We shall be happy."

She had run away, which gave me time to come out of my stupor.

"Tell me, Signora," I said to the Countess, "where and by whom that charming girl was brought up."

"In the country, by always being present at the lessons which Sardini[32] gave my brother, though he devoted his whole attention to him. Clementina was the one who profited by it, my brother was bored. She made our mother laugh, and she amazed the old tutor."

"We have poems of Sardini's which no one reads because he is too learned in mythology."

"Quite so. I will tell you that she has a manuscript of his containing a quantity of pagan fables. Persuade her to show you her books and the verse she composes and lets nobody see.''

I was beside myself. She comes back, I pay her compliments; I tell her that I am fond of poetry and belles-lettres, and that I should count it a favor if she would show me her books and especially her verses.

''I'd be ashamed. I had to stop studying two years ago when, our sister having married, we had to come here, where we see only good people who, thinking of nothing but the harvest, are interested in nothing but the weather. You are the first who, by calling me Hebe, led me to conclude that you are fond of letters. If Sardini had come here I could have continued to study; and he was willing to come, but my sister did not want it.''

''But my dear Clementina,'' her sister replied, ''what use, I ask you, could my husband make of an octogenarian who can do nothing but compose verses and weigh air?''

''All very well,'' said Count Ambrosio, ''if he could have taken a hand in managing the estate; but he is an honest old man who refuses to think anyone a scoundrel. He is both learned and stupid.''

''Good heavens!'' Clementina cried, ''Sardini stupid? It is true that he is easy to deceive; but he would not be deceived if he were less upright and less intelligent. I like it in a man that he is easy to deceive for those reasons. But everyone says I am silly.''

''No, my dear sister,'' said the Countess. ''On the contrary, everything you say bears the stamp of wisdom, but a wisdom outside your sphere, for letters and philosophy are not what is needed to manage a house, and when the time comes for you to marry your taste for the sciences will perhaps prevent you from making a good match.''

"I expect so, and I am already prepared to die an old maid; but it does not speak well for men."

What a tumult of passion in my poor soul at this cruel dialogue! I was in despair. Had I been noble and rich, I would have given her a hundred thousand scudi then and there, and have become engaged to her before I rose from the table. She told me that Sardini was in Milan, sickly from old age, and when I asked her if she had paid him a visit she answered that she had never seen Milan, any more than had any of her sisters. Yet by carriage and at a fast trot one could go there in two hours.

I begged her so insistently that, after coffee, she took me to a study next to her room to show me her books. She had no more than thirty, all good, but all the sort of reading one would find in the library of a young man who had just finished his studies in rhetoric.[33] Her books could teach my angel neither history nor any of those parts of physical science which could raise her out of her ignorance of essentials and be the joy of her life.

"Are you aware, my dear Hebe, that certain books you should have are lacking in your collection?"

"I suspect it, my dear Iolaus."

"Be sure of it, and leave the rest to me."

After spending an hour looking over Sardini's works I asked her to show me her own.

"No, they are too faulty."

"I expect that; but the good I shall find in them will outweigh it. I will forgive the diction, the style, the absurd ideas, the lack of method, and even your unscannable verses."

"That is a little too much, for I do not believe I need so plenary an indulgence. Here, Signore. These are all my scribblings."

Delighted to have succeeded by my trick, I began by reading her an Anacreontic song,[34] very slowly, bringing out all its beauties by the tones of my voice and reveling in the joy which flooded her soul and shone in her eyes and in her whole face when she heard herself at such a pitch of beauty. When I read her a verse which I had made more touching by changing some syllables, she was aware of it, for she was looking on while I read ; but far from feeling humiliated by the correction, she was grateful to me for it. She felt that my touches with the brush did not keep the painting from being hers, and she was in raptures, being aware that the pleasure I took in reading her was far greater than that which made her happy at the moment. Our mutual enjoyment continued for three hours, an enjoyment of our souls already in love, than which it is impossible to imagine a pleasure either more pure or more voluptuous. Happy, and more than happy, for us if we had known enough and had strength enough to stop there; but Love is a traitor and a deceiver, and laughs at all those who think they can trifle with him and not fall into his snares.

It was the Countess Ambrosio who came to tell us to forsake letters and join the company for a time. Clementina put everything back in place, thanking me, and, in token of her gratitude, offering me her blood, the flame of which I saw in her captivating face. In this state, followed by myself and the Countess, she appeared before the company, only to be asked if she had been doing battle.

The table had been made ready for faro; but before sitting down I took Clairmont aside and ordered him to make sure that at dawn the next day I should have four horses harnessed to my carriage to take me to Lodi[35] and bring me back in time for dinner.

The whole company punted, as on the day before, and I was very glad not to see the Abate. I saw the Canon, who was punting at ducati, with a pile of them before him. At that I increased the bank, and at the end of play I had the pleasure of seeing the whole family content. Only the Canon had lost some thirty zecchini; but the loss made him none the less gay at table.

The next day I went to Lodi, without telling anyone I was going. I bought all the books which I thought suitable for the Countess Clementina, who understood only Italian. I bought translations which I was surprised to find in the town of Lodi, which until then I had thought notable only for its excellent cheese, which the whole of Europe ungratefully calls Parmesan.[36] It does not come from Parma but from Lodi, and I did not fail that very day to add a comment to the article "Parmesan" in the dictionary of cheeses which I had begun and which I later abandoned, finding it beyond my powers, as J. J.[37] found a dictionary of botany beyond his. At that time he had taken the name of "Renaud the Botanist." *Quisque histrioniam exercet* ("Everyone plays a part"). But the eloquent Rousseau had neither the temperament to laugh nor the divine talent of calling forth laughter.

At the best inn in Lodi I ordered a dinner for twelve persons for the next day but one, giving a deposit and taking a receipt. I ordered whatever would serve to make my expenditure as large as possible.

Back at S. A., I took the bag filled with books to the Countess Clementina's room, and at the sight of the present she lost the power of speech. There were more than a hundred books, all poets, historians, geographers, physicists, and some romances translated from the Spanish or the French, for, with the exception of thirty or forty poems, we have not a single good romance in prose in Italian. To make up for it we have the supreme masterpiece of the human mind in the *Orlando furioso*,[38] which cannot be translated into any language. So, if that poem is made only for the Italian language, it seems that the Italian language is made only for it. The European author who has produced the truest, the most beautiful, and the simplest eulogy of Ariosto was Voltaire,[39] at the age of sixty years. If he had not sung that palinode,[40] posterity would have raised an insurmountable barrier which would have prevented him from ever reaching the temple of immortality. I told him so, thirty-six years ago, and the great genius believed me and took fright; and nothing can prevent his apotheosis, unless it be a great curtain which he should have refrained from drawing.[41] Voltaire saw very well, but he foresaw as badly as possible.

Clementina turned her eyes from the books to me and from me to the books, seeming to doubt if they belonged to her. Suddenly serious, she said that I had come to S. A. to make her happy. Such a moment transforms a man into a god. *Homo homini Deus* ("Man is a god to man").[42] At such a moment the person who receives the benefit inevitably determines to do everything possible to make the person happy who has so easily conferred happiness.

The pleasure one feels when one sees the divine handwriting of gratitude on a countenance with which one has fallen in love is supreme. If it does not interest you as much as it does me, my dear reader, I do not want you to read me; you can be only a miser or a blundering clown, in which case you are unworthy to be loved. Clementina, after dining without appetite, spent the rest of the day in her room with me, arranging her books. She first ordered a carpenter to make her a bookcase with a grille and a lock, which would be her constant delight after I had gone. She was lucky at faro and in high spirits at supper, during the course of which I invited the whole company to dine at Lodi on the next day but one. My dinner being for twelve, Countess Ambrosio undertook to find two guests to make up the number at Lodi, and the Canon promised to bring his lady with her daughter and her son.

I spent the next day without leaving the castle, occupied with giving my Hebe some notion of the sphere and setting her on the way to enjoying Wolff.[43] I made her a present of my case of mathematical instruments, which she considered an inestimable gift.

I burned for her; but would her taste for literature have made me fall in love with her if I had not first thought her pretty? Alas, no. I like a ragout, and I am a great eater; but if it does not look attractive I think it bad. The first thing which interests me is the outside, is the seat of beauty; examination of the form and what is within comes afterward, and if that enchants it kindles; the man who disregards it is superficial. And that, in the realm of ethics, is synonymous with "reprehensible." The new thing which I found in myself as I went to bed was that, in my conversations with Hebe, when we were alone together for three or four hours, her beauty did not distract me in the least. Yet what so constrained me was neither respect nor virtue nor so-called duty. What was it? I did not care to guess. I only knew that this Platonism could not last long, and, to tell the truth, the realization mortified me; the mortification arose from virtue, but from a virtue at its last gasp. The beautiful things we read interested us so strongly that feelings of love, rendered accessory or secondary, could not but remain silent. In the presence of the mind the heart loses its imperial power, reason triumphs, but the struggle is bound to be short. Our victories misled us; we thought we were sure of ourselves, but it was on a foundation of clay; we knew that we loved, but we did not know that we were loved.

This equally dangerous and modest confidence led me to enter her room to tell her something about the excursion to Lodi, the carriages being already waiting. She was asleep; she started awake, and it did not even occur to me to excuse myself. It was she who excused herself, saying that Tasso's *Aminta*[44] had interested her so greatly when she had gone to bed that she could not put it down until she had read it through. She had it on her bedside table. I told her that the *Pastor fido*[45] would delight her even more.

"Is it more beautiful?"

"No."

"Then why do you say it will delight me more?"

"Because it has a charm which acts on the heart. It softens, it seduces, and we love to be seduced."

"Then it is a seducer?"

"No, it is seductive, as you are."

"A fundamental distinction! I will read it this evening. I shall be dressed in a moment."

She dressed, forgetting that I was a man, but with modesty. Even so, I saw that she would have been more modest if she had been sure I was in love with her. I glimpsed, when she drew a shift over her buttocks, when she laced her corset, when she put on her petticoat, and when, getting out of bed, she put on her stockings and fastened her garters above the knee, I glimpsed—I say—beauties which drove me to distraction, made me answer her at random, and forced me to leave the room in order to save my carnality from too shameful a defeat.

I took a place on the folding seat of my carriage, holding the Countess's son on a big pillow in my lap. She laughed till she had no breath left, as did Clementina. Halfway through the journey the infant began crying; it wanted milk; its mother quickly uncovers a rose-pink spigot, which she does not mind my admiring, and I hold the baby out to her, while it smiles because it is going to eat and drink at the same time. I longed to possess the noble picture, my delight was visible. The pretty baby, satisfied, lets go; I see the white liquid still running.

"Ah, Signora! It is a crime; allow my lips to gather this nectar which will put me among the gods, and do not fear that I will bite you."

In those days I had teeth.

I suckled on my knees, looking at the Countess-mother and her sister, who, both laughing, seemed to pity me;

it is a kind of laugh which no painter has ever succeeded in imitating, except the great painter Homer, where he depicts Andromache with Astyanax in her arms when Hector leaves her to return to the army.[46]

With my insatiable desire to raise a laugh, I asked Clementina if she had the courage to grant me the same favor.

"Why not, if I had milk?"

"You need only have the source of it. I will imagine the rest."

But at that she blushed so intensely that I was almost sorry I had said it. Still in high spirits, we reached the inn at Lodi without having been aware of the time the short journey had taken us. The Countess at once sent her lackey to ask a lady who was a friend of hers to come to dine with her together with her sister. I seized the opportunity to send Clairmont to buy me an ample supply of paper, sealing wax, pens, ink, an inkstand, and a fine portfolio with a lock, for my beautiful Hebe, who was never to forget me. When she had it all in front of her before dinner, she did not know how to express her gratitude except with her beautiful eyes. There is not a woman on earth, whose heart is true and uncorrupted, whom a man cannot be sure of conquering by making her grateful. It is the infallible method and the shortest road to success, but one must know how to go about it.

The lady from Lodi came with her sister, who could challenge her whole sex for the prize of beauty; but at that time Venus herself could not have torn me from Clementina. The matrons and the young ladies embraced one another repeatedly, expressing their delight at meeting again. I was introduced, I was described, I was praised to the skies; I played the fool to put an end to the compliments.

My dinner was good and handsomely served; it being Lent, the scrupulous found various sorts of fish which kept them from regretting the fowl and the game. The excellent sturgeon was to everyone's taste.

After dinner the lady's husband came with her sister's lover, so the gaiety increased. I acceded to the request of the whole charming company by making them a bank; and after three hours I stopped, delighted to have lost thirty or forty zecchini; otherwise I should not have been proclaimed the finest player in Europe.

The beauty's lover was named Vegio, so I asked him if he was descended from the author of the thirteenth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*;[47] he replied that he was, and that he had translated it into Italian stanzas.[48] In response to my show of interest he promised to bring it to me at S. A. on the next day but one. I congratulated him on his ancient nobility, for Maffeo Vegio flourished at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

At nightfall we set out, and in less than two hours we were back at S. A. The moon, which shone on my every movement, helped me to resist the temptation inspired in me by one of Clementina's legs, for, the better to hold her nephew on her lap, she had put one foot on the folding seat. The mother, arrived home, paid me a thousand compliments on the good company I had been to her. None of us wanting to sup, we retired, but Clementina confided to me that she was in despair because she had not the least notion of the *Aeneid.* Signor Vegio was to come to S. A. with his thirteenth book, and she was plunged in gloom because she would be unable to judge it. I comforted her.

"Tonight," I said, "we will read the splendid translation of the poem by Annibale Caro.[49] You have it, and you also have the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Dell'Anguillara,[50] and Marchetti's[51] of Lucretius."

"I wanted to read the *Pastor fido.*"

"We will read it some other time."

So we spent the night reading that magnificent poem in Italian blank verse. But the reading was interrupted again and again by the witty laughter of my charming pupil. She laughed heartily over the chance which provided Aeneas with an opportunity, though a very inconvenient one, to give Dido convincing proof of his love,[52] but even more when Dido, complaining of the Trojan's perfidy, says that she could still forgive him if, before forsaking her, he had given her a little Aeneas whom she would have had the pleasure to see playing about her court. Clementina was justified in laughing; but why is it that one does not laugh when one reads it in Latin? *Si quis mihi parvulus aula luderet Aeneas.*[53] It is only the beauty of the language which gives an air of dignity to this comical complaint.

We did not end our reading until the night ended.

"What a night, my dear friend!" she said. "I have spent it with you in the joy of my soul. But you?"

"With the utmost pleasure, seeing yours."

"And if you had not seen mine?"

"I should have enjoyed it two thirds less. I love your mind to the highest degree, but tell me, please, if you think it possible to love someone's mind without loving the case which contains it."

"No, for without the case it would evaporate."

"Then it follows that I must love you, and that I cannot possibly spend six hours alone with you and not die of my longing to give you countless kisses."

"You are right; and I believe we resist that desire only because we have duties, and because we should feel humiliated if we disregarded them."

"That is true; but if your nature is like mine, this constraint must cause you great pain."

"As much, perhaps, as you yourself feel; but I will tell you that I believe that resisting certain desires is hard only at the beginning. Little by little people grow used to loving each other without any risk. Our outsides, in which we now delight, will cease to concern us, and then we can spend hours and days together without any unwonted desire coming to trouble us."

"Good-by, beautiful Hebe. Sleep well."

"Good-by, Iolaus."

CHAPTER X

Excursion. My sad parting with Clementina. I leave Milan with Croce's mistress. My arrival in Genoa.

I AT once went to bed, ordering Clairmont not to wait up for me in future. I laughed at Clementina's plan, based, as it was, on her belief that the way to take away someone's appetite was to set before him the dishes he liked, only telling him that he was forbidden to touch them. She knew no more than I did about it; but when she had said to me that if one resists desire one does not feel humiliated after one satisfies it, her words had been full of sense. The humiliation which she dreaded arose from the attachment and respect she felt for her duties, and she honored me in assuming that I thought as she did. I must let her go on believing it. I fell asleep, determined never to undertake anything which could make her lose her confidence in me.

The next morning I rang very late. She came to wish me good morning, carrying the *Pastor fido*.

"I read the first act," she said, "and I have never read anything so sweet. Get up. We will read the second act before dinner."

"Dare I get up in your presence?"

"Why not? A man need go to very little trouble to observe modesty."

"Then be so kind as to give me that shirt."

Smiling, she drew it over my head, and, thanking her, I said that I would do her the same service at the first opportunity.

"From you to me," she said, blushing, *"there is less distance than from me to you."*

"This time, my divine Hebe, you have answered me like a true oracle, even as you did when you were worshiped in Corinth."

"Did Hebe have a temple in Corinth?[1] Sardini doesn't say so."

"But Apollodoros[2] does. It was even a place of asylum. But please do not dodge the issue. What you said is contrary to geometry. The distance from you to me must be the same as the distance from me to you."

"What I said was stupid."

"No, no. You had an idea; whether it was right or not, I want to hear it."

"Very well. The two distances differ in direction, as to up and down. Isn't it true that a body simply released will descend without having to be propelled? Isn't it also true that without propulsion there is no ascent? If this is true, admit that I, who am shorter than you, cannot reach you except by ascending, which is difficult; whereas for you to come to me you need only let yourself go, which is very easy. Hence you risk nothing when you allow me to change your shirt; but I should risk a great deal if I let you perform the same office. Your too rapid descent on me might crush me. Are you convinced?"

"Convinced? I am beside myself. Never has a paradox been more wittily justified. I could cavil; but I would rather be still, admire, and adore you."

"Thank you, but don't think of sparing me. How could you cavil?"

"On your cleverness in making my height one of your factors, whereas you would not let me change your shift even if I were a dwarf."

"Very good, my dear Iolaus; we cannot deceive each other. I should be happy if God had destined such a man as you to be my husband."

"Alas, why am I not worthy of it!"

The Countess-mother came to summon us to dinner, at the same time saying she was happy that we loved each other.

"Madly," said Clementina; "but we keep our heads."

"If you keep your heads, you do not love each other madly."

We dined, we played cards, and after supper we finished the *Pastor fido*. She asked me if Signor Vegio's thirteenth book of the *Aeneid* was beautiful.

"My dear Countess, it is worthless, and I praised it only to flatter a descendant of its author, who, however, composed a poem on the shrewd tricks of peasants[3] which is not without merit. But you are sleepy, and I am keeping you from undressing."

"Not at all."

After undressing without granting anything to the cupidity of my eyes, she got into bed, but sat up in it; I sat at her feet, and her sister turned her back to us. The *Pastor fido* being on her night table, I took it and opened it by chance to the place where Mirtillo speaks of the sweetness of the kiss he received from Amarilli.[4] Seeing Clementina apparently as touched as I felt that I was ardent, I pressed my lips to hers, and observing no sign of alarm, I was about to clasp her to me when, with the utmost sweetness, she put out one arm and drew away, begging me to spare her. At that I asked her to forgive me, bestowing countless kisses on the beautiful hand which she had surrendered to me.

"You are trembling," she said.

"Yes, my dear Countess; and I can assure you it is from fear that I have offended you. Good-by. I leave, wishing that I loved you less."

"No indeed, for such a desire can only be the beginning of hatred. Do as I do: I desire that the love you have inspired in me shall increase every day in precisely equal measure with the strength which I need to resist it."

I went off to bed very ill pleased with myself. I could not decide whether I had done too much or too little; in either case, I repented of it. I thought Clementina a creature as perfectly deserving of respect as of love, and I could not imagine myself able to go on loving her without the reward which love owes to love. If she loved me she could not refuse it to me; but it was my part to ask for it, I must even urge it upon her, in order to justify her defeat. The duty of a lover is to force the object of his love to surrender, and love can never adjudge him insolent. So Clementina could resist me to the point of denial only if she did not love me; I must put her to the test, and the more so because, if I found her unconquerable, I felt sure that would cure me. There was no doubt of it. But no sooner had I decided to follow this course than I considered it and found it abhorrent. The idea that I should stop loving Clementina was like poison. I loathed such a cure worse than death, for she deserved to be adored.

I slept badly. I rose very early and entered her room, she was still asleep, and the Countess Eleonora was getting dressed.

"My sister," she said, "read until three o'clock in the morning. Now that she has all these books she will go mad. Let's play a trick on her. Get into the bed on this side of her. We'll see how surprised she'll be when, waking, she turns and sees you."

"Do you think she will take it as a joke?"

"How can she help it? You are dressed."

I do as she tells me. In dressing gown and nightcap I take the place which Eleonora has just left, pulling the covers up to my chin; she laughed, while my heart pounded, for my mind would not believe that I could give the trick the air of comedy which alone could color its grossness with innocence. I hoped she would be long in waking, to give me time to assume a facetious expression.

At last Clementina wakes. She turns and, with her eyes still closed, puts out her free arm and, thinking it is her sister she is holding, gives me the kiss with which she usually greets her, and lies there ready to go back to sleep; but at the laughter which Eleonora cannot hold back, Clementina opens her eyes and does not see me in her arms until a second after she has seen her sister standing there laughing.

"A pretty trick indeed," she says, without moving, "and I admire you both."

At this beginning my faculties resume their functions; my confidence returns, and I feel that I am sufficiently in control of myself to play a part.

"And so it is," I say, "that I have received a kiss from my beautiful Hebe."

"I thought I was giving it to my sister; it is the kiss which Amarilli gave Mirtillo."

"That makes no difference. It produced the effect it was bound to produce, and Iolaus is rejuvenated."

"My dear sister, what you let my dear Iolaus do is too much, for we love each other and I was dreaming of him."

"It is not too much," Eleonora replied, "for he is dressed. See!"

So saying, she uncovers me to convince her; but in trying to show me to her sister, she spreads before me all the beauties which the bedclothes have kept me from seeing. Clementina quickly hides them; but I had already seen the cornice and the frieze of the altar of love, on which I longed to die. She covers herself, and Eleonora goes, leaving me leaning on one elbow with my head bent toward the treasure of which some occult power prevented me from taking possession.

"My dear Hebe," I said, "you are certainly more beautiful than the goddess. I saw what the gods saw when she fell; if I had been Jupiter, I would not have done as he did."

"Sardini says that he dismissed her; and to avenge Hebe I ought now to dismiss Jupiter."

"But remember that I am Iolaus. I am your handiwork. I love you, and I labor to stifle desires which torture me."

"You planned this trick with Eleonora."

"There was no planning. It was all pure chance. I came in, she was dressing, you were asleep, she told me to take her place so that we could laugh at your surprise, and I cannot but be grateful to her. The beauties I have seen surpass the idea I had conceived of them. My Hebe is charming. May I hope for a generous pardon?"

"It is strange that when one feels too tenderly fond of somebody one cannot help being curious about his whole person!"

"It is natural, my divine philosopher. Love itself could be considered a very powerful curiosity, if curiosity could be counted among the passions; but are you not curious about me?"

"No. I might find you pleasing; and I do not want to take that risk, for I love you, and I am delighted with the feelings I have which speak in your favor."

"That is quite possible, I see, and hence I must be very careful to keep my advantage."

"Then you are satisfied with me?"

"More than satisfied, for I am something of an architect. I find a regularity in you which is divine."

"I am glad of that, my dear Iolaus, but refrain from touching it. Let your having seen it suffice for you to judge it."

"Alas, grant something to the sense of touch, which alone can judge the resistance and smoothness of these marbles which Nature has so perfectly polished. Let me kiss these two springs of life. I prefer them to Cybele's[5] hundred, and I am not jealous of Attis."[6]

"You are mistaken. Sardini says that it was Diana of Ephesus[7] who had a hundred breasts."

How could I keep from laughing when, at such a moment, I heard mythological erudition proceeding from Clementina's lips? Can love expect such a thing? Can it fear it? Foresee it? No. But, far from finding it cruel, I saw that it could only be favorable to me. I told her she was right, asking her to excuse me, and a feeling of literary gratitude so restrained her that she did not prevent my lips from descending on a pink bud of which the only visible indication was its color.

"You suck in vain. It is sterile. Go to my sister. Are you swallowing?"

"Yes. The quintessence of my own kiss."

"Perhaps a little of my substance, too, for you have made me feel pleasure. That was a long kiss; but it seems to me that the kiss which is discharged into the mouth should be preferable."

"You are right. In that case the reciprocity is real."

"Precept and example! Cruel teacher! Let us stop. There is too much pleasure in it. Love looks at us and laughs at our temerity."

"Why, my sweet friend, do we put off allowing him a victory which can only make us happy?"

"Love's happiness is uncertain. No. I beg you. Keep your arms here. If kisses can kill us, let us kill ourselves; but let us use no other weapons."

After a long skirmish as sweet as it was cruel, it was she who called a halt, and who, with her eyes darting fiery sparks, asked me to go to my room.

In the violence of my condition, my love had dissolved into tears, lamenting the constraint which a prejudice foreign to its nature had put upon it. After abating my fire by a toilet which I had never so greatly needed, I dressed and went back to her room. She was writing.

"I feel inspired," she said, "by an exaltation which in all my past life I have never felt. I want to celebrate our victory over ourselves in verse."

"Sad victory, hostile to human nature, source of death, which Love must abhor because it vilifies him."

"That is poetry already. Let us both write as our Muses dictate, I praising the victory, you assailing it. But you look sad."

"I am suffering, and, in your ignorance of a man's constitution, you cannot know why."

Clementina did not reply; but I saw that she was touched. I was suffering a dull and torturing pain in the place where tyrannical prejudice had kept me garroted when love wanted me to be free. Only bed and sleep could restore the region to equilibrium. I dined gloomily enough, having paid scarcely any attention to the reading of the translation which Signor Vegio had brought me. I asked my friend the Count to deal for me, and I was allowed to go off to bed. No one could guess what my illness was; only Clementina could have some suspicion of it.

After sleeping three or four hours I set myself to writing, in *terza rima,*[8] like Dante, the story of the illness to which I had succumbed in consequence of that sad victory. It was Clementina herself who brought me supper, saying that the bank had won and that her brother-in-law would tell me about it the next day.

After watching me sup with a good appetite, she withdrew to put the same story into verse. I finished mine and made a fair copy of it before going back to sleep, and very early in the morning I saw Clementina at my bedside, holding her little poem, which I read with pleasure. The pleasure she felt when she heard me praise her ideas was far greater than mine.

But mine was greater still when, reading her what I had written, I saw that she was touched and often on the verge of tears. I also had the pleasure of hearing her say that if she had known the part of physiology which instructs the student in that subject she would have acted differently.

After taking a cup of chocolate with her I asked her to lie down beside me, dressed as she was, and to treat me as I had treated her the day before and so learn what sort of torture it was; and, after smiling, she yielded to my urging, but on condition that I would make no attempt on her.

So I had to let her do what she would; but in the end I had no reason to complain. Since she was mistress of the field, I enjoyed the despotism she exercised upon me, at the same time that I knew what pain she must suffer from my not exercising it on her and from her condemning her eyes not to see that of which her hands were in possession; I vainly urged her to satisfy herself in whatever way she might wish; but she would never admit that she wanted anything more than what she was doing.

"At this moment," I said, "it is impossible that your pleasure is equal to mine."

And she replied that in that case I had no reason to complain.

When she left me she said, all on fire with blushes, that she had convinced herself that in love one must do everything or nothing.

We spent the day reading, at table, strolling, playing, laughing over countless things, without making the progress in love which the samples I had received promised me. She wanted to dominate me, and she did not want me to dominate her; I gently complained of it, and she could not object.

Two or three days later about midnight I proposed to her, her sister being present and in bed beside her, the expedient one proposes to a nun, a widow, a nubile girl who refuses love because of the consequences she fears. I took from my pocket a packet of fine English coveralls, explaining how they could be used and letting her examine the shape and mechanism of the little bags at her leisure. After laughing at them heartily, she declared, with her sister agreeing, that they were hideous, disgusting, and scandalous. In addition she maintained that they were not to be relied on, for they could easily be torn. I vainly denied her ''easily.'' I had to put them back in my pocket when she said that the mere sight of them horrified her.

I decided that Clementina could put up such a resistance only because she was not in love enough, and, with this idea in mind, I saw that it was my part to make her so by the infallible means of providing her with new pleasures, regardless of expense. I thought of giving her a fine dinner in Milan at the pastry cook's, whose apartment was still at my disposition. I had to take the whole family, but without telling them where we were to go, for my friend the Count might have felt obliged to inform his wife and to introduce his sisters to her. That would have spoiled all my pleasure. The excursion could not but be attractive to the three sisters, for none of them had ever seen Milan. Little by little I found myself so taken with the idea I had conceived that I determined to carry it out in magnificent style.

I wrote to Zenobia to go at once to buy three ready-made dresses for three ladies of station, of the very prettiest Lyons fabrics she could find; I sent her the measurements, specifying the trimmings I wanted. The most expensive trimming, which was to be of stiffened Valenciennes lace, I intended for a dress of pearl-gray satin, which was to be the shortest and which would be for the Countess Ambrosio. I sent her a letter for Signor Greppi, who would give her a man to pay for whatever she bought. I ordered her to take the three dresses to the pastry cook's and to lay them out on my bed. I sent her a letter for the pastry cook in which I ordered him to prepare a dinner for eight persons on such-and-such a day, with both fish and meat, sparing no expense. I instructed Zenobia that everything must be ready in twice twenty-four hours, and that she must be waiting at the pastry cook's for me when I arrived with the three ladies for whom the three dresses were intended. I sent her my letter by Clairmont, telling no one where I was sending it.

Upon Clairmont's return, when I was sure that my orders would be carried out to the letter, I said at table to the Countess-mother that I begged the honor of giving her another dinner like that which I had given her in Lodi; but on two conditions: first, that no one in the family was to know where I was taking them until we were in our carriages; second, that no one was to leave the house in which I would give the dinner except to get back into the carriages, which would take us home to S. A. the same day.

The Countess, as politeness demanded, looked at her husband, who instantly said that he was ready and willing, as indeed he would be if I had proposed to carry off his entire family. I told him that we would leave the next day at eight o'clock in the morning, and that they need not concern themselves about the carriages. I did not exclude the good Canon from the party, both because he danced attendance on the Countess Ambrosio and because he had begun playing heavily and lost every day. Indeed, that very day he was cleaned out. He lost three hundred zecchini on his word, and at supper he said he must ask me to let him have three days to await the return of a man whom he would send to Milan early the next morning. I replied that all my money was at his service.

When we retired I as always accompanied my charming Hebe to her room. We had begun Fontenelle's[9] *Plurality of Worlds.* She said that, having to rise early, she wanted to go to bed, and, replying that she was right, I took Ariosto and, while she was getting into bed, read her the story of Fiordispina, Princess of Spain, who had fallen in love with Bradamante.[10] At the end of the charming tale I expected to see Clementina on fire; but not a bit of it, she was as downcast as her sister Eleonora.

"What is the matter, divine Hebe? Perhaps you did not like Ricciardetto?"

"I liked Ricciardetto very much, and in the Princess's place I would have done what she did; but we shall not sleep tonight, and it is your fault."

"I? What have I done?"

"Alas, nothing! But you could make us happy by giving us a great proof of your friendship."

"Speak. My life, all I possess, my will itself—all is yours. You shall sleep."

"Let us into the secret of where we are going tomorrow."

"Didn't I tell you you would learn that when we set out?"

"But we shall not have slept; and we will be in the dumps all day long."

"I should be very sorry for that."

"Do you doubt our discretion? In any case, it can't be a very weighty secret."

"And it is not. It is a made-to-order secret; but I will reveal it to you. I should be wronging you if I hesitated. I shall give you dinner tomorrow at my apartment in Milan."

"In Milan?"

"In Milan?" asked her sister.

They both get up, just as they are, they fall on me, they devour me, then they leave me to embrace each other, then they come back and sit on my knees, and they talk to me. They have never seen Milan, they have longed for nothing more than to see that magnificent city; when they had to admit that they had never seen it, they felt ashamed; but at the very moment when they learned that they were to have that joy the idea that they must return to S. A. the same night filled them with despair, and the condition I had made that they must not leave the house to which I would take them seemed to them harsh and inhuman.

"Can one travel the fifteen miles to Milan," said Clementina, "just to dine there, and travel them again just to get home?"

"Can we go there," said Eleonora, "without seeing at least our sister-in-law?"

"I foresaw all your objections, my dear children, and that was the reason for my secrecy; but that is how the excursion has been arranged. Perhaps you do not like it. I am at your orders."

"Not like it?" said Clementina. "The excursion is only the more charming just as you thought it up."

So saying, intoxicated with joy and gratitude, she did not think of defending herself from love. She was in my arms, as I was in hers; Eleonora had gone back to bed. Clementina surrendered to all my desires and shared my ecstasies, mingling her smiles with tears which arose from her amorous and blissful soul.

Two hours later I left her and went to bed, full of my happiness and impatient to renew it on the morrow all the more perfectly because my blood would have cooled.

The next morning at eight we all breakfasted; but despite my usual ability to do so, I could not enliven my companions. Clementina and her sister concealed their joy; but the others, in their impatience to know where I would take them, were a trifle somber.

Clairmont had carried out my orders well, and, the carriages being all ready in the courtyard, we go down and I put the Countess Ambrosio in my carriage with Clementina, who held the baby on her lap; after that I go to the other carriage and announce to the company, who are dying of curiosity:

"*We are going to Milan.* Whip up, postilion. To Milan: to the Piazza Cordusio, to the pastry cook's."

I at once leave them and get into my carriage, saying the same thing to my postilion. Clairmont mounts, and we set off. Clementina pretended astonishment, and the Countess Ambrosio looked as one does when one has had a surprise which, though pleasant, gives occasion for thought. We had plenty of time to discuss it and to reach a pitch of gaiety before we came to a village where we got out because, having gone at full speed, the horses had to be unbridled for a quarter of an hour.

I found my companions in good spirits, like people who have decided to make the best of something.

"What will my wife say?" said my friend the Count.

"She will learn nothing about it, and in any case I am the only guilty one. You will dine at my apartment, where I live incognito."

"You have been thinking about taking me to Milan for two years now," said the Countess Ambrosio to her husband, "and our friend thought about it for only a quarter of an hour."

"True," he replied; "but I wished to have us spend a month there."

At that I told him that if he wished to spend a month there, I would see to everything, and he thanked me, saying that I was an extraordinary man. I said I was a man who did not find easy things difficult.

"Admit that you are happy," the Countess Ambrosio said to me as soon as we were back in the carriage; and I admitted it:

"But it is the company which makes me happy. Banish me from your presence, and I shall be wretched."

I made them laugh till the tears came by putting the baby to my breast, where it sucked in vain until disappointment set it to crying. The loving mother soothed it, enjoying my praise of the beautiful picture she presented. She was only less of a beauty than her sister Clementina, who was also three inches taller. We laughed all through the journey, chiefly at the Canon, who had asked the Countess's intercession to gain him my permission to absent himself for half an hour to make a call. She had replied that he must abide by the same condition as all the others. He wanted to call on a lady who, if she learned that he had been in Milan without going to her house, would never have forgiven him.

We arrived in Milan as the clock was striking noon and got out at the pastry cook's door, his wife at once taking the sole offspring of the noble A. B. family in her arms; she begged the Countess to entrust him to her, exhibiting a bosom which proved her competence to make the offer. This scene of mammary hospitality took place at the foot of the stairs, and the Countess accepted the kind offices of the pastry cook's wife with a dignity which enchanted me. I felt that I was the author of all the little beauties which chance sent to embellish the play which my genius had brought forth. I was the happiest of all my actors, and I felt it.

She took my arm, and we entered my apartment, than which nothing could have been neater. I am surprised to see Zenobia with Croce's forsaken mistress, who strikes me as ravishingly pretty. I very nearly failed to recognize her. She was very well dressed, and her face, freed from the expression of sadness it had worn when I had entrusted her to Zenobia, had become enchanting.

"There are two charming young pullets," said the Milanese Countess. "Who are you, Signorine?"

"We are," replied Zenobia, "the Cavaliere's very humble servants, and we are here only to have the honor of serving you."

Zenobia had taken it upon herself to bring the other, who was already beginning to speak Italian, and who looked at me uncertainly, fearing that I might disapprove. But I quickly reassured her, telling her that she had done well to keep Zenobia company. Her brow cleared. The girl could not be unfortunate for long, because no one could look at her without becoming interested in her. A letter of credit displayed on a face is not liable to bankruptcy. Whoever has eyes pays it at sight.

So my "very humble servants" relieve the ladies of their mantles and show them to my bedroom, where they see the three dresses spread out on the large table. I knew only the one of pearl-colored satin trimmed with lace, for I had ordered it. It was the Countess Ambrosio who noticed it before she did the two others.

"What a charming dress!" she said. "You must know to whom it belongs."

"Of course I do. It belongs to your husband, who will do as he pleases with it. I hope that, if he gives it to you, you will not offend him by refusing it. There, Count, the dress is yours. I will kill myself if you will not do me the honor to accept it."

"We are too fond of you to let you kill yourself. The jest is as magnanimous as it is novel. I accept the dress with this hand, and with the other I give it to my dear wife."

"What, my dear! This dress, this charming dress, is mine? Whom shall I thank? Both of you. I insist upon wearing it at dinner."

The two other dresses were not as rich; but they were more striking, and I rejoiced, seeing my angel's eyes fixed on the longer one, and Eleonora looking only at the one she was sure I intended for her. The first was of rose-colored satin with apple-green stripes, trimmed with tufts of down; the other was sky-blue, variegated with bunches of flowers in five or six colors and trimmed with mignonette lace in large knots, which made the prettiest effect. It was Zenobia who unhesitatingly told Clementina that the striped dress was hers.

"How do you know?"

"Because it is the longest of the three."

"Then it is mine?" she asked me.

"If I may dare to hope so."

"I will put it on."

Countess Eleonora declared that hers had a style which made it superior to the two others. We left them to themselves.

I went into the next room with the two Counts and the Canon, who were thoughtful. They must have been reflecting on the prodigality of gamesters, to whom money cost nothing; but I saw that, even so, they were astonished, and arousing astonishment was my passion. It was an intense feeling of self-esteem which made me superior to those who were around me; it was enough that I believed it. I would have scorned anyone who had dared to tell me that I was being laughed at, yet it is possible that he would have been telling me the truth.

My contentment putting me in high spirits, I infected my guests with my gaiety. I warmly embraced Count Ambrosio, asking him to forgive me for the presents I had given his family, and I thanked his brother again and again for having made me acquainted with him.

The beautiful Countesses came in, shining like stars, all three saying they were sure I had taken their measurements, but they did not know how. Countess Ambrosio remarked that I had had her dress made in such a way that it could be let out when she was with child; and she admired the trimming, saying that it must have cost four times as much as the dress. Clementina could not tear herself away from the looking glass; she supposed that in the rose and green colors I had wanted to give her Hebe's attributes.[11] As for Countess Eleonora, she continued to maintain that her dress was the prettiest.

Delighted with my beauties' satisfaction, I summoned the company to table, all of us being very hungry. At the dinner we were served every imaginable delicacy in the way of both fish and flesh, as well as oysters from the Arsenal[12] of Venice, which the pastry cook had managed to wheedle from the Duke of Modena's maître d'hôtel, and which we found delicious. We ate three hundred of them, and we emptied twenty bottles of champagne. We spent three hours at the table, drinking and singing, served by the beautiful girls whose charms rivaled those of the ladies who admired them.

Toward the end of the meal the pastry cook's wife came in with the Countess's baby at her breast. It was a striking tableau: the joy of the devoted mother, who exclaimed with delight when she saw him, and the pastry cook's wife, who seemed proud to have taken the Countess's place for four whole hours.

We spent another hour drinking punch and laughing, after which the Countesses went to undress. Zenobia saw to putting the three dresses into my carriage in a basket; and when I said that it was time to set out I saw everyone sad. Croce's forsaken mistress found an opportunity to tell me that she was very happy with Zenobia and to ask me when we should leave. I promised her that she should be in Marseilles two weeks after Easter at the latest.

Questioned privately, Zenobia assured me that she was a girl of excellent character, very well behaved, and such that she would be most sorry to see her leave. In my heartfelt satisfaction over the beautiful dresses she had bought, I gave her twelve zecchini. She said that I would find the mercer's receipts in the hands of Signor

Greppi's clerk. Content with everything, I paid the worthy pastry cook whatever he asked. I loved, I was loved, my health was good, I had a great deal of money, and I spent it, I was happy and I confessed it to myself, laughing at the stupid moralists who say that there is no true happiness on earth. It is their "on earth" which makes me laugh, as if one could look for it anywhere else. *Mors ultima linea rerum est* ("Death is the final boundary line of all things").[13] There is a happiness which is perfect and real as long as it continues; it passes, but its end does not mean that it has not existed and that he who has enjoyed it cannot have been aware of it. The men who do not deserve happiness are those who, having it, hide it from themselves, or those who, having the means to obtain it, neglect it. *Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero* ("Seize the day, trusting as little as possible to the day to come"),[14] and in another place: *Prudens futuri temporis exitum caliginosa nocte premit Deus ridetque si mortalis ultra fas trepidat. Quod adest memento componere aequus: caetera fluminis ritu feruntur* ("Wisely does the god conceal in dark night what the future is to bring, and laughs if a mortal feels concern beyond what is lawful. Remember to deal calmly with what now presses upon you: the rest is borne along like a river").[15]

We left the pastry cook's house at seven o'clock, we arrived at S. A. about midnight; and we at once went to bed; but I did not leave Clementina until I had spent with her some of those hours which make a man happy and which come back to make him happy every time that, well in body and mind, he recalls them.

"Do you suppose," she asked me, "that I can be happy after you leave?"

"During the first days we shall both be unhappy; but little by little our fire will be quenched under the ashes of philosophy."

"But admit that you will easily console yourself with your young ladies; but do not suppose that I am jealous of them, for I should loathe myself if I thought I could be capable of receiving the kind of consolation you will certainly seek."

"Do not imagine that, I beg you. The girls whom you saw are not of a kind to take your place, and they cannot fill my heart and mind. The taller of them is the wife of a tailor, and the other is a respectable girl whom I shall take back to Marseilles, her native city, from which a wretch carried her off after seducing her. In future and until the day of my death you alone shall reign over my soul, and if it ever happens that, led astray by my senses, I clasp in my arms some object which has tempted me, hideous repentance, my dear friend, will follow fast to avenge you and to make me unhappy."

"I am sure that I shall never be unhappy for that reason. But I do not understand how, loving me as you love me and holding me in your arms, you can believe in the possibility of becoming unfaithful to me."

"I do not believe it, I assume it."

"That seems to me to be the same thing."

What was I to answer? She was right, even though she was wrong; but what set her wrong was love; mine did not show a strength equal to that with which hers forbade her to foresee. I reasoned more correctly only because I loved less. The man who, in the arms of his mistress, is convinced of that can answer only by sighs and kisses mingled with tears.

"Take me with you," she said, "I am willing. I shall be happy. You must, if you love me, be delighted with your own happiness. Let us make each other happy, dear friend."

"I cannot dishonor your family."

"Do you consider me unworthy to become your wife?"

"You are worthy of a monarch. It is I who am unworthy to possess such a girl as you. Consider that I have nothing in the world but the Goddess Fortune, who may forsake me tomorrow. Also, I do not fear her reverses, but I would kill myself if I saw you involved in my misfortunes.''

''Why does it seem to me that you can never meet with misfortune, and why do I feel certain that you cannot be happy except with me? Your love is not like mine if you do not trust in it as I do.''

''More than you can have done, my angel, I have had a cruel experience of life, which, making me tremble for the future, affrights love. Love affrighted [16] loses in strength what it gains in reasonableness.''

''Cruel reasonableness! Then we must subscribe to our separation?''

''My heart will remain with you; I shall leave adoring you, and if Fortune is kind to me in England you shall see me here next year. I will buy an estate wherever you choose, and I will make you a present of it, sure that you will bring it to me as your dowry, and our children will be our delight.''

''Oh, what a charming future! It is a dream. Would that I could fall asleep and make it last until I die! But what shall I do if you leave me with a child?''

''Ah, my divine Hebe! That will not be. Have you not noticed that I spared you?''

''Spared? I know nothing about it; but I can imagine. I am grateful to you. Alas! You were not born to bring me troubles. No! Never can I repent of having surrendered to love in your arms. Everyone in this household says that you are fortunate and that you deserve your good fortune. What praise! My dear friend, you cannot imagine how my heart leaps for joy when I hear that said in your absence. When I am told that I love you I reply that I adore you, and you know it is no lie.''

It was with these dialogues that we occupied the intervals between our amorous ecstasies during the five or six last nights which we spent together. Her sister, in bed beside us, slept or pretended to sleep. When I left, I went to bed, I rose late, then I spent the whole day with her, either alone or in company with the family.

What a life! Is it possible that a man who is his own master can bring himself to leave it? Fortune had ordained that I should win from the Canon all the money I had let the family win from me by never watching how they played. Clementina alone would never profit by my inattentiveness; but on the last two days I made her go halves with me in my bank, and, the Canon still being unlucky, she won about a hundred zecchini. The worthy monk lost a thousand zecchini, of which seven hundred remained in the house.

The last night, the whole of which I spent with my angel, was very sad; we should have died of grief if love had not come to our aid from time to time. When, the last half hour having come, we appeared at the table to breakfast with the entire family, both Clementina and I looked as if we were at death's door; but our state was respected. They saw me gloomy for once, and no one asked me the reason. I promised to send them news of me and to return the following year; and I wrote to them; but I stopped when the misfortunes which overwhelmed me in London made me lose hope of seeing them again. I did not see them again; but I could never forget Clementina. Six years later, on my return from Spain, I learned, and I wept for joy, that she was living happily, Marchesa di . . . ,[17] in the city of . . . , three years married and the mother of two male children, the younger of whom, now twenty-seven years of age, is today a captain in the Austrian army. How I should like to meet him! When on my return from Spain I learned of Clementina's excellent situation I was in wretched circumstances. Having traveled through Lombardy, I was on my way to Leghorn to better my fortunes. I found myself four miles from an estate where she might be with her husband; but I did not have the courage to go to see her. Perhaps I did well.

Having to go downstairs to leave, and seeing the whole family about to accompany me to my carriage and not seeing Clementina, I pretended to go for something I had forgotten, in order to bid her a last farewell. I found her dissolved in tears, her throat swollen, and unable to say a single word to me. Mingling my tears with hers, I took a last kiss from her trembling lips, and I left her there. After thanking and embracing the entire company, I set off with my dear Count, and in less than three hours, during which we slept, we arrived at his house in Milan, where we found the Countess, who did not expect us, with the Marchese Triulzi. After laughing heartily that amiable man sent to his house for dinner for four. They were able to tell us that we had been in Milan, and the Countess complained that we had not let her know of it; but the Marchese soothed her, saying that she would have had to give us dinner.

At the table I told them that I should leave for Genoa on the fourth day, and, unluckily for me, the Marchese Triulzi promised me a letter to Signora Isolabella,[18] a celebrated coquette, and the Countess promised me one for the Bishop of Tortona,[19] who was a relative of hers.

I reached Milan in time to wish my dear Teresa, who was going to Palermo, a good journey. I talked to her about our son Don Cesarino's bent,[20] trying to persuade her to abet him in it. She replied that she was leaving him in Milan, that she now knew what had given rise to his passion, and that she would never consent to it. She said that she hoped to find him changed when she returned; but he did not change. The reader will hear more of him fifteen years hence.

I settled my accounts with Greppi, who gave me bills of exchange on Marseilles and a letter of credit for ten thousand francs on Genoa, where I did not expect to need much cash. Despite my luck at play, I left Milan poorer by a thousand zecchini. I had spent money fast and furiously.

I passed every afternoon at the Marchesa Q.'s, sometimes alone and sometimes with her sister present. With Clementina's image constantly before the eyes of my soul, she did not seem to me the same woman.

Having no reason to keep it from Count A. B. that I was taking a young lady with me, I sent Clairmont to fetch her small trunk, after paying Zenobia all that she had disbursed for her, and at eight o'clock on the morning of my departure she came to my apartment, very nicely dressed.

After kissing the hand of the Countess who had made an attempt on my life, and after thanking my dear Count, I left Milan on the 20th of March in the year 1763, and I have never returned there.

The young lady, whom out of respect for herself and her family I shall call Crosin,[21] was charming and had an air of breeding which was above her station and a reserved manner which bespoke her excellent upbringing. Seeing her beside me, I congratulated myself on feeling in no danger of falling in love with her; but I was mistaken. I told Clairmont that I intended to present her as my niece, and I ordered him to treat her with due respect.

Having never talked seriously with her, I first took care to gauge her intelligence and, though I had no intention of making love to her, to inspire friendship and confidence in her. The wound which Clementina had made in my heart could not heal. I congratulated myself on being in a position to restore her to the bosom of her family without harrowing myself and in the certainty that I should leave her there without regret. I enjoyed my noble deed in advance, and I was proud of my ability to spend many days with a very pretty girl from no other motive than the heroic one of saving her from the disgrace she might have suffered if she had made the journey alone. She felt this.

"Indeed," she said, "I am sure that Monsieur de la

Croix would never have forsaken me if he had not found you in Milan."

"You amaze me. Believe me, he acted basely, for, despite all your merits, he could not count on me as certainly as all that. I will not say that he deliberately scorned you, for his circumstances may have been desperate, but you ought to be convinced that he no longer loved you."

"I am certain of the contrary. Finding himself without resources, he had either to leave me or to kill himself."

"Neither. His duty was to sell everything you had and take you back to Marseilles. When one is in Genoa one can go there by water for very little. La Croix counted on the interest your pretty face inspires, and he was not mistaken; but you see what a risk he took. A man who loves, believe me, cannot bear such an idea. Permit me to tell you that, if you had not made a strong impression on me, my concern for you would have been very slight. But I am making a mistake in condemning La Croix, for I see plainly that you are still in love with him."

"That is true; I pity him, and I complain of nothing but my cruel destiny. I shall not see him again; but I shall not love again. I will retire to a convent. My father has a kind heart; he will forgive me. I was the victim of love; my will was not free. When I reflect on what I have done, I cannot repent."

"You would have left Milan with him, even on foot, if he had told you to?"

"Can you doubt it? But he loved me too much to expose me to weariness and poverty."

"I am sure that if we find him in Marseilles you will go back to him."

"No. My soul is already beginning to recover its freedom. The day will come when I shall thank God that I have utterly forgotten him."

The girl's sincerity pleased me. Knowing the power of love, I pitied her. She spent two hours telling me all the details of her unfortunate passion.

Having reached Tortona[22] at nightfall, I decided to spend the night there, leaving it to Clairmont to order me a good supper. But at supper my pretended niece showed me a cast of mind which I did not expect. In addition, she kept up with me in enjoying the excellent made dishes, glass in hand. I found her amusing, lively within the limits prescribed by good society, and not uttering another word about her wretched lover. To something I said when we had risen from table, she replied with a witticism which, after setting me laughing heartily, gave me a decided liking for her. I embraced her in the joy of my heart, and, having found on her beautiful lips a kiss as ardent as mine, I began to be tempted by the idea of love. I asked her if she would take it in good part if we shared a bed.

At this invitation she shows surprise and, in a serious tone and with a submissive air, than which nothing could have been better calculated to displease me, she replies:

"Alas, it is for you to command."

"Command? It is not a matter of obedience, or even of obligingness. You have inspired love in me; but if you do not share it I can stifle it in its infancy. As you see, there are two beds here."

"Then I will sleep in the other one. If that should make you less kind to me, I shall consider myself unfortunate."

"No, no, my angel; you will not find me deserving of your scorn. Go to bed. I shall find a way to win your esteem."

She drew out a screen, and she went to bed after undressing completely, as she told me herself at Genoa several days later.

The next morning very early I sent the Bishop of Tortona the letter from Countess A. B. An hour later, just as I was breakfasting with my niece, an old priest came to invite me to dinner at the episcopal palace with the young lady who was with me. The Countess's letter had said nothing of a young lady who might be with me; but the polite Spanish prelate saw that, unable to leave her alone, I should not have accepted his invitation; he forced me to accept by inviting me with her. He had apparently learned from the innkeeper's register that the lady was my niece. I told the priest I would go.

My niece, apparently in the best of humors, treated me as if I could feel no resentment at her having preferred her bed to mine. This pleased me. My blood having cooled, I saw that she would have degraded herself if she had acted otherwise. I did not even feel hurt. Self-esteem tells an intelligent woman not to yield to a lover's desires until he can suppose that she has been won by his attentions. I had invited her to share my bed as if it were expected of me. I had drunk too much. I saw that she felt flattered when I told her I would take her with me to dinner at the Bishop's. She attired herself with elegance and modesty. At midday Monsignore sent us a carriage.

I saw a prelate two inches taller than myself, eighty years of age, but active, serious, and affable. When my niece tried to kiss his hand he withdrew it, offering her the golden cross which hung from his neck. She kissed it saying:

"This is what I love"[23]

She then looked at me, and the ingenious jest rather surprised me. At table I found the Bishop learned. We were a company of nine or ten; in addition to four priests, he had invited two young noblemen, who treated my niece with every possible attention, which she received in a manner to convince me that she was accustomed to it. I noticed that the Bishop never fixed his eyes on her pretty face, even when he spoke to her. I determined to win the love of this girl by my assiduities.

I left Tortona at four o'clock and traveled to Novi,[24] where I stopped for the night. At supper I turned the conversation to religion, and, finding her a good Christian, I asked her how she could have joked when she was kissing the cross of Our Lord. She said that the pun had come to her by pure chance, and that if she had thought about it such a jest would never have left her lips. I pretended to believe her. She was witty. The desires she inspired in me became stronger by the moment, but my self-esteem forced me to hold them in check. I refrained from embracing her when she went to bed; but, there being no screen, she did not undress until she thought I was asleep. The next morning we set out at six o'clock, and at noon we were in Genoa.

I went to lodge in a townsman's house of which Pogomas[25] had sent me the address in Milan. He had rented an apartment of four very well-furnished rooms for me, with which I was thoroughly pleased. I sent him word that I had arrived, and I ordered dinner.

Volume Nine

CHAPTER I

I find Rosalie happy. Signora Isolabella. The cook. Biribissi. Irene. Passano in prison. My niece an old friend of Rosalie's.

POGOMAS, who used the name Passano[1] in Genoa because everyone knew him, introduced me to his wife and his daughter, both of them ugly, dirty, and impudent. I quickly got rid of them in order to eat a hasty dinner with my niece and then to call on the Marchese Grimaldi. I could not wait to find out where Rosalie[2] was living.

A *staffiere* ("confidential servant") of the Senator's told me that His Excellency was in Venice and was not expected back until the end of April. He showed me the way to Paretti's,[3] who had married her six or seven months after I left.

Recognizing me at once, he was obviously delighted to see me, and he left his shop to take me to his wife, who, on seeing me, gave a cry of joy and came to me with open arms. A minute later he left us to return to his business, asking his wife to show me her daughter.

After showing me a six-months-old infant, Rosalie told me that she was happy, that her husband was devoted to her in heart and soul, and that, with the help of the Marchese Grimaldi's patronage, he had plied his trade to such purpose that he was already working on his own account.

Rosalie had become a perfect beauty. She was inexpressibly grateful to me for having come to see her so soon after my arrival, and she added in a tone which allowed no gainsaying that she expected me for dinner the next day.

"My dear and loving friend, I owe you my good fortune and my peace of mind; let us embrace each other, but no more; and tomorrow let us beware of speaking to each other too fondly.[4] But, come to think of it, I have a surprise for you; wait a moment."

She leaves the room and, two minutes later, comes back with Veronica.[5] She had engaged her as her chambermaid. Delighted to see her again, and enjoying her surprise, I embraced her, asking her at once for news of Annetta;[6] she said she was well and worked at home with her mother. I told her to send her to me to serve as maid to my niece for the two or three weeks I should spend in Genoa. She promises to send her the next day; but Rosalie bursts into laughter, exclaiming:

"Another niece! But, since she enjoys that privilege, I hope you will bring her with you tomorrow."

"With pleasure, and the more so because she comes from Marseilles."

"Marseilles? She might know me, but I don't care. What is her name?"

Telling her some common name, I say that she is the daughter of a female cousin of mine in Marseilles; she does not believe a word of it, but she is happy to see me still involved in pleasant adventures.

Leaving her, I go to Signora Isolabella's[7] and send in the Marchese Triulzi's[8] letter. A minute later she comes to greet me, saying that he had sent her word in advance and that she was expecting me. She immediately introduced me to the Marchese Agostino Grimaldi della Pietra,[9] her great *cicisbeo*[10] during the prolonged absence of her husband, who was living in Lisbon.

Signora Isolabella's rooms were well appointed; as for herself, at the age of thirty she had a pretty face, a gentle, agreeable character, a small waist, extreme thinness, and a complexion covered with rouge and whitening, but so awkwardly that it was visible at once. It revolted me despite her black eyes, which were superb. A half hour later I take my leave, and I accept an invitation to supper the next day

Back at my lodging, I am happy to see that my niece has settled very comfortably into a room separated from mine only by a closet in which, I tell her, I will have the maid sleep whom I have engaged for her and whom she will see the following day. She thanks me. I tell her that she will come to dinner with me at a merchant's house as my niece, and she is grateful to me for all the pleasures I provide for her. This girl, whom Croce[11] had infatuated to the point of insanity, was as pretty as an angel, but her well-bred manner and her gentle nature surpassed even her rare charms. I was in love with her, and regret that I had not made her mine the first day gnawed at my soul. If I had taken her at her word, I should have become her lover and, in tranquil possession of her, should perhaps have made her forget Croce completely.

Having scarcely dined, I sat down at table as hungry as my niece, whose appetite was magnificent. We laughed together, finding our supper very bad. I told Clairmont[12] to send up the landlady.

"It is the cook's fault entirely," she said. "He is a cousin of your secretary Passano, who engaged him for you. If he had left it to me I should have given you an excellent cook and at lower wages."

"Have him here for me tomorrow."

"Gladly. But first arrange to get rid of this one. He is quartered on me with his wife and children. It is Passano, who engaged him, who should dismiss him."

"Leave it to me. In the meanwhile engage your cook for me; I will try him day after tomorrow."

I took my niece to her room, I asked her to go to bed without concerning herself about me. I read the gazette. When, after reading it, I went and kissed her and wished her good night, saying that she might spare me the torment of going to bed alone, she made no answer.

The next morning, just as Clairmont was washing my feet, she came into my room to ask me to have coffee with milk made for her because she found chocolate too heating; I at once sent Clairmont to get it, and she knelt down before me to dry me.

"I will not let you do that."

"Why not? It is a token of friendship."

"To give it to anyone but a lover is to degrade yourself."

She lowered her beautiful eyes and sat down beside me. Clairmont came back, dried me, put on my shoes and stockings, and the landlady came up with coffee for her and chocolate for me. She asked her if she wanted to buy a beautiful Pekin silk mantilla[13] in the Genoese style, and I replied that she had only to bring it to her. She went to fetch the milliner; in the meanwhile I gave her twenty Genoese zecchini,[14] telling her to use them for pin money. She accepted them, expressing her gratitude and showing no reluctance when I embraced her. The milliner came up, she made her choice, bargained, and paid.

Passano came to protest to me on the subject of the cook.

"I engaged him by your order," he said, "for the whole of your stay in Genoa at four lire a day with board and lodging."

"Where is my letter?"

"Here: 'Provide me with a good cook, whom I will keep as long as I am in Genoa.' "

"I said 'good,' and he is not good. I am the only competent judge of his goodness."

"You are making a mistake, for he will prove that he is good; he will sue you in court, and you will lose."

"Then you gave him a written agreement?"

"Authorized by you."

"I want to see him at once. Bring him up."

I ordered Clairmont to go for a lawyer. The cook comes up with Passano, and I see the agreement signed by two witnesses and so drawn up that, *stricto jure* ("according to the letter of the law"), I could not but lose in court; I rail, but to no purpose. The cook tells me he is good and that he can find four thousand people in Genoa who will bear written testimony that he is a good cook. The lawyer arrives and tells me the same; he says more: he says I will find no one to say he is bad.

"That may be so," I reply, "but I want him to leave because I want to engage another one; and I will pay him just the same."

"In that case," says the cook, "I will sue you for damaging my reputation."

At that I began alternately laughing and crying, and just then in came Don Agostino Grimaldi.[15] When he heard the story he laughed, shrugged his shoulders, and told me to beware of going to court, for I should lose the case and have to pay the costs as well.

"The person who, if he is not *una bestia* ['an idiot'], has played a rascally trick on you is your secretary, who should have included a clause providing for a trial, as one does with all cooks."

Passano here interrupted him to say that he was neither a rascal nor *una bestia*. The landlady adds that he is his cousin.

At that I pay the lawyer and send him away, and I tell the cook to go downstairs. After that I ask Passano if I owe him any money; he replies that, on the contrary, I had paid him for a month in advance and that he still has ten days in my service.

"Very well, I make you a present of the ten days, and I dismiss you here and now unless your cousin leaves this house today, giving you back the stupid agreement you entered into with him. Now go."

They all left; whereupon Signor Grimaldi said that I had won my case with Alexander's sword.[16] He asked me to introduce him to the lady he saw there, and I told him she was my niece. He said that Signora Isolabella would be delighted if I would introduce my niece to her, and I excused myself from doing so on the ground that the Marchese Triulzi had not mentioned her in his letter. A moment later he left; and in comes Annetta with her mother. She had become dazzling. The little yellowish spots which she had on her face had disappeared, I thought her teeth had become whiter, she had grown taller, and her bosom, having attained its perfection, was concealed by a gauze fichu. I introduced her to my mistress, whose surprise amused me. I showed her her bed, telling her mother to send her belongings. Having to make my toilet, I told my niece to go to make hers with Annetta, who was delighted to be with me again.

Toward noon, when we were all ready to go out, my landlady came to present my new cook and to give me the agreement which Passano had made with his cousin. This comical victory put me in a mood for enjoyment. I gave my new cook instructions for the dinner I wanted, and I went to Rosalie's in a sedan chair, followed by my niece.

I saw a brilliant company of both sexes, and I observed my niece's surprise when she saw Rosalie and the latter's equal surprise when she saw my niece. Rosalie, embracing her, called her by her name, and she replied with a compliment which she ended by assuring her that the first news she would send her mother would be that she had found her in Genoa, beautiful and happy. As I expected, they went into another room together, and they returned a quarter of an hour later looking very well pleased. But the scene was not yet ended. Paretti comes in, and she introduces my niece to him, saying that she is Mademoiselle xxx. He is delighted; he is in correspondence with her father; he runs out, and a minute later comes back with a letter from her father, which he shows her, and my niece kisses the signature. Seeing her touched to the verge of tears, I cannot hold back mine; I urge Rosalie to tell her husband that there are weighty reasons why he must not inform her father of the news.

The dinner was brilliant, and Rosalie did the honors of it with the greatest ease; but the homage of all the guests was paid to my niece, who, as the daughter of Monsieur xxx, the well-known and wealthy merchant of Marseilles, attracted the attention of a young man whom God had destined to be her husband. How gratified I was to find that I was serving as Heaven's chosen instrument!

As for Rosalie, she astonished me. She seemed really to have been born to be the mistress of a great house. She candidly took the credit for everything I found worthy of praise, even to the beautiful china and the exquisite wines. We rose from table well satisfied and in high spirits.

Tables at cards were proposed; but Rosalie, knowing that I did not like social games, declared that we must play *trente-et-quarante*[17] with everyone joining in. The game filled the time until supper, with no one being able to complain that he had lost too heavily. At midnight we broke up, all of us enchanted with the delightful evening we had spent.

Back at the house, I was no sooner alone with my niece than I asked her how she had come to know Rosalie in Marseilles.

"I made her acquaintance at my house, where she came with her mother to bring the washing. I always liked her. She is two years older than I am. I recognized her at once. She told me that it was you who had made her leave Marseilles, and that she owes her good fortune to you; but she told me nothing in detail. For my part, I told her no more than she must have supposed. I admitted that you are not my uncle, and if she thinks you are my lover I do not mind. You cannot imagine how much I enjoyed the evening; you were born to make people happy."

"But *La Croix*!"[18]

"Please do not speak of him."

She had me on fire. She called Annetta, and I went to my room. But after putting her mistress in bed, she came to mine, as I had expected.

"If it is true," she said, "that Madame is your niece, can I flatter myself that you still love me?"

"Yes, my dear Annetta, I love you; go get undressed, and then come back to talk with me."

With that rare girl I spent two charming hours which momentarily quenched the fire with which I burned for my niece.

The next morning Passano came to tell me that he had arranged matters with the cook at a cost of six zecchini, and I gave them to him, asking him to be more careful in future.

I went to breakfast at Rosalie's to invite her to dinner on the next day with her husband and four guests of her choice, adding that it would be for her to tell me if a cook I was thinking of engaging was good. After promising to come, she wanted to know the story of my amour with Mademoiselle xxx; but when I replied that I could not tell her the truth, she said that she was not interested in hearing me make up stories. But she was delighted when I told her what she had said to me about her. She asked me if I would mind if she came to my dinner with the young man who had shown my niece such great attention at table.

"Who is he? I am curious to know."

"He is So-and-so. He is the only son of a rich merchant."

"Bring him. Farewell, my erstwhile love."

On my way out I asked Paretti to get me a good hire valet, and he sent me an excellent one that same day. I found my niece still in bed. I told her that Rosalie would come to dine with us the next day, and that she could be sure her husband would not write to her father that she was in Genoa. She thanked me, for she was uneasy about it. Having to sup out that evening, I told her that she could go to Rosalie's, unless she would rather sup alone.

"My dear Uncle, your solicitude overwhelms me. I shall go to Rosalie's."

"Are you satisfied with Annetta?"

"By the way, she told me that she slept with you last night and that you were her first lover at the same time that you were her sister Veronica's."

"It is true, but she is an indiscreet chatterbox."

"You must forgive her. She told me that she had consented only after you swore to her that I was your niece; then, too, you must see that she can have confessed the thing to me only out of vanity. She expects it will oblige me to feel a certain respect for her; and she is right. I am bound to respect a girl whom you love."

"I would rather you had the right to be jealous of her. I give you my word that if she does not treat you with due deference, I will turn her out. You may not love me, and I have no right to complain of it; but you are not of a nature to truckle to me."

I was not sorry that my niece had learned that I had Annetta; but I was a trifle piqued by the way she had taken the thing. I thought she felt no love for me, and, what is more, it seemed to me that she was very glad to find that my relation with Annetta freed her from the risk she thought she ran every day when, constantly in my company, she saw me admiring her charms.

We dined alone; and my cook's appetizing dishes made us augur well of him. The valet whom Paretti had promised me arrived; I told my niece that he was hers to command. After an airing in my carriage for a couple of hours I took her to Paretti's and left her there. I went to Signora Isolabella's, where I found a numerous gathering of both men and women of the highest nobility.

The amusement provided until time for the supper was a *biribissi*,[19] to which the women in particular were passionately addicted. The game was forbidden in Genoa; but people were free in their own houses, and the government could say nothing. So the gamesters who owned and operated the game went to the private houses to which they were summoned, and word was sent to the players, who assembled there. That evening, unfortunately for them, the gamesters were at Signora Isolabella's, and so she had a large party. To do as the others were doing, I began playing too. In the room in which we were playing there was a portrait of the Signora dressed as a Harlequiness, and on the *biribissi* board there was a Harlequiness; to pay my court to the mistress of the house, beside whom I was seated, I staked a zecchino on the Harlequiness. The board contained thirty-six figures, the winner was paid thirty-two times his stake. Each player in turn drew a ball from the bag three times in succession. The *biribissi* gamesters numbered three: one tended the bag, another kept the money, the third attended to the board, gathering in the money staked on the various figures as soon as the ball had been drawn. The bank amounted to some two thousand zecchini. The table, a handsome cloth, and four silver candelabra belonged to the gamesters. One could stake as much as one wanted to on a number. I staked a zecchino each time.

Signora Isolabella having been the first to draw, and the bag going round to her right, my turn did not come until last. As fifteen or sixteen people were playing, when my turn arrived I was behind by almost fifty zecchini, for the Harlequiness had never come out. Everyone condoled with me.

But at last my turn arrived, I draw the ball, and it turns out to be the Harlequiness. I am paid thirty-two zecchini. I put them all on the same Harlequiness, it comes out, and they have to pay me a thousand. I leave fifty of them on the figure, and I make my third draw, and the Harlequiness comes out. They give me all the money they have, and, that not being enough, everything is mine—the table, the cloth, the *biribissi* board, and the four silver candelabra. Everyone laughs, the company applaud me, they jeer the crestfallen, bankrupt gamesters, and turn them out. But after the laughter I see that the ladies are inconsolable. The game is over; they are at a loss for something to do. I comfort them by saying that I will bank for the game, and I add that I will not have the odds in my favor: I will pay thirty-six. I was declared charming. I kept them amused until suppertime without either winning or losing. My eloquence finally persuaded Signora Isolabella to accept the whole outfit as a present. The strange turn of events was the subject which kept us amused all through supper. Having remained until all the others were gone, I invited the Signora and the Marchese to dine with me the next day, and they accepted. I had a heavy bag, in which were three hundred [20] zecchini in silver, carried out to my carriage, and I went to Rosalie's to call for my niece, whom I was to take home and who told me that she had spent a delightful evening.

"A very pleasant young man," she said, "whom Rosalie will bring to dine with us tomorrow, said countless flattering things to me, among them that he wants to go to Marseilles to make my father's acquaintance and to pay his court to me. He will have his journey for his pains."

"Why?"

"Because he will not see me. A convent shall be my world. My kind, humane father will forgive me, and I will punish myself."

"That is an idea bred from melancholy, which you should put out of your mind. You are a woman to make the happiness of a husband worthy of you and secure, so far as that is possible, from the vagaries of fortune. The more I study you, the more convinced I am of what I am saying to you."

I observed with pleasure my niece's kind manner to Annetta when she undressed her, and a certain lack of attentiveness in the latter which displeased me. When she came to bed I chided her on the subject, with a gentleness to which she should have replied only by caresses; but not a bit of it, she proceeded to cry. A pretty girl's tears in the arms of a lover ready for amusement put him out of humor.

"Be gay," I said, "or go to your bed."

At these words she broke from my arms and left me to my own devices; I fell asleep in a temper.

The next morning I sternly told her that she had played a scurvy trick on me and that I would dismiss her if she did it again; instead of soothing me, she cried again, and, my patience exhausted, I went to count my money. A half hour later my niece enters and in a soft, feeling voice asks me why I had mortified poor Annetta.

"My dear niece, tell her to behave herself."

At that she smiles, takes a handful of my scudi, and goes. A minute later I see Annetta in high spirits, with her scudi in her apron, come to embrace me and promise she will never cry again in all her life. Such was the nature of my niece, who wanted me to love her and did not want me as a lover. In the code of feminine coquetry, such projects are far from uncommon.

Passano, whom I had not sent for, comes in and congratulates me on my triumph.

"Who told you about it?"

"Everyone at the coffeehouse. It's unheard of, for the *biribissanti*[21] are cheats with nothing to learn. The thing will get you talked about, for everyone says you could not possibly have cleaned them out as you did unless you had come to an understanding with the one who tended the bag."

"My dear fellow, you bore me. Give this coin to your wife and go away."

The gold piece I had given him was worth a hundred Genoese lire.[22] It was a coin which the government had

had struck for internal commerce. There were others worth fifty and twenty-five lire.

I went on counting my gold and silver. Clairmont hands me a note. It was a fond invitation from Irene, who asked me to breakfast with her. My dear Irene in Genoa! After locking up my money I go there in morning dress, I find her well lodged, she tells me that the furniture belongs to her, and her old father, Count Rinaldi, embraces me, shedding tears of joy. He congratulates me.

“Three thousand zecchini,” he says, “are something!”

“Yes: practice and luck.”

“The amusing thing is that the man who tended the bag is in the pay of the other two *biribissanti.*”

“What strikes you as amusing in that?”

“That at no loss to himself he must have been the gainer by half the amount, for except on that condition he would never have made an agreement with you.”

“So you believe that?”

“Everybody believes it. The thing can’t be otherwise. He’s a cheat who has made his fortune by betraying cheats. All the sharpers in Genoa are applauding him and singing your praises.”

“As an even greater cheat?”

“They don’t call you that—far from it. They hail you as a sublime intellect, they congratulate you.”

“My thanks to them.”

“I heard the story from someone who was present at the delightful encounter. He said that you recognized the ball the second and third time by touch, with the connivance of the man with the bag.”

“And you believe that is true.”

“I am convinced of it. There’s not a gentleman who, in your place, would not have wished he could do the same. But I advise you to take every precaution when you meet the man with the bag to give him his half. You will have spies following you. If you wish, I will see to it for you.”

I had self-control enough to remain cool, to make no answer, to rise, and to push aside Irene, who, as she had done in Milan, tried to keep me from leaving. This slanderous story, which, according to the cheating gamesters' code, did me honor, wounded me to the soul. Passano and Rinaldi had said enough to show me that the thing was on everyone's lips, and I was not surprised that people believed it, but I could not and must not countenance it. I go to the Strada Balbi[23] to tell it to the Marchese Grimaldi and at the same time to return his call. He had gone to sit in court; I am conducted there; I am announced, he comes out, he thanks me for the trouble I have taken, and, after hearing me tell the story which is going the rounds, he replies with a laugh that I should disregard it and not even take the trouble to refute it.

"Then you advise me to admit that I am a scoundrel."

"Only fools will call you that; treat them with the contempt they deserve, unless they say it to your face."

"I should like to know the name of the patrician[24] who is telling the story and who says he was present at the incident."

"He is wrong to tell it; but you would be wrong to try to find out his name. In telling it he does not mean to speak ill of you or to discredit you."

"That is hard to believe. Do you think that if the thing happened as the story says it did, it would be to my honor?"

"Neither to your honor nor to your dishonor. You will be liked for it, people will laugh, and everyone will say that in your place he would have done the same."

"You too."

"Yes. If I had been sure the Harlequiness was in the ball, I would have broken the bank just as you did. I tell you sincerely that I do not know if you won by luck or by skill; but if I had to hand down a decision based on what is more probable, I should say that you knew the ball. Admit that my reasoning is sound."

"I admit it, but granting you a supposition which is dishonorable to me. Admit, too, that everyone who supposes that I would win by skill insults me.''

''That depends on how one takes it. I admit that they insult you if you feel that you are insulted; but they cannot guess that, and so, having no insulting intention, they do not insult you. In any case, you will not find anyone impudent enough to tell you that you won by skill; but you cannot keep people from thinking so.''

''Very well, let them think it, but let them beware of saying it to me. Good-by, Marchese, until dinnertime.''

I went home angry with Grimaldi, angry with Rinaldi, angry that I had ill-treated Irene, whom I loved, and angry at being angry, for I could have laughed at the whole thing; in the state of moral corruption which prevailed in society, it could not be prejudicial to my honor. My reputation was that of a man of parts, in a sense which, in Genoa more than anywhere else, cast a luster on the name ''rogue,'' which the strait-laced[25] made a term of obloquy. Finally I reflected that, supposing the man with the bag had in fact made an agreement with me beforehand, I should not have scrupled to clean out the *biribissanti* by the means I was believed to have employed, if only to entertain the charming company with the brilliant exploit; but since that was not the case I could not bear having it bruited about as the truth.

I shook myself out of these reflections in order to be in a good humor for the choice company I expected for dinner. I saw my niece appear before me, unadorned with diamonds or a watch or any jewelry at all, her wretched lover having sold everything she possessed; but, well dressed and with her hair done to perfection, she could not have wished to shine more.

Rosalie arrived richly accoutered, then Paretti with his uncle and aunt and two friends, one of whom was the young man who was flattering my niece. Signora Isolabella arrived very late with Signor Grimaldi.

Just before we sat down at table Clairmont announced a man who wanted to speak with me. I told him to show him in; and it was Signor Grimaldi who said to me that it was the man who tended the bag at the *biribissi*.

"What do you want with me?"

"I have come to ask you to help me a little. I have been dismissed, and I have a family. Everyone thinks that——"

I did not let him finish. I told Clairmont to give him four zecchini, and I sent him away.

We sat down at table, but in comes Clairmont again, this time with a letter for me. I see Passano's handwriting, I put it in my pocket without opening it.

My dinner was very gay, and my cook was given due praise. Signora Isolabella was the dominant figure, but Rosalie and my niece eclipsed her. The young Genoese devoted all his attention to my niece, and I thought she took it in very good part. I wanted to see her fall in love with someone who could rid her of the desperate idea of going to bury herself in a convent. She could not become happy again except by forgetting the wretch who had brought her to the verge of ruin.

Here is Passano's letter:

"I went to the Banchi[26] to change the hundred-lire piece you gave me. It was weighed and, on being found to be ten carats light, was confiscated, and I was ordered to name the person from whom I had received it. You can understand that I could not permit myself to answer the question. I let them take me to prison, and if you do not find a way to get me out I shall be brought to trial. You can also understand that I cannot let myself be hanged. I am—etc."

I hand the letter to Signor Grimaldi. After reading it he took me aside and said it was a very serious matter, which if it got into court could only end at the gallows for whoever had clipped the coin.

"The *biribissanti* will go to the gallows. Let them!"

"Signora Isolabella will be compromised, for *biribissi* is forbidden everywhere. I must speak to the State Inquisitors.[27] Leave it to me. Write Passano to persevere in his silence and tell him you will take care of everything. The law concerning clipped money[28] is severe only in regard to those particular coins, for the government wants them to circulate in Genoa, and to make examples which will teach the clippers to respect them."

I wrote to Passano accordingly, and I sent for scales. We weighed all the gold pieces I had won at the *biribissi*, and we found that they had been clipped to the extent of two thousand Genoese lire. Signor Grimaldi undertook to cut them up and sell them to a goldsmith.

We found all the tables at cards made up, and Signor Grimaldi proposed that he and I play quinze[29] together. As a two-handed game, it is very tiresome, but I consented. At a limit of four zecchini, I lost five hundred zecchini in four hours.

Toward noon the next day he came to tell me that Passano was out of prison and that the value of his coin had been returned to him. He also gave me twelve or thirteen hundred zecchini which he had received from the goldsmith to whom he had sold the clipped gold pieces. I thanked him for everything and said that I would go to Signora Isolabella's the next day and have my revenge at quinze.

I found him alone with his lady. We were to sup without other company, but we did not sup at all. We sat down to play, and we did not stop until two hours after midnight. I lost three thousand zecchini, of which I paid him a thousand the next day, giving him bills of exchange drawn on myself for the other two thousand. When the bills fell due I was in England and I let them be protested. Five years later he was urged by a traitor to have me arrested in Barcelona; but Signor Grimaldi was a man of honor. He wrote me a letter in which he told me my enemy's name; and he assured me that he would never take any steps to force me to pay. The person who had urged my arrest on him was Passano, who was in Barcelona then, though I did not know it.

I shall tell the story when I come to that time. All those whom I associated with me to use in the tricks I played on Madame d'Urfé betrayed me except a Venetian girl, whom I shall introduce to my dear reader in the following chapter.

Despite these losses I lived well and was not short of money, for, after all, what I had lost had been only the money I had won at the *biribissi*. Rosalie regularly came to dinner with me, and I went to sup at her house every evening with my niece, whose affair of the heart was becoming more serious each day. I told her so, but she would not renounce her intention of entering a convent, and she told me at the beginning of Holy Week that her resolve was now immutable, that day having given her undeniable evidence that she was not pregnant.

She had come to have such a friendship for me, and, since I had been having Annetta, such great confidence in me, that she often appeared in the morning and sat down on my bed when the girl was still in my arms. She laughed to see our fondness, and she seemed to share in our amorous pleasures. It is certain that her presence increased mine. I quenched in Annetta the desires which my niece kindled in me, since I could not quench them with her and in her. Annetta, with her shortsightedness, could not be aware of my frequent preoccupation. My niece knew that her presence gave me pleasure, and I know that what she saw me do could not leave her indifferent. When she thought I was exhausted she would ask Annetta to get up and leave her alone with me because she had business to talk over with me. Annetta would get up and go. Then, left alone with me, she would laugh and have nothing of consequence to say. Sitting beside me in the scantest of attire, she thought that her charms could have no more power over me. She was mistaken, and I took care not to set her right, for fear of losing her confidence. My niece did not know that she was not Annetta and that Annetta was not she. I spared her for my own ends. I felt certain that she would finally grant me the reward which I deserved, at the latest after our departure from Genoa, when we should be thrown together alone in the very free conversation and companionship of travel and in the pleasant idleness which, to replace doing nothing, forces the body and the soul to do everything. One grows tired of talking, of insisting, of reasoning, and even of laughing; one lets oneself go, and one acts because one does not want to know what one is doing. One thinks about it afterward, and one is very glad that it all happened.

But the story of my journey from Genoa to Marseilles was written in the great book of Fate. Not having read it, I could not know what its circumstances were to be. All I knew was that I had to set out, for Madame d'Urfé was waiting for me in Marseilles. The journey was to put in motion a train of events which would decide the destiny of the prettiest of all female creatures: a Venetian girl who did not know me and did not know that I existed to be the instrument of her good fortune. I did not know that I had stopped in Genoa to await her, for I did not know that she was among the number of the living.

Having set my departure for Easter Monday,[30] I still had six days before me. I settled my accounts with the banker to whom Greppi had sent me, and I obtained a letter of credit on Marseilles, though, Madame d'Urfé being in that city, I could not want for money there. I took leave of Signora Isolabella's household, in order to spend the whole week in perfect freedom with no one but Rosalie and her family, often going to her house in the country.

CHAPTER II

My brother the Abate and his base behavior. I take away his mistress. Departure from Genoa. The Prince of Monaco. My niece conquered. Arrival in Antibes.

EARLY ON the Tuesday in Holy Week Clairmont told me that an unknown Abate who refused to give his name wanted to speak with me. Annetta had gone to wait on her mistress. I had invited Rosalie, with her entire family and her friends, to dinner that day.

I go out of my room in my nightcap to see who the Abate might be. I see a figure who falls on my neck and hugs me. The room was dark. I take him to the window, and I see the youngest of all my brothers,[1] whom I had always despised, whom I had not seen for ten years, and who interested me so little that I did not even ask if he was alive or dead in the correspondence I maintained with the Signori Bragadin, Dandolo, and Barbaro.[2]

As soon as his stupid embraces were over I coldly asked him what chance brought him to Genoa in the pitiable state in which I saw him, for he was dirty, disgusting, and in rags; his only advantages were a pretty face, fine hair, a good complexion, and the age of twenty-nine. He was born, like Mohammed,[3] three months after my father's death.

"If I am to tell you the whole story of my misfortunes, dear brother, it will be a long one. So let us go into your room and I will relate everything in perfect truthfulness."

"First answer all my questions. How long have you been here?"

"Since last evening."

"Who told you that I am here?"

"Count A. B. in Milan."

"Who told you that the Count knew me?"

"On Signor Bragadin's table in Venice a month ago I read a letter he was writing you, addressed to the Count's house."

"Did you tell him you are my brother?"

"I had to admit it when he said I look like you."

"He told you what is not so: you are a consummate fool."

"He invited me to dinner."

"In those rags. You did me great honor."

"He gave me four zecchini, without which I could never have come here."

"He did a stupid thing. You have become a beggar. Why did you leave Venice, and what do you want of me? I don't know what to do with you."

"Oh, I beg you not to drive me to despair, for really I am capable of killing myself."

"I don't believe a word of it; but why did you leave Venice, where you managed to live on your mass and your sermons?"

"That is the chief point of my story. Let us go in."

"Certainly not. Wait for me here. We will go somewhere and you shall tell me whatever story you please. Take care not to tell my servants that you are my brother, for I am ashamed of it."

I go and quickly put on a *frac*,[4] and I order him to take me to his inn.

"I must tell you that at my inn I am not alone, and that what I have to say to you can be said only in private."

"In whose company are you?"

"I will tell you. Let us go to some coffeehouse."

"But whom are you with? Out with it! Is it a gang of thieves? You sigh?"

"It is a girl."

"A girl? You are a priest."

"Blinded by love, seduced myself, I seduced her. I promised to marry her in Geneva; and I certainly dare not go back to Venice, for I abducted her from her father's house."

"What would you have done in Geneva? You would have been allowed to stay there three days, then you would have been expelled. Let us go to your inn; I want to see this girl you have deceived. You can talk to me privately afterward."

I set out for the inn, the name of which he had told me; he has to follow me; I enter; at that he precedes me and goes up to the fourth floor, where, in a wretched den, I see a very young girl, tall, dark, pretty, appetizing, with a certain haughty pride, who, not in the least embarrassed and making me no salutation, asks me if I am the brother of the liar there who has deceived her. I answer yes.

"Then I call upon your decency and your charity to send me back to Venice, for I will no longer stay with this scoundrel to whom I listened like the idiot I was and who told me all sorts of lies which turned my head. He was to meet you in Milan, where you would give him money to travel by post to Geneva, where he said that priests marry after turning Protestant. He said you expected him, and you were not there. He got hold of some money, I don't know how, and brought me here. Thank God he has found you, for otherwise I would have set off on foot tomorrow, begging for alms. All I have left is the shift on my back. He sold the three others I had in Bergamo, after selling my trunk and everything in it in Verona and Bressa. He took my wits away. He made me believe that the world outside Venice was a paradise; I wanted to see it, and I left my home; I found that one is nowhere as well off as in our country. A curse on the day I first met this impostor! He's a beggarly good-for-nothing who always talks as if he were preaching. He wanted to sleep with me as soon as we got to Padua; but I was not such a fool. I insisted that I would see this marrying in Geneva first. Here is the written promise he gave me. I make you a present of it; but if you have a soul capable of kindness, send me to Venice and so save me from having to go there on foot."

I listened to this whole tirade standing and in real astonishment. What gave the tragic scene a touch of comedy was my brother, who, sitting with his head in his hands, had to hear out the whole cruel story. But for the sighs he heaved from time to time I should have thought he was asleep.

The pathetic adventure strangely touched me. I at once saw that I must take care of the girl, break off the ill-assorted match, and send her safely back to her country, which she might not have left but for the confidence in me which my brother had made her feel. The girl's typically Venetian nature struck me even more than her charms; her frankness, her just indignation, her revulsion of feeling, her courage, pleased me; she had not asked me to send her home; but she had convinced me that I could not honorably abandon her. I could not doubt the truth of her story, since my brother had preserved the silence of guilt throughout it. The pity he might arouse in me could not but be accompanied by scorn.

After too long a silence I promised to send her back to Venice, escorted by a decent woman, in the coach which left Genoa every week.

"But you will be in a pitiable situation if you return home with child."

"With child? Didn't I tell you he was to marry me in Geneva?"

"Even so——"

"What do you mean? I tell you I never yielded to the least of his desires."

"Remember," my brother said to her in a plaintive voice, "the oath you took that you would be mine forever. You swore it before a crucifix."

As he spoke these words in which he accused the girl of breaking faith, he had risen; but, far from his overawing her, she gave him a backhanded slap with the utmost vigor. I expected a struggle of sorts, which I would not have tried to stop. But not a bit of it: the long-suffering Abate simply turned to the window, raising his eyes to heaven, and burst into tears.

"You are quite a little devil, my beautiful Signorina," I said. "The man whom you are mistreating is unhappy because you made him fall in love with you."

"All I know is that he took my wits away, and that I will not forgive him until I have seen the last of him. That's not the first slap I've given him, I began in Padua."

"You are excommunicated," he said, "for I am a priest."

"I'll give you more of the same."

"No, you will not," I said. "Bundle up your things and come with me."

"Where are you taking her?" said my lovelorn brother.

"To my lodging, and hold your tongue. Just a moment. Here are twenty zecchini, go at once and buy yourself a coat, an overcoat, and some shirts. Do not change your lodging. I will come here to talk with you tomorrow. Give your rags to the poor, and thank God that you found me. Come, Signorina, I will have you taken to my lodging in a sedan chair, for Genoa must not see you in my company, especially since it is known that you arrived here with a priest. I must end this scandalous state of affairs. I will put you in the care of my landlady; take good care not to tell her this ugly story. I will have you dressed suitably at once."

"Let us go God be praised!"

Turned to stone by the twenty zecchini, he let us leave without uttering a word. I at once instructed my landlady to buy her a dress, shifts, stockings, shoes, and whatever she might need. I was extremely curious to see what the girl would become when her anxieties were relieved. I told Annetta that a girl who had been commended to my care would eat and sleep with her, and, expecting a large and brilliant company, I went to dress. I thought it incumbent on me to tell my niece the whole story, to keep her from judging me unfavorably. She declared that I could not have performed a nobler act, and she became very curious to see the girl, as well as my brother, whom she thought far more to be pitied. I gave her a dress of calencar[5] with a large flower pattern which became her wonderfully well. She aroused my admiration, both for her behavior toward me and for the way in which she treated the young man[6] who was already hopelessly in love with her. She saw him every day, either at my lodging or at Rosalie's. He wrote to her straightforwardly, in the style of a business letter, that since they were well matched in all the essentials of age, station, and fortune, nothing could prevent him from going to Marseilles to ask her father for her hand except some antipathy to his person on her part. When she showed me the letter, asking me for my advice, I congratulated her. I told her that in her place I would not reject his offer, if Signor N. N. was not displeasing to her. She replied that nothing in the young man displeased her, and that Rosalie was of my opinion.

"Then tell him by word of mouth that you will wait for him in Marseilles and that he can be sure of your consent."

"I will tell him so tomorrow."

When I rose from table I went to see Annetta, who was dining in my niece's room with Marcolina;[7] such was the Venetian girl's name. I very nearly did not recognize her. But it was not because of her dress, which was in no way unusual, but because of her face, which contentment had made a hundred times prettier. Gaiety had taken the place of anger, which always looks ugly, and the softness which is born of satisfaction gave her a countenance in which one saw love. I thought it impossible that the being I saw before me had given my brother, a consecrated priest, the resounding slap which I had seen and heard. The two new friends were eating, laughing at being unable to understand each other. Marcolina spoke the Venetian dialect, and Annetta, in revenge, spoke that of Genoa; but the former is charming and every Italian understands it, while the latter is further from Italian than Swiss is from German. I congratulate Marcolina on her look of happiness.

"I have passed from hell to paradise."

"Indeed, you look like an angel."

"And this morning you called me a devil. But here beside me is a white angel, such as we have no idea of in Venice."

"And she is my treasure."

My niece comes in and, seeing me in high spirits with the two girls, sits down beside me to submit my new acquisition to a thorough scrutiny. She pronounces her perfectly pretty, and, after telling her so, gives her a sweet kiss. Marcolina, always the Venetian, asks her bluntly who she is.

"I am a niece of the Signore, who is taking me home to Marseilles."

"Then you would be my niece, too, if I were his sister. How happy I should be to have such a pretty niece!"

Upon this ensued any number of kisses, which Marcolina received and returned with all the ardor which Venetian women put into kissing. We left her with Annetta, and, together with the whole company, went for a sail about the harbor in a good-sized vessel.

Back at the house about midnight, I asked Annetta, who was undressing her mistress, where the Venetian girl was, and, receiving the answer that she had gone to bed early and was asleep, I took it into my head to go to see her. She wakes, I sit down beside her, I tell her that in bed I think her even more beautiful, I make to embrace her, she holds me off, I do not insist, and we talk. A quarter of an hour later Annetta comes in, I tell her to go to bed, and she goes to my room, proud to show Marcolina that she is my mistress.

I then bring up the subject of my brother, I tell her of the lively interest she inspired in me the moment I saw her and of all that I felt inclined to do for her, whether she wanted to return to Venice or preferred to go to France with me.

"As your wife?"

"No, for I am married."

"That is a lie, but I don't care. Send me to Venice, and as soon as possible; I will not be any man's concubine."

At that I became pressing, but using only the gentleness which any woman finds harder to resist than open force. Laughing the while, Marcolina, when she sees that I persist although she blocks my every advance, suddenly gets out of bed clad in a long shift, goes into my niece's room, and locks the door. At that I went off to bed, but not at all vexed. Annetta, finding herself made all the more of, praised Marcolina's decision.

The next morning early I went into my niece's room to laugh a little over the company which chance had led me to procure her; and there was reason to laugh.

"Your Venetian girl," she said, "raped me."

Far from defending herself, the other begins giving her fresh tokens of a continuing fondness, which, being graciously accepted, enabled me to guess what the two of them were doing under the covers.

"This," I said to my niece, "is a rude shock to your uncle's respect for your prejudices."

"Trifling between girls," she replied, "cannot tempt a man who has just come from Annetta's arms."

"But it does tempt me."

So saying, I uncover the two of them. Marcolina cries out, but does not move; my niece feelingly begs me to cover them up again; but what I saw enchanted me too much to let me hurry. Just then Annetta comes in and, obeying her mistress's command, puts the covers back over the bacchantes, thus depriving me of the beautiful vision. Angry with Annetta, I throw her on the bed, and I give the two others a spectacle so interesting that they stop their trifling to watch it with the utmost attention. After the act Annetta swore to me that I had been right thus to avenge myself on their prudery. Rather pleased with the joke, I went to breakfast and, immediately afterward, to the inn to see my brother.

I found him well dressed.

"How is Marcolina?" he asked me sadly.

"Very well. I have put her into decent clothes. She eats and sleeps with my niece's chambermaid, and she is very well satisfied."

"I did not know I had a niece."

"You know it now. I shall send her to Venice in three or four days."

"I hope I may dine with you today."

"No, my dear brother. You are never to show your face in my lodging, for if Marcolina saw you it would distress her. You shall not see her again."

"Oh, I will go to Venice too, even if I should be hanged for it."

"What use is that? She can't bear you."

"She loves me."

"She slaps you."

"Because she loves me. She will become gentle when she sees me decently dressed. You do not know how much I suffer."

"I can imagine it; but I do not allow myself to think of it, because you are a blasphemer and a fool, a barbarian who deserves no pity; for to satisfy a vile whim you were about to bring a lifetime of misery to a charming girl who was born to be happy. Answer me. What would you have done if I had turned my back on you?”

“I should have gone begging with her.”

“She would have beaten you half to death; and she could have gone to the police to rid herself of you.”

“But what will you do with me if I let her go back to Venice and do not follow her?”

“I will take you to France and see that you get service under some bishop.”

“Service? I was born only to serve God.”

“Proud fool! Marcolina was right yesterday when she said that you talk as if you were preaching. Who is your God? What is the service you render him? Ignorant hypocrite! Do you serve him by turning the head of a decent girl, profaning your profession, betraying your religion, which you do not know? Without talents of any kind, you are fool enough to imagine that you can become a Protestant minister when you don't know even the rudiments of theology, when you can't even speak your own language properly. Beware of showing your face in my lodging, for you would force me to have you driven out of Genoa.”

“Very well then, take me to Paris! I will go to my brother Francesco,[8] who has a kinder heart than yours.”

“Excellent. I will see that you get to Paris. We shall leave in five or six days. Remain at this inn and I will send you word. I shall have my niece, my secretary, and my valet with me, and we will go by sea.”

“The sea makes me sick.”

“Then you shall vomit.”

When I repeated this whole dialogue to Marcolina I saw no sign of interest on her face. She said prettily that she was under no obligation to him except for his having made her acquainted with me. I replied that I forgave him only because he had made me acquainted with her.

"I love you, and if you do not consent to become my mistress it will kill me."

"Never, for I should fall in love with you, and when you left me it would kill me too."

"I will never leave you."

"Very well, take me to France, and there we will begin sleeping together; at the moment you have Annetta, and I am in love with your niece."

The cream of the jest was that my niece had also fallen in love with her, and had told me we must have her eat with us and that from then on she would sleep with no one else. Having acquired the right to witness their sports, I had no objection. At table she told us such amusing stories that they kept us occupied until it was time to go to supper at Rosalie's, where Signor N. N. never failed to be present.

The next day, which was Maundy Thursday, Rosalie came with us to see the processions. I had Rosalie on one arm and Marcolina on the other, both well concealed in their *mezzari*,[9] and Signor N. N. gave his arm to my niece. On the following day, when the same company went to see the processions which in Genoa are called *casacce*,[10] Marcolina pointed out my brother, who kept hovering around us, though always pretending that he did not see us. He was dressed within an inch of his life, and the conceited fool thought that he would make such a good impression on Marcolina that day that she would regret having scorned him; but he must have suffered the torments of the damned, for the Venetian girl, accustomed to manipulating the *zendale*,[11] could use the *mezzaro* even more effectively than a born Genoese woman; he could never be sure that she had seen him. In addition the cruel creature clung so closely to my arm that we appeared to be on the best of terms.

The two girls, become intimate friends, could not bear to have me tell them that their amorous diversions were the only source of their friendship; they promised me that their toying would cease when we left Genoa, and that I should begin sleeping between them in the felucca[12] which would take us to Antibes, in which we were to spend at least one night, during which we should not undress. I took them at their word, I set our departure for Thursday,[13] I engaged the felucca, and on Wednesday I went and told my brother to be on board.

A very cruel moment was that in which I returned my kind Annetta to her mother's care. Her tears made us all weep. My niece gave her a dress, and I thirty zecchini, promising her that I would return to Genoa when I came back from England; but I never returned there. I informed Passano that he would eat with the Abate whom he would find on board the felucca. I had it supplied with food for three days. Signor N. N. promised my niece that he would be in Marseilles in two weeks, and that when he arrived their marriage would already be arranged between her father and his. This outcome filled me with joy, for it assured me that her father would receive her with open arms. Signor N. N. and Rosalie and her husband did not leave us until they had to let us board the felucca.

My felucca, which was of good size, had twelve rowers and was armed with some small cannon and with twenty-four muskets, so that we should be able to defend ourselves against pirates. Clairmont had cleverly had my carriage and my luggage arranged in such a way that five mattresses were stretched across them at full length, so that we could have slept and even undressed as if in a room. We had good pillows and wide covers. A long tent of serge covered the whole ship, and two lanterns hung from the two ends of the long beam which held up the tent. As soon as night fell they were lighted, and Clairmont brought us supper. Sitting up between my two young ladies, I served my guests, my niece first, then Marcolina, then my brother and Passano. Watering the wine was forbidden, each drank his bottle of excellent burgundy. After supper, though the wind was very light, the sail was raised and the rowers rested. I had the lanterns put out, and my two female angels went to sleep, each with her free arm lying across me.

The light of dawn waked me at five o'clock and showed me the two slumbering beauties on either side of me in the same position in which I had seen them when the lanterns were put out. I could not cover either of them with kisses. The one was supposed to be my niece, the other was a girl whom humanity forbade me to treat as my mistress in the presence of a brother who adored her and to whom she had never granted the slightest favor. He was there, overwhelmed by grief and by the sufferings inflicted on him by the sea, which turned his stomach and made him vomit up whatever it contained. There he remained, watching to see if there was any movement under the covers. I felt that I must have pity on him and not risk driving him to despair at a moment when he might easily have thrown himself into the sea and been drowned.

The girls awoke as fresh as roses; and after mutual congratulations on the good sleep we had enjoyed, we stretched and, one after the other, went to the prow to a closet which had been arranged for us and which was necessary to the modesty of my beauties. But I scolded the master of the felucca when I saw that we were only opposite Finale.[14]

"The wind," they all said together, "stopped blowing at Savona."

"We feared we should wake you; but you shall be at Antibes tomorrow."

Cursing the calm, the rowers set to work. Clairmont gave us an excellent broth made from tablets which I always took with me. We dined at noon, and at three o'clock we decided we should like to land at San Remo. The whole crew were grateful to me. We are put ashore there; but I give orders that no one is to leave the felucca. My niece could not keep from laughing openly at my wretched brother, who was constantly taking a mirror from his pocket and giving a sad sigh upon seeing his face, which the sea had robbed of its bloom.

I escorted my two young ladies to the inn, where I ordered coffee. A gentleman comes up to us politely and asks us to do him the honor of going to his house, where we can amuse ourselves playing *biribissi.*

"I thought, Signore, that the game was forbidden in the State of Genoa?"

"That is so, but in San Remo we enjoy a number of privileges.[15] It is a fief of the Empire. The *biribissanti* who were in Genoa have been here for several days."

Certain that the sharpers were those whose bank I had broken, I accept the invitation. My niece had fifty louis[16] in her purse; I give Marcolina ten or twelve, and we find ourselves in a drawing room in which there is a large company. Places are found for us; we sit down, and I see the same gamesters whom I had punished at Signora Isolabella's, except for the man who tended the bag. At sight of me they went pale.

"I stake on the Harlequiness," I said to them.

"We have got rid of her."

"How much is in the bank?"

"You see it there. Play is for small stakes here. These two hundred louis are enough. One may stake as little as one pleases, and at most a louis."

"Excellent, but my louis are full weight."

"I believe ours are so too."

"Are you sure of it?"

"No."

"In that case," I said to the master of the house, "we will not play."

"You are right. Bring out the scales."

The owner of the *biribissi* then said that at the end of play he would give four six-franc *écus* for every louis won from him, and no more was needed. In a moment the board was completely covered.

We all staked at a louis. I lost twenty, as did my niece; but Marcolina, who had never seen a *biribissi* and who had never had two zecchini of her own, won a hundred and forty louis. She staked on the picture of an abate, which came out five times in twenty turns. She was given a bag filled with six-franc écus, and we went back to our felucca.

The wind being contrary, we had to be rowed all night, and the sea having become rough, at eight o'clock in the morning I decided to go ashore at Mentone.[17] My niece and Marcolina were unwell. I alone escaped. After locking Marcolina's bag into my trunk, I went ashore with my two girls, telling Passano that he could do likewise with my brother.

We go to the inn. My beauties lie down on a bed. The innkeeper tells me that the Prince of Monaco[18] is in Mentone with his Princess. I decide to call on him. It was thirteen years earlier that I had paid my court to him in Paris. I was the man who, supping with him and his mistress Coralline,[19] kept him from yawning. It was he who had taken me to call on the ugly Duchess of Ruffec;[20] he was not married then, and here he was in his Principality[21] with his wife, by whom he had already had two sons.[22] She was a Marchesa di Brignole, a rich heiress, but even more beautiful and charming than rich; I knew her by reputation; I was curious to see her.

I go there, I am announced, and, after a very long wait, I am shown in. I give him his due by addressing him as Your Highness, which I had never done in Paris, where no one so addressed him. He says that he is pleased to see me again, but with a coldness which belies any pleasure. He hazards a guess that I had stopped because of the bad weather; I say that, if he will permit it, I will stay in his delightful city (which was not delightful) all day; he replies that I am at liberty to do so, and he explains to me that he stays there in preference to Monaco, whose situation both his Princess and he dislike. I ask him to present me, and he orders someone to take me to her.

She was at her harpsichord, accompanying herself in an air; she rises and, no one presenting me, I tell her my name. Nothing is more awkward than a man of my kind announcing himself. The Princess pretends that my name is enough and, to find something to say to me, she tries to remember the commonplaces of the catechism of the nobility under the article "Presentation"; but I do not give her time to be at a loss. I tell her everything in a few words, except that I have two young ladies with me. The Princess was beautiful, affable, and brought up in a way to foster all her talents. She was an only daughter. Her mother,[23] who knew the Prince of Monaco and foresaw that he would make her unhappy, did not want to give her to him; but she had to resign herself to it when she said to her: *"O Monaco, o monaca"* ("Either Monaco, or a nun)."

In comes the Prince, running after one of her maids, who makes off laughing, but the Princess pretends to see nothing and continues the remark she had begun to me. I take my leave, and she wishes me a good journey. I meet the Prince again; he bids me good-by and tells me always to come to see him when I pass that way. I return to the inn, and I order dinner for three.

In the Principality of Monaco there was a French garrison,[24] in return for which the Prince received a pension of a hundred thousand francs. He was right, for the garrison did him honor and gave him a semblance of greatness.

A very smart, dapper young officer,[25] perfumed with ambergris, stops before our open room and, letting effrontery stand for acquaintance, asks us if we will permit him to join his gay humor with ours. I reply coldly that he does us great honor; which is as much as to say neither yes nor no; but a Frenchman who has taken the first step never draws back and is not easily abashed.

After displaying his attractions to my beauties and making several random remarks which he does not give them time to answer, he turns to me and says that, knowing I have spoken with the Prince, he is surprised that he has not invited me to dinner at the palace with these charming ladies. I thought it proper to tell him that I had not informed the Prince of the charming ladies' presence.

No sooner has he heard my answer than he rises eagerly, says that he is no longer surprised, that he will go at once to announce them to His Highness, and so will have the pleasure of dining with us at Court. No sooner has he spoken than he makes for the stairs and is gone.

We all three laugh at the coxcomb's enthusiasm, feeling perfectly certain that we shall dine neither with him nor at the Prince's table.

He comes back a quarter of an hour later in the highest spirits and triumphantly extends an invitation to us from the Prince to dine at the palace. I ask him to thank His Highness and at the same time to beg him to excuse us. I tell him that, the weather having turned fair, I intend to leave at once, after eating a hasty bite. He insists, he protests, but he is finally obliged to leave, crestfallen, to tell the Prince that it is impossible. I thought the thing was over; but not at all.

In another quarter of an hour he comes back looking even more contented; and, completely disregarding me, he tells the ladies that he has described their charms to His Highness with such truth to nature that he had resolved to come to dine with them.

"I have already ordered two more places set," he said, "for I shall have the honor too. You will see him in a quarter of an hour."

"Very well," I said, not hesitating for an instant; "in that case I will go to my felucca to fetch an excellent *pâté* which His Highness will find exquisite. Let us go, ladies."

"You can leave them here, Monsieur. I will keep them company."

“Thank you, but no; they too need some things from the felucca.”

“Will you permit me to accompany you?”

“As you please.”

I go down, and I ask the innkeeper the price of the dinner.

“Monsieur, everything is paid for. I have just received an order not to tender you a bill.”

“That is certainly very handsome of the Prince.”

I rejoin the young ladies, and my niece takes my arm, laughing heartily because the French officer was addressing gallantries to Marcolina, who did not understand a word of anything he was saying to her, and he had no way of knowing it for he had not given her time to tell him so.

“We will have a good laugh at table,” my niece said to me; “but what are we going to the felucca for?”

“We are going to leave. Be still.”

“Leave?”

“At once.”

“What a trick to play!”

We go on board the felucca; and the officer, delighted with my fine carriage, falls to examining it. I whisper to the master of the vessel that I want to leave instantly.

“Instantly? The Abate and your secretary have gone ashore, and two of my crew as well.”

“That makes no difference. They can come to Antibes by land; it is only ten leagues away; I want to leave, I tell you: make haste.”

“Very well.”

He pulls up the anchor chain, and the felucca veers off. The astounded officer uncomprehendingly asks me what it means.

“It means that I am going to Antibes; and it gives me great pleasure to take you there.”

“That would be a jest indeed! But you are joking.”

“I am perfectly serious, and your company is very dear to us.”

"What next! Be so good as to put me ashore, for—pardon my impoliteness, ladies—I haven't time to go to Antibes. Some other day!"

"Put the gentleman ashore," I said to the master, "for our company is not to his liking."

"It is not that, on my word of honor, for these ladies are charming, but you must understand that the Prince would have reason to take it ill; for he would believe I had connived with you to play this trick on him, and after all it is not one to be passed over lightly. What will he say? But I can justify myself perfectly. Good-by, ladies, good-by, sir."

Marcolina stood there in complete astonishment, and, understanding nothing of what was going on, she could not laugh at it; but my niece was holding her sides, for nothing was more comical than the way the officer had taken the situation.

Clairmont served us a dinner than which we could have asked for nothing more choice. Everything set us laughing, even the thought of the astonishment of Passano and my stupid brother, which could not but be a scene from comedy, when they arrived at the place and found the felucca gone. I had no doubt that I should see them the next day at Antibes.

At four o'clock we were off Nice, and at six o'clock we landed at Antibes. Clairmont saw to having everything I had brought in the felucca taken to my rooms, waiting until the next day to have my carriage made ready for the road again. We supped in high spirits and with the appetite which one feels on leaving the sea, the very air of which upsets the stomach.

Marcolina, feeling a little tipsy, went to bed and to sleep at once; and my niece would have done likewise, had I not reminded her of her promise, with all the sweetness which love imparts to eloquence. She consented without replying, but with the charming manner which denotes perfect contentment.

Transported with delight to see a readiness so unmistakable and one which seemed very much like love, I got into bed beside her saying:

"At last the moment of my happiness has come."

"And of mine too."

"Of yours? How can you say that? You have always refused me."

"Never. I have always loved you, and I bore your indifference in bitterness of heart."

"The first night we spent after we left Milan, you preferred the pleasure of sleeping alone to that of coming to bed with me."

"Could I do otherwise and not risk making you think me a girl more a slave to her temperament than to love? You should have told me that you loved me, and have convinced me of it by the most ardent attentions. That would have given me the courage to convince you that I loved you too, and then you would not have had the mortification of seeing yourself the only one in love, while on my side I should not have had that of supposing you would think you owed only to submissiveness whatever pleasure you might have received from having me in your bed. I do not know if you would have loved me less the next morning; but it is certain that you would not have esteemed me."

My niece was right, and I acknowledged it; but at the same time justifying myself, for I had to guard against her thinking that I could basely demand that she pay me by her favors for the obligations under which I had put her. Weighing the question, we saw that, in the reciprocity of feeling between a woman and a man in love, it is his part to grant her all the advantages of consideration and to indulge her in all the ideas which she may have and which can only humiliate her unless the man is intelligent enough to interpret them all in her favor. A woman humiliated can neither love nor forgive the man cruel enough to have debased her soul by making it entertain the dark idea of humiliation. From these general truths, however, the soul of a slave, whether man or woman, must be excepted. Slavery creates monsters. So I cannot understand how the Helots[26] can have existed on earth without committing all kinds of crimes.

We spent the sweetest of nights; and she told me in the morning that it was probably only for her own good that we had not begun with that at which we had now arrived, for then she would never have brought herself to accept Signor N. N., though to all appearances he could not but make her happy. I was not a man who would marry.

Marcolina congratulated us in the morning. She swore that she would always sleep alone. She gave us countless caresses.

Passano arrived with my brother as we were about to sit down at table, and my niece having had two more places set, I assented. My brother could not walk.

"I am not used," he said, "to riding horseback, and since my skin is delicate it is not surprising that I am half flayed. But God's will be done. Never in my life have I suffered such pains as I have during this journey, not only in body but even more in mind."

So saying, he gave Marcolina a piteous look, which made us all burst out laughing. My niece, wanting to be amused, said:

"I am sorry for you, dear Uncle."

At the word "Uncle" he blushed, and addressing her as "dear niece," he paid her the stupidest of compliments in French, thinking it would surprise us. I told him to be still and to be ashamed of himself, for he had spoken no better than a pig. But the poet Pogomas spoke French no better.

The latter told us that he had no sooner arrived at the place where the felucca should have been and not seen it than he had not known what to think.

"I went," he said, "with the Signor Abate to the inn where I knew you had ordered dinner, to try to find out something; but all I learned was that the innkeeper was expecting you and was also expecting the Prince and an officer, who were to dine with you. As I was telling him that he was waiting in vain, since you had left, in comes the Prince with the officer, very angry, and saying that he should look for payment from no one but you. The innkeeper replies that you had tried to pay him before you left, but that the order he had received from the Prince himself had kept him from accepting anything. At this answer the Prince gave him a louis, asking us who we were. I said that we were in your service, and that you had not waited for us either. After laughing at what had happened, the Prince asked me who the two young ladies in your company were, and I replied that one of them was your niece and that I did not know the other; but at that the Signor Abate said that she was your *cuisine* ['kitchen'] instead of saying *cousine* ['cousin']. You can imagine how the Prince laughed at his saying *cuisine.* He left, declaring that he would still find you somewhere and that he would remember the trick you had played on him. The innkeeper, a worthy man, felt obliged in conscience to give us a very good dinner, as he also did to the two sailors, who arrived later. After dinner we hired two horses, and we slept at Nice. This morning we came here, sure that we should find you"

Marcolina dryly told my dear brother that if he took it into his head to call her his *cuisine* in Marseilles or anywhere else, he would have to reckon with her, for she wanted to be neither his *cuisine* nor his *cousine.* I added seriously that he should stop trying to speak French, for the blunders he made disgraced the persons he was with.

When I was preparing to order post horses so that we could spend the night at Fréjus,[27] a man appears saying that I owe him ten louis for the stabling of a carriage which I had left with him almost three years before.[28] I at once remember that it was when I had carried Rosalie off from Marseilles. I laugh, for the carriage was a poor one and not worth even five. I reply that I make him a present of it. He says he does not want my present, he wants ten louis. I tell him to take himself off, and I order horses, intending to leave. A quarter of an hour later a fusilier appears and orders me, at my creditor's instigation, to go to speak with the Commandant. I go there, and I see a one-armed individual,[29] who politely tells me to pay the man the ten louis and take my carriage. I reply that since my contract at six francs a month had no terminal date, I do not want to take the carriage.

"And if you never take it?"

"He will be free to leave his claim to his heir."

"Nevertheless, I believe he can legally demand that you either take it or consent to its being sold at auction."

"That may be the case, but I am so magnanimous as to want to spare him the trouble. Not only do I consent to his selling it, I make him a present of it."

"That ends the matter. The carriage is yours," he said to my man.

"I beg your pardon, Commandant, but that does not end it, for I am willing to sell it, but I want the balance."

"You are wrong. As for you, I wish you a good journey; and forgive the ignorance of these people, who want the laws to conform to their ideas."

It was late, and I put off leaving until the next day. Needing a carriage for Passano and my brother, I thought that the one in question might do for them. Passano went to see it, and, having found it in wretched condition, he got it for four louis, and I spent another to put it in condition to reach Marseilles. I was not able to get away until afternoon.

CHAPTER III[1]

My arrival in Marseilles. Madame d'Urfé. My niece is well received by Madame Audibert. I get rid of my brother and Passano. Regeneration. Departure of Madame d'Urfé. Marcolina's constancy.

MY NIECE, become my mistress, set me on fire. My heart bled when I thought that Marseilles was to be the tomb of my love. All I could do was to go there by very short stages. From Antibes I went only as far as Fréjus, in less than three hours; I told Passano to sup with my brother and to go to bed, ordering a choice supper, with good wines, for myself and my two girls. I remained at table with them until midnight; then, while the hour hand made one revolution, I passed the time in amorous diversions and in sleep; I did the same at Le Luc, at Brignoles, and at Aubagne,[2] where I spent the sixth delicious night with her, which was the last.

No sooner had we arrived in Marseilles than I took her to Madame Audibert's,[3] having sent my brother and Passano to the "Thirteen Cantons,"[4] where they were to lodge without saying anything to Madame d'Urfé, who had been staying at the same inn for three weeks, waiting for me.

It was at Madame Audibert's that my niece had made the acquaintance of La Croix;[5] she was a woman of wit and intrigue, who had felt the greatest fondness for her even from her childhood; and it was by her good offices that she hoped to obtain her father's forgiveness and thus return to the bosom of her family. We had arranged that, leaving her in the carriage with Marcolina, I should go up to see the lady, whom I already knew, and from whom I should learn where she could go to lodge while she took all the steps necessary to bring her plan to a happy issue.

I go upstairs to Madame Audibert, who had seen me from the window getting out of my carriage and, curious to know who could be arriving at her house by post, came to meet me. After I reminded her who I was she consented to go into a room alone with me to learn what I might want of her. I briefly and truthfully told her the gist of the whole matter, the misfortune which had forced Croce to abandon Mademoiselle P. P., my good fortune in saving her from ruin, my second good fortune in having introduced her at Genoa to someone who would present himself in less than two weeks' time to obtain her hand in marriage from her father, and the pleasure which I felt in being able to put the charming creature, whose savior I had been, in her care from that very moment.

"Where is she?"

"In my carriage, where blinds make her invisible to passers-by."

"Have her get out, and leave the entire matter to me. No one shall know that she is in my house. I cannot wait to embrace her."

I go downstairs; I make her draw her hood down over her face, and I conduct her to the arms of her sagacious friend, enjoying the dramatic moment. Embraces, kisses, tears of joy mingled with tears of repentance, make me shed them too. Clairmont, to whom I had given instructions, carries up her trunk and everything she had in the carriage, and I leave, promising that I will go to see her every day.

I get back into my carriage, after telling the postilions where to take me. It was to the house of the worthy old man where I had so happily kept Rosalie.[6] Marcolina was weeping for grief at being parted from her dear friend. I get out at the old man's house; I hastily conclude an arrangement with him by which Marcolina will be lodged, fed, and waited on like a little princess. He tells me that he will put his own niece with her, he assures me that she will never go out and that no one will enter her apartment, which he shows me and which I find charming.

I then go to get her out of the carriage, and I order Clairmont to follow us with her valise.

"Here," I said to her, "is your house. I will come tomorrow to see if you are satisfied, and I will sup with you. Here is your money, changed into gold; you will not need it, but take care of it, for a thousand ducati will give you consideration in Venice. Do not weep, my dear Marcolina, for you possess my heart. Good-by until tomorrow evening."

The old man then gave me the key to his house door, and I went at a fast trot to the "Thirteen Cantons." I was expected, and I was shown to the apartment which Madame d'Urfé had arranged for me to have next to hers. I at once saw Brougnole,[7] who came to bring me her mistress's compliments and to say that she was alone and could not wait to see me.

It would bore my reader to read a detailed account of our interview, for he would find nothing but absurdities in the arguments of the poor woman, who was infatuated with the falsest and most chimerical of doctrines, and, on my side, nothing but falsehoods which had not a shadow or even a semblance of truth. Given over to libertinism, and in love with the life I was leading, I took advantage of the delusions of a woman who, if she had not been deceived by me, would have wanted to be deceived by someone else. I gave myself the preference and, at the same time, amusement. The first thing she asked me was where Querilinte[8] was, and she was surprised when I told her he was there in the inn.

"So it is he who will regenerate me in myself. I am certain of it. My Genius assures me of it every night. Ask Paralis[9] if the presents I have prepared for him are worthy to be given to a leader of the Rosicrucians by Seramis."[10]

Not knowing what the presents were, and unable to ask her to let me see them, I replied that we must first bless them at the planetary hours appropriate to the ceremonies[11] which we were to perform, and that Querilinte himself could not see them before their consecration. That being the case, she at once showed me into the adjoining room, where she took from a desk seven packages which the Rosicrucian was to receive as offerings to the seven planets. Each package contained seven pounds of the metal governed by the planet, and seven precious stones governed by the same planet, each weighing seven carats: diamond, ruby, emerald, sapphire, chrysolite, topaz, and opal.

Thoroughly resolved to proceed in such a way that none of all this should fall into the Genoese's hands, I said that, as to the method, we must be entirely guided by Paralis and must begin consecrating the gifts by putting the packages one at a time in a box made expressly for the purpose. Only one could be consecrated each day, and we must begin with the Sun. It was a Friday, we must wait until the next day but one; I had the box made on the following day, which was Saturday, with seven compartments. To perform the consecration I spent three hours a day alone with Madame d'Urfé, so that the ceremony was not finished until the following Saturday. During that week I had Passano and my brother dine with her; completely at a loss to understand her harangues to Passano and myself, my brother never said a word. Madame d'Urfé, who thought him an imbecile, believed that we intended to put the soul of a sylph in his body, so that he could engender a creature half divine and half human. When she confided this discovery to me she said she would put up with it provided that after the operation he would behave toward her in a way betokening common sense.

I was extremely amused by the spectacle of my brother in despair because Madame d'Urfé took him for an imbecile, and doubly so when he saw fit to say something to her which would convince her that he was a wit. I laughed to see that he would have played the role very badly if I had asked him to play it deliberately; but the buffoon lost nothing by it, for the Marquise, to amuse herself, provided him with the sort of soberly luxurious clothing which would have been affected by an abbé of the most illustrious family in France. The one to whom Madame d'Urfé's dinner was a torment was Passano, who had to answer the lofty questions she asked him and who, not knowing what to say, usually beat about the bush. He yawned, he did not dare to get drunk, he did not adhere to the manners and the politeness which usage decrees at table. Madame d'Urfé said to me that some great misfortune must be threatening the Order, since the great man was so preoccupied.

As soon as I had had the box delivered to Madame and had arranged everything with her to begin the consecration on Sunday, I had the oracle decree that for seven days in succession I must go to the country to sleep, practice perfect abstinence from every mortal woman, and worship the Moon with the proper ceremonies every night at her hour, in the open air, in order to prepare to regenerate her myself in case Querilinte, for reasons purely divine, could not perform the operation in person. In consequence of this command not only was Madame d'Urfé debarred from objecting to my sleeping elsewhere, she was grateful to me for the pains I was taking to ensure the successful outcome of the operation.

On Saturday, then, which was the day after my arrival in Marseilles, I went to Madame Audibert's, where I had the pleasure to see Mademoiselle P. P. delighted with the friendly way in which she had taken her interests to heart. She had spoken to her father; she had told him that his daughter was in her house, and that she hoped for nothing but his forgiveness, so that she could return to the bosom of her family in order to become the wife of a rich young Genoese, who, for the honor of his house, could receive her only from his hands. Her father had replied that he would come on the next day but one to take her to one of his sisters, who lived in a house she owned in Saint-Louis,[12] two short leagues from the city. By staying there perfectly quietly, she could await the arrival of her future husband without giving occasion for any gossip. Mademoiselle P. P. was surprised that her father had not yet heard anything from him. I told her that I would not go to see her at Saint-Louis, but that I would certainly see her again when Signor N. N. arrived, and that I would not leave Marseilles until I had seen her married.

From there I went to Marcolina's, whom I could not wait to clasp in my arms. She received me with heartfelt joy; she said that she would be happy, were it not that she could neither make herself understood nor understand anything that her waiting woman said to her. I saw that it was true, but I saw no remedy for it; I should have had to try to find her a servant who spoke Italian, and it would have been a hard task. She was touched to tears when I conveyed my niece's compliments to her and told her that she would be in her father's arms the following day. She already knew that she was not my niece.

The choice and delicate supper we enjoyed reminded me of Rosalie, whose story delighted Marcolina, who said that I seemed to travel only to bring happiness to unfortunate girls, provided that I found them pretty. Marcolina also charmed me by the appetite with which she ate. The fare one finds in Marseilles is exquisite, except for the poultry, which is of the poorest; but one does without it; we forgave the garlic which is put in all dishes to make them tasty. In bed Marcolina was charming. It had been eight years since I had enjoyed Venetian wantonness in bed, and the girl was a masterpiece. I laughed at my brother, who had been fool enough to fall in love with her. Unable to take her anywhere and wanting her to be amused, I told the landlord to let her go to the theater[13] with his niece every day and to prepare supper for me every evening. The next day I replenished her wardrobe by buying her everything she could want in order to shine like the other women.

The next day she told me that she had infinitely enjoyed the play, though she did not understand a word of it, and on the day after that she surprised me by saying that my brother had taken it upon himself to join her in the box in which she was sitting and had said so many impertinent things to her that if she had been in Venice she would have slapped his face. She thought he had followed her, and she feared she would be harassed.

Back at the inn, I went to his room, where I saw at Passano's bedside a man who was putting away his surgical instruments before leaving.

"What does this mean? Are *you* ill?"

"I have caught something which will teach me to be more careful in future."

"At sixty years of age, it is too late."

"There is always time."

"You stink of balsam."

"I will not leave my room."

"That will make a bad impression on the Marquise, who thinks you are the greatest of adepts."

"I don't give a f...[14] *for the Marquise. Stop bothering me."*

The rascal had never spoken to me in such a tone. I conceal my feelings, and I turn to my brother, who is shaving.

"What did you want with Marcolina at the theater yesterday?"

"I wanted to remind her of her duty and tell her that I was not a man to be her p . . ." [15]

"You insulted her, and me too. You are a wretch and a fool who owes everything to that charming girl, for, without her, I would never even have looked at you, and you dare to go talking your nonsense to her?"

"I have ruined myself with her, I cannot go back to Venice, I cannot live without her, and you are taking her from me. What right have you to her?"

"The right of love, idiot, and the right of the strongest. How is it that, with me, she says she is happy and that she cannot bring herself to leave me?"

"You have dazzled her, and afterward you will treat her as you have treated all the others. In any case, I believe I have the right to speak to her wherever I may find her."

"You shall not speak to her again, I promise you."

Having said which, I take a hackney carriage and go to a lawyer's to inquire if I can have a foreign abbé put in prison for owing me money, though I have not the necessary papers to prove he is in my debt.

"If he is a foreigner, you can give security, have him sequestrated at the inn where he is staying, and make him pay you, unless he proves that he owes you nothing. Does he owe you a large sum?"

"Twelve louis."

"Come with me to the magistrate, where you will deposit twelve louis, and you will have the right to put him under guard at once. Where is he staying?"

"In the same inn as I, and I do not want to have him arrested there. I will have him turned out, I will send him to the 'Sainte-Baume,' [16] which is a disreputable inn, and there I will put him under guard. Meanwhile, here are twelve louis for the security, go get the order, and you will see me at noon.

"Give me his name and yours."

After accomplishing this I go back to the "Thirteen Cantons," and I see my brother dressed and about to go out.

"Let us go to Marcolina's," I say. "You and she shall have it out in my presence."

"With pleasure."

He gets into the hackney carriage with me, I order the driver to take us to the "Sainte-Baume," and as soon as we are there I tell my brother to wait for me, assuring him that I will come back with Marcolina; but instead I went to see the lawyer, who, having already obtained the order, went at once to take it where it was executed. I then returned to the "Thirteen Cantons," I had all his clothes put in a trunk, and I took them to him at the "Sainte-Baume," where I found him in a room under guard, talking to the astonished innkeeper, who could not understand what was going on. But when he saw a trunk, and when, having taken him aside, I told him my trumped-up story, he left without wanting to hear more. Whereupon, going into my brother's room, I told him that he must prepare to leave Marseilles the next day, and that I would give him money enough to pay for his journey to Paris; but that if he would not go there willingly, I abandoned him, being certain that I knew how to have him expelled from Marseilles.

The pusillanimous fool began crying and said he would go to Paris.

"Then you shall leave tomorrow morning for Lyons; but you must first write me a note stating that you owe twelve louis to the bearer."

"Why?"

"Because I want you to. On that condition I assure you that I will give you twelve louis tomorrow and will tear up your note."

"I cannot but do blindly whatever you wish."

"You can do nothing better."

He wrote the note. I went at once to reserve a place for him in the diligence, and the next morning I went with the lawyer to withdraw the order and recover my twelve louis, which I took to my brother, who left at once with a letter of recommendation to Signor Bono,[17] whom I instructed not to give him any money and to see that he left for Paris in the diligence. I gave him twelve louis, which was more than he needed, and I tore up his note. So it was that I got rid of him. I saw him again in Paris a month later, and, in the proper place, I will recount how he returned to Venice.

But on the previous day, before going to dine alone with Madame d'Urfé, and after taking my brother's trunk to the "Sainte-Baume," I went to talk with Passano, to find out just what was the reason for his ill-humor.

"My ill-humor is due to my certainty that you are about to take possession of twenty or thirty thousand écus in gold and diamonds which the Marquise intended should be mine."

"That is possible. But it is not for you to know whether I will take possession of them or not. What I can tell you is that I shall prevent her from doing anything so foolish as to give you either the gold or the diamonds. If you have any claim to them, go and lay your complaint before the Marquise, I will not stop you."

"So I must put up with having served as the instrument of your impostures without getting any benefit from it? You shall not boast of that. I want a thousand louis."

"You are a wonder."

I go upstairs to the Marquise's apartment. I tell her that dinner is served and that we will dine alone together, since weighty reasons had obliged me to dismiss the Abate.

"He was an idiot. But Querilinte?"

"After dinner Paralis will tell us everything. I have strong suspicions."

"I too. The man seems to me to have changed. Where is he?"

"He is in bed with the foul disease which I dare not name to you."

"That is most extraordinary. It is a work of the dark ones, such as has never happened before, *I believe.*"

"Never, so far as I know; but now let us eat. We shall have a great deal of work to do today after we consecrate the tin." [18]

"So much the better. We must perform a ceremony of expiation to Oromasis,[19] for—horrors!—he was to regenerate me four days hence, and he is in this horrible condition."

"Let us eat, I say."

"I am afraid we shall lose the hour of Jupiter."

"Never fear."

After the ceremony to Jupiter, I put off the one to Oromasis until another day in order to produce a number of cabalistic figures which the Marquise translated into letters. The oracle said that seven Salamanders had transported the real Querilinte to the Milky Way, and that the one who was in bed in the ground-floor room was the black Saint-Germain,[20] whom a Gnomess had put in the terrible condition in which he was in order to make him the executioner of Seramis, who would have died of the same disease before reaching her term. The oracle said that Seramis must leave it entirely to Paralisée Galtinarde[21] (who was I) to get rid of Saint-Germain, and to have no doubt of the successful outcome of the regeneration, since the word [22] was to be sent to me from the Milky Way by Querilinte himself on the seventh day of my devotions to the Moon. The last oracle declared that I was to inoculate Seramis two days after the conclusion of the ceremonies of consecration, after a charming Undine[23] had purified us in a bath in the room in which we then were.

Having thus undertaken to regenerate my good Seramis, I began considering how best to avoid cutting a poor figure. The Marquise was beautiful, but old. I might find myself a nullity. At *thirty-eight* years of age, I was beginning to see that I was often subject to that disastrous misfortune. The beautiful Undine whom I would receive from the Moon was Marcolina, who, transformed into a bath attendant, would instantly procure me the generative power which I should need. I could not doubt it. The reader will see how I went about having her descend from the sky.

A note which I received from Madame Audibert made me go to see her before I went to sup with Marcolina. She told me joyfully that Monsieur P. P. had received a letter from Genoa from Signor N. N., who asked him for his daughter as the wife of his only son, she being the young lady whose acquaintance he had made at Signor Paretti's, the introduction having been made by the Chevalier de Seingalt (who was I), who must have taken her back to Marseilles and restored her to her family.

"Monsieur P. P.," said Madame Audibert, "feels that he is as greatly indebted to you as a father who loves his daughter can be to a man who has shown her paternal kindness. His daughter herself has given him a most interesting account of you, and he is determined to make your acquaintance. Tell me when you can sup at my house. His daughter will not be present."

"I am very glad of it, for Mademoiselle's P. P.'s fiancé can only esteem his future wife the more when he learns here that I am her father's friend; but I cannot be present at the supper; I will come at six o'clock whenever you please and will stay with you until eight, and the acquaintance will have been made before her fiancé arrives."

I made the appointment for the next day but one, and I went to see Marcolina, to whom I told all this news and gave an account of the way I intended to get rid of my brother on the morrow, which I have already imparted to my reader

It was on the next day but one that, as we were going to dinner, the Marquise smilingly gave me a long letter which the scoundrel Passano had written her in very bad French, but which was still understandable. He had filled eight pages to tell her that I was deceiving her, and, to convince her that it was true, he truthfully gave her the whole story of the affair, omitting not the slightest circumstance which could injure me. In addition he told her that I had arrived in Marseilles with two girls whom I was keeping he did not know where, but that it was certainly with them that I went to sleep every night.

Giving the letter back to her, I asked the Marquise if she had had the patience to read it through, and she said that she had not understood a word of it for he wrote in gibberish, and that she did not want to understand it, for he could only have written her lies intended to turn her from her course at a moment when she most needed not to be led astray. Such prudence on her part greatly pleased me, for it was necessary to my plans that she should not suspect the Undine, the sight of whom I should need to set the work of the flesh in motion.

After dining and getting through all the ceremonies and oracles I needed to fortify my poor Marquise in her resolve, I went to a banker to obtain a bill of exchange for a hundred louis on Lyons to the order of Signor Bono, and I sent it to him, instructing him to pay the hundred louis to Passano on the warrant of an advice in my hand which Passano was to present to him in order to receive the hundred louis on the day which he would find specified in the advice. If he presented it after the specified day, he was to refuse payment.

After sending this off, I wrote Bono the letter which Passano was to present to him, in which I said to Bono:

"Pay Signor Passano on sight of this one hundred louis d'or, if it is presented to you this day, April 30,

1763. After this day my order will be null and void."

With this letter in my hand, I went to the room in which the traitor's groin had been pierced by the lancet an hour earlier.

"You are a traitor," I said. "Madame d'Urfé did not read the letter you wrote her, but I read it. Here is the choice I give you, and the only choice, for I am in a hurry. Either decide to let yourself be taken to the hospital at once, for we want no one with your disease here, or decide to leave in an hour to go to Lyons without stopping once, for I give you only sixty hours, which should suffice you to travel forty stages.[24] No sooner have you arrived in Lyons than you will take this letter to Signor Bono, who will at sight of it pay you a hundred louis, which I give you, and after that you can do whatever you please, for you are no longer in my service. I make you a present of the carriage which was taken out of storage in Antibes, and I will now give you twenty-five louis for the expenses of your journey. Choose. But I warn you that if you choose the hospital I will pay you only one month's wages, for I dismiss you from my service here and now."

After thinking a little he said that he would go to Lyons, though at the risk of his life, for he was very ill. I thereupon called Clairmont to pack his trunk, and I informed the innkeeper that the man was leaving, so that he should send for post horses for him at once. After that I gave him the letter addressed to Bono, and twenty-five louis to Clairmont to give to Passano when he saw him in the carriage and ready to leave. After thus disposing of the matter I went to pursue my love affair. I needed to have long conversations with Marcolina, with whom I felt that I was more in love every day. She told me every day that to be completely happy all she lacked was a knowledge of French and the shadow of a hope that I would take her to England with me.

I had never given her any expectation of that, and I became sad again when I saw that I must think of parting from the girl, who, voluptuous to the marrow, and no less accommodating, had a natural temperament which gave her an insatiable appetite for all the pleasures of the bed and of the table, where she ate as much as I did and drank more. She was delighted that I had got rid of my brother and Passano, and she begged me to take her with me to the theater sometimes, where all the people of fashion approached her kind companion[25] to learn who she was and berated her because she would not let her reply. I promised to go with her during the following week.

"For at the moment," I said, "I am engaged in a magical operation which keeps me busy all day, and in which I shall need you. I will have clothes made for you to disguise you as a boy groom;[26] and so clad you will present yourself to the Marquise with whom I am staying, at an hour of which I will inform you, and deliver a note to her. Will you have the courage to do that?"

"Certainly. Will you be there?"

"Yes. She will speak to you, and since you do not speak French and so cannot answer her, you will pass as a mute. The note will describe you as such. The same note will say that you offer to wait on her in the bath, in my company; she will accept your offer, and at the hour she appoints you will undress her completely, then you will do the same, and you will rub her from her toes to the top of her thighs, and no farther. While you are doing that in the bath with her, I will strip naked, I will embrace the Marquise closely, whereupon you will do nothing but look at us. When I leave her you will wash her amorous parts with your delicate hands and then dry them. You will do the same to me, and I will embrace her closely a second time. At the end of the second time, after washing her again, you will wash me too and cover with Florentine kisses[27] the instrument with which I shall have given her unmistakable signs of my affection. I will then embrace her for the third time, and this time your office will be to caress us both until the end of the skirmish. You will then give us the last ablution and, after drying us, you will dress her, you will take what she gives you, and you will return here. You will see me an hour later."

"I will do whatever you order me to do, but you must know how hard it will be for me to do it."

"No harder than for me, for it will be you whom I shall want to embrace, and not the old woman you will see."

"Is she very old?"

"She will soon be seventy."[28]

"As old as that? I am sorry for you, my dear Giacometto. And afterward you will come to sup and sleep with me?"

"Certainly."

"That's better!"

On the day appointed by Madame Audibert, I saw my late niece's father, to whom I told everything truthfully, except that I had slept with her. He embraced me several times, and thanked me again and again for having done more for her than he could have done himself. He told me he had received another letter from his correspondent, containing one from his son which was very modest and respectful.

"He asks for no dowry with her," he said, "but I will give him forty thousand écus, and we will celebrate the wedding here, for it is a most honorable marriage. Everyone in Marseilles knows Signor N. N., and tomorrow I will tell the whole story to my wife, who, in view of the happy outcome, will grant her daughter a full pardon."

I had to promise that I would attend the wedding party with Madame Audibert, who, knowing that I was an inveterate gamester, and having high play at her house, was surprised not to see me there; but I felt that I was in Marseilles at the time to create, not to destroy. Everything has its proper season.

I had a waist-length jacket of green velvet made for Marcolina and breeches of the same material, I gave her green stockings and morocco leather shoes and gloves of the same color, and a green net in the Spanish fashion, with a long bag behind which held her long black hair. Thus clad she became a figure so worthy of admiration that if she had shown herself in the streets of Marseilles everyone would have followed her, for, aside from all that, the fact that she was a girl was obvious to every eye. Before supper I took her, in girl's clothes, to my inn, to show her where she was to hide in my room after the operation, when the day came for me to perform it.

The ceremonies to the planets being completed on Saturday, I had the oracle declare that Seramis was to be regenerated on Tuesday at the hours of the Sun, of Venus, and of Mercury, which, in the planetary system of magicians, follow one another, as they do in the imaginary system of Ptolemy.[29] They would be the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh hour of that day, since, being Tuesday, its first hour would belong to Mars. The hours at the beginning of May were each of sixty-five minutes; so the reader, if he knows anything at all about magic, will see that I had to perform the operation on Madame d'Urfé from half past two o'clock to five minutes before six. Early Monday night, at the hour of the Moon, I had taken Madame d'Urfé to the seashore, followed by Clairmont carrying the box, which weighed fifty pounds. Having made sure that we were unobserved, I told Madame d'Urfé that the moment had come, and at the same time I had Clairmont set the box down at our feet, after which I ordered him to wait for us at the carriage. We then addressed a set prayer to Selenis,[30] and we threw the box into the sea, to Madame d'Urfé's great joy, which, however, was no greater than mine, for the box we threw into the water contained fifty pounds of lead. I had the other box in my room, where no one could see it. Back at the "Thirteen Cantons," I left the Marquise there, telling her that I would return to the inn after rendering thanks to the Moon in the same place where I had performed my seven ceremonies.

I went to sup with Marcolina, and while she put on her groom's costume, I wrote with rock alum[31] on white paper in capital letters:

"I am dumb but I am not deaf. I have come out of the Rhone to bathe you. The hour has begun."

"Here is the note," I said to Marcolina, "which you will deliver to the Marquise when you appear in her presence."

I have her go out with me on foot, we enter my inn unseen by anyone, and then my room, where I hide her in a cupboard. I then put on a dressing gown and I enter Madame's room to inform her that Selenis has fixed her regeneration for the next day before three o'clock, and that it must be completed by half past five in order not to risk trespassing on the hour of the Moon, which followed that of Mercury.

"You will arrange, Madame, for the bath to be ready here at the foot of your bed before dinner, and you will make sure that Brougnole shall not enter your room before nightfall.'

"I will tell her to go for a walk; but Selenis had promised us an Undine."

"True; but I have not seen one."

"Ask the oracle."

"As you please."

She herself puts the question, renewing her prayers to the Genius Paralis that the operation should not be deferred even if the Undine does not appear, since she is prepared to bathe alone. The oracle replies that Oromasis's orders are infallible, and that she had been wrong to doubt it. At this reply the Marquise rises and performs a ceremony of expiation. The woman could not move me to pity, for she moved me too strongly to laughter. She embraced me, saying:

"Tomorrow, my dear Galtinarde, you will be my husband and my father. Tell the learned to explain that enigma."

I shut her door, and I go to the cupboard to release my Undine, who at once undresses and gets into my bed, where she well understood that she was to spare me. We slept all night without looking at each other. In the morning, before calling Clairmont, I had her take breakfast and I instructed her to get back into the cupboard at the end of the operation, for she must not risk being seen leaving the inn clad as she was. I repeated all her instructions, I charged her to be gay and affectionate, and to remember that she was dumb but not deaf and that at exactly half past two she must enter and present the paper to the Marquise, going down on one knee.

Dinner was ordered for twelve o'clock, and as I entered the Marquise's room I saw the bath at the foot of her bed, two-thirds filled with water. The Marquise was not there; but two or three minutes later I see her come out of the dressing room with a great deal of rouge[32] on her cheeks, a cap of fine lace, a short blond lace mantle covering her bosom, which forty years earlier had been of a beauty unequaled in France, and wearing an old but very rich dress of cloth of silver and gold. In her ears were two emerald pendants, and she had on a choker of seven aquamarines from which hung an emerald which could not be matched for clarity; the chain which held it was of some eighteen or twenty very white diamonds of a carat and a half. On her finger she had the carbuncle which I knew, which she valued at a million and which was only paste; but the other stones, which I did not know she owned, were genuine, as I assured myself later.

Seeing Seramis thus bedecked, I saw that I must flatter her by my homage; so I went to meet her and made to kiss her hand on my knees; but she, preventing me, invited me to embrace her. After she had told Brougnole that she was free until six o'clock, we discussed the subject of our concern until dinner was served.

Clairmont alone was permitted to wait on us at table, and on that day she would eat nothing but fish. At half past one I ordered Clairmont to close our apartment to everyone and to go for a walk until six o'clock if he wished. Madame began to seem uneasy, and I pretended to be slightly so too, I looked at my watches, I again calculated the minutes of the planetary hours, and I kept saying:

"We are still in the hour of Mars, the hour of the Sun has not yet begun."

At last we hear the clock striking half past two, and two or three minutes later we see the beautiful Undine enter, smiling and making her way with measured steps straight to Seramis, to whom she delivers her paper, going down on one knee. She sees that I do not rise, and she remains seated too, but she raises the Genius, accepting her paper, and she is surprised to see it white all over. I at once hand her a pen; she understands that she is to consult the oracle. She asks it what the paper is. I take back the pen, I construct the pyramid for her question, she interprets it, and she finds: *"What is written under water can be read only under water."*

"I understand it," she says; and she rises, goes to the bath, dips the opened sheet into it, and reads, in letters whiter than the paper:

"I am dumb but I am not deaf. I have come out of the Rhone to bathe you, the hour of Oromasis has begun."

"Then bathe me, divine Genius," says Seramis, putting the paper on the table and sitting down on the bed.

Thereupon Marcolina, following her instructions exactly, takes off her stockings, then her dress, then her shift, gently puts her feet in the bath, and, in no time at all, strips bare, steps into the bath up to her knees, while I, having put myself unaided in the state in which they both were, beg the Genius to dry Seramis's feet and to be the divine witness of my union with her, to the glory of the immortal Horosmadis, King of the Salamanders.[33]

My request is scarcely uttered before the Undine, who was not deaf, grants it, and I consummate the marriage with Seramis while admiring the beauties of Marcolina, which I had never seen so well.

Seramis had been beautiful, but she was as I am today;

without the Undine, the operation would have failed. Yet Seramis, affectionate, amorous, clean, and not in the least repulsive, was not distasteful to me. After the act:

"We must," I said to her, "wait for the hour of Venus."

The Undine purified us where the aspersions of love were to be seen; she[34] embraces the bride, washes her to the top of her thighs, caresses her, is embraced in turn, then she does the same to me. Enchanted by her good fortune and praising the divine creature's charms, Seramis invites me to examine them, I declare that no mortal woman is like her, Seramis becomes tender again, the hour of Venus begins, and, encouraged by the Undine, I undertake the second assault, which would be the most strenuous, for the hour was of fifty-five minutes. I enter the lists, I work for half an hour, groaning and sweating and tiring Seramis without being able to reach the final point and feeling ashamed to cheat her; she wiped from my brow the sweat which dripped from my hair mixed with pomade and powder; the Undine, treating me to the most provocative caresses, preserved what the old body I was obliged to touch was destroying, and nature disclaimed the effectiveness of the means I was employing to reach the finish line. Toward the end of the hour I finally determined to make an end, after imitating all the usual signs which appear at that sweet moment. Emerging from the skirmish the victor, and still threatening, I left the Marquise in no doubt as to my valor. She would have declared Anael[35] unjust; he had indicted me before Venus as a counterfeiter.

Even Marcolina was deceived. The third hour struck, it was time to satisfy Mercury. We spend a quarter of his hour in the bath up to our waists. The Undine enchanted Seramis by the kind of caresses which she gave her, and of which the Regent, the Duke of Orléans,[36] had had no notion; she thought them peculiar to the Geniuses of rivers, so she applauded all the labors which the female Genius performed on her with her fingers. Moved to gratitude, she begged the beautiful creature to bestow her treasures on me, and it was then that Marcolina displayed all the learning of the Venetian school. She instantly became Lesbian, and, seeing me alive in consequence, she urged me to satisfy Mercury; but again I find myself not without thunder but without the power to discharge it. I saw the inexpressible pain which my labors caused the Undine, I saw that Seramis was longing for the end of the skirmish, I could no longer sustain it, I decided to cheat again by an agony accompanied by convulsions which ended in motionlessness, the inevitable consequence of an agitation which Seramis, as she told me afterward, found unexampled.

After pretending to come to myself, I got into the bath, which I left after a brief ablution. I having begun to dress, Marcolina did as much for the Marquise, who watched her with adoring eyes. The Undine dressed at once, and, inspired by her Genius, Seramis took off her necklace and put it around the neck of the beautiful bath attendant, who, after giving her a Florentine kiss, hurried away to resume her place in the cupboard. Seramis asked the oracle if the operation had been perfect. Terrified by the question, I made it reply that the word of the Sun was in her soul, and that at the beginning of February she would give birth to herself with her sex changed, but that she must stay in bed for a hundred and seven hours.

Overjoyed, she declared that the command to rest for a hundred and seven hours was divinely wise. I embraced her, saying that I was going to spend the night outside the city to recover the remainder of the drugs I had left there after the ceremonies I had performed to the Moon, and promising that I would dine with her the next day.

I made infinitely merry with Marcolina until half past seven o'clock, for if I was not to be seen leaving the inn with her I had to wait until dark. I took off the fine wedding coat I had put on and replaced it by a *frac,* and I accompanied her to her lodging in a hackney carriage, taking with me the box with the offerings to the planets which I had so well earned. We were both dying of hunger, but the choice supper we were to have assured us that we should return to life. Marcolina took off her green jacket and put on a dress, after giving me the fine necklace.

"I will sell it, my dear, and give you the money."

"What may it be worth?"

"A thousand zecchini at least. You will go to Venice with five thousand ducati correnti[37] of your own; you will find a husband with whom you will be very well off."

"I give you all the five thousand ducati; and take me with you as your loving mistress; I will love you like my soul, I will never be jealous, I will take care of you as if you were my child."

"We will discuss that, my beautiful Marcolina; but now that we have supped well, let us go to bed, for I have never been so desirous of you as I am at this moment."

"You must be tired."

"Yes, but not exhausted so far as love is concerned, for—thank Heavens!—I was able to distill myself only once."

"I thought it was twice. The good old woman! She is still attractive. Fifty years ago she must have been the greatest beauty in France. When one grows old, one can no longer be pleasing to Love."

"Your way of winding me up was irresistible, but she unwound me even more."

"Do you always need to have a young girl before your eyes when you want to be loving with her?"

"No indeed, for the other times it was not a case of giving her a male child."

"So you have undertaken to make her pregnant. Let me laugh, please. Perhaps she believes she is pregnant, too."

"She certainly believes it, for she is sure that I gave her the seed."

"Oh, what a joke! But why were you foolish enough to promise her three assaults?"

"I thought that, seeing you, I should find it easy, and I was wrong. The flabby skin I was touching was not the skin my eyes saw, and the acme of pleasure would not come. You shall see it is true tonight. Once again: let us go to bed."

"Let us."

By virtue of the comparison I spent a night with Marcolina which equaled those I had spent at Parma with Henriette[38] and at Murano with M. M.[39] I remained in bed for fourteen hours, four of which were consecrated to love. I told Marcolina to dress fittingly and to expect me at the hour for the theater. I could not do her a greater favor.

I found Madame d'Urfé in bed, elegantly attired and with her hair youthfully dressed, and showing a satisfaction which I had never seen in her before. She said she knew that she owed me all her happiness; and she proceeded to argue very rationally from the premise of her delusion.

"Marry me," she said, "and you will be the guardian of my child, who will be your son; by so doing, you will keep me in possession of my entire fortune and have control of what I am to inherit from my brother Monsieur de Pontcarré,[40] who is old and cannot live long. If you do not take care of me next February, when I am to be reborn as a man, who will take care of me? God knows into what hands I shall fall. I shall be declared a bastard, and I shall be forced to lose an income of eighty thousand livres, of which you can keep me in possession. Consider it well, Galtinarde. I already feel within me the soul of a man; I confess it to you, I am in love with the Undine and I want to know if I can sleep with her fourteen or fifteen years hence. If it is the will of Oromasis, he can bring it about. Oh, the charming creature! Have you ever seen a woman so beautiful? What a pity she is dumb. She must have a male water sprite for a lover. But all water sprites are dumb, for in the water it is impossible to speak. I am amazed that she is not deaf. I was surprised that you did not touch her. The softness of her skin is incredible. Her saliva is sweet. Water sprites have a language of gestures, which one can learn. How it would delight me if I could converse with the creature! I beg you to consult the oracle and ask it where I am to lie in; and if you cannot marry me, I think everything I possess should be sold, so that I shall have means when I am reborn; for in my infancy I shall know nothing, and money will be needed to give me an education. By selling everything, it would be possible to invest a large sum which, in trustworthy hands, would suffice to supply all my needs from the interest on it alone."

I replied that the oracle should be our only guide, and that when she became a man and my son I would never allow her to be declared a bastard; and it reassured her. Her reasoning was perfectly sound; but since her argument was based on an absurdity, I could only pity her. If any of my readers is of the opinion that, to act honorably, I should have undeceived her, I am sorry for him; it was impossible; and even if it had been possible I would not have done it, for I should have made her miserable. Her very nature was such that only chimeras could satisfy her.

I put on one of my handsomest coats to take Marcolina to the theater with me for the first time. Chance decreed that the two Rangoni sisters,[41] the daughters of the Roman Consul, took places in the box in which we were. As I had known them since the first time I had been in Marseilles, I introduced Marcolina to them as a niece of mine who spoke only Italian. It was just what was needed to make Marcolina happy, for now she could at last talk with a Frenchwoman in her own Venetian language, which is so full of charm. The younger of the two sisters, far more attractive than the elder, a few years later became Princess Gonzaga Solferino.[42] The Prince who married her, a man of learning and even of genius, though poor, was none the less a Gonzaga, being the son of Leopoldo, also very poor, and a Medini,[43] the sister of the Medini who died in prison in London in the year 1787. Babet[44] Rangoni, though the poor daughter of a merchant of Marseilles and Roman Consul, none the less deserved to acquire the title of Princess, for she had all the airs and manners of one. She shines under her name of Rangoni in the list of princes[45] to be found in every almanac.[46] Her husband, who is extremely vain, is delighted that readers of the almanac should believe that his wife belongs to the illustrious Modenese family. An innocuous vanity. The same almanacs call the Medini who is the Prince's mother a Medici. These little falsehoods, which spring from the pride of the nobility, do no harm to society. The Prince, whom I saw in Venice eighteen[47] years ago, was living on a comfortable pension[48] granted him by the Empress Maria Teresa; I hope that the late Emperor Joseph[49] did not take it from him, for he deserves it, both by his morals and by his interest in literature.

At the play Marcolina did nothing but chatter with the charming younger Rangoni, who tried to persuade me to bring her to call, but I excused myself. I was considering how best to send Madame d'Urfé to Lyons, having no further use for her and finding her presence in Marseilles a burden.

On the third day after her regeneration she gave me a question for Paralis asking where she was to expect to die, that is, to lie in, and it was on this occasion that I made the oracle decree that a rite must be performed to the water sprites on two rivers at the same hour, after which the question would be decided; the same oracle told me to perform three expiations to Saturn because of the too harsh manner in which I had treated the false Querilinte, in which rites there was no reason for Seramis to take part, though she must be present at the rite to the water sprites.

While I was pretending to think of a place where two rivers were close together, it was she who said that Lyons was watered by the Rhone and the Saône and that nothing would be easier than to do the thing in that city, and I agreed. She having asked the oracle if preparations must be made, I produced the reply that it was only necessary to pour a bottle of sea water into each of the two rivers two weeks before beginning the rite, a series of ceremonies which Seramis could herself perform at the first diurnal hour of the Moon each day.

"In that case," said Seramis, "the bottles must be filled here, for all the other seaports in France are farther from there, and I shall have to set out as soon as I am allowed to leave my bed and then wait for you in Lyons. You see that, since you have to perform expiations to Saturn, you cannot come with me."

I agreed, pretending to feel regret at being obliged to let her leave alone; the next day I bring her two sealed bottles containing salt water from the Mediterranean, I stipulate that she shall empty the bottles into the rivers on the 15th of May (the month in which we then were), promising her that I will be in Lyons before the two weeks are over, and we set her departure for the next day but one, which was the 11th. I wrote down the hours of the Moon for her, and her itinerary so that she would spend the night at Avignon.

After she left I went to stay with Marcolina. On that day I gave her 460 louis in gold, which, with the 140 she had won playing *biribissi,* put her in possession of 600 louis. It was on the day after the Marquise's departure that Signor N. N. arrived in Marseilles with a letter from Rosalie Paretti, which he brought to me the same day. She said that her honor and mine demanded that I present the bearer of her letter to my niece's father. Rosalie was right; but since the girl was not my niece, the thing became awkward. But that did not keep me from telling him, after embracing him warmly, that I would at once present him to Madame Audibert, the intimate friend of his fiancée, who would introduce him, with me, to his future father-in-law, who would later take him to see his daughter, who was two leagues from Marseilles.

Signor N. N. had gone to lodge at the "Thirteen Cantons," where he had at once been told where I was staying; he was delighted to find himself about to attain his dearest wish, and his joy increased when he saw how Madame Audibert received him. She immediately fetched her mantle, got into my carriage with him, and took us to the house of Monsieur N. N.,[50] who, after reading his correspondent's letter, introduced him to his wife, whom he had already informed, saying:

"My dear wife, here is our son-in-law."

I was greatly surprised when, having been previously acquainted with the facts by Madame Audibert, he displayed the tact and presence of mind to introduce me to his wife as his cousin who had made the journey with their daughter. She politely expressed her gratitude, and the awkwardness was over. He at once sent an express messenger to his sister to say that he would dine at her house the next day with his wife, his future son-in-law, Madame Audibert, and a cousin of his whom she did not know. After dispatching the messenger he invited us, and Madame Audibert undertook to convey us in her carriage. She told him that I had with me another niece, of whom his daughter was very fond and whom she would be very glad to see again. He was delighted. Admiring the woman's presence of mind, I was very glad to offer Marcolina this pleasure, and I expressed most sincere thanks to Madame Audibert, who left, saying that she would expect us at her house the next morning at ten o'clock.

I then took Signor N. N. to my lodging, and he came to the theater with Marcolina, who loved to talk and so could not bear to be with French people who spoke only their own language. After the performance Signor N. N. supped with us, and it was at table that I told

Marcolina the good news that she would dine the next day with her dear friend; I thought she would go mad for joy. After Signor N. N. left, we at once went to bed, in order to be ready early the next day. The fiancé did not keep us waiting. At the appointed hour we arrived at Madame Audibert's, who spoke Italian and who, declaring Marcolina a perfect jewel, gave her countless caresses and regretted that I had not made the introduction sooner. At eleven o'clock we arrived in Saint-Louis, where I had the pleasure of witnessing the dramatic scene: Mademoiselle P. P., with a dignity mingled with respect and affection, giving her fiancé the most gracious reception, then thanking me for having been so kind as to introduce him to her father, then passing from seriousness to joy to bestow countless kisses on Marcolina, who was lost in astonishment because her dear friend had not spoken to her at once.

At the dinner everyone was pleased and very gay. I laughed to myself when I was asked why I was sad. They thought I was so because I said nothing; but I was very far from being sad! It was one of the best moments in my life. In those blissful moments my mind was concentrated in the divine tranquility of true contentment, I saw myself the author of the whole delightful comedy, very satisfied to find (on striking the balance) that I did more good than evil in this world, and that, though not born a king, I was able to make people happy. There was not a person at the table who did not owe his particular contentment to me; this reflection gave me a happiness which I could only enjoy in silence.

Mademoiselle P. P. returned to Marseilles with her father, her mother, and her fiancé, who Monsieur P. P. at once insisted must come to stay in his house, and I returned with Madame Audibert, who made me promise to bring Marcolina to supper. It had been settled that the marriage should take place upon the arrival of the answer to a letter which Monsieur P. P. had written to the father of his future son-in-law. We were all invited to the wedding, and Marcolina was very much flattered to be included. What a pleasure for me, on our return from Saint-Louis, to see the young Venetian girl madly in love! Such is, or should be, the state of every girl who lives with a man who truly loves her and shows her attentions; all her gratitude is transformed to love, and the lover, seeing himself rewarded, becomes all the fonder.

At supper at Madame Audibert's a very rich young man, a considerable dealer in wine and his own master, who had spent a year in Venice and was seated beside Marcolina, who said countless charming things, showed that he was not insensible to her attractions. By nature I was always jealous of all my mistresses, but when I could foresee their good fortune in a rival who was coming into being before my eyes, jealousy left me. For this first time I merely asked Madame Audibert who the young man was, and I was extremely pleased to learn that he was of good character and had a hundred thousand écus, together with large wine warehouses in Marseilles and Sète.[51]

The next day at the theater he entered the box in which we were, and I was delighted to see that Marcolina received him very graciously. I invited him to sup with us; he accepted, and was respectful, ardent, and tender. On his departure I said that I hoped he would do me the honor some other time; and, left alone with Marcolina, I congratulated her on her conquest, showing her that she could expect a position in life almost equal to that which Mademoiselle P. P. had attained; but instead of finding her grateful, I saw that she was furious.

"If you want to get rid of me," she said, "send me to Venice; I do not want to marry."

"Calm yourself, my angel—get rid of you? What a thing to say! What have I ever done to make you think that you are a burden to me? This handsome, polished, rich young man loves you, I thought I saw that he is to your liking; wanting to see you happy and safe from the whims of Fortune, I point out the prospect of a happy situation for you in the future, and you turn on me? Charming Marcolina, stop crying, you distress me."

"I am crying because you imagined that I loved him."

"It was a possibility; I will stop imagining it. Calm yourself and let us go to bed."

She passed from tears to laughter and caresses in an instant, and we said no more about the wine merchant. The next day at the theater he came to our box, and Marcolina was polite but reserved. I did not dare to invite him to sup with us. At home Marcolina thanked me for not having asked him and said she had been afraid I would do so. It was enough to guide me in the future. The next day Madame Audibert called to bring us an invitation from the wine merchant to sup at his house; I at once turned to Marcolina and asked her if she wished to accept the invitation, and she replied that she was only too happy to be anywhere with Madame Audibert. So she came for us toward nightfall, and she took us to the merchant's, who gave us a supper to which he had invited no one else. We saw a bachelor's house which lacked nothing but a woman fit to do the honors of it and to be its mistress. At the very choice supper the young man divided his attentions between Madame Audibert and Marcolina, who, having made Mademoiselle P. P.'s good manners and easy bearing her own, played her part to perfection. Gay, polite, and discreet, she left me certain that she had set the worthy merchant on fire.

No later than the next day Madame Audibert asked me by a note to come to see her. I went, and, to my considerable surprise, heard her ask me for Marcolina as the wine merchant's wife. I did not think long before replying that I was willing, and that, on sufficient security, I would give her ten thousand écus, but that I could not take the risk of speaking to her on the subject.

"I will send her to you, Madame, and if you can gain her consent I will keep my word; but you must not speak to her about it on my behalf, for it might distress her."

"I will go for her myself, and she shall dine with me, and you shall come to fetch her in time for the play."

The next day she came, and Marcolina, whom I had forewarned, went to dine with her. About five o'clock I went to the lady's house, where, finding Marcolina in a charming humor, I did not know what to suppose. They were alone; not having been taken aside by Madame Audibert, I did not want to take her aside, and when it was time for the play we left. On the way Marcolina lavished praise on the lady's excellent character, without saying a word about the affair; but halfway through the play I guessed everything. I saw the young man in the amphitheater,[52] and I did not see him appear in our box, where there were two empty places.

What a pleasure for Marcolina to see me more amorous and fond than ever at supper! It was not until we had gone to bed that, in the sincerity of joy, she repeated to me all that Madame Audibert had said to her.

"I never gave her any answer," she said, "except that I will not marry until you order me to do so. But I am obliged to you for the ten thousand écus which you would be ready to give me. You left the decision to me, and I left it to you. I will go to Venice when you wish it, if you think you cannot take me to England, but I will not marry. It is likely that we shall see no more of the gentleman, who I grant is amiable and whom indeed I could love if I did not have you."

And in fact we heard no more of him. The day of Mademoiselle P. P.'s wedding arrived; we were invited, and Marcolina appeared at it in my company, without diamonds but otherwise as richly attired as she could wish.

CHAPTER IV[1]

I leave Marseilles. Henriette in Aix. Irene in Avignon. Passano's treachery. Madame d'Urfé's departure for Lyons.

BUT FOR my interest in the occasion I should have found the wedding banquet intolerable. The profusion of viands, the noisy company, the congratulations, the interrupted remarks, the insipid jokes, the unrestrained laughter would have driven me to distraction had it not been for Madame Audibert, whom I never left. Marcolina was never far from the bride, who, since she was to return to Genoa a week later, wanted to take her with her, promising to send her to Venice in trustworthy hands; but Marcolina would have nothing to do with plans which would separate her from me. She told me she would go to Venice when I sent her there of my own free will. The wedding festivities she was witnessing did not make her repent in the least of having refused the excellent match which Madame Audibert had proposed to her. The bride showed her heartfelt content on her face, I congratulated her on it again and again, she admitted that she was happy and said that what most gratified her was that she was sure she would have a true friend at Genoa in Rosalie.[2]

The day after the wedding I made ready to leave. I began by opening the box which contained the offerings to the planets, keeping the diamonds and taking all my money to Roux de Corse,[3] who still had the entire amount which Greppi had placed to my credit; I obtained a letter of credit on Tourton & Baur;[4] for, Madame d'Urfé being in Lyons, I could not lack money there. Three hundred louis which I had in my purse were enough for current expenses. In Marcolina's case, however, I took a different course. I withdrew the six hundred louis she had, I added twenty-five, then I had the whole sum converted into a bill of exchange to her order for 15,000 francs[5] on Lyons, for I still had it in mind to take advantage of a good opportunity to send her home. At the same time I provided her with a separate trunk, into which I had her put all the dresses and underwear I had had made for her. Marcolina had become a beauty and had acquired the manners of good society

On the eve of our departure we took leave of Madame N. N., supping at her house with her husband and the entire family. She embraced Marcolina fondly, but she showed no less affection for me, the author of all her happiness, despite the presence of her husband, who expressed the greatest friendship for me.

We left the next day, intending to travel all night and not stop until we reached Avignon, but at half past five o'clock, a league beyond the Croix d'Or,[6] the fastening of the pole of my carriage broke, so that we needed a cartwright. We had to resign ourselves to waiting until the nearest one to the place at which we were could come to our aid. Clairmont went to make inquiries at a pretty house on our right at the end of a drive 300 paces long and bordered by trees. I had only one postilion, whom I forbade to leave the four too restive horses. He came back with two menservants from the house which we saw, one of whom brought a message from his master inviting me to wait for the cartwright in his house. It would have been rude of me to refuse such politeness, which is characteristic of the country and especially of the nobility. The pole is made fast with ropes, and, leaving Clairmont to guard everything, I go to the house on foot with Marcolina. The cartwright had been sent for, and the carriage slowly followed us.

Three ladies accompanied by two gentlemen of rank come to meet us, one of the latter addresses me, saying that they cannot be very sorry for the misfortune which had befallen me since it gave Madame the opportunity to offer me[7] her house and her services. I turn to the lady to whom he has pointed and say that I hope I shall inconvenience her only for a short hour. She curtsies to me, but I do not see her face. Since the wind of Provence was blowing very strongly that day, she, like the two other ladies, had her hood drawn well forward. Marcolina was bareheaded, and her beautiful hair streamed in the wind. She replies by curtsies and smiles to the compliments paid to her charms which did not fear the wind; the gentleman who had first addressed me asks me, offering her his arm, if Madame is my daughter. Marcolina smiles, and I reply that she is my cousin and that we are Venetians.

Even the politest Frenchman is so eager to flatter a pretty woman that he often does not care that the compliment he pays her is at someone else's expense. He really could not suppose that Marcolina was my daughter, for despite the twenty years between us I did not look more than ten years the older; so she laughed. We were about to go in when, a big mastiff in pursuit of a pretty long-eared spaniel making Madame fear that it would bite it, she ran to rescue the little dog; and, making a misstep, she fell. We all ran to pick her up; but, getting up unaided, she said that she had given herself a sprain and, limping, went up to her apartment with the same nobleman who had spoken to me. We were no sooner seated than lemonade was served us, and, seeing

Marcolina at a loss before one of the ladies, who was speaking to her, I offered her excuses, telling the lady the truth. She was beginning to speak broken French, but so badly that I had seen nothing for it but to tell her never to open her mouth. It was better than arousing laughter by foreign expressions. One of the two ladies, the uglier, said to me that she was surprised that the education of young ladies was so neglected in Venice.

"They are not made to learn French!"

"It is a mistake, Madame, but in my country a girl's education includes instruction neither in foreign languages nor in parlor games; that comes when her education is finished."

"Then you are a Venetian too?"

"Yes, Madame."

"One really would not think so."

I bowed in acknowledgment of the unworthy compliment, for, though flattering to me, it was derogatory to my fellow countrymen, but the fact did not escape Marcolina, who gave a little laugh.

"Then Mademoiselle understands French," said the lady who had complimented me, "for she laughs."

"Yes, Madame, she understands everything, and she laughed because she knows that I am just like all other Venetians."

"*Non, Madame, non, Madame,*" said Marcolina, at which there was more laughter.

The Chevalier who had escorted the limping lady to her room returned and said that Madame, having found her ankle swollen, had gone to bed and asked us to go up to her apartment.

She was lying in a big bed in an alcove which was made even darker by curtains of crimson taffeta. She did not have on a hood; but it was impossible to see her well enough to know if she was ugly or beautiful, young or getting on in years. I said that I was in despair at being entirely to blame for her mishap, and she answered in Venetian Italian that it would amount to nothing.

Delighted, for Marcolina's sake, to hear her speak my language, I introduce Marcolina to her, saying that she can pay court to our hostess without speaking French; whereupon Marcolina began talking to her, putting her in high spirits with naïve remarks the amusing side of which it required a thorough knowledge of my country's charming language to appreciate

"Then Your Ladyship has spent some time in Venice?" I asked.

"Never, but I have often talked with Venetians."

A servant came in to tell me that the cartwright was in the courtyard and that he said it would take him at least four hours to put my carriage in condition to travel. I then asked permission to go down, and I looked at everything. The cartwright lived a quarter of a league away, I was thinking of going there in the carriage itself by fastening the pole to the forecarriage with ropes, when the gentleman who did the honors of the house asked me in the Countess's behalf to sup and spend the night at her house, for, if I went to the cartwright's it would be out of my way, I should not get there until nightfall, and the cartwright, having to work by candlelight, would do everything badly. So persuaded, I told the cartwright to go home and to come back at daybreak with whatever he needed to put me in condition to leave. Clairmont then took everything which was not still tied on the carriage to the apartment I was to occupy. I went to express my gratitude to the Countess, interrupting the laughter which the things Marcolina was saying and the Countess translating aroused from the company. I was not surprised to find that Marcolina had already arrived at the stage of fond caresses with the Countess, who to my regret remained invisible, for I knew her weakness. A table was set for seven, and I hoped I should see her; but not a bit of it, she did not want supper. She did nothing but talk, now to Marcolina, now to me, with a great deal of wit and very correctly. I learned that she was a widow from her dropping the expression "my late husband." I never dared to ask in whose house I was. It was from Clairmont that I learned her name, and then not until I was going to bed; but it made no difference, for I had no knowledge of the family whose name it was.

After supper Marcolina returned to the Countess, sitting down on her bed without so much as "by your leave." Nobody could say a word, for the dialogue between the two new friends was continuous and very animated. When I thought politeness demanded that I should withdraw, I was greatly surprised to hear my supposed cousin tell me that she would sleep with the Countess. The latter's laughter and her "yes, yes" prevented me from telling the madcap that her intention was not far from impertinent. Their mutual embraces showed me that they were of one mind; wishing the Countess good night, I said only that I did not guarantee the sex of the person whom she was admitting to her bed. She answered very distinctly that *the only risk she took lay in which way she would gain.*

Going to bed, I laughed at Marcolina's propensity, which in the same way had won the fond friendship of Mademoiselle P. P. in Genoa. The women of Provence almost all have the same propensity;[8] it makes them only the more charming.

The next morning I rose at daybreak to hasten the cartwright's labors. Coffee was brought to me at my carriage, and when everything was ready I asked if the Countess was visible so that I could go to thank her. Marcolina came out with the Chevalier, who asked me to excuse Madame for not being able to receive me.

"She is," he said with the utmost politeness, "in bed in such dishabille that she dares appear to no one; but she asks you, if ever you come this way again, to honor her house, whether you are alone or in company."

The refusal, though gilded, greatly displeased me; but I concealed my feeling. I could attribute it to nothing but the effrontery of Marcolina, who I saw was in very high spirits, and yet whom I did not want to mortify. After exhausting my stock of compliments, and giving a louis to each of the servants present, I set off.

In rather a bad humor, but able not to show it, I asked Marcolina, after fondly embracing her, how she had spent the night with the Countess whom I had not seen.

"Very well indeed, my friend; we indulged in all the wantonness in which you know two women who love each other indulge when they are in bed together."

"Is she pretty? Is she old?"

"She is young, not more than thirty-three or thirty-four, and I assure you she is quite as beautiful as my darling P. P. I saw all of her this morning, and we kissed each other all over."

"You are a strange one. You cuckolded me with a woman, leaving me to sleep alone. Faithless wretch, you prefer a woman to me."

"It was a passing fancy. But consider that I owed her the kindness, for she was the first to declare her love."

"How?"

"When we were laughing so hard and I embraced her, as you saw, she put her tongue between my lips. You understand that I had to respond in the same fashion. After supper, when I was on her bed, I managed to tickle her you know where, and she did the same to me. After that how could I help anticipating her desire by saying that I wanted to go to bed with her? I made her happy. Look. This proves how pleased she was."

Marcolina shows me a ring set with four stones of the first water of two or three carats each. I am amazed. Such a woman indeed loves pleasure, and deserves to be given it. I bestowed a hundred fond kisses on my beautiful pupil of Sappho,[9] and I forgave her for everything.

"But I cannot understand," I said, "why she did not want me to see her. It seems to me that, to a certain extent, the generous Countess treated me rather like a p. . . ."[10]

"Not at all. On the contrary, I think she felt ashamed to let herself be seen by my lover, for I had to confess to her that such you were."

"Perhaps. That ring, my dear, is worth two hundred louis. How delighted I am to see you happy!"

"Take me to England. My uncle must be there, I will go back to Venice with him."

"You have an uncle in England? Really? It sounds like a fairy tale. You've never mentioned it to me."

"I never mentioned it because I have always been afraid that it would be the very reason why you would not take me there."

"He is a Venetian; what is he doing in England? Are you sure he will give you a good reception? How do you know he is there now, and that he is going back to Venice? What is his name, and how am I to go about finding him in London, where the population is a million?"[11]

"My uncle won't take any finding. His name is Matteo Bosi,[12] and he is valet to Signor Querini,[13] the Venetian Ambassador, who went to congratulate the new King of England[14] with the Procurator Morosini.[15] He is my mother's brother, he left last year, and he told her in my presence that he would be back in Venice in July of this year. So you see we will find him just ready to leave. My uncle Matteo is a kind man, forty years of age, who loves me and who will forgive me for my escapade when he finds that I am rich."

All this was literally true so far as the embassy was concerned; I knew it from Signor Bragadin, and in all the rest that Marcolina had told me I saw the stamp of truth. I find her plan both attractive and well conceived, I give her my word that I will take her to London, delighted thus to have her with me five or six weeks longer. Possessing her, I felt that I was traveling with happiness at my side.

We arrived at Avignon toward the end of the day. We were very hungry, Marcolina had filled me with love; the "Saint-Omer"[16] inn was excellent; I tell Clairmont to take everything we need out of the carriage and to order horses for five o'clock in the morning. Marcolina, who did not like travel at night, shows a pleasure which delights me; but here is what she says to me while we are waiting for supper to be prepared.

"Are we in Avignon?"

"Yes, my dear Marcolina"

"Then, my dear Giacometto, it is at this moment that, as an honest girl, I must perform the task the Countess laid on me this morning before she kissed me for the last time. She made me swear not to speak of it to you until this moment"

"I am very curious. Speak"

"It is a letter from her to you."

"A letter?"

"Will you forgive me for not having delivered it to you until now?"

"Of course, if you promised her you would not. Where is the letter?"

"Wait"

She took a sheaf of papers from her pocket.

"This is my baptismal certificate."

"So I see; you were born in '46"

"This is my certificate of good conduct."

"Keep it."

"This one declares that I was a virgin at the time."

"Excellent. Did a midwife write it for you?"

"It was the Patriarch of Venice."

"Where is the letter?"

"I haven't lost it"

"God forfend! I'll send you back to Aix."

"This is the vow your brother made to marry me as soon as he turned Protestant."

"Give it to me."

"What does 'turned Protestant' mean?"

"I'll tell you later. Where's the letter?"

"Here it is."

"It has no address."

My heart was pounding. I unseal it, and I see the superscription in Italian: "To the most honorable man I have known in this world." I unfold it, and at the bottom of the sheet I see: "Henriette." That was all. She had left the sheet blank. The sight struck me motionless in body and soul. *Io non morii, e non rimasi vivo* ("I did not die, and did not remain alive").[17] Henriette![18] It was her style, her laconism. I remembered her last letter from Pontarlier, which I received in Geneva and which said only: "Farewell." Dear Henriette, whom I had so greatly loved, and whom I felt that I still loved with the same ardor! You saw me, and you did not want me to see you? Perhaps you thought that your charms might have lost the power with which they chained my soul sixteen years ago, and you did not want me to see that in you I had loved only a mortal woman. Ah, cruel Henriette, unjust Henriette! You saw me, and you did not want to know if I still love you. I did not see you, and I could not learn from your beautiful lips if you are happy. It is the only question I would have asked you. I would not have asked you if you still love me, for I know I am unworthy of that, having found it in myself to love other women after loving in you the utmost perfection which Nature has produced. Adorable and generous Henriette! You did not want me to know that you exist until I arrived here, because you feared that I would retrace my steps to have the happiness of seeing you; but I will see you tomorrow. You sent me word that your house would always be open to me. But no. The order which you gave Marcolina shows me that you do not want to see me again now. You may have left this morning, to go God knows where. You are a widow, Henriette. You are rich. Let me imagine that you are happy. Perhaps you only toyed with Marcolina to let me know that you are happy. My dear, my noble, my divine Henriette!

Astonished at my long trance, Marcolina did not dare arouse me from it. I did not change my position until the innkeeper came to offer me his compliments and tell me that he had made me a supper such as he knew I liked. I thanked him, and I restored Marcolina to life by fondly embracing her before I sat down at table.

"Do you know," she said, "that you frightened me? You went pale, you spent that quarter of an hour like an idiot. What is it? I knew that the Countess was acquainted with you, but I could not guess that her mere name would have such a tremendous effect on you."

"How did you know that she was acquainted with me?"

"She told me so again and again last night, but she ordered me not to say anything to you until after you had opened her letter."

"What did she say to you?"

"Just what the superscription says. It's odd. The whole letter is nothing but the superscription. Inside there's nothing but her name."

"But that name, my angel, tells everything."

"She told me that if I want to be happy always, I must never leave you. I answered that I was sure of it, but that you wanted to send me home, though you loved only me. I see and I guess that you loved each other dearly. Tell me if it was long ago."

"Sixteen or seventeen years."

"She cannot have been more beautiful."

"Be still."

"And were you lovers long?"

"Four months of perfect and constant joy."

"I shall not be happy as long as that."

"You shall be, my dear Marcolina, with another handsome, honorable man, and of your own age. I am going to England to try to get my daughter away from her mother."

"You have a daughter? The Countess asked me if you were married, and I said no."

"What you said was true. My daughter is not legitimate; she is ten years old. I will show her to you. You will swear she is my daughter."

As we were about to sit down at table, someone came downstairs from the third floor to sup at the common table, where my reader will remember that I had met Madame Stuard.[19] Since our door was open and we were looking at the people who were coming down, we were strangely surprised when we heard a cry and saw the girl who had uttered it come running to us to take my hand and kiss it, calling me her "dear papa." I turn toward the light, and I see Irene,[20] whom I had treated with scant courtesy in Genoa because of the tone her father[21] had taken when he talked to me about the *biribissi* bank I had broken at Signora Isolabella's. I of course draw back my hand and I embrace her. Pretending surprise, the artful creature drops a deep curtsy to Marcolina, who politely returns it and is all ears for the dialogue which was bound to follow such a meeting between the pretty girl and myself, especially when she hears me speak to her in Venetian.

"What brings you here, my beautiful Irene?"

"We have been here two weeks. God, how happy I am to see you! My heart is fluttering. May I sit down, Madame?"

"Yes, yes, sit down," I say, making her drink a little wine, which restores her.

A servant comes up and says she is waited for; she answers sharply that she wants no supper. Marcolina, unexpected as ever, orders the servant to set another place, and shows her satisfaction that her order has not displeased me. The soup being served, I sit down at the table facing the two girls, telling Irene to eat, for we are very hungry. I say that she shall tell us afterward what chance has brought her to Avignon.

Marcolina, seeing that she is eating heartily, says she would have made a mistake not to take supper; the other, pleased to hear herself addressed in Venetian, thanks her for her interest, and in three or four minutes they have become good friends enough to embrace each other. I laugh at Marcolina, who, always the same, fell in love at sight with all the pretty women she saw. From the brief dialogues we exchange in the course of eating I learn that her father and mother are at the common table, and from her exclaiming from time to time that it is God's pity for her which has sent me to Avignon, I gather that she must be in distress. Nevertheless, Irene, who was as pretty as ever, had assumed an expression of contentment perfectly in keeping with the gay remarks Marcolina made to her in her satisfaction at having learned from her own lips that she had called me "papa" only because her mother had told her in Milan that she was my daughter. Marcolina laughed most heartily at the amusing revelation and looked forward to seeing the mother, who was supping downstairs and whose lover I must have been.

We had not yet come to the roast when Count Rinaldi[22] came in with his wife. I asked them to be seated. Had it not been for Irene, I should have given the old rascal, who had tried to lay me under contribution for what I had won, no very good reception. He scolded Irene for having had the boldness to enter my apartment without considering that she must have been unwelcome, in view of the charming company I was enjoying; but Marcolina reassured him by saying that Irene could only have given me pleasure since, as her uncle, I could not but be glad to see a charming girl in her company.

"I even hope," she added, "that you will allow her to sleep with me tonight, if the prospect is not unpleasing to the Signorina."

"Yes, yes," from either side; the new friends embrace, and I cannot but laugh, though this time the thing did not please me, for I wanted only Marcolina; but I have always been able to adapt myself to circumstances.

When the two girls were sure that they would spend the night together they went wild with joy; I helped on their delight with good champagne, and I had a large bowl of punch made. Signor Rinaldi and his wife went up to their rooms tipsy; after they left, Irene told us that a Frenchman who had become her lover in Genoa had persuaded her father to go to Nice, where there was high play;[23] that at Nice, having found nothing of what the Frenchman had promised them, she had been obliged to sell some of her belongings to pay the innkeeper, her lover assuring her that he would make it up to her in Aix, where he was certain he would receive a sum of money. At Aix, her lover not having found the people who were to put him in funds again, she had had to give him more of her belongings in order to get them to Avignon, where, so he said, he could not fail to obtain whatever he needed.

"But here," she told me, "he again not finding what he hoped for, and none of us having anything left to sell, my father reproached him so vehemently that the poor young man would have killed himself if I had not prevented it by giving him the lynx-lined cloak you had made for me in Milan, on condition that he would leave. He took it, he pawned it for four louis, he sent me the ticket, assuring me in a very affectionate letter that he was going to Lyons to replenish his purse and would come back to take us to Bordeaux, where we would win great sums. It is twelve days since he left, and we have heard nothing more from him. We haven't a sou, we have nothing left to sell, and the innkeeper threatens to turn us out naked if we do not pay him tomorrow."

"What has your father decided to do?"

"Nothing. He insists that God's Providence will take care of us."

"What does your mother say?"

"She is perfectly calm."

"And you?"

"I undergo continual mortifications, for they say that if I had not fallen in love with the wretch we should still be in Genoa."

"Were you really in love?"

"Alas, yes!"

"Then you are unhappy now?"

"Very unhappy; but not because of love, for I've stopped thinking about that, but because of what will happen tomorrow."

"And at the common table no one has fallen in love with you?"

"There are three or four who make advances to me in words; but knowing that we are in need, they do not venture to come to our room."

"Nevertheless you are gay, you haven't the downcast look which distress brings, and I congratulate you."

It was La Stuard's situation all over again.

Marcolina, who was decidedly tipsy, showed that she was very much touched by Irene's story. She embraced her and said that, if I was her father, I ought not to abandon her, and that she should think of nothing but getting a good sleep. They then began to undress, and so did I; but not wanting to skirmish with two, I told them to leave me in peace. Marcolina burst out laughing and replied that I had only to go to bed; which I did, nothing but idle curiosity leading me to watch what Marcolina was doing to the charming Irene, who perhaps found herself engaged in a combat of this nature for the first time in her life.

It was Marcolina who undressed her, at the same time that she undressed herself. When they were both in their shifts Marcolina, always eager for amusement, came to my bed with her arms around Irene and ordered me to embrace her; I told her she was tipsy and that I wanted to sleep; declaring herself insulted, she urged Irene to do as she did, and they forced their way into the bed beside me, where, there not being room enough, Marcolina placed herself on top of Irene, calling her her "wife," while the other played the role very well. I had the strength of mind to remain for more than an hour the spectator of a scene which was always new though I had witnessed it so many times; but at last, become ravenous, they both attacked me so violently that I suddenly lost the power to resist, and I spent almost the whole night abetting the furies of the two bacchantes, who did not leave me until they saw me become a nullity and offering no hope of resurrection. We went to sleep, and I was surprised on waking to see that it was noon. They were still sleeping, wrapped round each other like two eels. I sighed when I saw them, thinking of the true happiness in which the two young creatures were plunged. I got up without disturbing their sleep, and I went out to countermand the horses and to tell the innkeeper that I wanted a good dinner at five o'clock and coffee with milk when I called for it. The innkeeper, who knew me, and who remembered what I had done for Stuard, guessed that I would do as much for Count Rinaldi.

When I returned to my room the two heroines greeted me with smiles and with the charming proof of confidence which Nature taught them they should give me, by simultaneously displaying, without an atom of jealousy, the beauties the enjoyment of which they have lavished on me: an infallible method, according to the constitution of mankind, of provoking me to give them the good morning of love. I felt tempted to do so; but the time of life had set in when I was unconsciously beginning to hoard my resources. I spent a voluptuous quarter of an hour on the bed, comparing all their treasures; and unprotestingly letting them call me a miser, I told them to get up.

"We should have left at five o'clock this morning," I said to Marcolina, "and it will soon strike one."

"We have enjoyed ourselves," she replied, "and time spent in enjoyment is never wasted. Are the horses there? We shall take coffee, I hope?"

They dressed, and while waiting for coffee, I gave Irene twelve double louis and then four more to get her cloak out of pawn. Her father and mother came in on their way from dining to wish us good morning. Irene did not lose a minute; she proudly gave him the twelve coins and she told him to love her a little better in future. He laughed, then he wept, and he left. He came back half an hour later to tell Irene that he had found an opportunity to go to Antibes for very little money, but that they must leave at once, for the driver wanted to spend the night at Saint-Andiol.[24]

"I am ready."

"No, my angel," I said, "you shall dine with your dear friend at five o'clock, and the driver will wait. Have him wait, Signor Rinaldi; my niece will pay him for the day—won't you, Marcolina?"

"Of course; I shall be very glad to dine here. I foresee that we shall not leave until tomorrow."

She was right. We dined at five o'clock, we went to bed at eight, and we indulged in the same sport as the night before; but at five o'clock in the morning we were all of us ready. I saw Irene, in her fine cloak, part from Marcolina with tears, and the other do the same. Old Rinaldi prophesied prodigious good fortune for me in England, and Irene wept because she was not to me what Marcolina was. We shall meet Irene again ten years hence.

A half hour later we left, and we traveled fifteen stages without once stopping. We spent the night in Valence, where we ate poorly; but Marcolina remained very happy. She did nothing all day but talk to me about Irene; she said sincerely that if it had been in her power she would have taken her from her father and brought her with her. She said she believed she was my daughter, though her face was not like mine, because of the great fondness she felt for her.

"How can you expect me to believe she is my daughter, when I never had anything to do with her mother?"

"She told me the same; she told me that you loved her for only three days, and that you bought her maidenhead for two hundred zecchini."

"That is true; but I was in love with someone else then; otherwise I would have bought her from her father for a thousand zecchini"

"You are right. I think, my dear friend, that if I stayed with you, I should never be jealous of your mistresses, provided you let me sleep with them too. I think that is evidence of my good character. Tell me if my reasoning is sound"

"You are good, but you could be just as good without the furious temperament which rules you."

"It is not temperament, for I am not tempted to do it except with the person I love; if it's a woman, I don't care, I enjoy myself just the same."

"Who gave you this inclination?"

"Nature. I began at the age of seven. In ten years I have certainly had more than three or four hundred girl sweethearts."

"And when did you begin doing it with men?"

"When I was eleven years old Father Molin, my confessor, monk of SS. Giovanni e Paolo,[25] wanted to make the acquaintance of the girl with whom I was sleeping at that time; it was during the Carnival. He treated us to a fatherly admonition in the confession box and gave us to hope that he would take us both to the theater if we would resolve to give up our trifling for only a week; we promised; and at the end of the week we went to him and assured him that we had abstained from it. The next day he came, masked, to the house of my sweetheart's aunt, who knew him, and who let us go, thinking there could be no harm in it, for, aside from his being a monk and our confessor, we were too young; my sweetheart was only twelve. After the play he took us to an inn for supper, and after supper he talked to us about our wrongdoing and wanted to see how we were built. He told us that the sin was a great one between girls, whereas between a girl and a man it was of little account, and he asked us if we knew how a man was built; we knew, but we told him we did not. He then said that, if we would promise to keep it a secret, he could satisfy our curiosity; and we promised. Thereupon our confessor showed us his treasure, and in an hour he made us women; and he did it so well that we became the suppliants. Three years later I fell in love with a goldsmith, then your brother made me laugh by falling in love with me and saying that his conscience would not let him ask me for my favors unless he married me. He said it could be done by going to Geneva, and he astonished me by asking me to make the journey with him. Like a fool I decided to do it, and you know the rest. A proof that I never loved him is that I was never curious to know how he was built. He told me at Padua, where I gave him a beating, that I was excommunicated. I had a good laugh.’’

We left Valence at five o’clock in the morning, and we reached Lyons at nightfall, going to stay at the ‘‘Parc.’’[26] I at once went to Madame d’Urfé’s house on the Place Bellecour;[27] as always, she told me she had been sure I would arrive that day. She wanted to know if she had performed her ceremonies properly, and Paralis, of course, declared that all had been in order, which greatly flattered her; after embracing young D’Aranda, who was with her, I promised to be at her house at ten o’clock the next morning.

We spent it working together to obtain from the oracle all the necessary instructions for her lying-in, for her will, and for finding a way to make sure that, when she was reborn as a man, she would not be reduced to poverty. The oracle decided that she should die in Paris, that she should leave everything to her son, and that her offspring would not be illegitimate, for Paralis promised that as soon as I arrived in London I would send her a gentleman who would marry her. The last oracle was that she must prepare to leave for Paris in three days, together with young D’Aranda, whom I was to restore to his mother’s arms in London. His real identity was no longer a secret, for the little rascal had told all. But I had taken care of that in the same way that I had offset the blabbings of La Corticelli and Passano. I could not wait to give the little ingrate back to his mother, who kept writing me saucy letters. I had it in mind to end her custody of my daughter, who must be ten years old and who, according to what her mother wrote me, had become a prodigy of beauty, grace, and talent.

After settling all this I went to the "Parc" to dine with Marcolina. It was very late, and, since I could not take her to the theater that day, I went to Signor Bono's to find out if he had sent my brother to Paris. He said that he had left the day before, after introducing him to a certain Passano, my great enemy, whom I should fear.

"I saw the man," he said, "pale, wasted, unable to stand; he told me he was going somewhere to die, and that there was no doubt of it, because you had had him poisoned; but he is sure, so he says, that he will make you pay dearly for your crime, and that he will see himself avenged before he dies here in Lyons, where he was certain that you would arrive. In half an hour, his lips foaming with rage, he told me the most execrable things about you. He wants everyone to know that you are the greatest scoundrel on earth, that you are ruining Madame d'Urfé by blasphemous lies, that you are a sorcerer, a counterfeiter, a thief, a spy, a coin clipper, a traitor, a cardsharper, a slanderer, an issuer of false bills of exchange, a forger of handwriting, and in short the worst of men, and that he intends to make you known to the world not by a satire but by a formal accusation in court, to which he will appeal for just reparation for the wrongs you have done to his person, his honor, and in fact his life, for you have killed him by a slow poison. He says that he is in a position to prove everything he alleges. My esteem and friendship for you oblige me to inform you of all that the man said to me, so that you can try to combat it. This is not a thing to treat lightly, for you know the power of calumny."

"Where is the traitor?"

"I have no idea."

"How can I find out?"

"If he is purposely hiding so that you cannot discover where he is living, it will be very difficult for you to do so. Nothing is easier than to remain hidden in Lyons, especially when one has money; and Passano has it."

"What can he do against me if he intends to get me into trouble?"

"He can institute criminal proceedings which will break your heart, which will degrade you even if you are the most innocent of men."

"I think I must forestall him."

"That is what you must do, since you do not know where he is; but you cannot avoid publicity."

"You will have no objection, I hope, to testifying in court to all that the slanderous traitor has said to you."

"None whatever."

"Give me the name of a good advocate."

"Here it is; but consider well, for the thing will cause talk."

"Not knowing where the scoundrel has hidden himself, I can take no other course."

If I had known where he was staying, Madame d'Urfé, who was related to Monsieur de Rochebaron,[28] the Commandant of Lyons, would have had him expelled from the city for me.

Smelling a rat, I went to the "Parc," where I drew up a formal complaint. I asked the police court for protection against a traitor who was lying hidden in Lyons and who was threatening my life and my honor; but the next morning Signor Bono, who came to see me very early, advised me against it.

"For," he said, "the police will at once make a search to discover where he is staying, and as soon as your enemy gets wind of it he will attack you in criminal court, after which he will no longer lie hidden. It will be he who will demand protection against violence on your part. It seems to me that if you have no important business in Lyons you might hasten your departure."

"That is a course which insults me to the soul. I would die rather than hasten my departure by one hour on the scoundrel's account. Would that I knew where he has slunk away! I would give a hundred louis to find it out."

"I am delighted that I do not know it, for if I knew I would tell you, and God knows what you would do. If you will not hasten your departure, accuse him before he accuses you, and whenever you see fit I will even make a written declaration of all that he said to me."

I went to the advocate whose name Bono had given me, in order to be guided by his advice. Before telling him my business I said that it was Signor Bono who had praised his probity and skill to me. After hearing me out, the advocate replied that he could be neither my advocate nor my counsel, for he was already representing my opponent in both capacities.

"But," he said, "do not regret that you have told me what you intend to do, for everything shall proceed as if you had not said a word about it to me. Signor Passano's complaint or accusation will not be drawn up until day after tomorrow, I will not even tell him that he should act sooner because you might anticipate him, for it is a circumstance which I have learned only surreptitiously and by inadvertence. Do not take it to heart, Monsieur. You will find other advocates in Lyons as honest as I am or more so."

"Would you suggest one to me?"

"I cannot, but Signor Bono himself can do so."

"Could you tell me where your client is staying?"

"His chief concern is to remain hidden, and he is right. You must understand that I cannot tell you."

"You are right"

I put a louis on his table, and he hurried after me to return it. For once, an honest advocate! I immediately thought of setting a spy to follow him; for I wanted nothing more than to throttle the monster with my own hands; but where to find a spy? I hurry to see Bono, who gives me the name of another advocate and advises me to make haste, for in a criminal case the first to petition always has the advantage. I ask Bono to put me on the track of a reliable spy who, by following the advocate, will certainly be able to tell me where the scoundrel is staying; but Bono declines to help me in this way. He even proves to me that, by having the advocate spied on, I should be acting dishonorably; and I knew it; but where is the man whom anger, whether justified or unjustified, does not drive to violence?

I go to see the second advocate, a venerable-looking old man, whose prudence commands even more respect than his appearance. After hearing the whole of my business, he said that he would serve me and would present my complaint that very day. I told him he must hurry, for I had learned from the slanderer's own advocate that the accusation would be presented on the next day but one.

"That must not be the reason for our hastening, Monsieur, for you cannot abuse the confidence which my colleague made to you. We must hasten because the nature of the case demands it. *Prior in tempore potior in jure* ("The earlier in time, the stronger in law"). Prudence demands that the enemy be attacked. Be so kind, if you please, as to call here at three o'clock this afternoon "

I left him six louis, and he said he would render me an account of them.

In the afternoon I went to read the complaint, which I found correct in every particular, and after that I went to Madame d'Urfé's, where I stayed for four hours constructing pyramids to delight her soul; despite my ill-humor I could not but laugh at the account she gave me of her pregnancy, at her certainty of it because of the symptoms she felt, and at her regret that her having to die would prevent her from laughing at what the physicians of Paris would say about her bearing a child, which would be pronounced most extraordinary at her age.

At the "Parc" I found Marcolina very sad.

"You told me we would go to the theater, and I waited for you. You shouldn't have kept me waiting."

"You are right. Forgive me, dear heart. Urgent business delayed me at Madame d'Urfé's. Be gay."

I needed gaiety, for having to deal with Passano had upset me. Anger had as much power over me as love. I slept very badly.

The next morning I went to see my advocate, who told me that my complaint had already been registered in the Criminal Magistrate's court.

"We have nothing more to do at present," he said, "for, not knowing where he is, we cannot serve a summons on him."

"Cannot I demand that the police ferret him out?"

"You can, but I do not advise you to do so. Let us wait for him to come to court. The accuser, finding himself accused, will have to think of defending himself and providing the crimes with which he charges you. If he does not appear, we will have him sentenced *in absentia* to all the penalties which are inflicted on slanderers. Even his counsel will abandon him if he does not appear as you do."

With my mind somewhat set at rest by the advocate, I spent the whole day with Madame d'Urfé, who was to leave the next day; I promised that I would come to her house in Paris as soon as I had dealt with some matters which concerned the Order. Her great rule of conduct was to respect my secrets and never to interfere with me. Marcolina, who had been bored by being left alone all day long, breathed again when I told her that I would now be wholly hers.

The next morning Signor Bono came to my lodging to ask me to go with him to Passano's advocate, who wanted to speak to me. The advocate told us that his client was a madman who really believed that he had been poisoned and, thus reduced to despair, he was ready for anything.

"He maintains," he told me, "that even if you should have anticipated him, he will have you sentenced to death, for he is ready to go to jail, and he maintains that he will come out of it the victor, since he has witnesses to all his accusations. He shows twenty-five louis d'or which you gave him in Marseilles and all of which are short-weight, and he has two documents from Genoa certifying that you clipped a large number of gold pieces, which a noble Grimaldi had a goldsmith melt so that they should not be found in your possession on the occasion of a search which the government was about to make of your lodging to convict you of your crime. He even has a letter from your brother the Abate testifying against you. He is a madman very sick with the pox, who, if he possibly can, wants to see you die before he does. I take the liberty of advising you to give him money to rid yourself of him. He has told me that he has a family, and that if Signor Bono would give him a thousand louis he would sacrifice all his justified accusations to his needs. He has ordered me to discuss it with Signor Bono. What is your answer?"

"That I will not give him a copper. I will not let him off. He is an infamous slanderer, and I will not stomach what he says about the Genoese coins which Signor Grimaldi took to the goldsmith's. The fact is true, but the wretch aggravates it by slander. I hope to learn today where he is lodging. The foul beast! Why does he hide?"

"I have put off presenting his complaint in order to see if I could prevent the scandal which will follow from it. I shall now go to present it."

"I beg you to do so. In any case, I am much obliged to you."

We left; and Bono was sorry that the thing was bound to make a noise. I went to my advocate's to report the scoundrel's proposal to him. My advocate praised me for not having consented to pay anything to stop the accuser's mouth. He even said that, having Bono as witness, I could force the advocate not to put off presenting the complaint, which he must have already drawn up; and I at once instructed him to take the necessary steps. He at once sent a clerk to obtain an order from the Criminal Magistrate directing the advocate to present, within three days, a criminal complaint against me, which must be in his hands, on the part of a certain Ascanio Pogomas, alias Giacomo Passano. I signed.

I was displeased by the three days. He replied that no other procedure was possible; but that *jacta erat alea* ("the die was cast")[30] and that I must prepare to undergo all the unpleasantness which the case would cause me even if I came out of it the victor on every point.

Madame d'Urfé having left, I went to the "Parc," where, after dining well and employing every means to raise my spirits, I went out with Marcolina. I took her to see the fashions at the celebrated milliners' shops; I bought her everything she could wish for, then I took her to the theater, where she could not but be pleased to find the eyes of the entire audience turned to her. Madame Pernon,[31] sitting beside the box in which we were, made me introduce her; she embraced her very fondly after the performance, and from the expression on both their faces I foresaw that the most intimate friendship would spring up between them; and it would have done so if Marcolina had been able to speak French or Madame Pernon Italian. They were both baffled when they became aware of their respective ignorance. A woman who cannot understand her lover and cannot make herself understood becomes cold. At home Marcolina laughed and confessed to me that when they parted Madame Pernon had given her a Florentine kiss. It was the petticoat password.[32] Our supper was enlivened by the high spirits in which my little presents had put her, and after it we celebrated our amorous rituals. The next morning I took Marcolina to see the manufactories,[33] and I gave her a pretty dress. In the afternoon we were invited to sup at Madame Pernon's, where Marcolina could not shine, for no one spoke Italian. Signor Bono, who spoke Italian and who was Madame Pernon's admirer, was not present; we were told that he was ill.

But the next morning early I saw him in my room, looking cheerful but exhausted; he asked me to go out with him in morning dress, he had good news to tell me. He took me to a coffeehouse, and he showed me a letter from the scoundrel in which he told him that he was ready to drop everything, on the advice of his counsel, who had found an accusation against him which he did not want to oppose. "That being the case," the wretch wrote to him, "arrange for Monsieur de Seingalt to give me a hundred louis, and I will leave at once. All will be over."

"I should be a great fool," I said, "to give him more money to escape the law. Let him go if he will and if he can; but I will give him nothing. Tomorrow I will obtain an order for his arrest. I want to see him branded with infamy by the hangman. The slanders he has put upon me are too vile; my honor demands that I force him to prove everything"

Bono replied only that he thought I could consider a clean dropping of the proceedings adequate satisfaction, and that I should prefer it to a formal condemnation which would harm me even in the moment of victory, and he added that the hundred louis were nothing in comparison with what the legal proceedings would cost me. I left him, asking him to excuse me if I could not share his opinion. I went to inform my advocate of the proposal I had rejected, and I told him to take the necessary legal steps to have a warrant for his arrest issued.

The same day I had Madame Pernon to supper, and, Signor Bono being present, Marcolina shone and we were in very high spirits. On the next day but one Bono wrote me that Passano had left Lyons, never to return, and that before leaving he had drawn up a retraction with which I would be thoroughly satisfied when I saw it.

I thought his flight natural; but I also thought it most unlikely that he would have made a retraction, since he had left of his own free will. So I called on Bono, who astonished me by showing me a retraction as full as possible. He asked me if I was satisfied with it, and I replied that not only was I satisfied, I forgave him too.

"I only think it strange," I said, "that he did not insist on the hundred louis."

"He had the hundred louis,[34] but from me; I was glad to pay them in order not to see publicity given to a piece of baseness which, aside from harming us all, would have given me great pain, for you would have done nothing if I had told you nothing. I would not have said anything to you if you had not told me you are satisfied with the retraction and that you have forgiven him. As for the hundred louis it costs me, I am delighted to have had the opportunity to give you a small token of my friendship. Let us say no more about it, I beg you."

I embraced him affectionately.

I went to dine with Marcolina, and I told her we should leave for Paris in three days.

CHAPTER V

I meet the Venetian Ambassadors and Marcolina's uncle in Lyons. I part from that charming girl and I leave for Paris. Amorous journey with Adèle.

THE NEXT day I was sitting in the theater behind Madame Pernon, when I was surprised to see Signor Querini and the Procurator Morosini enter the box opposite to the one in which I was; with them I see Signor Memmo[1] and Count Stratico,[2] professor in the University of Padua; they were all people whom I knew and who were passing through Lyons on their way home from London.

"Farewell, dear Marcolina," I said to myself. I sit there impassively, saying nothing to her; she was listening to a remark Signor Bono was making to her; in any case she knew none of the Venetians. I perceive that Signor Memmo had noticed me and that he was pointing me out to the Procurator, who knew me very well; I felt that I could not avoid going to pay them my respects in their box.

The Ambassador Morosini received me enthusiastically, Signor Querini politely enough for a bigot, and Signor Memmo with emotion, for he remembered that eight years earlier his mother had been a party to the plot which had sent me to prison[3] under the Leads. I congratulate the gentlemen on their brilliant embassy to George III and on their return to our country, and as a matter of course I commend myself to their good offices to obtain the pardon which would permit me to return to it someday. Seeing me in fine array, Signor Morosini says that I am luckier than he, for I had to stay away, while nothing but duty made him go back. He asks me where I have come from and where I am going; and I say that I have come from Rome, where the Holy Father had made me a Cavaliere, and that I am going to London.

"Come to see me," he says, "and I will give you a little commission."

"Will Your Excellency stay here for some time?"

"Three or four days."

I return to the box in which I was sitting; Marcolina asks me who the gentlemen I have gone to see are, I reply, looking at her coldly, that they are the Venetian Ambassadors on their way back from London. She changes color, she says nothing more. A moment later she asks me which of them is Signor Querini, and I point him out to her.

The play ended, we go down. The Ambassadors were at the door, waiting for their carriage. Mine happened to be ahead of theirs in the line.

The Procurator Morosini says to me:

"You have a charming girl there."

Marcolina goes and kisses Signor Querini's hand; greatly surprised, he thanks her, and asks:

"*Why me?*"

"Because," she answers him in Venetian, "I know that Your Excellency is Signor Querini."

"What are you doing with Casanova?"

"He is my uncle."

My carriage being there, I excuse myself, I hand Marcolina into it, and I say:

"To the 'Parc.'"

Marcolina was in despair, for, it having been decided that she should go back to Venice, I must not neglect this opportunity. She supped in tears, while I was far from gay. I said that we had three or four days before us in which to consider how best we might talk with Master Matteo, her uncle; I praised her for having kissed Signor Querini's hand, and I begged her to be gay while we were deciding upon a course, for grief would tear my soul.

We were still at table when I heard in the anteroom the voice of Signor Memmo, a young Venetian, good-natured and highly intelligent. I at once warned Marcolina not to say a word about our affairs and to be gay but dignified. We rise, he makes us resume our places at the table, he drinks with us, and he gives us a full account of the gay supper they had had with the old bigot Signor Querini, whose hand a pretty Venetian girl had kissed. The adventure had delighted them all, and even Signor Querini had been pleased by it.

"May I ask, Signorina, how you come to know Signor Querini?"

"Oh, that is a secret."

"A secret! Ah! How we shall laugh tomorrow! I have come," he said to me, "to invite you in the name of the Ambassador to dine with us tomorrow, together with your charming niece."

"Would you like to go, Marcolina?"

"Con grandissimo piacer. Parlaremo venizian[4] ['With the greatest pleasure. We will talk Venetian']. I simply cannot learn to speak French."

"No more can Signor Querini."

After a sufficiency of most amusing talk, he left, very well pleased, to tell the Ambassadors that they would have me at dinner with Marcolina. She at once came to embrace me, congratulating herself on the fortunate meeting. I told her that she must dress in her best the next day, be charming to everyone at table, and above all pretend not to see her uncle Matteo, who would be sure to wait on his master.

"Leave it to me," I said, "to give the recognition scene all the beauty which can be drawn from it, for I shall bring it about that the person who will take you back to Venice will be Signor Querini himself. Your uncle will look after you at his order."

Delighted with the arrangement, Marcolina promised me all that I asked.

The next morning at nine o'clock I left her at her toilet table and went to see what commission the Procurator Morosini wanted to entrust to me. He gives me a small sealed box which I am to deliver in London to Lady Harrington,[5] together with a letter and a card on which were only these few words: "The Procurator Morosini regrets that he was unable to take a last leave of Mademoiselle Charpillon."[6]

"Where shall I find her?"

"I have no idea. If you find her give her the card; if not, it doesn't matter. You have a dazzling girl with you."

"And I am dazzled by her"

"But how is it that she knows Querini?"

"She saw him by chance in Venice; but she has never spoken to him."

"I can well believe it. We had a good laugh, for Querini attaches great importance to the meeting. But how do you happen to have this Venetian girl with you, who, according to Memmo, doesn't speak French?"

"It is a long story."

"She is not your niece."

"She is more, for she is the mistress of my soul."

"Have her learn French, for in London——"

"I shall not take her to London. She wants to go back to Venice."

"I am sorry for you, if you love her. Will she dine with us today?"

"She is enchanted to have that honor."

Back at the "Parc," I warned her that if, at table or afterward, there was any talk of her going back to Venice, she must say that no one on earth could persuade her to go back unless Signor Querini would take her with him and assume the custody of her property. She was to leave it to me to get her out of any difficulty which might arise from this declaration.

I put on an ash-gray short-napped velvet coat embroidered with silver and gold spangles, a shirt with cuffs of point lace worth fifty louis, and my watches, snuffboxes, rings, and the cross of my order, all of which were set with diamonds and which together were worth at least twenty thousand écus, and with Marcolina, who was as bright as a star, I went at half past one o'clock to the Ambassadors' lodging.

The company consisted entirely of Venetians, and we joined it to bring joy. They were at once delighted to see Marcolina, who made her entrance with all the ease of a French princess. She dropped two solemn curtsies to the two Ambassadors, and a smiling one to the rest of the company. As soon as she found herself seated between two grave Senators, the first thing she said was that she was delighted to see herself the only woman in such a choice company and to see not a single Frenchman. After this sample of her wit, the company knew what tone to take. Amusing remarks were made to her, to which she replied with propriety, she always answered and never questioned, and she gave a charming account of the differences she had observed between French and Venetian manners, which were in many points diametrically opposed.

At table Signor Querini asked her how she had recognized him, and she replied that she had seen him at mass more than fifty times. Signor Morosini, pretending not to know that she wanted to return to Venice, told her that she should study French, which was the language of all countries, for otherwise she would be bored in

London, where Italian was very little spoken. She replied that she hoped I would be so kind as to put her in the company only of people to whom she could talk, as I had done until then, for she foresaw that if she had to learn French by studying it, she would never speak it.

At the end of dinner Signor Querini praised the brilliance of the four stones in her ring and asked where it had been set; she replied that, since it was a present a lady had given her, she did not know. When we left the table the Ambassadors asked me to tell them the story of my escape from the Leads, and I obliged them. My narrative continued for two hours and was never once interrupted. The whole company having noticed that Marcolina shed tears at the place where I was in danger of perishing, she was taken to task at the end of the story. Someone said that, for a niece, she had shown too much concern over my danger, and she replied that, since she had never loved anyone but me, she had no way of knowing what difference there was between one love and another. Thereupon Signor Querini told her that, in human nature, there were five different kinds of love: love of one's neighbor, love of friends, love of family, conjugal love, and love of God; and she listened to his dissertation with the greatest attention. When he came to explaining the love of God the Senator took wing, and then I was more surprised than anyone else in the company to see Marcolina touched to the point of shedding tears, which she quickly dried as if to hide them from the wealthy old man, whom wine had made more of a theologian than usual. Pretending rapture, Marcolina kisses his hand, and the vain enthusiast takes her head and kisses her on the brow, saying:

"*Poveretta* ['Poor little thing']! You are an angel."

We all bit our lips to keep from laughing, and the minx pretended to have lost all her gaiety. I did not really know Marcolina until that day, for she confessed to me at the "Parc" that she had purposely feigned emotion in order to win the old man's heart. When we left them they invited us to dinner on the next day too.

We went to the "Parc," for we both wanted to talk to each other more than to go to the comic opera. I did not have the patience to wait for her to undress before covering her with kisses.

"My dear Marcolina, you wait until the end of our acquaintance to reveal your treasures to me, so that I shall weep all the rest of my life for the mistake I am making in letting you go back to Venice. Today you fettered the hearts of all those who dined with you."

"Then, my friend, I will always do the same; you will make me happy if you will keep me. Did you see my uncle?"

"I think I saw him. Was it not he who always changed your plate?"

"Yes. I recognized him by his ring. Tell me if he looked at me."

"Constantly, and always in astonishment; but I, too, took care not to look at him, for he did nothing but turn his eyes from you to me and from me to you."

"How I wish I knew what he is thinking! You will see something new tomorrow. I am sure he has told Signor Querini that I am his niece and hence cannot be yours. If Signor Querini says so to me tomorrow, I must admit it, must I not?"

"Certainly, but with the greatest dignity, without any truckling, and not giving him any idea that you need him in order to return to Venice. Remember that after all he is not your father and that he has no rights over your freedom. You must also admit that I am not your uncle and that we are bound together only by the fondest friendship. After all, you are shrewd, and I rely on you. Remember to say everything I have told you to say. It must be Querini who takes you to Venice, or nobody. And he must take you as if you were his daughter."

Early the next morning I receive a note from Signor

Querini asking me to call on him as he has something important to say to me. I tell the lackey that I will go at once.

"That's the beginning," says Marcolina. "I am very glad that the thing is taking this turn, for when you come back you can instruct me to act in accordance with what you will have said."

I go to the inn on the Place Bellecour; Signor Querini has me shown in, I see him with the Procurator Morosini; they ask me to be seated, and Signor Querini, after saying that his colleague's presence was no disadvantage, says that he has a confidence to make to me but that, in order to do so, he must ask me to make one to him.

"I have trust enough in Your Excellency's discretion not to keep anything secret from Your Excellency."

"I am obliged to you. That being so, I ask you to tell me sincerely if you know the girl who is with you, for your niece she certainly is not. At least none of us believes that she is."

"She is not my niece; and since I do not know her parents I cannot say that I know her in the sense in which Your Excellency is using the word; but I believe that I know her inmost soul and that I have reason to congratulate myself if I have conceived an affection for her which will end only with my life."

"What you say pleases me. How long has she been with you?"

"About two months."

"Excellent. How did she come into your custody?"

"Permit me not to answer that question, for it concerns her."

"Very well, let us pass over it. Being in love with her, it is impossible that you should not have had the curiosity to ask her who her parents are, who is responsible for her."

"She has told me that she has a father and mother, who are poor but honest people; and, truthfully, I never cared to ask her their names. She has told me only her

Christian name, Marcolina, which perhaps is not hers; but that does not matter to me."

"It is her name."

"It is? Then Your Excellency knows her?"

"Yes. I did not think so yesterday; but I think so now. Two months, and her name is Marcolina; my valet is not mad."

"Your valet?"

"Yes. She is his niece. He learned in London that she ran away from home about the middle of Lent. Marcolina's mother, who is his sister, wrote to tell him so. The prosperous condition in which he saw her yesterday kept him from speaking to her; he even thought he was mistaken; he feared to commit a fault and to be disrespectful to me, seeing that I had her at our table as your niece. But what did she say to you yesterday when you left here, for it is quite possible that she does not know that her uncle Matteo is in my service; but she cannot fail to recognize him. She must have seen him."

"She did not see him, for, being what she is, she would have told me she had done so."

"It is true that he was always behind her. But now let us come to the point of the matter. Tell me, if you are free to tell me, if Marcolina is your wife or if you intend to marry her one day."

"I love her as much as it is possible to love, but I cannot make her my wife; it is a great grief to me, the cause of which only she and I know."

"I respect your reasons, and I do not even ask to know them; but, that being the case, would you object to my interesting myself in her to the point of asking you to let her return to Venice with her uncle?"

"I consider Marcolina fortunate if she has been able to inspire some interest in you, and I am even persuaded that a return to Venice and to the bosom of her family under Your Excellency's protection might efface the stain which she put upon herself by running away. As for letting her go, I certainly cannot oppose it, for I am not her master. As her lover, I would defend her with all my power if anyone tried to tear her from my arms by force; but if she wanted to leave me, I could only weep and, resigning myself, hope that time would heal my wound as it has healed so many others."

"You are very reasonable. Then would you have any objection to my undertaking this good work? You understand that I should not venture to take any steps without your consent."

"I respect the decrees of destiny when they seem to me to come from a pure source; I adore God, and I yield. If Your Excellency can persuade Marcolina to leave me, I will consent to it; but I advise you to go about it gently; for Marcolina is intelligent, she loves me, and she knows that she is free; in addition, she counts on me, and she is not mistaken. Speak to her today, and privately, for my presence might embarrass you both. Wait until after dinner to speak, for the discussion may take a long time."

"My dear Casanova, you are an honest man, and I swear to you I am delighted to have made your acquaintance."

"I take my leave, and I assure you that I will say nothing to Marcolina beforehand."

Back at the "Parc," I gave Marcolina a full account of this dialogue, informing her at the same time that I had promised not to say a word to her about it, but I told her that she must execute a master stroke to show Signor Querini that I had not lied when I had told him she had not seen her uncle.

"You must," I said, "as soon as you see him, show surprise, speak his name, run to him, and embrace him. Will you do that? It will make a dramatic tableau, which at the same time will show everyone what a good heart you have."

"Be sure that I will do it very well."

When she was ready we went to the Ambassadors' lodging, where, with all their train, we found them waiting only for us. Marcolina, even gayer and more brilliant than on the day before, first paid her respects to Signor Querini and then was gracious to all the others. A quarter of an hour before dinner was served the valet Matteo entered to bring his master, who was seated beside Marcolina, his eyeglasses on a tray. Marcolina, fixing her eyes on the man's face, breaks off an interesting discourse to which she was treating the company, and suddenly says to him:

"My uncle!"

"Yes, my dear niece."

At that she rises, she kisses him, he embraces her fondly, we all show the astonishment which the meeting could not but arouse in us.

"I knew," she said to him, "that you had left Venice to go with your master I don't know where; but I did not know that your master was His Excellency. I am very glad to see you again; you shall take news of me to Venice. You see that I am happy. Where were you yesterday?"

"Here."

"And you did not see me?"

"I did indeed; but your other uncle there——"

"Well, my dear cousin," I said to him, smiling, "let us recognize each other and embrace; Marcolina, I congratulate you."

"What a moment!" said Signor Querini.

The valet left; we resumed our places, but each of us with a different countenance from that of the day before. Marcolina showed the mixture of contentment and regret which remembering its native country arouses in a noble soul. Signor Querini showed admiration and the confidence he felt that he would succeed in his undertaking because he was dealing with a girl who displayed such moderation; in the silence which had fallen Signor Morosini made appropriate comments on the turn which I had given to the little drama. All the others, serious, attentive, curious to know the end of the story, sat without moving or speaking, listening to the extremely interesting monologue which Marcolina was delivering, turning her eyes first to one, then to another. Anyone clever enough to recognize it would have seen that I was only dissembling. It was Signor Memmo who courteously tried to rouse me to the point of saying a few explanatory words; but in my answers he found only evidence of contentment.

We sat down at table, and at the second course it was Signor Morosini who, having learned from me that Marcolina might consider returning to Venice, ventured to say to her that, since her heart was free, she could hope to find in Venice, her native country, a husband worthy of her

"As to his being worthy of me, I must be the judge."

"One can also have recourse to discreet persons who are concerned for the happiness of both parties to a marriage."

"Pray excuse me. Never. The man whom I marry must please me; and not after, but before the marriage."

"Who," asked Signor Querini, "taught you that maxim?"

"My uncle there," she replied, pointing to me; "during the two months I have lived with him he has taught me, and I believe him, all that we need to know to guide us in this world."

"I congratulate both the pupil and the master; but, my dear Marcolina, our guide through this world, which is morality, is not learned so quickly."

"What His Excellency has just told you," I said to her, "is true. On the subject of marriage, one must take the advice of the wise, for all marriages contracted from inclination prove to be unhappy."

"But please tell me," the Procurator said to her, "what qualities the man you would choose for a husband must have."

"I cannot tell you them in detail; but I should suppose he had them all if he pleased me."

"And if he was a scoundrel?"

"He would not please me. That is why I will never marry a man without knowing him well before I give myself to him."

"And if you are mistaken?"

"I shall keep it a secret."

"And poverty?"

"She need have no fear of it, Monsignore," I said, "for Marcolina has fifty écus a month without fail for the rest of her life."

"That casts a different light on the subject," said Signor Querini. "If that is true, my dear child, you enjoy a great privilege, which is being able to live in Venice without needing anyone."

"Yet it seems to me that, if I am to live in Venice, I shall always need the protection of such a nobleman as yourself."

"Well then, my dear child, come to Venice, and I give you my word of honor that I will do whatever lies in my power for you. But how, if I may ask, are you certain of these fifty écus a month? You laugh?"

"I laugh because I am a scatterbrain who does not inquire into her own affairs. If you want to know that, my friend will tell you all about it."

"You were not joking?" the old man asked me.

"Certainly not. Marcolina has a cash capital which will give her a life annuity even higher than the sum I mentioned, but she was very right to say that in Venice she needs Your Excellency's protection, for her capital must be carefully invested. The capital is in my hands, and if Marcolina so wishes, it will be in hers no later than two hours from now."

"That is enough. So, my dear child, you must come to Venice no later than day after tomorrow. There is Matteo, who is beside himself, and who is ready to receive you."

"I love my uncle Matteo and I esteem him; but it is not to him that Your Excellency must entrust me if I decide to come."

"To whom then?"

"To yourself. You have called me by the sweet name of your 'dear child' three times, so take me to Venice as if I were your child, or I will not come; that I tell you. We will leave day after tomorrow for London."

At this declaration, which ravished my soul, the whole company at table looked at one another in silence. It was for Signor Querini to reply, and he had said too much to withdraw. There was silence for half a quarter of an hour. Everyone ate and drank gravely. Matteo changed his niece's plate, trembling. Dessert was being served when Marcolina broke the silence, saying that Divine Providence must be humbly adored, and only after its effects were manifested, for before its consequences it was impossible to judge of good and evil in this world.

"In what connection, my dear child, are you making this reflection," Signor Querini asked her, "and in what connection are you now kissing my hand?"

"I am kissing your hand because for the fourth time you have called me 'my dear child' "

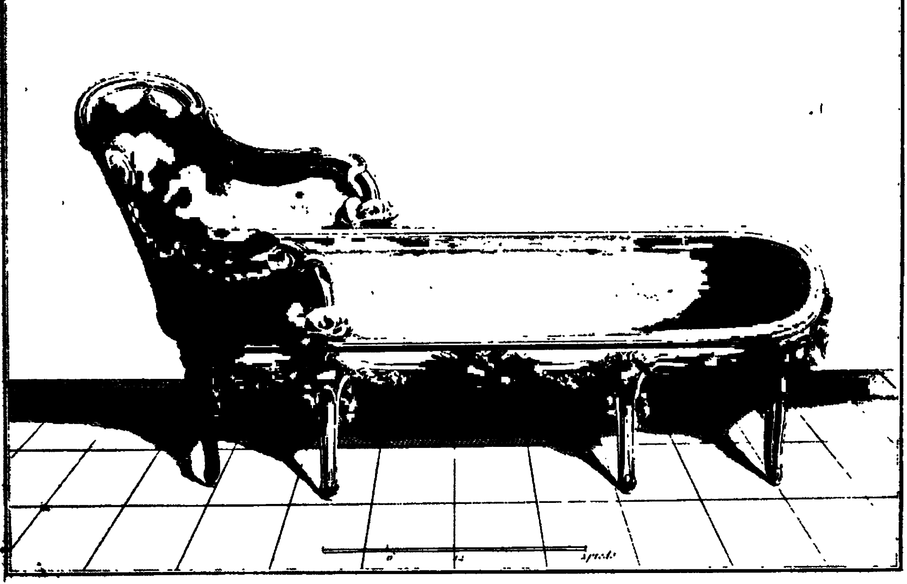
At that a general laugh restored the table to life; but Signor Querini, not forgetting her reflection on adoring Divine Providence after its consequences, called upon her to explain it.

"I said it," she replied, "because of a thought which came to me in the course of examining myself. I am in good health, I have learned to live, I am seventeen years old, and I have become moderately rich in two months by honest and harmless means. I am happy, for I feel that I am happy. I owe all this to the greatest sin that a decent girl can commit. Must I not humbly bow in thousandfold adoration of Divine Providence?"

"Yes; but, even so, you must repent of the sin you committed."

"It is that which I find difficult, for in order to repent I have to think of it, and when I think of it I cannot repent. On that I must consult some great theologian."

"There is no need. I myself will tell you in the course



Bathtub

of our journey how it is done. In repenting, it is not necessary to think of the pleasure the crime you committed gave you."

Signor Querini, finding himself in the role of an apostle, was falling piously in love with his beautiful proselyte. On leaving the table he disappeared for a quarter of an hour, then, returning, said to Marcolina that if he had a daughter to take back to Venice he would certainly entrust her to no one but Signora Veneranda, his own housekeeper and the woman in whom he had complete confidence.

"I have just spoken to her, and it is all arranged, you will be with her day and night, you will sleep with her, if you choose, and you will eat with us until we reach Venice, where I will myself put you in your mother's hands in the presence of your uncle."

"Let us go to see Signora Veneranda."

"Gladly *Casanova, come with us.*"

We go, and I see a woman of canonical appearance, with whom Marcolina would not fall in love in her fashion, but who seemed sensible and trustworthy. Signor Querini tells her in our presence all that he had just told Marcolina, and the duenna[7] assures him that she will take the best care of her. Marcolina embraces her, she looks pleased, and we return to the company, who are delighted to learn that she is to make the journey.

"I must," said Signor Querini, "see about putting my major-domo in another carriage, for the calash holds only two."

"Your Excellency need not trouble about that," I said, "for Marcolina has a carriage of her own in which Signora Veneranda will be very comfortable and in which she can put her trunks."

"You mean," she asked me, "to give me your carriage too?"

I could not answer. I pretended to blow my nose, and I went to the window to dry my tears. Turning round two minutes later, I did not see Marcolina. The Procurator Morosini, touched as I had been, told me that she had gone to speak to Signora Veneranda. Since everyone looked sad, and I knew that my own emotion had caused it, I talked of England, where I was going in the expectation of making my fortune by a project[8] I had in mind which needed only the approval of the Minister, Lord Egremont.[9] Signor Morosini said that he would give me a letter for the Minister and another for Signor Zuccato,[10] who was the Venetian Resident. Signor Querini thereupon asked him if he would not be compromising himself with the State Inquisitors by recommending me, and the Procurator coldly replied that the Inquisitorial Tribunal had not informed him of the crime I had committed. Signor Querini, a man of extremely narrow mind, shook his head and did not answer. Marcolina returned, and everyone saw that she had gone away to cry. She came to me and asked me if I would take her to the "Parc," for she had to pack her trunk and put a quantity of gewgaws she had, and of which she was fond, in boxes. So we left, having promised to dine there the next day too. The travelers were to set off on the next day but one.

Back in our room and feeling that nothing could console me, I undressed, ordering Clairmont to have the carriage gone over and put in condition for a long journey. I flung myself on the bed in a dressing gown, refusing to listen to all the very reasonable things Marcolina was saying to me.

"Consider," she said, "that it is not I who am leaving you but you who are sending me away."

Toward six o'clock Signor Morosini and Signor Querini entered the courtyard and, before coming upstairs, stopped to look at my carriage, which the cartwright was examining. They spoke to Clairmont, then came to see us. I asked them to excuse me for being in undress. Signor Querini made me laugh by remarking on the large number of boxes which Marcolina had to find a way of getting into the carriage, and he exclaimed admiringly when he learned that it was the one he had just seen, for it was very fine. Signor Morosini told Marcolina that if she would sell it to him as soon as she was in Venice he would give her *mille ducati*[11] for it, which was exactly a thousand French écus; it was worth twice as much.

"That," Signor Querini said to her, "will increase your capital."

I then told him that the next day I would bring him a bill of exchange at sight on Venice for five thousand Venetian ducati, which, together with another three thousand which Marcolina could get by selling the valuable jewels she had, and the thousand for the carriage, would give her a capital of nine thousand écus, from which she could obtain a very respectable income. But Marcolina was crying while she laughed and laughing while she cried. My only consolation was knowing that I had made her fortune, as I had done for several others who had lived with me. It seemed to me that I must let her go in order to make room for the others whom heaven had destined for me. We supped gloomily and, despite love, the night we spent was not gay.

The next morning I went to Bono's to obtain a sight draft on Venice, payable to the order of Signor Querini.

It was Marcolina herself who handed it to him at dinnertime, and Signor Querini gave her a receipt in due form. Signor Morosini gave me the letters for England which he had promised me. It was settled that the departure should take place at eleven o'clock the next morning; but we went to their lodging at eight to give Signora Veneranda time to put everything she needed in the carriage. But what a sad night I spent with the girl! She could not understand, and she said it over and over again, how I could be my own executioner; and she was right, for I did not understand it either. In the course of my life I have done countless things I did not want to do, and each time I was driven to it by some occult power which I took it into my head not to resist. I put on boots and spurs, telling Clairmont that I should be back the next day, and when Marcolina was ready I got into the carriage with her and went to the Ambassadors' lodging. After taking her to Signora Veneranda's room I went to talk with Signor Memmo, who treated me to most eloquent commentaries on the heroism I was showing.

After all breakfasting together gloomily enough, for Marcolina's grief, keeping her constantly on the verge of tears, was respected by the entire company, we left, I on the folding seat opposite to the heart which I was tearing from my bosom and to Signora Veneranda, who kept us amused for a long time by her exaggerated comments on the beauty and comfort of the carriage and on her good fortune in riding in it as if she were an Ambassadress, as her master had said to her, for their carriages were nothing in comparison with ours.

We took coffee at Bourgoin[12] while the horses were changed, and the Ambassadors decreed that we should go no farther than Le Pont de Beauvoisin,[13] for Signor Querini did not like to travel at night. We arrived there at nine o'clock and, after supping badly, everyone went to bed in order to be ready to leave the next morning at daybreak. Marcolina went to bed with Signora Veneranda, who not only turned her back to us when she saw me at the bedside, with my head bent over Marcolina's, whose tears mingled with mine, but who, despite her piety, had moved so far over on the bed that there would have been room for me too if I had dared to occupy it. In every woman piety always yields to pity. I spent the night sleeping very badly on the uncomfortable chair which was beside Marcolina's bed. At daybreak I told them to dress, and Signora Veneranda, who had slept as soundly as possible, was greatly surprised when she saw me there and learned that I had stayed there all night.

The horses were harnessed, and a saddle horse which I had ordered to take me to La Tour-du-Pin[14] was ready too. After hastily drinking a cup of coffee we went downstairs, and I took leave of Their Excellencies and the whole company. The last was Marcolina, whom I embraced for the last time and whom I did not see again until eleven years later, when I found her happy. After tearing myself from the door of her carriage, I mounted and stayed there watching her until the moment when the postilion whipped up. Then I left at full gallop, hoping to kill the horse and to perish with it; but death never comes to the wretch who longs for it. I covered eighteen leagues in six hours, and as soon as I saw the ill-fated bed which thirty hours earlier had given me the refuge of love I threw myself on it, not hoping to find in dream what I could no longer possess in reality. However, I slept deeply until eight o'clock and, after ravenously devouring all that Clairmont brought me, I went back to sleep, and in the morning I found myself able to endure life.

Needing distraction, I told Clairmont to inform the innkeeper that I would eat at the public table, and at the same time I told him to find out where there was a decent carriage for sale, for I wanted to leave as soon as possible

The public table at the Hôtel du Parc was a Land of Cockaigne. The price was thirty sous[15] a head; I could not understand how the innkeeper could make anything on it. The company was good enough; what I liked was its variety. Foreigners came and went, I spoke to no one, and no sooner did someone take my fancy than I did not see him again at the next meal. The third day after Marcolina's departure I was ready to leave. I had bought a carriage of the kind known as a *solitaire,* with three glass windows,[16] two wheels, shafts, springs *à l'Amadis,* and lined with crimson velvet, almost new. I got it for forty louis. I sent two strong trunks to Paris by the diligence, keeping only a portmanteau packed with what I needed, and I was going to leave the next morning in dressing gown and nightcap, determined not to leave my *solitaire* until after fifty-eight stages on the finest road in all Europe. Imagining myself traveling alone, I thought I would be doing homage to my dear Marcolina, whom I could not forget. At table an officer told me that I had obtained the carriage only because the day's notices had made him lose a quarter of an hour. He had already offered thirty-eight louis, and he was on his way to take the owner forty; but my servant had already paid them. On his asking me when I was leaving, I said that I should leave at six o'clock the next morning, expecting to be in Paris in forty-eight hours.

A quarter of an hour later, when I am alone in my room putting my fine jewels and my diamonds away in my jewel case, Clairmont comes in to tell me that the merchant who had been at the table in company with a girl was in the anteroom with her, asking to speak to me. I tell him to send him in, and I shut my jewel case.

"Monsieur, I have come to ask you for a favor which, if you grant it, can cost you only a little inconvenience but which will be of great service to myself and my daughter."

"What can I do for you or for Mademoiselle, since I am leaving tomorrow at six o'clock?"

"I know that, for you said so at table; but it will not keep us from being ready at the hour you have set. I should like to ask you to take my daughter in your chaise; I am, of course, ready to pay for another horse which the post will furnish you, and I will ride on horseback."

"Apparently you have not seen my chaise."

"I beg your pardon, I have seen it. It is a *solitaire*; but the seat is deep, and if you will sit back a little she can very easily find room on the same seat. It is an inconvenience, certainly, but if you could know what a benefit the favor would be to me you would be glad to go to the trouble. All the places in the diligence are taken until next week, and if I am not in Paris in six days I shall lose my living. If I were rich I would hire a chaise and travel post, but that would cost me four hundred francs. The only course which remains to me is to leave by the diligence tomorrow, with my daughter and myself tied to seats on the roof, and you can understand what distress that would cause her. Look, she is crying."

I look at her attentively, and I see that she is such that, traveling alone with her, I cannot possibly remain within certain bounds. In addition my soul was beset by fears. The torment I had suffered at parting with Marcolina had turned me against not women but love; I had resolved to avoid anything which might lead me to enter into an attachment which could have consequences; my quiet, my peace of mind demanded that I at last adopt this course. "This girl," I said to myself, "may for my misfortune have so many charms of mind or character that I shall be in danger of falling in love with her if I grant the favor which they ask of me."

After half a quarter of an hour which I spent in reflection, I answered him, without looking at the young lady, that his situation caused me the greatest distress, but that I did not know what I could do about it, for I foresaw too many difficulties.

"You may suppose, Monsieur, that I could not ride so many posts in succession without stopping; and I assure you that you are mistaken."

"The horse you are riding may founder. You may be hurt, and if that happens I know myself; I shall have to stop despite you, and I am in a hurry. If you do not consider this reason sufficient, I cannot help it; for in my view it is so."

"Alas, Monsieur, let us take that risk."

"There is another risk which I do not wish to tell you. In short, I cannot."

"Alas, Monsieur," said the young lady, in a voice which would melt stone, "save me from traveling on the roof of the diligence; the very thought makes me shudder; though tied, I shall be afraid, deathly afraid, aside from a sort of indignity which I see in it, perhaps stupidly; but it is not in my power to think otherwise. I implore you to grant me this favor; I will sit at your feet, and I will inconvenience you no more than a dog would do."

"Enough! You do not know me, Mademoiselle. I am neither cruel nor rude, especially with your sex, and my resistance will make you think the contrary; but that shall not be: I still have too high an opinion of myself to permit you to believe it. The hire of a post chaise is six louis. Here they are. I beg you to accept them, Monsieur. Tomorrow morning I will put off my departure for an hour or two, if necessary, to assume the responsibility for the chaise you will hire, if you are not known, and here are four more louis for another horse, for they will put three to your chaise. Anything over that, you would have spent for two places in the diligence."

"Monsieur, I reverence your virtue and your generosity lays my soul at your feet; but I do not accept the present you wish to make me. I am not worthy of it. Let us go, Adèle.[17] Excuse us, Monsieur, for having made you waste half an hour."

"Wait a moment, my dear Father."

Adèle asked him to wait because her tears were choking her. The scene infuriated me, for the weeping girl, at whom I then looked with more interest, met my eyes with hers and so troubled my soul that I was no longer my own master.

"Calm yourself, my little dear," I said to her, "I yield, for otherwise I could not sleep; but I make one condition," I then said to her father. "You will be willing to ride on the back of my carriage."

"Gladly, Monsieur; I thought your servant would ride there."

"No, he goes on horseback. So now everything is arranged. Get to bed, and be ready at six o'clock."

"Monsieur, I will pay for a horse even so."

"You will pay for nothing, for it would insult me, and I beg you not to insist, for, just as you told me that you are poor, I tell you that I am rich, so do not feel that you are degrading yourself."

"Monsieur, I yield, but I will pay for the horse for my daughter."

"Not even that; you make me laugh. Stop haggling, I beg you, and let us all go to bed. I will set you both down in Paris without its costing you a sou; and after that I will send you about your business. Nothing else is possible. There—Adèle is smiling, and that pleases me."

"It is the joy my soul feels at being freed from the fear of the diligence roof."

"I understand that perfectly, and I hope that you will not cry in my chaise, for I loathe gloom. Good-by."

I went to bed, submitting to the decree of my destiny. I saw that I could not escape the charms of this new beauty; and I forearmed myself to resist any temptation to play the game longer than two days. Adèle was pretty, with blue, very prominent eyes, a complexion of lilies and roses, on the verge of adolescence, and with a bust which promised to develop during the next year. I went to bed thanking the good or evil Genius who was determined that I should not be bored during the short journey.

The next morning at five o'clock Adèle's father came into my room to ask if it made any difference to me if I took the road through the Bourbonnais[18] or through Burgundy.[19]

"Either way, it will make no difference to me, if you have business on one of the two roads."

"I have, Monsieur. I could collect some money in Nevers."[20]

"Then we will go by way of the Bourbonnais."

A half hour later Adèle, simply but neatly dressed, comes into my room with a look of contentment and wishes me good morning, saying that her father was taking the liberty of putting a small trunk which contained their clothing behind my chaise; and, seeing me busy tying up packages, she asks me if she can help me. I answer no, I tell her to be seated, I notice her air of exaggerated timidity and submission; it is not to my liking; I gently tell her so, and encourage her to take coffee.

When I was about to go down, a man comes to tell me that the lanterns are not properly fastened to their springs, that I will certainly lose the candle holders if I do not order him to mend them, which he will do in less than an hour. I curse, I call Clairmont, intending to scold him, but Clairmont says that the lantern maker himself, inspecting the lanterns without telling him so, must have loosened them on purpose to make money. It was the exact truth, I knew the trick, I call him a scoundrel, he answers me too plainly, I kick him in the stomach, pistol in hand. He goes off swearing, the innkeeper comes up at the noise, everyone says I am in the right; but despite that I have to lose an hour, for the moon was not shining and I had to have the lanterns. Quick, another lantern maker! He comes, he looks, he laughs, for the other's trickery was plain to see; and he undertakes to put in new springs, but it will take him two hours.

"Very well. Be quick about it," I say.

I talk with the innkeeper, asking him if I can have the other lantern maker sent to prison, even if it will cost me two louis.

"Two louis? I shall see that it is done at once."

I was fuming with rage, paying no attention to Adèle, into whom I struck fear. Ten minutes later the Chief of Police arrives, hears the facts, takes the names of the witnesses, draws up a complaint, and asks me how much my time is worth an hour. I set an English rate on it,[21] five louis. The Chief of Police, pocketing the two louis which I slipped into his hand, writes down the lantern maker's fine as twenty louis, and leaves, telling me that he will have him imprisoned at once. I breathe again, I pace up and down the room, I grow calm, I apologize to Adèle, who has no idea in what way she has offended me, her father comes in to tell me that the lantern maker is in prison, that I am right, and that he has testified in writing as an eyewitness with the utmost pleasure.

"Then you saw the scoundrel do it?"

"I beg your pardon. I wasn't there; but it makes no difference, for everyone who saw it, saw it."

At that I threw myself into a chair, weak with laughter. Moreau (such was the name of Adèle's father) then entertained me with his story. He was a widower, he had only Adèle, and he was going to Louviers[22] to work in a manufactory. That was the whole of it; but he had the gift of dragging out a narrative.

An hour later pathos has its turn. Two women in tears, one of them with an infant at her breast, followed by four small children, and all falling to their knees before me, presented a picture the source of which I knew at once. It was the malefactor's mother and wife, come to ask me to show him mercy. The wife spoke first, and irritated me because she said her husband was an honest man and all the witnesses were scoundrels. But the mother calmed me, saying it was possible that he had been guilty of the cheat, but that I ought to forgive it in a man who had to feed all the mouths I saw there and who would stay in prison all his life, for even if he sold everything down to his bed he would never have twenty louis.

"Very well, my good woman, I absolve him so far as I am concerned, and here is my waiver, which I give you in writing. Arrange the rest with the Chief of Police, for I will see neither you nor anyone else again."

Handing her the note, I gave her six francs for the children, and the family left well satisfied. The police clerk came a little later to have me sign my name in their big book, and I had to pay out more money. When the lanterns were mended, I had to pay twelve more francs, and the thing was all over. I got into my *solitaire,* Adèle sat down between my thighs, Moreau got up behind, Clairmont mounted his horse, and we set off. It was nine o'clock.

Adèle was awkwardly seated at first; I encouraged her to sit more easily and she did so; she caused me discomfort only because I saw that she was uncomfortable; she could rest her back nowhere but on me, and I felt that I should not urge her to take that liberty, which might lead to serious consequences. I made her talk of innocent subjects as far as Bresse,[23] where, while the horses were being changed, we got out to attend to natural necessities. Getting back into the carriage, into which Adèle had to follow me, I held out my hand to help her make the long stride needed to enter it from the front, for this sort of carriage has no step. Adèle having to raise her skirt in front, and directly before my eyes, and then to lift up her leg a great way, I saw black breeches instead of her white thighs. The sight displeased me; I said to her father, who was helping her from behind:

"Monsieur Moreau, Adèle has on black breeches."

She blushed, and her father said with a laugh that she was fortunate to have shown only her breeches.

His answer pleased me; but the thing itself displeased me, for in France the idea of wearing breeches is an impertinence in a girl, unless she has to ride horseback; and even then, a girl who is not of the nobility rides without breeches, only taking care to arrange her skirts properly. In Adèle's breeches I thought I saw an insulting intention, an attempt at defense; a reasonable supposition, but which I thought she should not entertain; the thought made me angry, and I did not speak to her all the way to Saint-Symphorien,[24] except now and again to tell her gently to make herself more comfortable, whereas all the way to Bresse I had said things to make her laugh. The young Adèle must have noticed this coolness on my part, which continued for four hours. At Saint-Symphorien I told Clairmont to ride on ahead, to order me a good supper for three, and to go to bed and sleep until dawn the next day. I saw that he was tired; Roanne[25] was a place which should offer good accommodations. In any case I was in no hurry.

Halfway through the stage, which is a double one,[26] Adèle said that she must really be inconveniencing me, since I was not as gay as I had been during the first stage; I assured her that it was not so, saying that I was keeping so still only to leave her perfectly undisturbed.

"I am grateful to you, but by doing me the honor to talk to me you will certainly not disturb me. You are not telling me the real reason for your silence."

"If you know what it is, tell it to me yourself."

"Your manner changed as soon as you saw that I had on breeches."

"It is true that their blackness offended me."

"I am sorry; but admit that I could not foresee two things: first, that you would find out I had on breeches, and second that you did not like black."

"You are right; but, chance having shown me the thing, you must also forgive the effect it had on me. The color black gives me gloomy ideas, whereas white would have given me a cheerful one. Do you always wear breeches?"

"Never."

"Then you see that, by wearing them on this occasion, you have done something a little unbecoming."

"Unbecoming?"

"Yes. What would you have said if I had put on skirts this morning? I should have acted unbecomingly. It is the same thing. You laugh?"

"Excuse me, but let me laugh, for I have never heard a more amusing idea. But it is not the same thing, for everyone would have seen you in skirts, while no one could guess that I have on breeches."

I assented to Adèle's analysis, charmed to find that she was intelligent enough to expose my sophism; but I continued not to speak to her

We supped well enough in Roanne. Adèle's father saw that, but for his daughter, he would neither have supped with me nor made the journey from Lyons to Paris for nothing; he was delighted when I told him that, far from inconveniencing me, she kept me good company. I told him the discussion we had had over breeches and skirts, and, laughing heartily, he said that his daughter was in the wrong, and after supper I edified him by saying that I would sleep in the other room, which had only one bed, leaving him to sleep in the one in which we had supped, where there were two.

When I had taken coffee the next morning Clairmont told me that he would ride ahead and would stop at a place where I could sleep, for, having lost one night, I might as well lose another. This discourse showed me that Clairmont liked to get his night's sleep, and his health was precious to me. I told him to stop at Saint-Pierre-le-Moutier,[27] and to have a good supper prepared for me. In the carriage Adèle thanked me.

"Then you don't like traveling at night?"

"I shouldn't care, if I weren't afraid I should go to sleep and fall on you."

"You would make me happy, my dear Adèle. A girl as pretty as you is a precious burden."

She did not answer. My declaration was made. To be sure that she would be as docile as a lamb, I had to see her come to it of herself. I did not speak to her again until noon, two minutes before arriving at the post station in Varennes.[28]

"My dear Adèle, I am hungry. If I were sure you would eat a fowl with me with an appetite equal to mine, I would dine here."

"Try it, and I will endeavor to do my duty."

So we dined well at Varennes and drank even better. We left tipsy. Moreau confessed that at a gallop he would fall into a ditch, both he and his horse. Adèle, who drank wine two or three times a year, laughed at not being able to stand straight. I comforted her, saying that the fumes of champagne did not last long.

A quarter of an hour later poor Adèle, after resisting sleep as long as she could, had at last to yield and fell on my chest. She slept soundly for two hours and a half, and I respected her. The only thing I did, and which delighted me, was to make sure that she was no longer wearing breeches, either black or any other color. Her intention was clear; but I wanted to see it fully revealed; to that end I had to hide my discovery from her, at the same time helping her to carry out her plan, whatever it might be. When she woke she thought she had come back from the other world: not only seeing herself in my arms, but finding me in hers, she could not summon words enough to excuse herself. Sheer humanity obliged me to give her a fond kiss to convince her that she had given me pleasure, and that soothed her uneasiness. But in trying to assume a decent position and to arrange her skirts, she uncovered the beginning of her thighs. She quickly covered them again; but my burst of laughter brought one from her, and she had the presence of mind to say that she hoped this time no black had given me gloomy ideas. Certain necessities obliged us to get out at Moulins,[29] where we were instantly assailed by eighteen or twenty women, vendors of knives, scissors, and other knickknacks of all sorts in steel. I made the father and daughter presents of whatever took their fancy; but we laughed heartily at the women, who actually came to blows in their eagerness to sell their wares. We reached Saint-Pierre as night was falling; but in the four hours it took us to travel the nine leagues,[30] Adèle became as familiar with me as if I had been her oldest acquaintance. I held her now on my right thigh, now on my left, so that she could look at me while she spoke; she told me stories, she laughed at those I told her, and if I never gave her a few kisses she thought it was only because I was afraid of displeasing her

At Saint-Pierre we found an excellent supper, thanks to the efforts of Clairmont, who had arrived there two hours before us and who had already gone to bed. Two large beds which were in the room in which we supped had been made; I at once told Moreau that he need have no hesitation over going to bed with Adèle. He replied that in all the five years since he had become a widower he had slept with her without ever forgetting that he was her father; but that on this one night she would sleep alone, for if he wanted to get his money he would have to be at Nevers[31] at daybreak and so he must leave at once and wait for us there.

"If you had told me this beforehand, we should all have gone to spend the night at Nevers."

"It does not matter. I shall ride the three and a half stages at a gallop. I entrust my daughter to you. She will be less near to you than in your chaise."

"Have no doubt of it, Monsieur Moreau. We are both on our good behavior."

"Do not drink any more, dear Father, for you have to ride."

After he left I told Adèle to go to bed.

"And if you do not believe I am your good friend, go to bed fully dressed. I will not be offended, my pretty little one."

"It would be very wrong of me to give you such a proof that I distrust you."

She went somewhere, then she came back, closed her door, and, when she was down to her last petticoat, came to embrace me. I was writing.

"My beautiful Adèle, my charming sleeper, I am dying to see you asleep in my arms once more."

"Very well then, come. I will sleep."

"All the time?"

"All the time."

"We shall see. Let us go."

I throw down my pen, and in a minute I take off my dressing gown, and there is Adèle in my arms, smiling, full of fire, yielding to me, only begging me a few moments later to spare her. I do whatever she asks; but a half hour afterward Venus seizes on her with such force that she grants me everything, only begging me to preserve her honor, and after the bloodstained sacrifice I keep my word to her; then we sleep. There is a knock at the door; it is Clairmont, telling me that five o'clock has struck. I order coffee. I have not time to give Adèle a morning greeting; but I promise her that I will make up for it on the road.

She quickly gets out of bed; she sees the sheets, she sighs, then she laughs; nevertheless, she rumples up my bed, then, a little pensive, she takes her coffee, and we are in the *solitaire*, both amorous, happy, renewing our ecstasies, and in despair that the journey is not longer. At Nevers we find the worthy Moreau disconsolate because his debtor cannot give him the two hundred francs until noon; he does not dare ask me to wait; but I hearten him by saying that we will dine there if he can have a good dinner prepared for us. He promises to do so, and we shut ourselves up in a room to avoid a crowd of women who wanted to force their wares on us.

He received his money, we dined very well, we left, and, finding ourselves in Cosne[32] at nightfall, I say that we will sleep there. Clairmont was waiting for us at Briare,[33] but that is nothing to me. After a bad supper Moreau, who had not slept the night before, gives Adèle the certainty that she can come to bed with me again. The second night is more delicious than the first. The next day at Briare we eat the supper which Clairmont had had prepared for us, and we go to spend the night at Fontainebleau,[34] where Moreau goes off to sleep in the small room next to the one in which we had supped and in which there were two beds. We need only one. It was there that I had the beautiful Adèle in my arms for the last time. In the morning I gave her my word that I would go to see her in Louviers when I came back from England, but I was unable to keep my promise.

From Fontainebleau to Paris, I took only four hours, which, occupied by love taking leave, I found passed very quickly. I stopped on the Pont Saint-Michel[35] at the shop of a watchmaker, who sold me a watch without my getting out of my carriage. I gave it to Adèle. I left them at a hostelry on the corner of the Rue aux Ours,[36] and I told Moreau to come for his trunk to the Hôtel de Montmorency, on the Rue de Montmorency,[37] where I intended to put up. I had reasons for not going to stay at Madame d'Urfé's. I dressed quickly, and I went to dine with her.

CHAPTER VI

I drive my brother the Abate from Paris. Madame du Rumain recovers her voice through my cabala. A bad joke. La Corticelli. I take young D'Aranda to London. My arrival in Calais.

MADAME D'URFÉ received me with a joyful cry, at once telling young D'Aranda to hand me the sealed note she had given him that morning. I unseal it, and I read, after that day's date: *"My Genius told me at daybreak this morning that Galtinarde is leaving Fontainebleau and that he will come to dine with me today."*

This is a fact. Countless things of the same sort have happened to me in my lifetime, such as would turn any other man's head. They amazed me, but, God be praised, they did not make me lose my power of reasoning. People cite instances in which they have guessed something before it happened; but they never mention countless other instances in which they have foretold something which never came to pass. Six months ago I was fool enough to bet that a bitch would give birth to five puppies, all female, the next day, and I won. Everyone was amazed, except myself.

Of course I expressed my admiration for the prophetic powers of Madame d'Urfé's Genius, and I rejoiced at the good health she was enjoying during her pregnancy. Certain that I would arrive, she had sent word to all the people who were to dine with her that she was ill. We dined with young D'Aranda, and spent the rest of the day alone together deciding how best to set about bringing the little fellow to the point of going to London willingly. The oracle's answers were all obscure, since I did not myself know what course to take. Madame d'Urfé's reluctance to tell him to go was so strong that I could not presume upon her obedience to that extent. I put off the decision until another day, and I left, assuring her that I would go to dine with her every day until I set out for London. I went to the Comédie Italienne,[1] where I saw Madame du Rumain,[2] who was delighted to see me back in Paris and who begged me to come to call on her the next day, for she was in the greatest need of my oracle. But my surprise was great when I saw the ballet, and La Corticelli among the dancers. I was tempted to speak to her, not from any feeling of love but because I was curious to learn her adventures. On my way out of the theater I saw Balletti,[3] who had retired from the stage and was living on his pension; he told me where she lived, the sort of life she was leading, and the state of her finances. She was in debt, and could not pay her debts.

"Hasn't she acquired a lover?"

"She had several; but she deceived them all, and she is in poverty."

I go to sup at my brother's, who was living near the Porte Saint-Denis,[4] curious to learn how he had received the Abate.[5] He is delighted to see me again, as is his wife, and he tells me that I have arrived in time to persuade our brother the Abate to leave the house of his own free will, for otherwise he had made up his mind to put him out.

"Where is he?"

"You will see him in a moment, for we are about to have supper, and eating is his chief employment."

"What has he done to you?"

"There he is, he's coming downstairs. I will tell you all in his presence."

Astonished to see me and to see that I do not look at him, he greets me politely and then asks me what I have against him.

"I consider you a monster. I have the letter which you wrote to Passano. According to your testimony, I am a cheat, a spy, a coin clipper, and a poisoner."

He does not answer and sits down at the table.

My brother speaks to me in his presence as follows:

"When the gentleman came to me, I received him gladly; my wife was delighted to make his acquaintance; I gave him the room above this one, and I told him that my house would be his. After that, to curry favor with us, he said that you are the greatest scoundrel alive on the face of the earth, and to prove it, he told us that, having carried off a girl from Venice to marry her in Geneva, he went to see you in Genoa, he and his lady having not a shirt to their backs and being reduced to begging. It is true, he told us, that you immediately rescued him from poverty by clothing him and thereafter letting him want for nothing; but you traitorously obtained possession of her by putting her in the company of two other girls you had, you took her to Marseilles with you, sleeping with her and with the other girl in his presence, and you finally drove him out of Marseilles, giving him, to be sure, a few louis, but discourteously and simply as charity. He ended his story by telling us that, the crime he had committed in Venice preventing him from returning there, he needed us until he could find a way to support himself by his talents and his priestly profession. As for his talents, he told us that he could teach Italian; but we laughed because he does not speak French and because I was sure he had a very poor knowledge of Italian. So we thought it best to confine our efforts to his being a priest, and the next day my wife spoke to Monsieur de Saincy,[6] the bursar in charge of vacant ecclesiastical benefices, to obtain an introduction for him to the Archbishop of Paris, who, upon receiving a favorable report on his conduct, could employ him in his service, after which he could hope to be given a good benefice. To that end he would have to attend our parish church, and I spoke to the parish priest of Saint-Sauveur,[7] who promised to show him every consideration and at once to appoint an hour for him to say mass, for which he would give him the usual fee of twelve sous. When we informed the Signor Abate here of what we had done for him in four days, he became angry. He told us that he was not a man to put himself to the trouble of saying mass for twelve sous, and that he certainly would not pay court to the Archbishop in the hope of entering his service, for he had no intention of serving. We concealed our feelings. The fact is that in the three or four weeks he has been here he has turned the house topsy-turvy. A manservant of whom I was fond has left because of him, my wife's chambermaid, who took care of her linen, and whom he upbraided for no reason, left yesterday, and our cook, who does not want him in her kitchen, threatens to give notice if we have not authority enough to forbid him to enter it.”

“What does he want in the kitchen?”

“To find out the menu for the day; to taste stews; to jabber away at the good woman, telling her what he thought was not good the day before. In short, our brother is an intolerable individual. I am delighted that you have arrived, for I hope that between us we will find a way to send him, tomorrow and no later, to mind his own f . . ing business ”[8]

“Nothing easier,” I replied. “If he wants to stay in Paris, he is free to do so; but you must send his rags to a furnished room tomorrow, and at the same time have him served with a police order forbidding him, as a disturber of your peace, ever to set foot in your house again. If he wants to go away, let him say so, and I undertake to pay for his journey this evening before I leave here."

"Nothing could be more humane. Well, what do you say?"

"I say," replies the Abate, "that it is the way he drove me out of Marseilles. It is exactly his style. Violence. Despotism."

"Thank God, you monster, that instead of giving you a beating I give you money. You tried to get me hanged in Lyons."

"Where is Marcolina?"

"You make me laugh. I have no accounts to render to you. Hurry up. Choose."

"I will go to Rome."

"Very well. For a man traveling alone the journey costs only twenty louis; but I will give you twenty-five."

"Where are they?"

"Just a moment. Paper, pen, and ink!"

"What are you going to write?"

"Bills of exchange on Lyons, Turin, Genoa, Florence, and Rome, and to take you to Lyons tomorrow you will have a paid place in the diligence. You will have five louis in Lyons, another five in Turin, five in Florence, and five in Rome, and here in Paris not a sou from me. Good-by, my sister. I am staying at the Hôtel de Montmorency. Good-by, Cecco."[9]

"I will send our excellent brother's trunk to you tomorrow."

"A very good idea. If I am not there, have it delivered to my manservant. Leave the rest to me."

"I will send it at eight o'clock."

The next morning the trunk came, and the Abate too. I had him given a room, and I told the proprietor that I would be responsible for the Abate's board and lodging for three days and no longer. He wanted to talk to me, and I put him off until the next day. I instructed my servant not to let him enter my room, and I went to Madame du Rumain's.

"Everyone is asleep," said the Swiss; "but who are you? for I have an order."

"I am So-and-so."

"Come into my lodge and amuse yourself with my niece. I will be back."

He comes back and he takes me to the chambermaid's room; she gets up cursing.

"What is the matter?"

"You might have come at noon. Madame got home at three o'clock in the morning. It's not nine yet; but she'll be sorry, I'm going to wake her."

I go in, and she thanks me for having had her waked just as I am asking her to excuse me for it.

"Raton, bring us writing materials, and leave us. You are not to come until I call you. I am asleep for everyone on earth."

"I shall go and sleep too."

"Monsieur, how is it that the oracle has deceived us? Monsieur du Rumain is still alive,[10] he was to have died six months ago; it is true that he is not well; but we will ask about that later. The urgent thing now is something else. You know that music is my chief passion and that my voice was celebrated both for its strength and its range. I have lost it, my dear friend; it is three months since I have been able to sing. Monsieur Herrenschwandt[11] has given me every remedy in the pharmacopoeia, and nothing can bring it back to me; I am in despair over it, I am only twenty-nine[12] years old, I am unhappy, it was the only pleasure which made life dear to me. Ask the oracle, I beg you, for a remedy to give me back my voice as soon as possible. How happy I should be if I could sing tomorrow, for instance; I shall have a great number of people here, and everyone would be astonished. If the oracle is willing I am sure it can be done, for there is nothing wrong with my chest. Enough!

that is my question. It is a long one, but so much the better. The answer will be long too, and I like long answers "

There were times when I liked long questions too, for they gave me time while I was constructing the pyramid to think of what I might answer. What the case required was a remedy for a trifling disorder; but I did not know one, and the honor of the oracle demanded that I give one. I was sure that a healthy regimen would restore her vocal chords to their original state; but it is not the part of an oracle to repeat what any incompetent doctor knows enough to say. So reflecting, I decide to take the course of ordering her to perform a ceremony of worship to the Sun at an hour which would oblige her to follow a regimen which would cure her, without my having to prescribe it for her.

So the oracle told her that she would recover her voice in twenty-one days, if she would begin on the day of the new moon and perform a ceremony to the rising Sun every morning in a room which had at least one window facing the east. To perform this ceremony, a second oracle instructed her, she must have slept for seven hours, and, before going to bed, must bathe in honor of the Moon, keeping her legs in warm water up to the knee. As for the liturgies appropriate to these ceremonies, I told her which psalms she was to read while bathing in order to secure beneficent influences from the Moon, and which ones she was to read before the closed window at the instant when the Sun rose. The oracle's consideration in ordering that the window should be closed greatly pleased the lady, for there might be a wind which would make her catch cold. Lost in admiration of the divinity of this magical remedy, she promised she would punctually carry out all of the oracle's instructions if I would be so good as to bring her the drugs needed for the fumigations.

I promised all that she asked, and to show her my zeal I told her that on the first day I would perform the fumigations myself so that she could learn the method, for the nature of the two ceremonies demanded that no woman be present at them. The manner in which she received my offers showed that she was deeply touched. We had to begin the next day, which was that of the new moon, and I went to her house at nine o'clock; for in order to sleep seven hours before worshiping the rising Sun she had to go to bed before ten. I was sure that what would make her recover her voice was the new regimen, and I was right in my expectation. It was at London that she gave me the news in a letter which came from her heart. This lady, whose daughter married Monsieur de Polignac,[13] loved pleasure, and, frequenting great supper parties, she could not always enjoy perfect health. She had lost the beauty of her voice. Having recovered it by a magical operation, she laughed when she found people who told her that magic was a chimerical science.

At Madame d'Urfé's I found a letter from Teresa,[14] young D'Aranda's mother. She wrote me that she would be obliged to take the step of coming to fetch her son herself if I did not bring him to her, and that she expected a definite reply at once. I told the boy that his mother would be at Abbeville in a week and that she wanted to see him.

"She must be granted the pleasure," I said; "you shall come with me."

"Gladly; but if you go to London with her, with whom shall I return to Paris?"

"Alone," said Madame d'Urfé, "preceded by a postilion."

"On horseback. Oh, how I shall enjoy that!"

"But you shall ride only eight or ten stages a day, for you need not risk your life riding at night."

"I will dress as a courier."

"Yes, I will have a fine jacket made for you, and chamois breeches, and I will give you a splendid parchment[15] with the arms of France."

"I'll be taken for a courier for the Cabinet, and I will say I am coming from London."

I then pretended to object, saying that a horse might fall and break his neck. By persisting in my opposition I made sure that he would come, for Madame d'Urfé, having suggested the plan in the first place, naturally became the one to whom he must appeal for the favor. I refused to hear a word of it for three days before I granted it to him on condition that he would not travel on horseback but would come with me. Sure that he would return to Paris, he insisted on taking only two or three shirts with him; but sure, on my side, that once I had got him as far as Abbeville he would not escape me, I had his trunk with all his clothes sent to Calais,[16] where we should find it on our arrival. In the meanwhile Madame d'Urfé had a complete courier's outfit made for him and a pair of strong boots which he needed to protect his legs in case of a fall. So it was that this difficult undertaking was made easy by chance.

I spent that afternoon with the banker Tourton & Baur[17] arranging to have my money in London distributed among several bankers, to whom he sent me, as I requested, with strong letters of recommendation. I wanted to make numerous acquaintances.

As I left the Place des Victoires, I thought of La Corticelli,[18] and curiosity took me to call on her. She was living on the Rue de Grenelle Saint-Honoré[19] in a furnished apartment. She was astonished to see me. After a long silence, seeing that I said nothing, she wept, then she said:

"I should not be unhappy if I had never known you."

"You would be just as unhappy, but in some different way, for your misfortunes are the result of your bad conduct. But what are they?"

"Unable to bear being in Turin after you dishonored me——"

"If you go on in that style I shall leave; for I have not come here to defend myself, but rather to hear the voice of your repentance.”

“And I repent; but it is none the less true——”

“Good-by.”

“Very well, I will tell my story and not say what I think. Sit down. I fled from Turin with Droghi;[20] he was in the corps de ballet, I don’t know if you knew him; he used to come to La Pacienza’s;[21] he loved me; I let him give me a child. When you arrived in Turin I was pregnant. At my wit’s end to decide on a course, for Droghi had no money and did not want to confess our situation to anyone, I gave my lover one of my watches and a ring to sell, and we left. We came here, but we stayed only a week. On the promenade of the Palais-Royal we found Santini,[22] who was going to London with D’Auberval [23] to dance in the opera at the Haymarket;[24] he needed a couple; he gave us a good contract without knowing what we could do, and we left. At London we were not liked, and if we had sued we should have lost, for it was plain to see that I was pregnant, and as for Santini everyone knew that he was a tailor who didn’t know how to dance a step. I gave him all my jewels to sell, and so we came back. In the two months we were in London we got twenty guineas[25] into debt, though we lived like beggars, and those barbarians would not even take up a collection for me.

“Santini had a relative in Versailles, a valet at the Court, and when he told him how hard put to it he was to provide for my lying-in at all comfortably, he offered him a lodging; he accepted, and I went to lie in at Versailles, giving birth prematurely to a dead infant after being on the verge of death myself. I came back here, reduced to possessing only one dress. The pantaloon Collalto[26] saw me, became my lover, took care of me, and one day, angry with Santini, who wanted to play the master, he slapped him and turned him out. He was right, for Santini should have shown him respect. Santini went I don’t know where, and Collalto got me an engagement at the Comédie Italienne[27] and gave me my freedom. In a short time I had five or six lovers keeping me one after the other, all of whom left me for trumped-up reasons, for after all I was not married to them. Collalto himself left me, angry at finding himself ill with the same disease which I had. He ought to have forgiven me and arranged to have me cured; but men are all like you, merciless. Again I sold everything I had, and I signed a bill of exchange for four hundred francs which, having fallen due, and I not being able to pay it, was protested, and a seizure was executed on my furniture because it was believed to be mine. The seizure lasted only twenty-four hours because the landlord, informed of the fact, was able to assert his rights; but he will have it taken away in two or three days if I do not pay him his month in advance, as I have always done. I haven't a sou, and, to make matters worse, I have been dismissed from the Comédie Italienne. In a week I will no longer appear there. I cannot count on another lover, for everyone knows I am ill; I am in the hands of the streetwalkers who prowl on the Rue Saint-Honoré at night. That is the true picture of the state in which you find me"

After this dreadful story she buried her face in a dirty handkerchief to catch a flood of tears. I was as if turned to stone, beside myself, and under the mortifying necessity of recognizing that I was one of the causes of the horrible abyss in which I saw the wretched girl sunk. Pity commanded me to do something for her at once.

"What course have you thought of taking?"

"You mock me. I don't know what taking a course means. To decide on a course one at least has to have money. I shall be arrested tomorrow. I shall go to prison and die there. God's will be done. Listen! someone is coming here Wait"

She rises and goes out; I hear her talking; the person leaves; she comes back, and she tells me that she has given twenty-four sous to a streetwalker who had brought her a man.

"I told her," she said, "that I have company and that I am engaged for the whole night."

My horror increases; I tell her that I do not think I am capable of relieving her misfortunes either with my purse or with my advice.

"What would you do if you had money?"

"If I had enough of it, I would go and get cured."

"And after that?"

"If I had any left, I would go to Bologna, where I would earn my living by my profession, having perhaps grown wiser."

"But where would you go to be cured, since spies would have you arrested?"

"I have no idea. If Collalto had not abandoned me!"

"Ah, poor Corticelli! You are lost, and permit me to tell you that you are wrong to console yourself by attributing the cause of your misfortunes to others and not to yourself. I would never have abandoned you if you had not acted toward me like the worst of enemies. Dry your tears! I will say no more. I leave, and I promise I will come back tomorrow or the next day and tell you where you shall go to be cured without anyone being able to find you; I will pay whatever it may cost. After you are cured you shall have money enough to go to Bologna; and after that may God bless you! You will not see me again."

At that the poor girl could thank me only by sobbing and holding my hands clasped in hers, which were trembling from the excess of emotion which what I had said to her had aroused in her soul. I stayed there until the outburst was over. At the end of the scene I gave her four louis, and I left in anguish of heart.

Having undertaken to rescue the poor girl from the abyss into which she had fallen, I thought of going to an honest surgeon whom I knew, and who alone could tell me how I could set about putting La Corticelli in an inaccessible place until she was cured. He was my erstwhile surgeon Faget,[28] who lived on the Rue de Seine.[29] I take a hackney carriage, I go there, I find him at table with his family; I ask him to finish his supper and then to go to his office with me to hear what I have to say. I tell him the whole story. She is to be cured in six weeks. No one is to know her; she will pay in advance. How much must she pay? She is poor. I am doing a work of charity.

Faget's only answer is to write a note, address it, and hand it to me unsealed, saying:

"The thing is done!"

The note ordered the man to whom it was addressed, at the end of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine,[30] to take in the person who would give it to him, and who would pay him a hundred écus, and to dismiss her six weeks later safe and sound. He added that the patient had reasons for not being seen by anyone. Delighted to have finished the business so quickly and so successfully, I go home, I sup, and I go to bed, declining to listen to my brother. I send him word that he can talk to me at eight o'clock. I needed to rest.

At eight o'clock he comes into my room and, stupid as ever, tells me that he had wanted to acquaint me with his plan before I went to bed in order to give me all night to think it over.

"There was no need of that. Do you want to stay in Paris, or go to Rome?"

"Let me have the money for the journey, and I will stay in Paris, giving a written undertaking not to go to see my brother again, or you if you are here. That should suit you just as well."

"You are a fool, for only I can judge what does or does not suit me. Leave my presence at once. I have not time to listen to you. Either Paris without a sou, or twenty-five louis to take you to Rome, parceled out as I see fit."

I call Clairmont and have him turned out of the room.

On my way out I tell the proprietor again that the next day is the last on which I will pay for the Abate. I was in a hurry to have done with La Corticelli and her troubles. I went in a hackney carriage to the house in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine of which Faget's note gave me the address, in order to see the place where the wretched girl was to do penance for six weeks. I find an elderly man with his wife, both of whom seem honest people, and after giving him Faget's letter to read I tell him that the girl will come without losing any time, and that I had come to see everything. At that he shows me a small room with a bed, a bath, three or four chairs, a table, a wardrobe, all very clean. He says that she will eat alone, and that unless her illness is very complicated he will have her cured at the end of six weeks. He shows me the doors of seven or eight rooms like the one we are in, four of which, he tells me, are occupied by sick girls, all more or less under the same condition of secrecy and whose names he does not know. I pay him a hundred écus, he writes the receipt in Faget's name, and I tell him he is to give the room in which we are to the person who will come to him with the receipt and the same letter from Faget. After that I go to the Palais-Royal,[31] where I happen upon a Venetian named Boncousin,[32] who tells me that he has come to open a rooming house in Paris, hoping thereby to make his fortune.

"Relying on what?"

"On two girls whom you know."

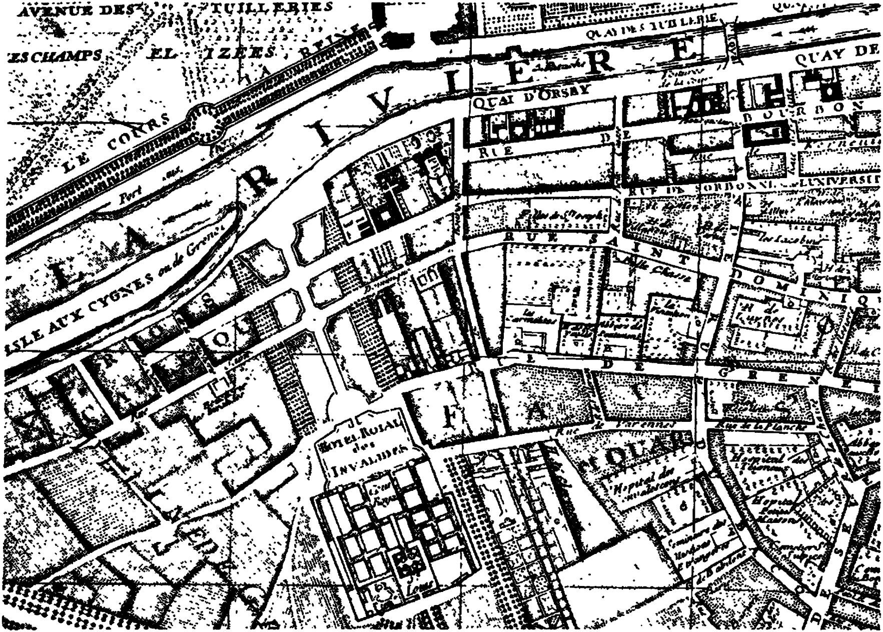
"Who are they?"

"I will not tell you. Come to supper with me, and you shall see them. Here is my address. But you shall pay for the supper, for I am not rich."

"Very well, I will come the day after tomorrow, for today and tomorrow I am engaged."

"Will you give me the money now, so that I shall be sure of it?"

"Gladly; but I did not suppose you had grown so poor. Here are six francs."


AVENUE DES TUILLERIES
CHAMPS ELIZEES
REINE
LE COURS
Port
LA RIVIERE
ISLE AUX CYGNES ou de Grenelle
QUAY DES TUILLERIE
QUAY DE
QUAI D'ORSBY
RUE DE BOURBON
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
RUE SAINT DOMINIQUE
RUE DE GRENELLE
Rue de Varennes
Rue de la Planche
HOTEL ROIAL des INVALIDES
Cour Royale
Filles de St Joseph
Hopital des Incurables

The Rue de Grenelle and Its Environs

"It is very little, if you want to sup well."

"I will pay the rest after the supper. Good-by."

I knew that the man was a scoundrel. He had an inn in Venice. I should not have gone if I had not been curious about the two girls I was supposed to know. I go to dine at Madame d'Urfé's, and immediately after dinner I go to La Corticelli's to comfort her. I find her in bed. She disgusts me by showing me her illness; I tell her what I have done for her and I give her the surgeon's receipt and the letter. I tell her she has only to take a hackney carriage and go there by herself, promising that I will go to see her once before I set off for London and will leave her another hundred écus, which should be enough to take her to Bologna as soon as she is cured. Full of gratitude, she tells me that she will go after dark the next day without saying anything to her maid, whom she will send somewhere so that she can take her shifts and her one remaining dress with her in a bag, and she asks me for two louis more to redeem some clothing which she had in pawn.

Delighted to have rescued La Corticelli from her sad plight, I go to see Madame du Rumain, who had taken leave of all her acquaintances for three weeks. She was a woman of the greatest probity, as polite and polished as possible, but with a manner so oddly affected that it often made me laugh heartily; she talked of the Sun and the Moon as if they were sovereigns whose acquaintance she was about to make. Talking to me one day of the happiness of the saved after death, she said that in heaven the happiness of souls must consist in their loving God "to distraction." I brought her all the drugs and herbs needed to make the perfumes; I told her what psalms to recite; at eight o'clock we ate a light supper together, then she ordered her chambermaid to shut her door and to expect me at ten o'clock, when she was to put me to bed in a room on the third floor which she had had made ready for me, instructing her to let me enter her room at five o'clock in the morning. At half past nine o'clock

I myself put her legs in the bath, the water in which had become warm, I showed her how to prepare the perfumes herself on the following days, I had her recite the psalms, then I dried her legs myself, laughing a little at her expressions of gratitude, and after seeing her to her bed, I went off to bed myself, waited on by her chambermaid, who, young and charming and merry, made me laugh by saying that if I had become her mistress's chambermaid it was only right that she should become mine. I wanted to make free with her; but she ran away, saying that I must save myself in order to be on my mettle with her mistress at five o'clock. She was mistaken.

The next morning at five o'clock I found Madame punctually putting on her shoes and stockings. We went into the adjoining room, from which we could have seen the rising Sun if the Hôtel de Bouillon[33] had not been in the way; but it did not matter. She performed her devotions with the air of a priestess. After that she sat down at her harpsichord, assuring me that she would find it very hard to occupy nine-hour mornings for three weeks in succession, for she did not dine until two. We breakfasted at nine o'clock, and I left her, promising that I would see her again before I set off for London.

I went to the Hôtel de Montmorency to dress, and Clairmont made me laugh by describing my brother's state of alarm because I had not come home to sleep. He was curling my hair when I saw him come in. I rose quickly, asking him, "Paris or Rome?" and he replied, "Rome." At that I told him to wait outside. When I was dressed I had him summoned, and just then my brother the painter came in with his wife to say that they had come to ask me for dinner. I wrote a note to Madame d'Urfé begging her to pardon me if I could not go there; and I told my brother that he had come in time to see the execution of the Abate, who had finally made up his mind to go to Rome however I chose to send him. I sent Clairmont to the office of the Lyons diligence to reserve and pay for a place for him; then in less than half an hour I wrote him four drafts for five louis each—one on Signor Bono in Lyons, another on Signor Zappata in Turin, another on Signor Sassi in Florence, and the last for Belloni in Rome.

"What assurance have I," the fool asked me, "that these gentlemen will pay me the money on sight of these notes?"

"If you are not sure of it, leave them with me, but for good and all. You are always impertinent to your benefactors."

Clairmont came, bringing a ticket for a paid place in the diligence which left at dawn the next day. I gave it to him and I bade him good-by.

"I can dine with you?"

"I do not want you. Go and dine with Passano, monster! You sign your name as a witness that I am a coin clipper, and you dare to speak to me? Clairmont, turn him out!"

It was unbelievable, but it was true. My sister asked me what I had done with the girl I had carried off.

"I sent her to Venice with ten thousand écus."

"That is all very well, but think of the pain the Abate must have felt when he saw you sleeping with her."

"Fools are made to suffer pain. Did he tell you that she would never let him give her a kiss, and that she beat him?"

"Not at all. He told us she adored him."

After spending three or four hours pleasantly, I took my sister-in-law to the opera,[34] and her husband went home. She complained to me bitterly. In all the six years[35] he had been married to her he had never been able to consummate the marriage.

"I am told," she said, "that I could ask for an annulment, and I cannot because I am mad enough to love him. He is up to his ears in debt, and if I made him give me back my dowry I should ruin him. But, knowing himself, why did he deceive me by marrying me? He is a traitor."

She was right. But my brother said it was not his fault, and that he had hoped that marrying her would put an end to his impotence. After her death he married another woman,[36] who punished him. She reduced him to having to flee from Paris and leave her everything he possessed. I will say more on the subject twenty years hence.[37]

The next morning early my brother the Abate left. I did not see him again until I was in Rome six years later. I will say more on the subject when I come to that time. I spent the day at Madame d'Urfé's, where I finally consented to young Trenti's[38] returning to Paris from Abbeville on horseback, and I set my departure for three days later. I went to the Français[39] to see a new play, which failed.[40] The author wept bitterly; to console him his friends said that only the machinations of the opposition had made it fail; but that did not make up to him for the money the failure would cost him.

Curiosity made me go to the address at which Boncousin had told me he was staying with two girls who knew me. It was on the Rue Montmartre;[41] the house door, the entry, and the floor were indicated; my coachman drove round and round several times, but could never find the house. I get out to look for it on foot, address in hand; a shopkeeper tells me that two foreign girls had arrived at the house next to hers not long since and that they must be living on the fourth floor. I go up, and I ask the woman who opens the door to me for news of two Venetian girls who must have come to lodge with her.

"Lord! I have fifteen, and God damn my soul if I know what country they come from. Come in, and you shall ask them yourself."

This makes me laugh, and I find a flock of wenches making a great racket and coming to me with exclamations as soon as I appear. I beg all the wild creatures to calm themselves, and I do not even think of asking for the Venetian girls for whom I was looking, for it was a

b. . . . . .[42] However, I talk to them all, and except for one, who was English, I find that they are all French. The mistress of the establishment comes to ask me if I want to sup with one of them, I consent, I decline to choose, I put myself in her hands, asking her to give me the one she thought would be most likely to please me.

She gives me one, who immediately takes charge of me, leads me to a room, and a moment later supper is brought and clean sheets are put on the excellent bed. I look at my table companion, and she does not please me. However, I hide the fact, I treat her pleasantly, I eat well, I sit at the table a long time, I send for champagne; having seen me cold to all her cajoleries, she thinks that I want to see her intoxicated; and she is obliging enough to get drunk. By the third bottle she no longer knew what she was saying or what she was doing. She undresses and lies down on the bed as nature made her, she invites me, she comes to me, I let her do what she will, and for the first time in my life I have the pleasure of seeing that she cannot make me become a man. Adèle, Marcolina, my niece P. P., Clementina, and the others were still too present to my memory. The hussy was young, pretty, and well built; but she became nothing when I compared her to the others. At three o'clock in the morning I went home, very well pleased with myself and not at all troubled by the poor idea of my valor with which I must have left the girl.

The next day after dining with Madame d'Urfé I took a hackney carriage to go to see La Corticelli in her retreat without being recognized. I found her sad, but well pleased with her situation and with the gentleness of the surgeon and his wife. I was assured that she would be completely cured. She told me that she had fled from the Rue de Grenelle at nine o'clock, carrying all her clothes with her, and that her maid must be in despair, for she was in debt to her. I gave her twelve louis, and I promised to send her twelve more when she wrote to me from Bologna; and she promised to do so; but the unfortunate girl died while she was under treatment.[43] I learned of it two months later by a letter which Faget wrote me to London, in which he told me that he did not know how to send the twelve louis which she had left to a Signora Laura, whom I must know. I sent the honest man an address at which he was able to dispatch them to her.

All those of whom I made use to help me in the magical tricks which I played on Madame d'Urfé, except Marcolina, betrayed me, and later they all came to bad ends. The reader will find Passano and Costa in their proper places.

On the eve of my departure I supped with Madame du Rumain, who assured me that her voice was already beginning to return; a wise reflection which she made gave me pleasure. She said that the regimen which ceremonial observances of this kind obliged her to pursue might contribute to it; I told her she should have no doubt of it. I was glad to learn that, to set reason on the road to truth, it was necessary to begin by deceiving it. Darkness had to precede light. Boncousin, whom I found in the parterre of the Théâtre Italien, laughed at me when I complained that the house of which he had given me the address was nowhere to be found on the Rue Montmartre. He told me with a laugh that his need for six francs had driven him to employ the trick to obtain them. I told him that he should not reveal himself to be a scoundrel so cheaply.

After taking leave of Madame d'Urfé and assuring her that I would not fail to keep all my promises, I took the youth with me in a hackney carriage, together with his strong boots, which he admired to adoration. I took him to the Hôtel de Montmorency, whence we set out toward evening. He had begged me to travel at night, because he was ashamed to be seen dressed as a courier and not to be on horseback. On the third day we arrive at Abbeville. I order dinner, he asks me where his mother is, I reply that we will inquire for her, and I invite him to go with me to see the cloth manufactory of the Messieurs van Robais.[41]

"But we can find out in a minute whether my mother is here or not."

"Well, if she is not here we will continue our journey, and we shall meet her on the road. We shall certainly meet her before we get to Boulogne."

"Go to see the manufactory, and meanwhile I will sleep."

"As you please."

I go. An hour and a half later I return to the inn, and I do not see the lad. Clairmont was asleep.

"Where is he? I want to dine."

"He rode off at a gallop to fetch the dispatches which you forgot in Paris."

I summon the post master, I tell him that if he does not bring him back to me he can count on being ruined, for he should not have given him a horse except by my order. He calms me and assures me that he will have him overtaken before he reaches Amiens. He gives the order to a postilion, who laughs when he sees that I am uneasy.

"I'd catch him," he says, "even if he left before dawn. He left only an hour and a half ago; he cannot have traveled more than two stages; I travel three in the same time. You will see me with him at six o'clock at the latest."

"You shall have two louis for drink."

I could not eat dinner. I felt ashamed to find myself tricked in this manner by an inexperienced youth. I threw myself on my bed, where I slept until the postilion waked me by bringing in the culprit, who looked like a corpse. Without a word to him, I ordered that he be locked in a room in which there was a good bed, that he be given supper, and that the innkeeper should make himself responsible for him until early the next morning, when I should leave for Boulogne and Calais. I had to let him rest, for he was exhausted. The postilion caught up with him halfway through the fifth stage, not far from Amiens. He had been as docile as a lamb. The next morning I summoned him, and I asked him if he wanted to come to London with me of his own free will or bound hand and foot.

"Of my own free will, I give you my word of honor; but on horseback, and riding ahead of you, for otherwise I should be dishonored. No one must be able to say that you set up a hue and cry after me, as if I had robbed you."

"I accept your word of honor. Order another saddle horse on my behalf. Come and embrace me."

Perfectly content, he mounted and, keeping ahead of me all the way, he stopped in Calais at the "Golden Arm,"[45] where he was astonished to find his trunk. I arrived an hour after him.

CHAPTER VII

My arrival in London. Mrs. Cornelys. I am presented at Court. I rent a furnished house. I make many acquaintances. English morality.

I HAD scarcely arrived before I summoned the innkeeper and had him give me a receipt for my post chaise, which I was leaving with him, countersigning it, and I at once chartered a packet boat[1] so that it should be at my orders whenever I pleased. Only one was disengaged, another was for all passengers who paid six francs a head. I paid six guineas[2] in advance for it, obtaining a receipt, for I had been told that it was at Calais that one began to be in the wrong in all disputes in which one could not produce visible and palpable proof of one's rights. Before the tide falls Clairmont sees to taking all my luggage on board, and I order supper. The innkeeper warns me that louis do not pass current in England, and he changes mine into guineas without taking any profit. I admired his honesty, for the guinea was worth seventeen sous more than the French louis.

Young D'Aranda-Trenti had resigned himself. He stayed with me quietly, proud to have shown me his prowess on horseback. We sit down at table, and I hear the sound of English words at the door of my room. The innkeeper enters and tells me that it is a courier of the Duke of Bedford,[3] the English Ambassador, who was about to arrive on his way back to London, coming from Versailles. The courier was arguing with the master of the packet I had chartered; he told him he had chartered it by letter and that he could not dispose of it; the other replied that he had not received the letter and no one could prove the contrary against him. At that I congratulate myself on having the packet. I go to bed, and early the next morning the innkeeper comes to tell me that the Ambassador had arrived at midnight and that his valet wished to speak to me. I have him shown in and he tells me on behalf of His Lordship, who was in a hurry to get back to London, that if I would relinquish the packet to him I should be at liberty to make the passage to Dover just the same. I then take a pen, and I write my answer in these words:

"My Lord the Duke may dispose of the whole of my packet, except for the space necessary for three people together with my small amount of baggage. I eagerly seize the opportunity to make this small gift to the English Ambassador."

The valet comes back to tell me that the Ambassador thanks me but that he wishes to pay.

"That is impossible, for the fee has been paid."

"He will give you back the six guineas."

"Tell His Lordship that the freedom of the boat is his without paying, but not otherwise; for I do not sell merchandise which I have bought."

A half hour later the Duke himself is announced and enters to tell me graciously that I am in the right, but that he is not wrong to refuse the too great favor which I wish to do him. I agree, with a mortified air, but I do not budge from my position.

"There is," he says, "a middle course. If you will take it, I shall be no less obliged to you. We will each pay half."

"I will take it, My Lord; it is I who shall be obliged to you for the honor you do me. I will not leave until you are ready."

He put three guineas on my chest of drawers without showing them to me, and he left, thanking me. I told the master of the packet to put His Lordship and all his effects on board, and I took no part in the disputes in which he engaged with the Ambassador's officers in order to get his money. It was not my affair.

We crossed the Channel in two hours and a half with the strongest of winds. The next day the search by the customs officers to see if I had any contraband articles struck me as extremely tedious, impertinent, indiscreet, and even indecent; but I had to put up with it and conceal my feelings, for an offended Englishman who has the law on his side is much more impertinent than[4] a Frenchman.

The island called England is a different color from that which one sees on the surface of the Continent. The sea is extraordinary, for being part of the Atlantic Ocean, it is subject to the ebb and flow of the tides;[5] the water of the Thames has a different flavor from that of all the rivers on earth. Horned animals, fish, and everything one eats has a different taste from what we eat, the horses are of a species of their own even in their shape, and men have a character not found elsewhere and common to the whole nation, which make them think themselves superior to all others. This is a supposition common to all nations; each thinks itself the first. They are all right.

I immediately saw the great cleanliness, the substantial fare, the beauty of the countryside and of the great roads; I admired the beauty of the carriages supplied by the post to travelers who have not one of their own; the reasonableness of the posting charges, the ease with which it is possible to pay them, the rapidity of travel, always at a trot, never at a gallop, and the construction of the cities through which I had to pass on my way from Dover to London. Canterbury and Rochester[6] have a large population, though their breadth is nothing in proportion to their length. We arrived in London toward nightfall, eighteen hours after leaving Dover, at the house of Mrs. Cornelys. This was the name assumed by Teresa, daughter of the actor Imer, later wife of Pompeati, the dancer, who had killed himself [7] in Vienna, cutting his belly open with a razor and tearing out his bowels in an instant.

This Signora Pompeati, who in Holland had taken the name of Trenti, had in London taken that of Cornelys, in honor of her lover Cornelius Rigerboos, whom she ruined, of whom I have spoken in my fourth volume.[8] I arrived, then, at the door of her house on Soho Square,[9] opposite that of the Venetian Resident, who lives on the other side of the same square. My arriving at her house was in obedience to the orders she had given me in her last letter. I had written her the day on which I hoped to see her.

I get out, leaving her son in the carriage, thinking that I shall see her at once; but the porter tells me to wait. Two minutes later a manservant brings me a letter in which Mrs. Cornelys tells me to go on to stay at a house to which the servant will show me the way and where she will come to supper with me. I find nothing strange in this. She might have reasons for it. I get in again, and the postilions arrive at the house on the street near the Square to which the servant directs them. A Frenchwoman, named Raucour[10] and excessively fat, and two menservants come to meet us; the stout woman embraces Mr. Cornelys[11] and rejoices at his safe arrival, dropping me a cold curtsy. In less than a quarter of an hour Clairmont, shown the way by La Raucour, puts all my luggage in a room which had a closet through which I could enter the apartment on the front, consisting of three fine rooms, in which the same Raucour had had My Lord Cornelys's trunk put, while he stood there open-mouthed and at a loss to answer when she said to him:

"These two valets are yours, and I am your most humble servant."

I return to my room through the same closet, and though seeing that I am not only badly lodged but lodged as an inferior, I control myself, a rare occurrence, and I do not say a word; I only ask Clairmont where his room is, so that he can go to it and dispose of his trunk, which was there with all of mine. After going, he comes to tell me that the fat lady had shown him his bed in a room in the attic where one of Master Cornelys's two menservants slept. Clairmont, who knew me, was astonished to hear me answer calmly:

"Very well, take your trunk there."

"Shall I unpack yours"

"No. Leave that until tomorrow."

Still concealing my feelings, I go back to the room of my master, who was looking exhausted because he had tried to ride a stage on horseback and had never succeeded in making his mount gallop. He was listening to Madame Raucour, who, sitting beside him, was giving him an account of his mother Mrs. Cornelys's splendid position, her extensive enterprises, her immense credit, the magnificent mansion she had had built, the thirty-three servants she kept, two secretaries, six horses, country house, and I know not what

"How is my sister Sophie?"[12]

"Is her name Sophie? She is called Miss Cornelys. She is a beauty, Sir, a prodigy of intelligence, grace, and talents; she sings, she plays at sight on all instruments, she dances, she speaks three languages and writes them correctly, she has her own governess and her own chambermaid. It is a pity she is too small for her age, for she is eight years old"

She was ten;[13] but since the woman was talking without vouchsafing me a look, I said nothing. My Lord Cornelys, who needed to go to bed, asked her at what time supper was served, and she replied:

"At ten o'clock and no sooner."

For Mrs. Cornelys was busy with her lawyer until then because of a great lawsuit she had against Sir

Frederic Fermer.[14] I thereupon go to my room and, saying nothing, take my hat and cane and set out for a walk. It was only seven o'clock. Careful not to lose my bearings, I walk at random, and a quarter of an hour later I enter a crowded coffeehouse. It was the "Prince of Orange," [15] notorious for those who frequented it, who were the dregs of all the scoundrelly Italians who were in London. I had been told of it in Lyons, and I had intended never to go there; it was dark, and chance led me there; nor did I ever set foot in it again. I sit down by myself, I order a lemonade; and a man sits down near me to take advantage of the light which was on my table to read a printed sheet. I see that it is in Italian. The man was crossing out letters with a pencil and putting the correction in the margin. "An author," I said to myself. I notice that he crosses out a letter in the word *ancora* and puts an *h* in the margin, to indicate that he wants it to be printed "anchora." I cannot restrain myself. I tell him that the word *ancora* has been spelled without an *h* for four centuries.

"I agree, but I am quoting Boccaccio,[16] and one should be exact in quotations."

"You are right, pray excuse me. You are a man of letters?"

"In a very small way. I am Martinelli." [17]

"Not in a small way at all. I know you by reputation. You are related to Calzabigi,[18] and he has talked to me about you. I have read some of your satires." [19]

"May I ask to whom I am speaking?"

"My name is Seingalt. Have you finished your edition of the *Decamerone*?" [20]

"I am still at work on it, and always trying to increase the number of my subscribers." [21]

"If you would like to add me——"

"You do me honor."

He thereupon gives me a ticket, and seeing that it was only a guinea, I ask him for another, I pay him, and I rise to leave, saying that I hope to see him again at the same coffeehouse. I ask him its name, and he tells me, astonished that I do not know it; but he is even more astonished when I tell him that I have just arrived in London for the first time.

"Then you will have difficulty finding your way back to where you are staying, and I will accompany you."

No sooner have we left than he very frankly warns me that the "Prince of Orange," to which chance had led me, is the most disreputable coffeehouse in London.

"But you go to it."

"I can go to it with the safe-conduct of Juvenal's verse: *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator* ['The traveler with an empty purse will sing when he meets a robber'].[22] The rogues have no way of getting their teeth into me. I do not speak to them; and they do not speak to me. I have been here for five years, I seek patronage only from Lord Spencer,[23] I occupy myself with literary work,[24] I am single, I earn enough to live in a furnished room and take my dinner at a tavern. I have a dozen shirts and this coat, and I am in good health; *nec ultra deos lacesso*" ("nor do I importune the gods for more'').[25]

Such a man, speaking Tuscan with the greatest purity,[26] pleases me. On the way I ask him how I should go about finding a good lodging, and after learning what accommodations I want and how long I intend to stay in London, and what sort of life I want to lead, he advises me to take a whole house for myself, fully furnished and with all the kitchenware and tableware I should need, as well as table linen and bed linen.

"You will be given the inventory," he says, "and as soon as you obtain a surety, you will be lord and master there, domiciled like an Englishman and responsible only to the laws."

I ask him to tell me of such a house; and he at once enters a shop; he speaks to the proprietress, he writes, and then he comes out after copying everything I needed from an *Advertiser*.[27] It was the locations where houses such as I wanted were to be found. The nearest to where we were was in a broad street called Pall Mall,[28] and we went to see it. An old woman who opened the smaller door to us as soon as he knocked showed us the ground floor and the three upper floors. Every floor had two front rooms—each with a closet, which goes without saying in London—and two at the back. In each apartment there were two beds, one in the room and one in the closet. Everything was scrupulously clean—porcelain, mirrors, bellpulls; it was perfection. In a very large cupboard in the room on the ground floor in which the old woman slept there was all the linen, and in another were the silver services and services of porcelain and china. In the kitchen there was an ample supply of pots and pans, and in the underground apartment, which I did not expect, there was furniture enough to lodge a whole family, and a cellar and storerooms to hold everything necessary for a well-run house. The rent was twenty guineas a week. I told Martinelli that the house pleased me and that I wanted to take it at once, so that I could move into it whenever I pleased.

As soon as he translated my decision to the old woman, she told him that if I wanted to keep her as housekeeper,[29] I need not have a surety, it being enough for her if I would always pay her the week's rent in advance; but that if I wanted to put someone else in charge of the house she would need at least two days to go over the inventory with whomever I should appoint and who, in that case, would have to give surety. I replied that I would keep her on condition that she would engage a maid, whom I would pay and who would take orders directly from her, but who must speak French or Italian in addition to English. She promised me that she would have the maid the next day; I paid her for four weeks in advance, and she gave me a receipt under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt; I never used any other name in London. Martinelli, delighted to have been of use to me, left me when, seeing that I was in my street, I thanked him and wished him good night. I returned to Mrs. Cornelys's, who was still awaited though ten o'clock had just struck. Young Cornelys was asleep on the sofa.

So it was that, despite all those who say that London is a chaos in which a stranger who arrives there needs at least three days to find himself a lodging, I was excellently lodged two hours after I arrived. I was also delighted to have made the acquaintance of Martinelli, of whom I had had a most favorable opinion for six years. He had given me the address of his room, which was above the "Prince of Orange," and that of his printer. Profoundly shocked by the way in which the Cornelys had received me in London, I awaited her impatiently, resolved, however, to put a good face on it.

Three knocks (signifying the mistress of the house) sound at last, and from the window I see her alight from a sedan chair, I hear her coming quickly up the stairs, she enters, she shows that she is glad, and indeed delighted, to see me, but she does not come running to embrace me; she has forgotten how she parted from me at The Hague;[30] she throws herself on her son, she takes him in her arms, she covers him with kisses, which he accepts sleepily and returns coldly, saying:

"My dear Mama, my dear Mama."

I tell her that he is tired and that, for people who need rest, she has kept us waiting too long. Supper is announced, and she does me the honor to take my arm to go in to it in a room which I had not seen. She has the fourth place removed, I ask her for whom it was; and she tells me that it was for her daughter, whom she had left at home because as soon as she had told her that I had arrived with her brother she had asked her if I was in good health.

"And you punished her for that?"

"Certainly, for it seems to me that she should be first interested in her brother's health and in yours only afterward. Do you think I am right?"

"Poor Sophie. I feel sorry for her. Gratitude has more power over her than the ties of blood."

"It is not a matter of feeling, but of accustoming young people to speaking as they should."

She talked a great deal to her son, who never gave her anything but studied answers, always with his eyes cast down, and with respect but with no sign of affection. She told him that she was working to leave him rich after her death, and that she had made me bring him back because he was old enough to help her and to share her work in the house she kept; and at that he asked her what sort of work it was in which she wanted him to share.

"I give," she said, "twelve suppers and balls a year for the nobility and twelve for the citizenry at two guineas a head, and I often have five or six hundred people; the outlay is immense, and, alone as I am, it is impossible that I should not be robbed, for since I cannot be everywhere I have to put my trust in people who perhaps abuse it, but now that you are here, you can oversee everything, my dear son, keep everything under lock and key, write, handle the cash, make payments, take receipts, and go all through the house to see if the ladies and gentlemen are properly served, in short, perform the functions and act the part of master in a house in which you will actually be so as my son."

"Then you believe, my dear Mother, that I shall be able to do all that?"

"Yes, for you will learn."

"It seems to me impossible."

"One of my secretaries will come to live with you in this house, which I have taken for the purpose, and he will instruct you in everything. For a year you will do nothing but learn English and come to my assemblies so that I can introduce you to all the most important people in London; and little by little you will become English; everyone will talk of Mr. Cornelys."

"Cornelys?"

"Yes, that is your name."

"My name? I'll go and write it down so that I shan't forget it."

Thinking that he was joking, she looked at me in some surprise. She told him to go to bed, which he did at once, thanking her. Left alone with me, she said that she thought him badly brought up and too small for his age, and that she saw she must begin, perhaps too late, to have him given a different education.

"What has he learned in six years?"

"He could have learned all the branches of knowledge, for he was in the best boarding school in Paris; but he learned only what he wanted to—playing the flute, riding horseback, fencing, dancing the minuet well, changing his shirt every day, answering politely, making a charming appearance, telling a story prettily, and dressing with elegance. That is all he knows. Since he would never apply himself, he hasn't the shadow of an acquaintance with literature, he cannot write, he cannot figure, he does not care whether he knows or not that England is an island of Europe."

"That makes six lost years. My daughter will laugh at him. But it is I who have brought her up. He will be ashamed when he sees how much learning she has at the tender age of eight; she knows geography, history, languages, music, and she talks with the greatest intelligence. All the ladies are forever snatching her from one another. I keep her in a drawing school all day, she comes home only at nightfall. On Sundays she dines here, and if you will do me the favor of coming to dinner at my house on Sunday, you will see that I have not exaggerated."

It was a Monday. I say nothing; but I find it strange that she does not think me impatient to see her, that she does not tell me to come to supper at her house the next day, that she has not brought her to supper with her. She tells me that I have come to London in time to see the last assembly of that year,[31] which she was giving for the nobility, who in two or three weeks would go to spend the summer in the country

“I cannot give you a ticket,” she said, “for I can give them only to the nobility; but you can come to it, and, by keeping near me as a friend of mine, you will see everything. If I am asked who you are I will say that you are the person who took care of my son in Paris and who has come to bring him back to me.”

“I am most grateful to you”

We remained at table talking until two o'clock in the morning; she gave me a full account of her lawsuit against Sir Frederic Fermer. He claimed that the house which she had had built,[32] and which cost ten thousand guineas, belonged to him, for it was he who had given her the money; but he was in the wrong, according to the law she cited, for it was she who had paid the workmen and it was to her that they had given the receipts; hence the house belonged to her; “but the money,” said Fermer, “did not belong to you.” She challenged him to prove it, to produce a single receipt. “It is true,” said the honest woman, “that you more than once gave me a thousand guineas at a time; but it was generosity on your part, and nothing strange in a rich Englishman, since we loved each other, we were living together.”

This lawsuit, which in two years she had won four times, and which did not end because of the legal chicanery Fermer employed to challenge her victory, had cost Mrs. Cornelys a great deal, and at the time we were talking there was an appeal which would take it to the Court of Equity,[33] where, *beati possidentes* (“blessed are they who are in possession”),[34] it would be fourteen or fifteen years before a decision was handed down. She told me that the suit dishonored Fermer, and I well understood that; but I could not understand how she could suppose it was to her honor; yet that was what she sincerely believed. Among the different subjects on which we touched in three hours of conversation she never asked me if I was comfortably lodged; she did not care to know if I intended to stay in London for some time and what I thought I might do there, and she offered me neither her services nor her credit, for she told me with a laugh that she never had a penny in her purse. She took in more than twenty-four thousand pounds sterling[35] a year; but in these first three years she had spent more than eighty thousand. Even so, she told me, she expected to finish paying all her debts the following winter.

Mrs. Cornelys having shown no curiosity concerning my affairs, I amused myself by telling her nothing about them. She saw no sign of wealth on me; I had only a perfectly plain watch, all my diamonds were in my jewel case. I went off to bed, annoyed but not angry, for at bottom I was very glad to have discovered her bad character. Despite the impatience I felt to see my daughter, I resolved not to see her until Sunday, going to dine at her mother's house, as, for politeness' sake, she had invited me to do.

The next morning at seven o'clock I told Clairmont to put all my belongings into a carriage, and when this was done I went to tell my poor young man, who was still in bed, that I was going to lodge in Pall Mall in the house of which the address was written on the card which I left him.

"What! You are not staying with me?"

"No, for your mother forgot to put me up."

"So she did. I want to go back to Paris."

"Don't do anything so stupid. Consider that now, being in your mother's house, you are in your own, and that in Paris you may no longer find a roof. Good-by. I shall dine with you Sunday at your mother's."

Clairmont arranged all my belongings in my new house in less than an hour. I went out wearing a *frac*,[36] and I took Signor Zuccato,[37] the Venetian Resident, the letter I had from Signor Morosini, the Procurator; he read it, and he said coldly that he was very glad to have made my acquaintance. I asked him to present me at Court, and my request set him laughing. I let him laugh, and I did not set foot in his house again. I went to take my letter from the same Procurator to Lord Egremont,[38] who was ill; I left it for him. A few days later he died. Some time afterward his widow married Count Brühl[39] Martinskirchen, who is still in London as Minister of the Elector of Saxony.[40] I went to call on the Count of Guerchy,[41] the French Ambassador, with a letter from the Marquis de Chauvelin,[42] who gave him such an account of me that he invited me to dine with him on the next day, saying that he would present me at the Court of St. James's[43] on Sunday after chapel.[44] At the Ambassador's table the next day I made the acquaintance of the Chevalier d'Éon,[45] his Secretary of Embassy, who later caused such a stir all over Europe. The Chevalier was a woman who, before becoming a diplomat, had been a captain of dragoons. Despite his considerable knowledge of diplomacy and his masculine manner, I suspected that he was something less than a man. His drama began soon afterward, when Monsieur de Guerchy, who was given a leave of absence, left London. During this week I presented myself to all my bankers, in whose hands I had at least a hundred thousand écus. They accepted the drafts, and in virtue of my letters of recommendation from Messrs. Tourton & Baur, they offered me their personal services. I went to the Covent Garden[46] and Drury Lane[47] theaters, unknown to everyone, and to taverns for dinner, in order to accustom myself gradually to English ways. Mornings I went to the Exchange,[48] where I made several acquaintances; it was there that the broker Bosanquet,[49] whom I had asked to find me a good servant who, besides English, could speak Italian or French, brought me a Negro whose honesty he guaranteed. It was Bosanquet, too, who got me an English cook who could speak French and who moved into my house at once with his whole family, and it was he who introduced me to several strange confraternities of which I will speak at the proper time and place. During this same week I also arranged to be initiated into the select bagnios,[50] where a rich man goes to bathe, sup, and sleep with a choice prostitute. It is a magnificent festival, which costs six guineas in all; economy can reduce it to four; but economy spoils pleasure.

On Sunday at eleven o'clock I dressed elegantly, and, wearing my fine rings, my watches, and my order hanging from my neck on a red ribbon, I went to Court, making my way to the last antechamber, where I found the Count of Guerchy. I went in with him, and he presented me to George III,[51] who spoke to me, but in a voice so low that I could reply only by bowing. But the Queen[52] made up for it. I was delighted to see the Venetian Resident among those who were paying their court. As soon as Monsieur de Guerchy spoke my name, I saw that the Resident was surprised, for in his letter the Procurator had called me Casanova. The Queen having at once asked me what province of France I was from, and having learned from my answer that I was a Venetian,[53] looked at the Venetian Resident, who showed by a bow that he had no objection to make. She asked me if I knew the Ambassadors who had left six weeks earlier, and I replied that I had spent three days with them in Lyons, where Signor Morosini had given me letters for Lord Egremont and the Resident. She said that Signor Querini had said many things which made her laugh.

"He told me," she said with a laugh, "that I am a little devil."

"He meant, Madam, that Your Majesty has the wit of an angel."

I should have been glad if she had asked me for what reason[54] it was not Signor Zuccato who was presenting me, for I would have answered in a way which the Resident would not much have enjoyed. After the Court I got into my sedan chair again and was carried to Mrs. Cornelys's house on Soho Square, where I was invited for dinner. A man dressed to appear at Court would not dare to walk through the streets of London; a porter, a loafer, a scapegrace from the dregs of the people would throw mud at him, laugh in his face, push him to make him say something offensive, all in order to have an excuse for engaging him in a fist fight. The democratic spirit prevails in the English people, even far more than it does today in the French; but the power of the constitution holds it in check. In short, the spirit of rebellion is prevalent in every great city, and the great task of wise government is to keep it dormant, for if it wakes it is a torrent which no dam can hold back.

The sedan chair stops at the door of Mrs. Cornelys's house, I tell my Negro, whose name was Jarba,[55] to dismiss my chairmen; I go in, I am conducted upstairs to the second floor, where, after passing through twelve or fourteen rooms, I am shown into that in which Mrs. Cornelys was sitting with two Englishwomen and two Englishmen. She received me with a politeness expressive of the most familiar friendship, and after making me sit down beside her she continued her conversation with her four visitors, speaking English and telling neither them who I was nor me who they were. When her majordomo came to announce that dinner was served, she ordered the children brought down. At sight of Sophie I run to her impulsively to take her in my arms and kiss her; but, following her instructions, she draws back and, dropping me a low curtsy, she pays me a compliment which she has learned by heart, to which I am tactful enough not to reply, for fear of leaving her with nothing to say. Mrs. Cornelys then presents her son to the gentlemen, and tells them that it was I who have brought him back to her after six years during which I had taken charge of his education; she says this in French, and I see with pleasure that everyone present speaks French.

We sit down at table—she between her two children and I, facing her, between the two Englishwomen, one of whom, though no longer young, at once delighted me with her wit. It was with her that I conversed when I saw that Mrs. Cornelys spoke to me only casually and that Sophie, who turned her beautiful eyes from one member of the company to another, never looked at me; she quite obviously passed me over; she was carrying out a command which I thought as absurd as it was rude. Angry to find that I felt offended, and determined not to allow myself to show it, I engage the English ladies and gentlemen in an amusing conversation on the customs I had observed in England, though without the slightest tinge of criticism, thus setting them laughing and making them find me an agreeable companion; and in my turn I never look at Mrs. Cornelys.

The lady next to me, after examining the beauty of my laces, asks me what is new at Court.

"Everything seemed new to me, Madam, for I never saw it before today."

"Did you see the King?" Sir Joseph Cornelys[56] asks me.

"My son," says his mother, "one never asks such questions."

"Why not, my dear Mother?"

"Because the question may be displeasing to the gentleman."

"On the contrary," I said, "it pleased me. For six years I have been teaching him always to ask. A boy who never asks anything always remains ignorant."

Mrs. Cornelys sulks and says nothing.

"You still have not told me," the young fellow takes me up, "if you saw the King or not."

"Yes, my dear boy, His Majesty spoke to me, but I do not know what he said, whereas the Queen spoke very clearly."

"Who presented you?"

"The French Ambassador."

"Excellent!" said his mother. "But you must admit that the last question is too much by far."

"Addressed to someone else, but not to me, who am his friend. You see that the answer he obliged me to give does me honor. If I had not wanted it known that I went to Court I should not have come to dine here dressed as I am."

"You are right. But since you like to be questioned, I will also ask you why you had yourself presented by the French Envoy and not by the Venetian one."

"Because the Venetian Envoy declined to do it; and he was in the right."

With much other conversation, this brought us to dessert, and my daughter had not yet said a word.

"My dear daughter," her mother said, "do say something to Monsieur de Seingalt."

"I shouldn't know what to say, my dear Mother. But ask him to say something to me, and I will answer as well as I can."

"Very well, my pretty child," I said, "tell me what you are studying at present."

"Drawing, and if you like I will let you see some of my work."

"I shall see it with pleasure; but please tell me in what way you think you have offended me, for you look guilty "

"I? I have certainly done nothing at which you could take umbrage."

"You speak to me without looking at me. Are you ashamed of having beautiful eyes? And now you are blushing. What crime have you committed?"

"You are embarrassing her," her mother said to me. "Answer him that you have committed no crime, but that it is out of respect and modesty that you do not stare at the people to whom you speak."

She made no answer.

After a short silence the company rose, and the little girl, after dropping a curtsy, went to fetch her drawings and came to me.

"Mademoiselle, I will look at nothing unless you will look at me."

“Come now,” her mother said, “look at Monsieur.”

“This time,” I said to Sophie, “I recognize you. And do you remember having seen me before?”

“Though it was six years ago, I recognized you as soon as you came in.”

“How can you have recognized me if you never looked at me? If you knew, my angel, what unforgivably bad manners it is not to look at the person to whom one speaks! Who can have taught you such a bad lesson?”

At that the child looked at her mother, who had gone to the window. When I saw that I had sufficiently avenged myself, and that the English guests had understood everything, I began looking at her drawings and praising everything in detail, congratulating her on her talent and complimenting her mother for giving her so good an education. She was filled with pride by the praise I bestowed now on her daughter, now on herself, and there was an end to lowered eyes. Sophie, seeing that she was free to look at me, constantly availed herself of the unspoken permission; in her physiognomy I saw a beautiful soul, and I silently pitied her for having to live under the domination of her mother, who was a fool. She sat down at the harpsichord, she sang in Italian, after that she accompanied herself on the guitar in some short airs, then her mother[57] wanted her to dance a minuet with her brother, who had learned it in Paris, and who danced very badly because he held himself badly; and his sister, after embracing him, told him so. She danced it at once with me, and her mother, after declaring the minuet superb, told her that she should let me embrace her, which I did, taking her on my lap and giving her all the kisses she deserved, which she returned with all the affection I could wish. Her mother simply laughed, and she embraced her fondly too when, after leaving me, she went to ask her if she was displeased.

She showed me the great room she had had built for balls and for giving supper to four hundred persons all seated at a single horseshoe-shaped table. I was easily persuaded that there was not a bigger room in London. The last assembly was to be given before Parliament closed, five or six days later. She had in her service more than twenty maids and ten or twelve footmen. All these vermin robbed her, she said, but she could not do without them, so it was unavoidable. I left Mrs. Cornelys, admiring her courage and wishing her good fortune.

I had myself carried to St. James's Park[58] to call on Lady Harrington;[59] I had a letter for her,[60] as my reader knows; she lived within the precincts of the Court, for which reason she entertained at her house every Sunday; play was allowed there, for the Park was under the royal jurisdiction. Everywhere else no one dares to play or to give concerts;[61] spies who walk the streets of London listen carefully to hear what sort of noise is being made in the drawing rooms of private houses, and if they suspect there is play or that someone is singing they hide wherever they can and, as soon as they see the door open, they slip in, and they hale to prison all the bad Christians who dare thus fail to respect the most sacred Sabbath, which, however, it is permissible to sanctify by going to taverns to entertain oneself with bottles and the prostitutes with which London swarms.

At Lady Harrington's I go upstairs, I send in my letter, she has me shown in at once, and I find myself among twenty-five or thirty people, men and women, I make my bow to Her Ladyship, who at once tells me that she had seen me with the Queen and that she wished to see me at her house too. For at least three-quarters of an hour I was the only speaker, answering the questions which are invariably the lot of the arriving foreigner. Lady Harrington, still beautiful at the age of forty, famous in London for her influence and for her gallantries, at once introduces me to her husband and her four adolescent daughters, all of them charming: the Ladies Isabella and Amelia Stanhope—I have forgotten the name of the third.[62] She asks me why I have come to London at the time when everyone goes to the country, and I reply that I expect to spend a year there. That leaves her nothing to reproach me with, and she says that so far as it lies in her power she will introduce me to all the pleasures of her country

"You will see all the nobility," she says, "on Thursday at Soho Square; I can give you a ticket. Here it is. There will be supper and a ball. It costs two guineas."

I give them to her; and she writes on the ticket "Paid, Harrington." I do not tell her that I have just dined with Mrs. Cornelys.

She gets up a game of whist[63] for me, and she asks me if I have letters addressed to other ladies. I tell her that I have a very odd one which I intend to present to the lady the next day. "The letter is the lady's portrait."

"Have you it with you?"

"Yes, My Lady."

"May I see it?"

"Why not? Here it is."

"It is the Duchess of Northumberland.[64] Let us go and give it to her. We will wait until the rubber is scored."

Lord Percy had given me the portrait on the day I had dined with him, saying that it would serve me as a letter of introduction when I presented it to his mother[65] in London.

"Here, Duchess," Lady Harrington said to her, "is a letter of introduction which this gentleman is commanded to deliver to you."

"Ah, yes! He is Monsieur de Seingalt. My son wrote to me; I am delighted to see you. I hope that you will come to my house. I receive company three times a week."

"Then permit me, Your Ladyship, to deliver my precious letter to you in your house."

"Gladly—you are right."

I played whist at very small stakes, and I lost fifteen guineas, which I paid at once, whereupon Lady Harrington took me aside to give me a lesson worthy to be recorded.

"You lost," she said, "and you paid in gold; I take it that you have no bank notes with you."

"I beg your pardon, My Lady, I have notes for fifty and a hundred."

"You should have changed one and paid with it, or have waited until another day to pay. Here in England paying in gold is a little unmannerly, though pardonable in a foreigner, who cannot know our customs; but try not to let it happen again. You saw that the lady smiled."

"Who is she?"

"Lady Coventry,[66] sister of the Duchess of Hamilton.[67]"

"Should I apologize to her?"

"Certainly not. She may be well pleased, for she gains fifteen shillings[68] by it."

I thought it a rather barbed remark. But Lady Coventry was an extremely beautiful brunette. I made the acquaintance of Lord Hervey,[69] the conqueror of Havana, an amiable and witty man. He had married Miss Chudleigh,[70] and had had the marriage annulled. This celebrated Chudleigh was maid of honor to the widowed Princess of Wales;[71] she later became Duchess of Kingston. Her strange adventures are well known. I shall speak of her at the proper time and place. I went home well enough pleased with my day. On the next I began eating at home, and I was well satisfied with my English cook, who, besides his country's favorite dishes, which he gave me every day, gave me fowl and very delicate French ragouts. What pained me a little was that I was alone; I had neither a pretty mistress nor a friend, and in London one can invite a gentleman to dine with one at a tavern, where he pays his share, but not to dinner at one's own table. People laughed when I said that I ate at home because at the taverns soup was not served. I was asked if I was ill. The Englishman is a meat-eater.[72] He eats scarcely any bread, and he insists that he is economical because he saves himself the expense of soup and dessert; which led me to say that an English dinner has neither beginning nor end. Soup is considered a great expense, because even the servants will not eat the beef from which broth has been made. They say it is fit only to give to dogs. The salt beef which they serve instead of it is excellent. I tried to get used to their beer; but I had to give it up after a week. The bitter taste it left in my mouth was intolerable. The vintner whom Bosanquet had sent me supplied me with French wines which were excellent because they were natural; but I had to pay high prices for them.

On Monday morning Martinelli came to see me. I had been settled in my house for a week, and I had never seen him; I asked him to share my soup, and having learned from him that he had to go to the Museum[73] and remain there until two o'clock, I went with him to see the famous collection which does such honor to the English nation. I made the acquaintance of Dr. Maty,[74] of whom I later had reason to think highly. I will speak of him when the time comes. At two o'clock we went to dinner, and Martinelli proved to be an excellent companion, for he instructed me in the customs of the country I was visiting, to which I must conform if I wanted to live well there. *Dum fueris Romae, Romano vivito more* ("When in Rome, do as the Romans do").[75]

I told him of my blunder in paying in gold what I should politely have paid in paper, and after laughing at it a little, he showed me that it was not only evidence of the prosperity and wealth of the nation, which gave its paper the preference over gold, but also a proof of its blind confidence in its Bank,[76] in which it was convinced that there was all the real value of all the notes which circulated in the three kingdoms.[77] This preference for paper over gold was also remarkable because of the advantage of five pounds in a hundred which the guinea had over the pound sterling and which the English disregarded. You owe someone a hundred guineas and you pay him a hundred pounds sterling in paper; he says nothing, though he is the loser by it, and he thanks you. By this policy the English nation has doubled its legal tender. All the wealth it possesses in cash serves it to carry on external commerce, and it carries on internal commerce with the tokens which represent the same real wealth.[78]

After dinner I went with Martinelli to the play at the Drury Lane Theater. At the beginning of the performance the groundlings in the pit, seeing that they had been cheated because the promised play was not being given, raised a row; Garrick,[79] the celebrated actor who was buried twenty years later[80] in Westminster Abbey, came forward and tried in vain to talk to the groundlings and calm them, he was howled down, he had to withdraw, and the raging mob shouted "Every man for himself!" and at that I saw the King, the Queen, and everyone else leave their boxes, make their way out, and abandon the theater to the rage of the angry populace, which carried out its purpose amid laughter. In less than an hour everything but the walls was torn down. After this accomplishment the democratic animals all went to get drunk on spirits at the taverns. In two or three weeks the whole auditorium was rebuilt, and bills were put up announcing the first performance. When the curtain rose Garrick appeared to beg the indulgence of the public; but just as he was beginning his apology a voice from the pit shouted "On your knees!" and the cry, repeated by a hundred mouths, forced the Roscius[81] of England to kneel. There was a burst of applause, and it was all over. Such is the populace of London, which mocks the King, the Queen, and all the Princes when they appear in public; so they very seldom let themselves be seen.

Four or five days after making the acquaintance of Sir Augustus Hervey, I came upon him in the Green

Park,[82] just as he had finished speaking with someone.

“Who,” I asked him, “is that gentleman?”

“He is the brother of Lord Ferrers,[83] who was executed by the common hangman two months ago for killing his valet.”

“And you speak to him? Is he not dishonored?”

“Dishonored for that? It would be absurd. Even his brother is not dishonored. He paid with his life for breaking the law, he owes nothing. He is a gentleman who played high. I know of no penalty in our constitution which dishonors. It would be tyrannical. I can calmly break any law, provided that I am ready to submit to the penalty enjoined for breaking it. It is a trifle mad, I admit, but it is my privilege. Dishonor would attach only to a criminal who, to avoid the penalty due for his crime, should have done cowardly or base things unworthy of a gentleman.”

“For example?”

“Persuading the King to grant him mercy, asking pardon of the people, any number of things.”

“Running away?”

“No, for escaping is a brave act. Observe that, to run away, a brave man needs nothing but his own faculties, whether moral or physical: he fights against death, which he risks by escaping: *Vir fugiens denuo pugnabit* [‘The man who runs away will fight again’].”[84]

“Then what do you think of highway robbers?”

“They are vermin whom I detest, for they inconvenience society; but at the same time I pity them when I think that their trade keeps the scaffold always before their eyes. You leave London by yourself in a hackney carriage to visit a friend who lives in a village two or three miles away. Halfway there, an agile man jumps on the step of your carriage and demands your purse, holding a pistol to your chest. What do you do then?”

“If I have a pistol I kill him, and if not I give him my purse, calling him a base assassin.”

"You would do wrong. If you kill him the law will sentence you to death, for you have not the right to dispose of an Englishman's life; and if you call him a base assassin he will answer that he is not, for he does not attack you from behind, and, by attacking you from the front, he offers you the choice. It is honorable in him, for he could kill you. You can, as you give him the purse he demands, reproach him for living by a vile trade, and he will admit it. He will tell you that he will hold off the gallows as long as he can, but that he knows it is inevitable. He will thank you afterward, and he will advise you never to drive out of London except with an armed servant on horseback, for then a needy robber will not dare to attack you. We English, who know that these vermin exist in our country, travel with two purses, a small one to give to the robbers we may encounter and another with the money we need."

What was I to reply to this discourse? I thought it reasonable. The island called England is a sea in which there are sandbanks, those who navigate it must voyage with due caution. Sir Augustus's lesson pleased me greatly.

Passing from subject to subject, he pitied the fate of the thief who, after stealing seventy thousand pounds sterling on the rise and fall of stocks, and fleeing to France where he thought he was safe, had nevertheless been recently hanged in London.[85]

"A year ago," he said, "the King demanded him from the Duke of Nivernais,[86] the Ambassador of Louis XV, among the conditions of the peace. The Duke, who is witty, answered the Minister[87] that his master would have no objection to ridding France of a thief by restoring him to his country; and in due course he was sent to us, and the nation, delighted to see a compatriot who had dared to cheat it brought to the gallows, was greatly obliged to the acumen of Lord Halifax,[88] who made our neighbors buy peace at the price of a condition so humiliating to them, for they violated the law of nations in respect to the wretch."

"And so seventy thousand pounds were recovered?"

"Not a penny."

"How was that?"

"Because what he stole was not found in his possession. Apparently he left the little treasure in the hands of his wife,[89] who lives in great comfort and who, pretty and rich enough, can marry again very advantageously."

"I am amazed that she has been let alone."

"What could be done to her? You can understand that she would never have admitted that her late husband had left the money with her. There was not even any thought of making a search to recover the amount. The law against thieves orders them hanged; it says nothing about the stolen property, for it supposes that it has disappeared. Then too, if a distinction were made between thieves who restored what they stole and those who did not restore it, there would have to be two laws and two different penalties, and you see what confusion would follow. In any case it seems to me that two penalties should not be inflicted for the same crime; the penalty of the gallows suffices without adding to it the restitution of the stolen property, if it is not liquid and in a condition to be claimed by the person who owned it before the theft, for afterward the thing stolen no longer belongs to him; it is the thief who has become the owner of it, by violence it is true, but that does not keep him from being really the owner of it, for he can dispose of it. Such being the case, everyone must take great care to keep what is his, for once it has been stolen from him, he sees that restitution is too difficult. I took Havana from Spain, a great theft executed by superior force, and it was given back[90] because I could not put the island of Cuba in my purse, as I did forty million piasters,[91] which were never even mentioned."

After being treated to several specimens of equally sublime doctrine, I went with him to the Duchess of Northumberland's, where I made the acquaintance of Lady Rochefort,[92] whose husband had just been appointed Ambassador to Spain.[93] The lady was one of three whose notorious gallantries daily supplied the busybodies of the great city with agreeable stories. The Duchess told me that she looked for her son to return every day.

On the day before the assembly at Soho Square Martinelli dined with me, and the subject having come up, he talked to me of Mrs. Cornelys and of the debts with which she was burdened, because of which she was reduced to not daring to go out of her house except on Sundays, on which day debtors could not be arrested. The enormous expenditures in which she indulged, and which were not necessary, put her in straits which must soon reduce her to the last extremity. She owed, he told me, four times as much as she possessed, even counting in her house, of which a lawsuit in progress made her ownership doubtful.

CHAPTER VIII

Mrs. Cornelys's assembly. Adventure at Ranelagh House. Disgust with English courtesans. The Portuguese Pauline.

I GO to Mrs. Cornelys's assembly, giving my ticket at the door to her secretary, who writes down my name. I see her, and she congratulates me on having been admitted to the assembly by ticket, saying that she had been sure she would see me there. Lady Harrington arrives; she was one of her great patrons; she tells her that she has a good number of guineas to give to her, and, seeing me in conversation with her, she adds that she had imagined we were acquainted but had not ventured to mention it to me.

"Why, My Lady? I consider it an honor that I have long known Mrs. Cornelys."

"I believe it," she said with a laugh, "and I congratulate you. You must certainly know this charming girl too."

With that she takes Sophie in her arms, kisses her, and tells me that if I love myself I ought to love her too, because she has exactly my countenance. She takes her by the hand, and she leads her into the crowd, taking my arm. It was then that I had to listen patiently to innumerable questions put to Lady Harrington by women and men who had not yet seen me.

"Is this not Mrs. Cornelys's husband, just arrived?"

"No, no, no," Lady Harrington said to all the busybodies; and I was bored for, to compliment me, everyone said that no child had ever resembled its father as the little Cornelys resembled me, and I asked her to let the child go; but she was too much amused to do me the favor.

"Stay with me," she said, "if you want to meet everyone."

And she sat down, making me sit at her side and keeping the little girl standing in front of her. The mother comes to pay court to the lady, and, having to answer the question if I am her husband, she makes up her mind and says that I am only an old friend and that everyone has good reason to be surprised at the great resemblance between her daughter and me. Everyone laughs and replies that it is not surprising at all; and Mrs. Cornelys, to change the subject, says that the child has learned to dance the minuet to perfection.

"We shall see," said Lady Harrington; "send for a fiddler."

Since we were in a side room and the ball had not yet begun, a fiddler comes; wishing the child to do herself honor, I take her out, and the minuet succeeds in earning great applause from the onlookers. The ball began, and continued until dawn without a break, for people went to eat in the side rooms in groups at all hours. I met all the nobility and all the royal family, for they were all there except the King, the Queen, and the Princess of Wales. Mrs. Cornelys had taken in more than twelve hundred guineas, but her expenditure was enormous too, with no attempt to economize and no measures to prevent theft of every kind. Mrs. Cornelys exhausted herself presenting her son to everyone, while he stood like a victim, not knowing what to say and doing nothing but make low bows, which, delivered to all and sundry, and in England, became the height of awkwardness. I felt sorry for him. In this role of an underling, which he was playing for the first time in his life, he was the most embarrassed youth on earth.

Taken home, I slept all that day, and the next day went to dine at the "Star" Tavern,[1] where I had been told that the prettiest and choicest girls in London were to be found. I had heard this at the reception of a certain Lord Pembroke[2] in Soho Square, who had told me that he went there very often. I enter the tavern, I ask a waiter for a private room. The host, observing that I do not speak English, addresses me in French, sits down with me, orders what I want, and I am so surprised by his polite, grave, and solemn manner that I cannot pluck up courage to tell him that I want to dine with a pretty English girl. I finally tell him in a roundabout way that I do not know if Lord Pembroke has deceived me in saying that I could have the prettiest girls in London there.

"No, Monsieur, he did not deceive you, and if that is what you want you can have as many as you please."

He calls "Waiter,"[3] whereupon a neat young man appears, whom he orders to send a girl for my service, as if he were ordering him to bring me paper and ink. The waiter leaves, and ten minutes later in comes a girl, whose appearance I dislike. I tell the host plainly that she does not please me.

"Give a shilling for the chairmen, and send her away. No one stands on ceremony in London, Monsieur."

I order the shilling given, and I ask for another girl, but a pretty one. The second arrives, worse than the first. I send her away. I also send away the third, the fourth, the fifth, and so on up to the tenth, delighted to see that, far from displeasing the host, my fastidiousness amuses him. I say I want no more girls, I want to dine; but I tell him I am sure the waiter had been making game of me to please the chairmen.

"That may be so, Monsieur; they always do it when they are not told the name and address of the girl who is wanted."

Toward nightfall I go to St. James's Park, I see that it is a day for Ranelagh House;[4] I was curious to see the place, it was far away, I take a carriage, and, alone without a servant, I go there to amuse myself until midnight and to try to make the acquaintance of some pretty girl. The Ranelagh Rotunda pleases me greatly, I eat bread and butter and drink tea, I dance a minuet or two, but make no acquaintances. I see very pretty girls and women, but I dare not make direct advances to any of them. Bored, I decide to leave about midnight, and I go to the door, thinking I shall find my hackney carriage, for I had not paid for it; but it was gone; there I was, cursing in vain; no one could find the carriage I was asking for, and I did not see how I was to get home. A pretty woman who saw the straits I was in and who had been there five or six minutes waiting for her carriage said to me in French that if I lived not far from Whitehall[5] she could take me to my door. I told her where I lived; her carriage arrives; one of her lackeys opens the door, we get in, and she orders her coachman to drive to my house in Pall Mall

In the carriage, which was very comfortable, I profusely express my gratitude, I tell her my name, I say I am surprised that I had not made her acquaintance at the assembly in Soho. She tells me that she has arrived from Bath[6] that day; I pronounce myself fortunate, I kiss her hands, then her pretty face, then her beautiful bosom, and finding, instead of resistance, only the sweetest yieldingness and the laughter of love, I have no more doubts, and I give her the greatest proof that I find her perfectly to my taste. Making bold to suppose, from the ease with which she had let me have my way, that she had not found me displeasing, I beg her to tell me where I may go to pay my most assiduous court to her during all the time I shall spend in London, and she replies that we shall meet again. I do not urge her, and in no time I am back at my house, very well pleased with the adventure. I had spent two weeks without seeing her anywhere, when I found her at last in a house to which Lady Harrington had told me to go and introduce myself, giving her name; it was the house of the elderly but illustrious Lady Betty Germaine.[7] She was not at home, but she was to return in a few minutes. I see the beauty who had brought me home from Ranelagh, busy reading a newspaper; it occurs to me to ask her to introduce me. So I go to her, she interrupts her reading, hears me out, and politely replies that she cannot introduce me since she does not know me.

"I told you my name, Madame. Do you not remember me?"

"I remember you perfectly; but such escapades are no ground for claiming acquaintance."

So strange an answer left me dumfounded. She went on quietly reading her newspaper; Lady Betty Germaine arrived. For two hours the philosophical beauty amused herself talking to others, showing not the slightest sign of being acquainted with me, but answering me politely when the conversation gave me an opportunity to address her. She was a noblewoman whose reputation in London was of the highest.

One morning at Martinelli's, on whom I had never called before, I asked him who a wench was who kept kissing her hand to me from a window on the opposite side of the street; I was surprised when he told me that she was the dancer Madame Binetti.[8] Less than four years had passed since, at Stuttgart, she had done me the great service which my reader may remember; I did not know that she was in London. I take leave of Martinelli to go to see her all the more eagerly when he tells me that she is not living with her husband, though he is to dance with her at the Haymarket Theater.[9]

"I recognized you at once," she said, receiving me. "I am surprised, my dear doyen, to see you in London."

She called me "doyen" because I was the oldest of all her acquaintances. I said that I had had no idea she was there, and that I could not have seen her dance for I had arrived three days after the opera closed.

"How is it that you are no longer living with your husband?"

"Because he plays, he loses, and he sells everything I own. Then too, a woman of the theater, if she lives with her husband, cannot hope to have a rich lover coming to visit her. Living alone as I do, all my friends can come to see me without fearing anything."

"What should they fear from Binetti? I never thought he was jealous or unduly particular."

"Nor is he. But you must understand that in England there is a law which empowers a husband to have a lover of his wife's arrested if he catches him *in flagrante* with her. He needs only two witnesses. It is enough if he finds him sitting on the bed with her, or in a position which might indicate that he has done something with her which only her husband has a right to do. The law sentences such a lover to pay the husband who claims to have been cuckolded half of what he owns. Several rich Englishmen have been caught in this way, and that is why they do not go to visit married women, especially if they are Italian."

"Then, far from complaining, you should be very glad that he is so accommodating, for, being perfectly free, you can receive whomever you please and grow rich."

"My dear doyen, you do not know the whole of it. As soon as he supposes I have had a present from some man who has come to see me, and of whose visit his spies have informed him, he comes at night in a sedan chair and threatens to turn me out into the street if I do not give him all the money I have. You do not know the base scoundrel."

I gave her my address, asking her to come to dine at my house whenever she pleased, only letting me know the day before. It was another lesson for me on the subject of going to see women. In England there are very fine and very good laws, but they are such that they can too easily be abused. The obligation of jurors to enforce them to the letter and not otherwise has the result that, since many of them are not written clearly enough, they are given an interpretation the very opposite of that which has usually been placed upon them, and so the judge finds himself in a quandary. For this reason new laws and new glosses on the old ones are made in Parliament every day

Lord Pembroke, having seen me at the window, came up to call on me. After being shown over my house and learning that I had a cook, he congratulated me and said that there was not a nobleman in London, except those who always lived there, to whom it would have occurred to maintain an establishment like mine. He calculated roughly that, if I wanted to dine and sup with friends, I would spend three hundred pounds a month. He said in passing that I ought to keep a pretty girl on the third or fourth floor, who would cost me very little, and that since I was a bachelor people who came to know of it would consider me very sensible.

"Do you keep one in your house, My Lord?"

"No, no, for it is my misfortune that as soon as I have slept with a woman or a girl I can no longer put up with her, so I have a new one every day, and without being as comfortable as you, I spend four times as much as you do. Observe that I am a bachelor and that I live in London like a stranger, never eating at home. I am amazed that you are content to eat alone nearly always, for I know my fellow countrymen."

"I do not speak English, I like soup, French dishes, and the best wines; so I cannot put up with your taverns."

He laughed when I told him that at the "Star" Tavern I had sent away eight or ten girls, and that he had been the reason for it.

"I did not tell you the names," he said, "of the girls I send for."

"You should have done so."

"But since they did not know you they would not have come, for they are at the disposal neither of the chairmen nor the waiters. Promise me that you will pay them as I do, and I will sign you notes with their names at once. When they see my name you shall have them, I assure you, even here if you wish."

"Here, by all means, I like that much better. Write me the notes at once and set the price, giving the preference to girls who speak French."

"That's a pity, for the prettiest ones speak only English."

However, after thinking for some time, he wrote five or six addresses and signed them with his name. I copied all the girls' names on a separate sheet, setting down the money I was to give them for spending the night or three or four hours with me. It was four guineas or six and, in the case of one of them, twelve.

"Then she's twice as pretty as the others?"

"That's not the reason; it's because she cuckolds a Duke, a peer of Great Britain, who gives her plenty of money but who touches her only once or twice a month."

I asked him if he would someday do me the honor of tasting my cook's fare, and he said he would, but taking potluck.

"And if you do not find me at home?"

"I'll go to a tavern."

Having nothing to do that day, I sent Jarba with one of His Lordship's notes to one of the two girls whom he had rated at four louis,[10] instructing him to tell her that it was for dinner alone with me, and she came. Despite my wanting to find her attractive, she pleased me only enough for a little toying after dinner. When she saw four guineas she left well satisfied. The second girl at four guineas supped with me the next day. She had been very pretty; but I found her gloomy and too meek; I could not bring myself to make her undress. On the third day at Covent Garden I saw an attractive girl, I addressed her in French, and I was delighted to hear her answer; I asked her if she would sup with me, and she asked me what present I would give her.

"I will give you three guineas."

"That will do."

At the end of the play we sup there, I find her charming, I ask her address, and I find that she is one of the three whom His Lordship had rated at six louis. Her name was Kennedy.[11] The other two were sisters; their name was Garrick; they pleased me only briefly. I kept the last, the twelve-guinea one, to crown the feast, and I did not find myself inclined to cuckold the Peer.

The next day I went to see him[12] early, telling him the whole story of the six sultanas whose acquaintance he had procured me.

"I am delighted that Kennedy pleased you, and that she does not know that I gave you her name. I have learned what your taste is. She was the favorite of Berlendis,[13] Secretary to the Venetian Ambassadors. I was able to sleep with her only once."

This Lord Pembroke was young, handsome, rich, and full of wit. He got out of bed, and wanting to take a walk, told his valet to shave him.

"I do not," I said, "see a sign of a beard."

"You will never see one on my face, for I am shaved three times a day."

"How do you manage three?"

"When I change my shirt I wash my hands, and when I wash my hands I wash my face too, and a man's face is washed with a razor."

"At what hours do you perform these three ablutions?"

"When I get up; when I come home to go out to dinner or the opera; and when I go to bed, for the girl who is with me must not find my face unpleasant because of a beard."

I praised his fastidiousness. I noticed that his valet really only drew the razor over his skin, which took less than a minute. I left him, as I had some writing to do. He asked me if I was dining at home, and I said that I was. I thought that he might come; and I guessed right. I instructed my cook to do himself honor, but not to let it appear that it was because I expected anyone.

La Binetti knocked at noon, and, delighted to find me at home, came into my room, saying that she had come to take potluck with me.

"You have done me a great favor, for it bores me always to be alone."

"This time my husband will torture himself and still not guess where I have dined."

The woman still pleased me. She was then thirty-five years of age; but no one would suppose her more than twenty-two or twenty-three. Her whole person had powerful charms, and her fine teeth and splendid lips forced the critical to admit that her mouth was not too large; in addition she had a playfulness which delighted everyone.

At half past one Lord Pembroke enters my room, and he and La Binetti utter simultaneous cries of surprise. I learn from His Lordship that he has been in love with her for six months, that he has written her ardent letters, and that she had always scorned him; and I learn from her that she would never listen to him because he was the most dissolute nobleman in all England, and that it was a pity because he was also the most amiable. The kisses which followed these explanations showed the contentment of the two parties. Praises were bestowed on chance, whose sacred minister I was declared to be, and we sat down at table, where we enjoyed exquisite dishes, both English and French. His Lordship swore that he had nowhere dined as well all that year, and condoled with me for not having company every day. La Binetti was as much of a trencherman and an epicure as His Lordship, and, after sitting at table two hours, we rose in high spirits and with a great desire to make love; but

La Binetti was too well versed in the great game to be weak with the Englishman: countless kisses, but nothing more.

Busying myself over books which I had bought, I let them talk together privately as much as they pleased, and to prevent them from asking me to invite them to dinner together another day, I said that I hoped chance would often grant me such favors. At six o'clock La Binetti had herself carried to the Park,[14] from where she would go home on foot, His Lordship went home to dress, and I went to Vauxhall,[15] where I found Monsieur Malignan, the French officer to whom I had opened my purse at Aix-la-Chapelle.[16] He told me he had something to say to me, and I gave him my address. I found there a man too well known, the Chevalier Goudar[17] by name, who talked to me at some length about gaming and girls; and Malignan introduced to me, as a man of rare parts who could be very useful to me in London, a person some forty years of age, with a Greek countenance, under the name of Mr. Frederick,[18] son of the late Theodore,[19] self-styled King of Corsica, who fourteen years earlier had died destitute in London after coming out of prison, to which he had been confined six or seven years for debt. I should have done better not to go to Vauxhall that day.

To enter the enclosure named Vauxhall one paid only half [20] what one paid at Ranelagh House; but the pleasures to be had there were great. Good food, music, strolls in dark walks where the bacchantes were to be found, and strolls in lantern-hung walks where one saw the most famous beauties in London, from the highest rank to the lowest, side by side.

Amid so many pleasures I was bored because I did not have a dear mistress in my bed and at my table, and I had already been in London for five weeks. My house was the perfect place to keep a mistress in discreetly and comfortably; Lord Pembroke was right: possessing the virtue of constancy, I needed only that to make me happy. But how was I to find in London the girl exactly to my taste and of a character like that of one of the women I had so greatly loved? In London I had already seen fifty girls whom everyone thought pretty, and I had found not one among them who had completely won me over. I thought of it continually. A strange idea came to me, and I acted upon it.

I went to talk to the old woman who was the caretaker of my house, and, with the maid whom I paid for the purpose acting as my interpreter, I told her that I wanted to rent the third and fourth floors of my house in order to have company, and that, though I had the right to do so, I would make her a present of half a guinea a week. So I told her to put up a notice at my door in the following terms, which I wrote out for her on the spot:

"Third-floor or fourth-floor furnished apartment to be let cheaply to a young lady alone and her own mistress who speaks English and French and who will receive no visitors either by day or by night."

The old Englishwoman, who had sown her wild oats, laughed so hard when my maid explained the notice to her in English that I thought she would die of coughing.

"Why do you laugh so hard, my good woman?"

"I laugh because your notice couldn't be better calculated to make people laugh."

"Then you think no one will come to rent the apartment?"

"On the contrary, I'll have girls coming all day to see what it means. I'll leave it to Fanny to get rid of them. Just tell me how much I am to ask per week."

"I will settle the price myself in conversation with the young lady. Think again, and you'll see that there won't be so many girls, because I want her to be young, speaking English and French, and, what is more, respectable, for she is absolutely forbidden to receive visits, even from her father and mother"

"But there will still be a great crowd gathered at our door to read the notice."

"So much the better"

The notice was put up the next day and, as the old woman had said, I saw that all the passers-by read it and reread it two or three times, then walked on, smiling. The first two days no one inquired; but on the third day Jarba came to tell me that the strange notice was announced in the *St. James's Chronicle,*[21] in a piece in which the writer made a very witty commentary on it. I told him to bring me a translation of it. The commentator said that the apartment on the second floor of the house with the notice must be occupied by the tenant of the third and fourth floors, who thus sought to procure himself an agreeable companion, sure of being alone in virtue of the condition which was part of the contract. He said that he ran the risk of being the victim of it, for he might find a very pretty girl who, having obtained the apartment cheaply, would use it only to sleep in, or even to go to only once or twice a week, and who might even refuse to receive the landlord if he took it into his head to pay her a visit.

This well-argued commentary pleased me, for it armed me against surprises. That is why the English newspapers are engaging; they chatter about everything that happens in London and they have the art of making trifles interesting.

Lord Pembroke was the first to come and laugh with me over my notice; then Martinelli came to tell me that my notice might be my undoing, for in London there were girls intelligent enough to come on purpose to turn my head.

A full account of all the girls who came for a week or ten days to see the two apartments, and to whom I refused them on various pretexts, is not worth writing. It goes without saying that I found all those whom I dismissed unprepossessing; I saw old women who said they were young, hussies, trollops, saucy wenches, until finally, one day when I was at table, I saw appear before me a girl between twenty-two and twenty-four years of age, tall, simply but neatly dressed, with a noble and serious countenance, beautiful in every way, with black hair and a pale complexion. She enters, making me a very humble curtsy which forces me to rise; she asks me to remain seated and, to oblige me to do so, accepts a chair. I offer her sweetmeats, for she had already impressed me, and she very modestly refuses.

She tells me, not in the French in which she had begun, but in the purest Italian it is possible to speak, and without any foreign accent, that she would like to take a room on the fourth floor and that she hoped I would not refuse her, for she thought she was still young and she would have no difficulty in submitting to the other conditions.

"You are free to use only one room, but the whole apartment will be yours."

"Though your notice says 'cheap' the whole apartment would still be too dear for me, for I cannot spend more than two shillings a week for lodging."

"That is exactly the price I have set for the whole apartment, and four for the third floor; so you see, Signorina, that the whole apartment is yours. The housemaid will take entire care of your room, you can trust her to get you what food you need, and she will have your linen washed. She will also run errands for you, so that you need not go out to attend to trifles."

"Then I will give my maid notice," she said, "and I am not sorry, for she has been robbing me—no more than pennies, but that is still too much for my means; and I will tell your maid what to buy for me every day in the way of food, which she is never to exceed, giving her tenpence a week for her trouble."

"She will be satisfied. I can even say a word in your favor to my cook's wife, who can supply you with dinner and supper for the same money you would spend sending out for your meals."

"I do not think that is possible, for I am ashamed to tell you what I spend."

"If you spend only twopence a day, I would tell her to give you only twopence' worth. I beg you not to be ashamed of having the uprightness to regulate your expenditure by your resources. I advise you to content yourself with the food you can have from my kitchen, where they are always at a loss for what to do with leftovers; and I promise you I will take no part in it. I will only say a word for you to my cook, and I hope you will not object to my taking an interest in you. Wait a moment, and you will see how naturally the whole thing will be attended to."

I call Clairmont, and I tell him to send up the maid and the cook's wife.

"Tell me," I said to the latter, "at what price you can give dinner and supper in her room to this young lady, who is not rich and who wants only food to keep her alive."

"I could feed her very cheaply, for you almost always eat alone and you have enough prepared for four."

"Very good. In that case I hope you will feed her for what she says she wants to spend."

"I can spend only fivepence a day."

"And for fivepence a day she will feed you."

I told the maid to have the notice removed at once and to do everything necessary in the rooms which she chose to occupy on the fourth floor. As soon as they had left, she told me that she would go out only to hear mass on feast days at the chapel of the Bavarian Minister,[22] and once a month to see the person who gave her three guineas to live on. I replied that she was free to go out without accounting for it to anyone. She ended by asking me never to bring anyone to her apartment, to order the portress never under any circumstances to let anyone go up to see her, and even to say that she did not know her if anyone should come inquiring for her. I assured her that the order would be given, and she left, saying that she would come back at once with her trunk. She stopped at the old woman's quarters to pay her for the week and take a receipt. After she left I told all my household to treat the young lady with all possible deference and courtesy, for what she had confided to me obliged me to show her perfect respect. I learn that she had come and gone in a sedan chair, and it surprises me a little. The old woman sent me word to beware of a trap.

"What trap? I risk nothing if she is respectable, and if I fall in love with her, so much the better, it is what I want. I need only a week to know her inside out. What name did she give you?"

"Here it is: 'Mistress Pauline.'[23] She came here pale, and she left red as fire."

Very well pleased to have found such a treasure, I feel content. I did not need a woman to satisfy my temperament, I needed to love and to find great worth in the object which interested me, on the score of both beauty and of qualities of soul; and my budding love gained in strength if I saw that the conquest would cost me effort. I relegated the possibility of failure to the category of impossibilities; I knew that there was not a woman in the world who could resist constant attentions and all the assiduities of a man who wants to make her fall in love with him.[24]

I went to the play; and when I returned to the house the maid told me that the lady had taken a small back room which was fit only to lodge a servant; but that she had managed nevertheless by not unpacking her big trunk, for there were only a small table, four chairs, and no chest of drawers. She had supped and drunk water, and she had asked her to tell the cook's wife that soup and one dish were enough for her; she had replied that she must take what she was given and that she, the maid, would eat what was left over. After that she had sat down to write, and when she had left her she had locked her door.

"What does she take in the morning?"

"I asked her that, and she said that she ate only a little bread."

"You shall tell her tomorrow morning that the custom of this house is that in the morning the cook makes a present of breakfast to all the people living in it, whether they want coffee or tea or a plate of soup, and tell her that if she refuses the gift it might displease me; but you are not to tell her that I ordered you to tell her so. Here is a crown[25] for you, which I will give you every week so that you will show her every attention. Before I go to bed I will give you a note to carry up to her tomorrow morning, in which I will ask her to leave the servant's room she is occupying and take one in which she will be more comfortable."

I wrote to her in such terms that she felt obliged to move into a large room; but she remained at the rear of the house. She told me, too, that she had accepted the breakfast of coffee with milk. Wanting to have her dine and sup with me, I was dressing to pay her a visit and to ask her the favor in a way which would make it impossible for her to refuse, when Clairmont announced that young Cornelys wished to speak with me. I received him, laughing and thanking him for the first visit he had paid me during the six weeks we had been in London.

"Mama would never let me come; I can't stand any more. Read this letter, and you will find something which will surprise you. She herself just wrote it in my presence."

I open it and I find the following:

"Yesterday a bailiff[26] waited until my door was open, entered my house, and arrested me. I had to follow him, and I am in prison in his house; but if I do not furnish security today, he will take me tonight to the real prison of King's Bench.[27] The security is for two hundred guineas,[28] which I owe for a bill of exchange which has fallen due and which I could not pay. Get me out of here at once, my kind friend, for tomorrow I may have the misfortune to see several other creditors, who will have me committed, and if that happens I am lost. Prevent my ruin and that of my innocent family. As a foreigner you cannot stand surety for me; but you have only to say a word to some householder, and you will find him ready. If you have time to stop in where I am, come, and you shall hear that if I had not signed the bill of exchange I could not have given the ball, for all my silver and china were in pawn. My son has the address of the house in which I am held."

Determined to let her go to ruin, I take a pen and I write her in a few words that I am sorry for her, that I have not time to go to see her, and that I should be ashamed to ask my friends to stand surety in the matter of a bill of exchange which had fallen due and the payment of which could not honestly be refused. I seal the letter, I give it to the youth, who wants to leave me the address of the bailiff's house, which I refuse. He goes away gloomily, with a lackey who was waiting at my door for him.

I tell Clairmont to go up to Mistress Pauline's and ask her if I may come to see her. She sends me word that it is for me to say; I go up, and I find her well lodged, with books and writing materials on a table, and on the chest of drawers clothes which indicated neither poverty nor even straitened circumstances. It is she who begins by saying that she is infinitely grateful for the kindness I show her, and I answer her bluntly that it is I who am in need of her.

"What can I do, Signore, to show you my gratitude?"

"You can put yourself to the trouble, Signora, of honoring me with your company at table whenever I have no guests, for, when I am alone, I eat like a wolf and my health suffers from it. If you do not feel inclined to grant me this favor, you will excuse me for having asked it of you, but the arrangements I have made for you in my house will remain in force despite your refusal."

"I shall have the honor, Signore, of eating with you whenever you are alone and you send to tell me so. The only thing that troubles me is that I am not sure if my company can be of use to you or at least entertain you."

"There is no doubt of that, Signora; I am grateful to you, and I assure you that you will never repent of having shown me this kindness. I even hope that it will be I who will entertain you. You inspired the most lively interest in me yesterday. We shall dine at one o'clock."

I did not sit down, I did not look at her books, I did not ask her if she had slept well; the only thing I noticed was that when I entered her room I found her pale and that her cheeks were crimson when I left her.

I went for a walk in the Park, in love with her, and firmly resolved to do everything on earth to make her love me, determined that I would owe nothing to mere compliance. My curiosity to know who she might be was extreme; certainly she could only be Italian; but I had promised myself that I would not importune her with the slightest question—a romantic idea, but one which comes into the mind of a man who is thinking of using all possible means to capture the heart of an unknown object in which he is greatly interested.

As soon as I was back at the house Pauline came down without my having sent her word, and this politeness pleased me; so I thanked her heartily for it; since we had half an hour before us I asked her if she had any cause to complain of her health; and she replied that nature had given her so good a constitution that she had never in her life suffered the slightest indisposition, except at sea, where the waves upset her stomach.

"Then you have traveled by sea?"

"Inevitably, for England is an island."

"You are right, but I could suppose that you are English."

"That is true."

On the table in front of the sofa on which we were sitting there was an open chessboard, and, Pauline toying with the pawns, I asked her if she knew the game.

"I play it, and even well, I am told."

"And I badly. Let us play. My defeats will amuse you."

We begin, and at the third move Pauline checkmates me; my king can neither protect himself from her attack nor withdraw. She smiles. We begin again, and she checkmates me at the fifth move, and with that she enchants me by laughing heartily. I feed my budding love, observing how perfect her laughter shows her teeth to be, how much beauty it adds to her face, how capable her soul, which could feel such gaiety, must be of happiness. I rejoice to think that I will contribute to it with all my power. We begin the third game, which Pauline plays inattentively and which we abandon to go to table; but scarcely have we sat down before Clairmont announces Miss Cornelys and Madame Raucour.

"Tell them I am at dinner and shall not leave the table for three hours, so they can take themselves off!"

But a minute later little Sophie, forcing her way upstairs, comes running in and goes down on her knees before me, bursting into tears and unable to speak, for her sobs stifled her. Touched by this melancholy tableau, I take her on my knees, I dry her tears, I soothe her by saying that I know what she wants and that I will do whatever she asks. At these words Sophie passes from gloom to contained joy; she embraces me, calling me her father, her dear father, she makes me weep; I tell her that I will see to everything after dinner, and that she will strengthen my resolve if she will dine with me. At that Sophie goes to embrace Pauline, who was crying too without knowing why, and we begin dinner. Sophie asks me to have dinner served to Madame Raucour, whom her mother had forbidden to enter my presence.

But everything which Sophie said to me during that dinner, while Pauline, listening in amazement, never spoke a word, surprised me. Reasoning as if she were twenty years of age, she did nothing but condemn her mother's conduct and call herself unfortunate because her duty obliged her to submit to her authority and obey her every order blindly.

"Then you do not love her?"

"How should I love her if she keeps me in fear? I am afraid of her."

"Then what made you cry before dinner?"

"The pity I feel for our whole family. Her telling me that only I could touch your heart, that I was her only hope."

"And you were sure that you would persuade me?"

"I hoped to, remembering what you said to me at The Hague. My mother tells me that I was only three years old then, but I know I was five.[29] It was she who ordered me not to look at you when I spoke to you; but you thwarted her. Everyone tells her that you are certainly my father, and at The Hague she told me so herself; but here she tells me I am Monsieur de Montperny's[30] daughter."

"But, my dear Sophie, your mother does herself wrong and she insults you, since she tries to make you pass for illegitimate whereas you are the legitimate daughter of Pompeati, the dancer, who killed himself in Vienna and who, when you were born, was living with her."

"Then if I am this Pompeati's daughter, you are not my father?"

"Of course not, for you cannot be the daughter of two fathers."

"But how is it that I look so much like you?"

"Simply by chance."

Pauline, who was spellbound by our dialogues, said very little to her; but she constantly kissed her. She asked me if the lady was my wife, and when I replied that she was, she called her "dear Mama," which made her laugh heartily. At dessert I gave her four fifty-pound bank notes, saying that she could give them to her mother but that it was to her that I made a present of them.

"With that amount, my dear Sophie, your mother can sleep in her own room tonight."

"Write her that it is to me that you give them, for I should not dare tell her so myself."

"My dear child, I cannot write her that, for it would be to triumph over her in her affliction. Can you understand that?"

"Yes, very well."

"You may tell her that she will be doing me a great favor as often as she sends you to dine or sup with me."

"Oh, write that, please! Dear Mama," she said, looking at Pauline, "ask my papa to write that, and I will dine with you very often."

At that Pauline, laughing unrestrainedly and addressing me as "husband," gravely asked me to write the words on a slip of paper, for they could only show her mother that I loved Sophie, and increase the esteem she ought to feel for her, and I complied. Sophie left with joy in her soul, after covering us with kisses.

"It has been a long time since I laughed so much," Pauline said to me, "and I don't think I ever had a pleasanter dinner in my life. The girl is a rare jewel, and the poor little thing is unhappy. She would not be so if I were her mother."

I then told her who she was, and the reasons I had for showing her mother that I despised her.

"I laugh to think of her telling her that she found you at table with your wife."

"She will not believe it, for she knows too well that marriage is a sacrament which I detest."

"Why?"

"Because it is the tomb of love."

"Not always."

Pauline sighed, lowering her beautiful eyes and changing the subject. Her asking me if I expected to stay long in London, to which I replied that I expected to stay there nine or ten months, justified me, I thought, in asking her the same question, and she replied that she had no idea, for her return to her country depended on a letter.

"May I ask you what your country is?"

"I foresee that I shall have no secrets from you if you show any interest in them; but please let us allow a few days to pass. I only began to know you today, and in a way which entitles you to my respect."

"I shall be most flattered if I can win your esteem; but as for respect I am not too fond of it, for it excludes friendship. I aspire to yours, and I warn you that I will try to trap you into according it to me."

"I think you are too clever at that, and I beg you to spare me. The great friendship which I might conceive for you would make me unhappy when we part, a thing which may happen any day and which I cannot but desire."

We finished our game, and after it she asked my permission to go up to her room. I should gladly have spent the whole day with her, for I had known very few women with a manner so sweet and gentle. I spent the rest of the day at La Binetti's, who at once asked me for news of Lord Pembroke. She was angry.

"He is a horrible man," she said, "who wants a new woman every day. What do you think of that?"

"I envy him his luck in being able to obtain one."

"He gets them because women are fools. He caught me because he took me by surprise at your house. Otherwise he would never have had me. You laugh?"

"I laugh because he has had you; you have had him too, so the score is even."

"It is not even, you don't know what you're talking about"

At eight o'clock I went home, and Pauline came down at once. The maid was obeying her order by notifying her immediately. "If Pauline," I said to myself, "has planned to make me fall in love by showing me attentions, we are of the same mind and the thing is done." We sat down at table at nine o'clock and stayed there until midnight. I told her amusing stories. When she left she said I made her too forgetful of her misfortunes.

Lord Pembroke came to take breakfast the next morning and to congratulate me on the removal of my notice.

He confessed that he was curious to meet my tenant; but I said it was impossible because she was of a solitary disposition and only put up with me because she could not do otherwise. He did not insist. I told him that La Binetti loathed him for his inconstancy, and it made him laugh.

"Shall you dine at home today?"

"No, My Lord."

"I understand."

Martinelli came to amuse me by reading me in Italian three or four notices like mine which appeared in an *Advertiser* published in the City. They were humorous parodies of mine. One said that there was an empty apartment suitable for a young and pretty lady who was leaving her husband because he objected to her having cuckolded him on the day after their wedding; it named the house in which the apartment was located, and said that the fugitive would pay only six shillings a week, but for that amount she would have board and the master of the house to sleep with her every night. The other notices were in the same style and all of them indecent. The freedom of the press is greatly abused in London. Martinelli politely did not mention my tenant. It was Sunday; I asked him to take me to mass at the Bavarian Envoy's. I thought I should see Pauline there, but I did not see her. She took, as she told me later, a place where she could not be seen. The church was full of people, and Martinelli pointed out to me a number of lords and ladies who were Catholics and did not hide the fact.

One of Mrs. Cornelys's lackeys handed me a letter just as I was entering my house. She said that she could go out without fear on holy days, and that she wanted to come to dinner with me. I told him to wait. I at once went to Pauline's rooms to ask her if she wanted to dine with Mrs. Cornelys, and she said that she had no objection, provided that she did not bring any men with her. So I wrote her to come without any men. She came with

Sophie, who this time did not hesitate to stay in my arms. Mrs. Cornelys, embarrassed by Pauline's presence, took me aside to express her gratitude, which she did with tears, and to impart to me various chimerical ideas which filled her head, all of them calculated to make her rich in a short time. It was Sophie who enlivened our dinner. I could not help telling Mrs. Cornelys that Pauline was a foreign lady to whom I was renting an apartment.

"Then she's not your wife?" Sophie asked me.

"No, I am not so fortunate; I was joking."

"In that case I want to sleep with her."

"When?"

"When Mama will let me."

"We must see," I said, "if the lady wants you."

"She is sure of me," said Pauline, embracing her.

"Very well, Madame, I will leave her with you; I will send La Raucour to fetch her tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow at three o'clock will be time enough. She shall dine with us."

At that Sophie went to her mother and gave her countless kisses. The woman had no idea of the pleasure it gives one to inspire love.

After Mrs. Cornelys left, I asked Pauline if she would like to go for an excursion with the little girl and myself, somewhere outside London where no one would see us, and she replied that prudence forbade her to go out with anyone at all; so we spent the whole day at home without being bored in the least. Sophie sang Italian, French, and English airs, in which she would have accompanied herself if she had had a harpsichord. She sang English duets with Pauline, which gave me the greatest pleasure. We supped in the same high spirits, and toward midnight I took them up to the fourth floor, telling Sophie that I would come up to breakfast with her if she would wait for me in bed, for I wanted to see if she was as pretty in bed as when she was dressed, and she promised to wait for me. I did not dare ask Pauline to grant me the same favor. So at eight o'clock I found her already up, though in chamber attire.

Sophie, all smiles, hid under the covers when she saw me appear; but as soon as I threw myself down beside her on the bed and began tickling her she put out her little face, which I covered with kisses, and I took advantage of my paternal rights to see exactly how she was built everywhere and to applaud everything she had, immature as it was. She was very small, but ravishingly built. Pauline saw me give her all these caresses without the least thought of evil, but she was wrong. If she had not been there, the charming Sophie would have had in one way or another to quench the fire which her miniature charms had kindled in her papa.

Very well pleased with her, I told her to get up, and we breakfasted very gaily. I spent the whole morning in this way with the two objects who delighted my heart, and after dinner, La Raucour having come to fetch the little girl, I remained with the grown-up Pauline, who was beginning seriously to set me on fire. So far I had not only not embraced her, I had not even taken her by the hand. Sitting beside her after my daughter left, I took one of her hands, pressing my lips to it, and asking her if she was married. She answered yes.

"Have you," I asked, "experienced the love of a mother?"

"No, but I can well imagine it. I have a husband, who has not yet slept with me."

"Is he in London?"

"No, he is very far from here. Let us not speak of him, I beg you."

"Tell me only if, when I lose you, it will be that you may rejoin him."

"Yes. I assure you, that unless you send me away, I will not leave your house except to leave England, and I will not leave this happy island except to go to be happy myself in my country with the husband I have chosen."

"My charming Pauline, I shall remain here unhappy, for I love you, and I fear that I will displease you if I give you the fondest proofs of it."

"Alas, I beg you to control yourself, for I am not my own mistress, either to yield to love, or to resist it if you do not spare me."

"I will obey you, but I shall languish. How can I be so unhappy when I have the good fortune to please you?"

"I have duties, my dear friend, which I cannot neglect without becoming an object of contempt to myself."

"I should consider myself the most traitorous, the most horrible of men, the most unworthy to be loved by a woman worthy of love, if I could esteem her less for making me happy by yielding to an inclination which I had myself inspired in her."

"I am glad of that. Nor do I believe you capable of it; but let us calm ourselves, remembering that we may be obliged to part tomorrow. Admit that our parting would be far more painful. If you do not admit it, it shows that your love is not of the same nature as mine."

"Of what nature, then, is the love which I have had the happiness to inspire in you?"

"It is such that its consummation seems to me only secondary."

"Then what is primary?"

"Living together in the most perfect harmony."

"That is a happiness which I possess, and which you possess. We both enjoy it from morning to night. Why can we not also be indulgent to the secondary, which will take only a few minutes of our time, which will bring our loving souls a peace and a quietude which are necessary to us? Admit, too, that this secondary thing supplies the food which keeps the primary in good health."

"I admit it, but admit, too, that the same food is most often deadly to it."

"One cannot believe that, my dear friend, when one loves; and I am in that situation. Can you yourself believe that, having me fond and amorous in your arms, you would love me less afterward?"

"No, I do not believe it; and it is precisely for that reason that I fear to make the moment of our parting intolerable."

"I must yield to your powerful reasoning, my charming Pauline. I should like to see with what you nourish your exalted intelligence. I should like to look at your books. Shall we go upstairs? I shall not go out."

"With pleasure, but you will be baffled."

"How?"

"Let us go."

We go up, I approach her books, and I find that they are all in Portuguese, except Milton in English, Ariosto in Italian, and La Bruyère's *Characters*[31] in French.

"All this, my dear Pauline, gives me a high idea of you; but why this preference for Camoëns[32] and all these other Portuguese writers?"

"Because I am Portuguese."

"You Portuguese? I thought you were Italian. At your age you know five languages, for you must also speak Spanish."

"That goes without saying."

"What an education!"

"I am twenty-two years old, but I knew those languages at eighteen."

"Tell me who you are. Tell me everything."

"Everything, and at once, trusting in you without fear, for if you love me you can do me nothing but good."

"And what are all these manuscript notebooks?"

"My story, which I have written here. Let us sit down."

CHAPTER IX[1]

Pauline's story. My happiness. Her departure.

"I AM the only daughter of the unfortunate Count of X-o,[2] whom Carvalho Oeyras[3] caused to be put to death in prison after the attempt on the King's life[4] which was laid to the Jesuits. I do not know whether my father was guilty or not, but I know that the tyrannical Minister did not dare to have him tried or to confiscate his estates, which are mine but which I can never enjoy except by returning to my country.

"My mother had me brought up in a convent under the care of her sister, who was its Abbess and who gave me all kinds of masters—among others an Italian, a native of Leghorn, a learned man, who in six years taught me everything he considered it right to teach me. I found him chary of answering my questions only when they concerned religion; but I comprehended his reserve. I can assure you that his caution, far from displeasing me, made me value him the more highly, for he not only allowed me to think but furnished me with material for thought.

"After my father's death, I was eighteen years old when my grandfather removed me from the convent, despite my having declared that I should like to stay there until an opportunity to marry should present itself. I was tenderly attached to my aunt, who, after my mother's death, did everything in her power to make me less sensible of my loss. My leaving the convent was the moment which decided the destiny of my whole life; if my will did not enter into it, you see that I have nothing to repent of.

"My grandfather sent me to live with the Marquesa of X-o, his sister-in-law, who let me have half of her town house. I was given a governess who was to be in entire charge of me, an assistant governess, a noble maid in waiting, chamberwomen, and pages, who were all in my service but who were nevertheless under the direct orders of my chief governess. But she was a very honorable woman.

"A year after my entrance into society my grandfather paid me a visit to tell me, my governess being present, that Count *Fl* [5] was asking for my hand for his son, who was to arrive from Madrid at about that time.

" 'What answer did you give him, my dear Papa?'

" 'That the marriage could only be welcome to the whole nobility and obtain the fullest approval of the king[6] and the entire royal family.'

" 'Is it certain that I will please my future husband and that he will please me?'

" 'No one has any doubt of it.'

" 'But I doubt it; so we shall see.'

" 'You will make each other's acquaintance before the thing is settled; but nothing to stop it can arise from that.'

" 'I desire that it may be so and I hope it.'

"After he left I told my governess that I would never consent to give myself to a man whose character I did not know beforehand. She made no answer, and when I urged her to tell me if I was right in thinking as I did, she replied that she would never tell me her opinion on that subject. It was as much as to tell it to me outright. I felt sure that my governess thought as I did. No later than the next day I went to visit my aunt the Abbess, who, after hearing my story, said it was to be hoped that the Count would be pleasing to me and I to him; but that even if we disliked each other there was every likelihood that the marriage would take place, for she had reason to believe that the project came from the Princess of Brazil,[7] who looked with favor on Count *Fl.*

"Thus warned, I went home, determined never to give my consent to any marriage in which I should not find everything to my liking.

"Two weeks later the young Count *Fl* arrived, my grandfather presented him to me together with his father at a reception at which several ladies were present. Nothing was said of the marriage; but the newcomer was led into talking at length of foreign countries and the manners of other European nations. I listened to it all most attentively, scarcely ever opening my lips. Having very little experience of the world, I had no standards of comparison by which to judge my would-be future husband; but it seemed to me impossible that the man could aspire to please a woman, and that a day would come on which I should belong to him. He was unabashedly derisive, stupid and bigoted to the point of superstition, ugly and ill built, and nevertheless so conceited that he was not ashamed to give the company a sneering account of the various conquests he had made among ladies in France and Italy.

"I returned home hoping that I had displeased him, and a week of silence confirmed me in my hope; but I was undeceived. It was at my great-aunt's, who had invited me to dinner, that my grandfather, in company with the elder and younger *Fl*, presented the fool to me as my future husband, asking me courteously enough to name the day and hour when I would sign the marriage contract. I replied, none too courteously, that I would tell him the day and the hour when I had made up my mind to marry. After coffee I withdrew.

"Some days having gone by since this scene without my seeing anyone, I was flattering myself that I should hear no more of the marriage, when my governess sent me word that Father So-and-so was in my room and wished to make his bow to me. I went there at once. He was the Princess of Brazil's confessor, who, after beating about the bush for some time, told me that Her Royal Highness congratulated me on my impending marriage to Count *Fl.* I replied modestly that the matter was not settled, for I was not yet thinking of marrying. He replied gaily that at my age I was fortunate enough not to have to think of anything, so I should leave thinking to those who loved me and in whose charge I had the good fortune to be, and that, such being the case, my decision could be made in a moment.

"My replies to his arguments were only smiles; but, foreseeing the attack to which I should be subjected, I the next day went with my governess to see my dear aunt the Abbess, who could not refuse me her advice in my distress. Her advice could only apply to my subsequent conduct, for I began by telling her plainly that I would never consent to the marriage.

"She replied that the Count had been introduced to her, and that she had really found him intolerable, but that she feared a way would be found to force me.

"This announcement upset me so much that, not having the strength to reply, I spoke of entirely different things until the end of my visit. But back at the house I came to the most unlikely of decisions without consulting anyone. My governess refusing to have anything to do with it, I was left with no one around me but idiots.

"I shut myself up in my study, and in a short letter I communicated my entire situation to my father's executioner, the pitiless Oeyras. I ended it by begging him to grant me his protection so that I should obtain such a measure of the King's grace as would save me from all violence, and from all fear of incurring the disfavor of the Princess of Brazil, in my inalterable resolve not to marry until I chose to do so of my own free will.

"I sent him my letter by a page the next day. Without supposing that the Minister possessed a human heart, I thought I had got to the heart of him. I counted on his pride; I felt certain that, by granting me justice, he would believe he would convince me that he had not been unjust to my father. I was not mistaken.

"On the next day but one a young gentleman came to speak to me on his behalf and, after asking me to hear him privately, told me that I was to reply to all those who urged me to consent to the marriage that I would not consent to it until they should convince me that Her Royal Highness desired it. The Minister asked me to excuse him if, for reasons known to himself, he had not answered me in writing. After speaking these few words the messenger departed, making me a low bow and not waiting for any answer; but you cannot imagine either my surprise at the young man's sudden appearance or the impression he left on my mind.

"What he said to me was more than enough to put me at ease, for the Minister could not have sent me such advice unless he had good reason to assure me that the Princess would no longer concern herself with my marriage; but the thought vanished from my mind the instant the young man left. I followed him with my eyes, completely amazed, and a moment later, amazed by my amazement, I thought I was a fool and I laughed at myself.

"Extraordinary, however, as I thought the impression the young man made on me was, it would have disappeared entirely in a few days, for, having chanced to see him the next week in church, I did not at once recognize him; but later it became powerful. Wherever I went, there I found him, at the theaters, on the promenades, and every time that, coming out of a house at which I had paid a call, I entered my carriage.

"After three or four months, if I happened not to see him in the church to which I had gone I felt uneasy.

"I saw the two Counts *Fl* almost every day at my great-aunt's; but as there was no further question of my marrying, they did not affect me one way or the other. I had forgiven them; but I did not feel happy. The young man, whose name I did not know, appeared before my mind's eye every time I saw my pages, and an indiscreet sigh which escaped me made me blush; I was angry because I guessed the reason for it.

"In this state I entered my chambermaid's room one morning, drawn by the sound of a voice which I did not recognize; I see laces on a table, behind which stood a girl who dropped me a curtsy, and at whom, being at first entirely taken up with the laces, I did not look. When I found no blond lace such as I wanted, the girl said that she would bring me some the next day, and, replying that I should be obliged to her if she would do so, I looked at her. Imagine my surprise when I saw the face of the young man who filled my mind only too often. To doubt it was my only resource. The girl whom I saw there might resemble him; she seemed to me to be taller, and in any case I thought such boldness beyond all likelihood. She left, after gathering up her bundles, without having looked me in the face, which increased my suspicion.

" 'Do you know that girl?' I asked my chambermaid coldly. She replied that she had never seen her before that day I withdrew

"Alone and reflecting on the resemblance, I finally ceased to think about it when I came to the conclusion that I was being ridiculous, but I decided to speak to the girl and insist on learning who she was. She might be my young man's sister.

"She did not fail to come back at the same hour with a box full of blond lace, and when I was told of it I did not hesitate to have her shown into my room. Since I spoke to her at once, not without strong emotion, she could not answer without looking at me, after which, convinced that I was not mistaken, I did not have the strength to ask the questions I had ready, for my chambermaid was present. But when, after choosing some pieces of blond lace, I told her to go for the money to pay for them, my astonishment was great when I saw the masquerader drop to his knees before me.

" 'Decide, Senhora,' he said, 'whether I am to live or to die; I am sure that you recognize me.'

" 'Yes, I recognize you, and I can only conclude that you are mad.'

" 'I adore you'

" 'Rise, for my chambermaid will come back.'

" 'She is in the secret'

" 'What are you saying'"

"However, he rose, and my maid unabashedly paid him the money. After putting his laces back in the box, he bowed to me and left.

"When he was gone it was only natural that I should talk to my chambermaid, and my duty demanded that I should dismiss her on the spot; but I did not hear that voice of Nature, and so I did not obey the precept which my duty would have dictated to me if I had stopped to consult it.

"Alone in my study, and examining the situation, I saw that it was already too late for me to turn to the police. I ought instantly to have sent word to my governess and had the audacious young man arrested; but my heart had spoken in his favor, and, after that indulgence, punishing my chambermaid would have been absurd. I did nothing; and I tried to believe that she did not know he had told me she was in the secret. I took the course of dissimulation, hoping that I should not see him again and so the whole momentous thing would be as if it had never happened.

"But this hope became nothing less than fear at the end of two weeks which passed without my seeing the young man again in any of the places where chance or his love had brought him into my presence. I felt an unconquerable curiosity to know at least his name, and only my chambermaid could tell it to me, for I could not think of going to inquire of the Count of Oeyras. I hated her, when, seeing her before me, I imagined that she might be aware that her crime was known to me, and that she enjoyed the pain I must suffer from the constraint I put upon myself. She might even draw conclusions from my silence which would wrong my honor, and believe that I loved him. Such a suspicion on her part, which would have outraged me, made me desperate when I thought that it might exist. As for the foolhardy young man who had risked incurring my just anger, I felt that I could only pity him, and, certain that he could not guess that I loved him, it sufficed me to know that he must be convinced that I despised him. This certainty avenged me at the moments when my vanity gained the upper hand over my love; but it drove me to despair at other times when, not seeing him again, I thought he had perhaps resolved to think of me no more and had already forgotten me. You see that I struggled, and that as long as the struggle continues, victory always remains in doubt.

"Any violent state is never permanent, and if nothing helps it to escape from the oscillation which keeps it in turmoil, it finally escapes from it by itself to regain equilibrium.

"Putting on a fichu trimmed with the lace I had bought from the pretended lace seller:

"'What has become,' I said to my sly chambermaid, 'of the girl who sold it to us?'

"Observe that I asked her the question completely without premeditation. It can only have been my Genius, whether good or evil, who put it into my mouth.

"'Apparently fearing,' she replied, 'that Madame penetrated her disguise, and that her boldness offended her, she has not dared to reappear.'

"'Of course I penetrated it; but I am a little surprised, now that I learn that you knew it was a young man.'

"'I could not fail to know it, since I was acquainted with the person'

"'Who is he?'

"'He is Count *Al*, whom you should have recognized, for you received him four months ago in this very room.'

"'That is true; and I may even have recognized him; but I should like to know why you lied when I asked you if you knew the girl.'

"'In order not to embarrass you. I thought you would be displeased to learn that I knew the masquerader.'

"'It would have been more to my honor if you had supposed the contrary. When you were in your room and I ordered him to leave, saying that he was mad and warning him that you might come back and find him on his knees, he told me that you were in the secret.'

"'The secret! I considered the thing a joke of no consequence'

"'So it is; but on my side I considered it of such consequence that, in order not to dismiss you from my service, I took the course of saying nothing to you, pretending to know nothing.'

"'I thought the little scene could only make you laugh; and now that I learn that you took it seriously I am really sorry that I can in a way reproach myself with having failed in my duty.'

"This dialogue, in which I saw that my chambermaid was completely justified, set my heart at rest, but did not restore to my mind the peace which it needed. I knew that a certain young Count *Al* was entirely without resources and could hope for nothing but what the Minister's patronage could procure him by giving him employment, and I was not sorry to have learned that this Count *Al* loved me, and the thought that I myself might be the happy instrument of his rise to fortune began to furnish the delightful subject of my daydreams when I was alone. Easily persuading myself that my chambermaid might be more intelligent than I in considering the young Count's action a prank of no consequence, I concluded that I was ridiculous in my excessive scrupulousness; but after these rather comforting thoughts another followed which greatly annoyed me, for it was humiliating to me. Count *Al's* resolve not to see me again forced me to attribute to him either a great lack of intelligence or a want of love which I found even more displeasing than his limited ability to reason. If he had been offended by my declaring his behavior that of a madman, he could be neither delicate, nor wise, nor worthy of my fond esteem.

"With my love thus languishing in the cruel uncertainty which is often its deathbed, here is what happened to arm it with all the strength needed to make it omnipotent.

"My chambermaid—without my knowledge, as I learned from her later—wrote to him that he could come to see her disguised in the same way, she being sure that I should not object. He followed her advice, and one fine morning she came into my room laughing and saying that the pretended lace-seller was in hers with some trinkets. At this news I laughed too, but forcing myself to do so, for I did not think the thing laughable; but when she asked me if I wanted her to show him in, I assumed a serious manner, asking her if she had gone mad, yet at the same time saying that I would myself go to her room.

"It was that day which saw the momentous negotiation begun. My chambermaid coming and going, we had all the time we needed to open our minds to each other and to make all the declarations we could possibly wish to make. Frankly confessing that I loved him, I sadly made him comprehend that I must forget him, for I could not hope that my relatives would consent to our union. For his part, he told me that his patron the Minister having decided to send him to England as soon as possible, he would certainly die either before he set sail or during the voyage, for without me he could not live, or at least without the hope of one day possessing me. It seemed to me that I could promise him nothing. He asked me if I would permit him to come to see my chambermaid from time to time in the same disguise, whereupon I gave him to understand to what he would expose me and expose himself. He replied that it was enough for him to have nothing to fear on my account, for his visits could never be laid to my door; but I had great reason to fear for him, for disguising himself as he did was a crime. Nevertheless, urging him to be prudent, I assured him that I should always see him with great pleasure.

"Count *Al*, eight inches shorter than I, twenty-two years of age, dressed as a woman, could not be taken for a man by anyone, not even from the tone of his voice or from a certain corpulence. He even has the gestures and manners of our sex, or he easily imitates them. Having very little beard on his chin, when he wants to he takes care that not a trace of it is visible.

"So he continued to visit me two or three times a week for nearly three months, always in my chambermaid's room and always within the bounds of the utmost respect; but even if we had been alone and completely free it would have made no difference; he was too afraid of offending me to attempt anything not consonant with the deference he owed me. But I believe that this restraint on his part as well as on mine was precisely the fuel which the fire of love needed in order to become inextinguishable.

"When we thought of the moment, which could not but come soon, when we should have to part, sadness overwhelmed our minds; but we made no plans, we had no thought of coming to a resolve which would make us happy. Our love itself, bowed down by grief, made us stupid; we flattered ourselves that the cruel moment would never come, or we banished the thought of it; so the moment came, unexpectedly and hence too soon, whether we wanted to arrive at a plan or decide that we would make no plans at all.

"One fine morning my lover, with tears in his eyes, told me the news that the Minister had given him a letter for London addressed to Senhor de Saa,[8] the Portuguese Envoy here, and another, unsealed, addressed to the captain of a frigate[9] which was to arrive from Ferrol,[10] and which, stopping for only a few hours, was to go to England. The Minister ordered the captain to take my lover on board, to treat him with consideration, and to convey him there.

"I instantly conceived the bold plan of going with him, either as his servant or even, without being under the necessity of disguising my sex, as his wife. I saw that my lover was astonished when I imparted my bold plan to him. The excess of his happiness so taxed his faculties that he told me he felt incapable of considering the matter reasonably and that he left me to decide everything. I said that we would discuss it at greater length the next day.

"Seeing the obstacles which I might encounter in leaving my house dressed as a woman, I decided to dress as a man; but since, in the guise of a man, I could play no role but that of my lover's valet, I feared that, in case of need during a sea voyage, I might find myself subjected to fatigues beyond the weakness of my sex. This reflection led me to think of playing the role of master, if the captain did not know Count *Al* personally. But the idea of seeing my lover obliged to perform the duties of my valet being no less distasteful to me, I decided to pass him off as my wife. As soon as we were landed in England we would marry and resume the clothes proper to our true sexes. Our marriage would wipe out the crime of my running away, or of the abduction of which my husband might be accused, and I did not think it within the realm of possibility that the Count of Oeyras would decide to persecute me when I had made the fortune of his protégé. To live until I came into possession of my income, the sale of my diamonds would suffice us. My jewel case was at my disposal.

"My lover either could not or dared not make the least objection the next day when I imparted my extraordinary plan to him. The only insuperable obstacle would have been if the captain of the expected vessel knew him. The risk had to be run. He himself supplied me with the clothes I needed. I was eight inches taller than he

"I did not see him again until three or four days later, about nightfall. He said that he had received a note from a clerk in the naval office informing him that such-and-such a frigate had arrived from Ferrol and was at anchor in deep water at the mouth of the Tagus[11] so that it should be ready to continue its voyage as soon as the captain, who had left it to carry dispatches to the Prime Minister, had returned on board. The frigate's longboat[12] was to be at such-and-such a place at midnight, where the captain hoped to find him when he arrived.

"Firm in my resolve as I was, I needed to know no more. He told me the place and the house where he would be waiting for me, and I promised to go there. I shut myself up, pretending to be ill, I put into a small bag what I absolutely needed, together with the jewel case containing all my mother's diamonds, and, dressed as a man, I left my apartment unseen by anyone, and at the end of the hall I went down by a stairway used only by the servants. Even the porter did not see me when I left the house.

"Count *Al,* dressed as a man, fearing that I might lose my way, was waiting for me a hundred paces from my door. He startled me by taking my arm. Together we went to the house where he had left his trunk, which he opened to pack his male attire in it and to take out the women's clothes in which he dressed in less than half an hour. Then, having the man whom he had ordered to carry his trunk and my small bag follow us, he took me to the longboat. We entered it at eleven o'clock. I took from my bag the case containing my small wealth, telling him that I thought it was safer in my pocket.[13] A few minutes after midnight the captain arrived, followed by one of his officers; upon seeing me he said that he had orders from the Minister to show me every consideration, and he was delighted when I introduced my wife, thinking it nothing unusual that the Minister had not informed him that I was taking her on board. In less than an hour we reached the frigate, which was three miles at sea, and anchor was weighed immediately. We were given a very large room, in which there was a wide bed, a folding bed, and a hammock. The captain, after I handed him the letter ordering him to give passage to England to my lover, whom fortunately he had never met, left us. We spent all the rest of the night discussing the great step we had just taken, and when dawn came we were very glad to be out of sight of Lisbon. Needing rest, I threw myself on the folding bed and my lover got into the hammock, without even thinking of undressing. But no sooner had we lain down than the sea began to treat us as it treats all those who are not accustomed to it. During the first twenty-four hours it emptied our stomachs, even trying to bring up what was not in them, and during the next two days we did nothing but sleep and moan; but on the fourth day, tormented by a devouring hunger, we were amazed that we could not satisfy it no matter how much we ate.

"The voyage is a very long one for Europe, since, as you know, it crosses the whole Atlantic,[14] yet we made it in two weeks. My lover having never left his room, the captain never came to pay him a visit; I could attribute it only to politeness, for in our country one can be jealous without fear of being ridiculous. For my part, however, I spent almost all day in the open, amusing myself looking through a spyglass at all the objects which distance did not permit me to distinguish. On the seventh day my heart fluttered when I was told that a vessel which we made out at a moderate distance was a corvette,[15] which, though it had left Lisbon at least a day after we did, would still reach England three days before us.

"We arrived there at dawn, and it was in the port of Plymouth[16] that the frigate dropped anchor.

"The officer whom the captain at once sent ashore to obtain permission to disembark his passengers returned on board toward nightfall, bringing him some packages and letters. After reading one of them more attentively than the rest he called me aside.

" 'This letter,' he said, 'is from the Count of Oeyras. He orders me, on my life, not to let a young Portuguese lady leave my ship, if she is on board it, unless she is personally known to me. He instructs me to take her back to Lisbon after executing the commissions which will detain me at Cadiz[17] for a few days. On my vessel there are neither unmarried women nor wives, except yours. Prove to me that she is your wife, and I will let you go ashore with her at once; otherwise you must see that I cannot disobey the Minister's order.'

" 'She is my wife, but I have no document to convince you of it.'

" 'That is too bad. She will return to Lisbon with me, respected and well treated, as the Count instructs me; you may be sure of that.'

" 'A wife, sir, cannot be separated from her husband.'

" 'I agree. You are free to return to Lisbon on the corvette: it will be there before her.'

" 'Why can I not return with her?'

" 'Because I am ordered to land you here. Why is your wife not named too in the letter you gave me? If she is not the person whom they want to recover, you can be sure that you will see her again in London.'

" 'Permit me to go and speak with her.'

" 'Certainly, but in my presence.'

"Broken-hearted, I went to tell my lover, addressing him as my wife, by what turn of fate and what cruel order we were condemned to part. He replied, finding the strength to hold back his tears, that we could do nothing but be patient, for we were sure to see each other again in two months at the latest. The captain's presence made it impossible for him to say more. I told him that from London I would at once write to the Abbess, that she was the first person he must see in Lisbon, and that from her he would learn my address. I took good care not to ask him for my jewel case.[18] The captain might have thought it his duty to take custody of it, and the value of the diamonds would have led him to conclude that my pretended wife was a young lady whom I had seduced. We could only surrender to our destiny. Embracing each other, we wept, as the captain did too when he heard me say:

"'Trust this worthy captain with your honor and mine!'

"The trunk was put into the longboat, and I had to leave my bag behind; so I found myself with only men's clothes. The customs inspection to which I was subjected showed me all that I possessed: notebooks, letters, books, shirts, two or three coats, a sword, dueling pistols and pocket pistols; I put the latter in my pockets. I went with my trunk to the inn, where the innkeeper told me at once that if I wanted to leave for London at dawn with two ladies and a clergyman it would cost me only the hire of one horse, and he invited me to sup with these three persons, whose manner showed me that I must not refuse them my company. On their part they found me worthy of theirs. We arrived in this city very early the next day, and got out in the Strand[19] at an inn where, finding myself poorly accommodated, I stayed only for dinner. Afterward I went out to secure a good lodging suitable to the situation in which I found myself. I had a purse containing fifty lisbonines[20] and a ring of about the same value.

"After seeing a number of rooms in different houses I took a fourth-floor one, persuaded by the kind, honest looks of the landlady. Without experience and without recommendations, I could only trust in God and my good intentions, hoping the best from sympathy. The woman pleased me. I at once agreed to ten shillings a week, and I immediately asked her to help me to obtain a perfectly plain girl's wardrobe, no longer daring to go out dressed as I was. No later than the next day my money had bought shifts, dresses, shoes, and all the clothing necessary for a poor girl who wanted neither to dazzle nor to arouse pity nor to follow the path of adventure. Speaking English so well that no one doubted I was an Englishwoman, I knew what demeanor I must maintain to protect myself against all that I had to fear.

"But in less than two weeks I saw that my good landlady's house was not suitable for my purpose, my peace, and my means, for my situation might continue for a long time and, without money, I should have been in the direst misfortune. I determined to leave the house. Since it was for me to say if I would receive visitors, I received none, but I could not prevent the curious from coming to my door all day long, and the more it became known that I received no one, the more of them there were and the more importunate they became. The house in which I was staying was too much frequented. In St. Paul's[21] and near the Exchange as it was, any number of young men came there to eat on the ground floor and the first floor, and they all insisted on trying to cure me of my sadness, though I had no need of it

"Resolved not to spend more than a guinea a week on the necessaries of life, and having no use for my ring, I decided to sell it, but little by little. An old merchant who lived on the same floor as I, and for whose honesty my landlady vouched, offered me a hundred and fifty guineas for it, and I let him have it on condition that he would pay me the amount at the rate of four guineas a month, and that I could redeem it from him at any time by paying him what he had advanced me. I wanted to keep the cash I had, and which I still have, to return to my country by land when I receive a letter telling me that I can go there with nothing to fear. I do not want to go there by sea. I did not spend much of it for clothing; and I have enough of it left. My ring is worth enough to keep me for three years, and in the year I have already spent here I have received only a third of its value.

"Leaving the house of my kind landlady, who still remains my firm friend, I took a room in a respectable house, once again in the Strand, for the same price, but I was obliged to take a maidservant, for I could never bring myself to eat anywhere but in my room. Having to keep a servant was always a misfortune, for I found none who were not cheats, and you can understand that, wanting to spend only a shilling a day for food, I could not put up with theft. I ate little and, unable to tolerate beer, I drank water. Port wine, excellent in our country, is here expensive and bad. All this abstinence made me lose flesh, I did not know what to do to escape from my wretched situation, when my good angel—if I dare flatter myself it was he—led me to read in an *Advertiser* the strange notice to be seen on your door. After laughing at it, for it was too amusing not to laugh at, I could not resist a wish to go and talk with you. I wanted to see if I could better my condition without increasing my expenditure. Curiosity entered in too, for the *Advertiser* also said that the master of the house was an Italian who apparently did not fear being tricked, and on my side I had no fear of violence, and in that I was mistaken, for there are kinds of violence which it is sweet not to resist. Having been educated by an Italian, I have always felt a great liking for your countrymen."

"Your story, Signora, is one which has interested me very much indeed! You have the intelligence of an angel; and now that I know you are Portuguese I am ready to forgive your countrymen."

"Then you bore us a grudge?"

"I hated you from the time I learned that you allowed your Vergil to die in poverty[22] two hundred years ago."

"Camoëns, you mean; but how can you be so fond of him when you do not understand our language?"

"I have read him translated into Latin heroic verse of such beauty that I thought I was reading Vergil."

"Heavens! What are you saying? This very moment I promise—nay, I make a vow—that I will learn Latin."

"Excellent—but from me. I will go to live and die in Portugal if you promise me your heart."

"Why have I not two! Since I have known you I like myself less; I am afraid that I have no constancy."

"I will be content if you will love me only as if I were your father; but let your father clasp his daughter in his arms sometimes. Please, go on with your story. I still do not know the most essential part of it. What became of your lover? And what did your relatives do when they learned of your flight?"

"On the third day after I arrived in this vast city I wrote a long letter to my aunt the Abbess, in which, in the greatest detail and with perfect truth, I told her all that had happened to me, begging her to protect my fiancé and to support me in my resolve not to return to Lisbon until she could assure me that when I arrived there my marriage would encounter no opposition and that, in possession of my inheritance, I could live openly with my husband. I asked her in the meanwhile to inform me of everything, sending her answers to me, by the name of 'Miss Pauline,' under cover directed to my landlady, whose address I gave her. I sent her my letter by way of Paris and Madrid, for there is no shorter route by land, hence I did not receive her answer until three months later. She informed me that the frigate on which I had left had returned to Lisbon only a week or ten days earlier, and that the captain, having at once sent the Minister word that he had brought back the only woman he had on board, despite the fact that Count *Al* claimed that she was his wife, requested his orders. The Minister, never doubting that the lady was I, ordered the captain, sending him a letter which he was to give the Abbess, to take the lady to her convent and give her into her charge. In the letter the Minister told the Abbess that he was sending her her niece and that he begged her to keep her under safe guard until further order. My aunt was surprised, but she would have been much more so if she had not three or four days earlier received the letter in which I told her my whole story. She thanked the captain, she took her supposed niece into a room in which she locked her up, and she instantly wrote the Count of Oeyras that in accordance with his order she had received into her convent a lady whom His Excellency called her niece, but that since the young lady was neither her niece nor a lady, but a young man dressed as a girl, she could not keep him in her convent. She therefore asked him to send someone to remove him from her custody as soon as possible. After sending the Minister this strange answer, she went to see Count *Al*, who at once fell to his knees before her. My aunt made him rise, telling him that she knew all and showing him my letter. At the same time she told him that, in obedience to her duty, she had just written the Minister that she could not keep a man in her convent, and so he must expect to be taken elsewhere within an hour or two. Thereupon the Count, bursting into tears, begged her good offices in my situation and his own, and gave her my jewel case, which he had kept in his pocket all along and of which the Abbess very gladly took custody. After that she left him, assuring him that she[23] would inform me of everything. She did not see him again, despite the fact that he had to spend part of the night and part of the following day in the room where he was, since the Minister had gone to one of his estates three or four leagues from Lisbon. Not having received her letter until very late, he could not answer her until the next day; but it was an answer which he considered he must deliver in person. The Abbess easily persuaded him of the importance of secrecy in the matter, for violation of the seclusion of her convent entailed the loss of her honor. She gave the proud Minister the letter she had received from me to read, and she told him that my jewel case had been placed in her custody. He replied that she should keep it. He thanked her for the frankness with which she had informed him of everything, and he asked her with a laugh to excuse him if he had sent her a handsome young man to keep her company. After spending a few minutes in thought, he told her that secrecy was of the utmost importance in the matter, and that, such being the case, the masquerader must leave the convent at once and go with him. Since my aunt could not but be of the same opinion, she went for him, took him to the door, showed him to the Minister's carriage, in which he was alone, and made him sit down at his right. She could not tell me what he had done with him, and no one knew anything about it. All Lisbon was curious, for the story was openly told, but with a circumstance which made an essential difference, which she had to let pass, and which must have made the Count of Oeyras laugh. It was, and still is, said in Lisbon that the captain of the frigate delivered me to my aunt by order of the Minister; but that no later than the next day the Minister himself went unaccompanied to remove me from the convent, and that no one knew where he was keeping me. Hence everyone believes that Count *Al* is here in London. Meanwhile it is easy for the Count of Oeyras to remain informed of everything about me, for he knows my name and my address and he has plenty of spies. On the advice of my aunt, I wrote him two months ago that I am ready to return to Lisbon if His Excellency will do me the honor to write me in his own hand that as soon as I arrive in my country Count *Al* will publicly become my husband, with the further condition that no one shall order me to go there, or take me there, even as a friend. Otherwise I declare that I am prepared to spend my whole life in London, where the law guarantees my freedom. I look for the Minister's answer every day.'

This story may seem a romance to those over whom the stamp of truth has no power. Despite the disguised names, a number of highly placed people in Lisbon know who the real actors are; but, being discreet, they will never name them.

So did Pauline and I live, never leaving each other and falling more in love every day precisely because we tried to make our love die of starvation; but it is love which would finally have killed me, for I was growing visibly thinner, I could no longer sleep, and my appetite was failing. Pauline, on the contrary, was putting on flesh and becoming every day more beautiful. I told her that if my sufferings had the virtue of increasing her charms, she ought to keep me from dying, for a dead man has ceased suffering. She convinced me that my decline came not from my love but from the life I was leading, never leaving the house. "If you love me," she said one day, "give me a proof of it. Go out for a ride."

"And afterward?"

"You will find me grateful, and you will eat with appetite and sleep all night."

Quick, a horse, quick, my boots! I kiss her hand, for I had not yet gone further than that, and I set out for Kensington.[24] Finding trotting uncomfortable, I try to make my horse gallop, and he takes the bit in his teeth and, in full career, his four legs slip from under him, and there I am on the pavement directly in front of the Duke of Kingston's[25] house, where Miss Chudleigh at the window recognizes me and sends one of her servants to my rescue. I get up, I want to go to thank her, but I cannot walk on my right foot. I am carried into the drawing room, my boots are pulled off, I am examined, and a valet who is a surgeon announces that it is a sprain with dislocation. He feels the bone, and he declares it pulled out of its socket. He prescribes a week in bed to restore me to health, he puts a great bandage on me, and the charming Miss Chudleigh has me carried home and sends the horse to its owner.

At home, I am put to bed, and a surgeon who lived twenty paces from my house takes off the bandage and laughs at the supposed dislocation. He offers to bet a hundred guineas that it is only a sprain, and he is disappointed.

"For I wish it were a fracture," he says, "so that I could show you who I am."

He was French. I thank him, and I swear to him that I do not need the experiment to be convinced of his skill.

I do not see Pauline. I am told that she has gone out in a sedan chair. I see her come back at last two hours later, very much upset, having learned from the old woman that I had broken a leg.

"Woe to me! I am the cause of it!"

She goes pale, and she falls onto the bed.

"My dear friend, it is nothing. A sprain!"

"The wicked old woman! God be praised! Feel my heart."

"I feel it. Fortunate fall!"

I press my lips to hers, kiss answers kiss,[26] and I bless the sprain. Pauline laughs.

"What are you laughing at?"

"At the rogue Love, who always conquers us."

"Where did you go?"

"I went to redeem my ring, giving the honest man back the forty-eight pounds he had paid me, at the rate of four a month, and I make you a present of it so that you shall have a keepsake to remind you of my friendship. Until I leave, we shall live together as wife and husband, and we will celebrate our nuptials this evening, supping here on your bed, for your sprain and I both forbid you to leave it."

"Ah, my dear Pauline! What news! Permit me to doubt it, I beg you, for being sure of it before it is done would kill me."

"Very well then, doubt it, but only a very little, otherwise your doubt could wrong me. Tired of living with you, loving you and making you unhappy, I made this decision three hours ago, when I saw you mount your horse, and I went to get my ring so that I need not leave your arms again until the fatal letter summoning me to Lisbon arrives. For a week my heart has been in dread of it. No, I want it no more."

"May the courier who is bringing it be robbed!"

Since she was talking to me standing, I invited her to fall into my arms, but, the door being open, she would not, and to calm me she went to fetch Ariosto, and she insisted on reading me Ricciardetto's adventure with Fiordispina,[27] Princess of Spain, which constitutes the beauty of the twenty-fifth canto of the poem, which I knew by heart. She pretended that she was the Princess and I Ricciardetto, and she delighted in imagining

> *Che il ciel l'abbia concesso*
> *Bradamante cangiata in miglior sesso*
>
> ("That heaven had granted her Bradamante, changed into a better sex").[28]

When she came to the stanza which runs

> *Le belle braccia al collo indi mi getta*
> *E dolcemente stringe e baccia in bocca:*
> *Tu puoi pensar se allora la saetta*
> *Dirizza amor, se in mezzo 'l cor mi tocca*
>
> ("Thereupon she throws her lovely arms around my neck and sweetly embraces me and kisses me on the lips; you can imagine if then Love straightens his arrow, if he strikes me in the heart"),[29]

she demanded a gloss on the phrase *baciar in bocca,* and on the love which then stiffened Ricciardetto's arrow. When I gave her the commentary in action, she seemed offended when I surprised her into touching the arrow; but she had to burst out laughing when she came to the two lines:

Io il veggo, io il sento, e a pena vero parmi
Sento in maschio di femina mutarmi

("I see it, I feel it, and I scarcely think it true; I feel myself change from a woman to a man"),[30]

and at two more in the following stanza:

Così le dissi, e feci ch'ella stessa
Trovò con mano la veritade espressa

("So I said to her, and I made her find the truth of it with her own hand").[31]

She said she was astonished that Rome[32] had not forbidden the poem, in which there were so many "obscenities," but she recanted when I convinced her that only the things which arouse disgust deserve to be called "obscenities." She thought it amusing that Ariosto should have chosen to attribute to a Spanish woman,[33] rather than to one of any other nation, the irregular taste which led her to fall in love with Bradamante. But I thought my turn had come when she read these three lines:

Io senza scale in su la rocca salto
E lo stendardo piantovi di botto
E la nemica mia mi caccio sotto

("Without stairs I mount the rock and suddenly plant my standard in it and put my enemy under me").[34]

I wanted to show her the thing in action then and there, but she said I risked making my sprain worse.

"Then must we wait until I am cured to consummate our marriage?"

"I think so. If I am not mistaken, you cannot avoid making certain movements——"

"You are wrong, my dear; but in any case I will not put it off until tomorrow, you may be sure, even if it costs me a leg. Besides, you will see that there are ways. Are you persuaded? Answer, for your concern makes me uneasy."

"Very well. The wife must obey the husband. I will do whatever you wish."

"When?"

"After supper."

"My dear wife, let us go without supper. We will dine the better tomorrow."

"No. Consider that we must give the servants no reason for suspecting anything."

I assented; but we could not eat, and at ten o'clock we were left to ourselves.

But the charming girl who had had the courage to tell me so clearly that we should become husband and wife after supper did not have the courage to undress in my presence. She could not bring herself to do it; she told me so, laughing at herself.

"But you spent two weeks in the same room with your lover."

"He always stayed in his hammock, with his back to me, when, sitting on my folding bed, I undressed, and it was the same when I dressed in the morning."

"So much virtue is almost beyond belief."

"I think, my friend, that when one has not yet begun it is easier to restrain oneself than to let oneself go. For this first night I will get into bed with you fully dressed."

"Do you want me to dress too?"

"You are cruel. Forgive my weakness."

"But, my angel, do you not see how unworthy of your intelligence this shame is?"

"Let us put out the candles, and in a minute I will come to your arms."

"Quick, let us put them out!"

But despite the drawn curtains a bright moon lit the room enough to let me distinguish the most charming profiles at the favorable distance to which she had withdrawn. The whole maneuver seemed calculated only to make me the more ardent; but Pauline knew that she had no need to use art.

Pauline came to my arms; at first we gathered our forces in a profound silence. Our ardors mingled, and her moans were my assurance that her desires were more intense than those I felt and that her needs were greater than mine. The unavoidable duty of safeguarding her honor made me call a sudden halt and collect in a handkerchief the proud tokens of her virtue over which I had just triumphed

Until that moment love alone had animated me; but after the blood-stained sacrifice I was surprised to find myself filled with respect and gratitude. I strained my powers of expression to convince her that I was sensible of the full extent of my good fortune and that she would always find me ready to expose my life to the plainest risks in order to convince her of my constant affection. After renewing our skirmishes several times, we found ourselves reluctantly unable to conclude the last one, and we fell into a sleep so sound that when we woke we could not believe that we had slept.

Seeing in my arms the greatest of Portuguese beauties, the only descendant of an illustrious family, who had given herself to me and yet who would be mine for only a very short time, I gazed at Pauline, leaning on one elbow and sunk in that sad reflection.

"What are you thinking of, my dear friend?"

"I am trying to convince myself that my happiness is not a dream. If it is real, I want to die before I lose you. I am the fortunate man to whom you have surrendered an inestimable treasure, of which I consider myself unworthy even though I love you more than myself."

"No, my friend. You are very worthy of it if you can still esteem me, for I have no doubt of your affection."

Moved by the caresses which followed my words, Pauline became ardent as soon as she felt that my fire was renewed, and, letting every beauty which could arouse my curiosity shine out before my avid eyes, made herself ready to enjoy my third assault, in the long course of which I several times saw her in the last extremity of love. A moment later I ended, showing her those tokens of my respect of which I had deprived her only in order to safeguard her honor

"I swear to you, my friend, that love did not give me time to think of it. I left it to you, I suppose; but I am very glad to see that I shall never be tempted to repent of having surrendered to love's power."

She then got out of bed to dress, laughing because my presence no longer embarrassed her.

"If the disappearance of shame," she said, "is a result of acquiring knowledge, tell me why our first parents did not feel shame until after they had acquired knowledge."

"I have no idea, my angel, but I should like to know if you put that question to the learned Italian whom you had as a tutor before you left the convent."

"As a matter of fact, I did."

"What did he answer you?"

"That they were ashamed not of having tasted enjoyment but of having been disobedient. In covering the parts which had led them astray they thought they repudiated the sin which they had made them commit. But, whatever people may say, Adam was far more guilty than Eve."[25]

"How so?"

"Because Adam had received the prohibition from God himself, while Eve could only have learned of it from Adam."

"They both received it from God."

"Then you have not read Genesis?"

"You are laughing at me."

"Then you have read it incorrectly, for it says there clearly that God made Eve after forbidding the thing to Adam."[26]

"I think it strange that our interpreters do not cite this fact, for it seems to me essential."

"It is because they are rascals, almost all of them enemies of our sex."

"Come now!"

"Let us drop the subject, I beg you; but my tutor was an honest man."

"Was he a Jesuit?"

"Yes, but of the short robe."[37]

"What does that mean?"

"We will discuss it another time."

My dear Pauline was a thinker so attached to her religion that she gave it far more thought than I did. I should never have learned this about her if I had not succeeded in going to bed with her. I have found a great number of women of the same stamp; to enjoy their souls, one must begin by damning them; after that one gains all their confidence, and they have no more secrets from the man who has been fortunate enough to conquer them. For the same reason, that charming sex loves the brave man and loathes the coward, unless sometimes he is a pretty plaything who amuses them but whom at bottom they despise, for if the brave man cudgels him they laugh.

After that heavenly night I decided not to leave my house again so long as Pauline remained in London. My resolve pleased her. I shut my door to everyone, even to the surgeon, for my sprain was disappearing of itself. I had word of it conveyed to the Honorable Miss Chudleigh, who stopped sending a lackey twice a day to inquire after my health.

Pauline having gone up to her room after our amorous battle, she seemed to me an angel incarnate when I saw her again at noon. Her complexion, which a year's abstinence had made too pale, had become tinted with a compound of lilies and roses, and her face had acquired an expression of satisfaction and contentment which my eyes never tired of admiring.

Wanting to have her portrait in miniature, as she wanted to have mine, I wrote Martinelli to send me the most celebrated painter in London for likenesses, and he sent me a Jew,[38] who succeeded perfectly. I later had them set in rings, and it was the only present which Pauline would accept from me, though I should have thought myself all the richer if she had consented to accept everything I owned.

Three weeks passed in this way after our nuptials, every moment of which, always exerting the same influence, made us equally happy. We had become such that we could no longer find the slightest difference between us; it was an unending succession of enjoyments such that we could ask nothing more. Since desires can arise only from needs, we could feel none, for, Nature and Fortune supplying us with everything, there was nothing we could need. Besides, any desire is inseparable from trouble and disquiet, and Pauline and I laughed at the philosophers who would have seen fit to pity us because we had no more desires. It is impossible to have them when one possesses everything, and we possessed everything. It was impossible for us to imagine that we could have been richer or happier, unless we had wished to think of the future; but we did not have time to think of it. This lack of time was the true foundation of our real riches. In a complete satisfaction of our senses, what could have lessened our happiness if we had stopped to examine ourselves strictly? It could have been only our feelings. Our feelings? We should have found our hearts pure.

Every day I found something new and adorable in her admirable character, and she was beginning to flatter herself that the fatal letter which would oblige her to leave would never arrive. She no longer thought of Count *Al* except to make reflections on the physical power of a handsome face, which reason should censure and which chance alone could make effective.

The first day of August was a day of ill omen for her and for me. For her, who received two letters from Lisbon, and for me because, among others, I received one from Paris giving me the news that Madame d'Urfé was dead.[39] It was Madame du Rumain who wrote me that the doctors declared, on the testimony of her chambermaid Brougnole, that she had poisoned herself by taking too strong a dose of a decoction which she called the "universal medicine." She told me that she had left an insane will, for she bequeathed everything to the first son or daughter she should bear, declaring that she was pregnant. It was I whom she appointed guardian of the infant, which cut me to the quick, for the story must have made all Paris laugh for at least three days. The Countess du Châtelet,[40] her daughter, had laid hands on her rich inheritance in real estate and on her portfolio, in which, to my great surprise, four hundred thousand francs had been found. I was dumfounded; but I contained my grief and my repentance by fixing my attention on the two letters Pauline had received, one from her aunt and the other from the Count of Oeyras, who urged her to return to Lisbon as soon as possible, by sea or land, assuring her that upon her arrival she would be put in possession of all her property and be publicly married to Count *Al.* He sent her a letter of credit at sight for twenty millions. The amount surprised me; however, it came to only about two thousand pounds sterling, for the Portuguese reckon in reis,[41] which is an indivisible coin, like the maravedi[42] in Spain. He advised her to make the journey by sea, and in case she decided to do so, he informed her that Senhor de Saa would arrange for her to embark on a frigate which he named and which should at that time be in some English port. Her aunt the Abbess, whom the Minister had informed, told her the same thing; but Pauline would not hear of the sea or of the Portuguese Envoy Saa, for she did not want to give anyone in Lisbon the slightest justification for saying that she had been forced to return against her will. She was angry that the Minister had sent her the bill of exchange; for it showed that he thought she was in need. Nevertheless I convinced her that she ought to be grateful to him for it, for he did not say that he was making her a present of it. She would have considered it an insult. Pauline was rich, and she was high-minded; the proof is the ring which she had made me accept when she was practically in poverty, and certainly she did not count on my purse, though she was sure that I would never have abandoned her. I always let her believe that I was very rich.

We spent the whole day sadly, and the night too. It was not until the next day that she spoke to me as follows:

"My dear friend, we must part, and what is more we must make an effort to forget each other, for my honor demands that in Lisbon I become the wife of a man to whom everyone cannot but believe that I have already given myself, and you must feel that as soon as he really becomes my husband my duty demands that I give him my undivided heart. I cannot conceive how, otherwise, I could live happily. But it will not be difficult for me, once I have seen you for the last time. The first impression, which you have almost blotted out, will regain its power, and I am sure that I shall love my husband, who is honest and gentle, as I very well learned during the few days we lived together.

"After this preamble, my very dear friend, this is what I must ask of you, and what you must grant me if only as a favor. You must promise me you will never come to Lisbon[43] unless I give you permission. I hope you do not need to have me tell you the reasons which oblige me to lay this prohibition on you. You must not risk coming to my country to trouble the peace of my soul. I could not become criminal without at the same time becoming unhappy, and you must abhor the idea of being the cause of it, loving me as you love me, and knowing me as you know me. Alas, believe me! I imagine that I have lived with you as your real wife, and as soon as you have left me I shall imagine that I have been widowed and that I am going to Lisbon to contract a second marriage."

Dissolving in tears and clasping her in my arms, I promised to obey her. She at once replied to the Minister and the Abbess that she would be in Lisbon in October and that she would send them news of her as soon as she was in Spain. Having money enough, she outfitted herself for the journey, she bought a carriage, and she engaged a chambermaid recommended to her by the honest landlady with whom she had lodged at the beginning of her stay in London. In this way she employed the last of the weeks during which she lived with me in London. Claiming it as a return favor, which she could not refuse me, I got her to accept the services of my valet Clairmont, whom I knew to be faithful, as far as Madrid. From Madrid he was, in accordance with my instructions, to rejoin me in London; but his unhappy fate had decreed otherwise for him.

We spent this week in the utmost outward tranquility, and in bitterness of heart and mind. We looked at each other without speaking, we spoke to each other not knowing what we were saying, we forgot to sit down at table to eat, and we went to bed together hoping that love would not let us sleep, but we were mistaken: an involuntary lethargy plunged our grief-burdened senses into the blackness of Styx[44] in the midst of the caresses which sometimes tried to convince us that we were immortal.

Pauline could not refuse either me or herself the pleasure of my accompanying her to Calais.

We left on August 10th; and I was very well satisfied with the appearance of her chambermaid, who had the manner of a governess; and the next day we remained in Dover only long enough for her carriage to be put on board a packet boat, which four hours later landed us at Calais, where Pauline, beginning to try to believe herself,[45] asked me to go to another room to sleep alone.

She left the next morning with four horses, preceded by Clairmont and determined never to travel at night.

The resemblance between this parting at Calais and the one which had lacerated my soul when Henriette had left me at Geneva fifteen years earlier,[46] is striking; striking, too, the similarity in character between those two incomparable women, who differed from each other only in beauty. Perhaps that was what was needed to make me as wildly in love with the second as I had been with the first. Both of them wise, both of them endowed with profound intelligence, it could only be because of the difference in their education that the first was gayer, and had more talents and fewer prejudices. Pauline had the noble pride of her nation, she was inclined to seriousness, and had religion in her heart even more than in her mind. In addition she surpassed Henriette in her fondness for the pleasure of loving and in the ecstasies which follow from it. I was successful with them both because they found me wealthy, otherwise I should have known neither of them. I have forgotten them; but when I recall them I find that Henriette left the stronger impression on me, and the reason is that my soul was more susceptible to impression at the age of twenty-two[47] than at the age of thirty-seven.

I returned to Dover at eight o'clock after a most uncomfortable crossing in a packet boat on which all ten or twelve passengers were seasick. I was only sad.

On arriving in London, I shut myself up in my house, thinking of how I was to go about forgetting Pauline. Jarba put me to bed. He was a reliable, good-hearted young fellow, but when he entered my room the next morning he guilelessly said something which made me shudder, though a minute later I laughed at it. He asked me, on behalf of the old woman who had charge of the house, if I wanted her to put the same notice up at the door.

"What! Devil take it! Does the old witch dare——"

"It's not that. She means no harm."

CHAPTER X

Peculiarities of the English. Castel-Bajac. Count Schwerin. My daughter Sophie in boarding school. My reception at the Thinkers' Club. La Charpillon.

I DID not go out until two days later, but sad, preoccupied, and like a man who had only just arrived. I entered a coffeehouse where twenty people were reading the newspaper. Not understanding English, I sat there quietly watching those who came and went. A merchant who spoke French said to another, who was reading, that So-and-so had killed himself and that he had done well because his affairs were in such disorder that he could only live in poverty.

"You are mistaken, I was present yesterday when his effects were inventoried, for he was in debt to me too, and we all agreed that he had done a stupid thing, for he could have waited another six months before he killed himself, even without putting his affairs in order."

The calculation making me laugh, I went to the Exchange to draw some money. I find Bosanquet, who at once gives me what I ask for; and seeing, on my way out of the room in which I signed the receipt, a man whose countenance aroused my curiosity, I ask him who he is

"He is a man who is worth a hundred thousand pounds."

"And that other one?"

"He is worth nothing."

"But what I want you to tell me is their names."

"I don't know them. A name means nothing. Knowing a man consists in knowing what amount he commands; for what does his name matter? Ask me for a thousand pounds and give me a receipt for them in my presence under the name of Attila,[2] and that is enough for me. You will repay me not as Seingalt but as Monsieur Attila, and we will laugh."

"But when you sign bills of exchange——"

"That is different, for I have to sign them with the name that the drawer gives me."

I leave him, and I go to the Park; but before entering it I want to change my bank note into coins. I enter the establishment of a fat merchant, a great trencherman whose acquaintance I had made at a tavern, and I ask him to give me guineas for my twenty-pound note, which I threw down on his counter.

"Come back in an hour," he says, "for at the moment I haven't a penny."

"Very well, I will come back on my way out of the Park."

"Take your note; you shall give it to me when I give you the cash."

"It makes no difference. Keep it. I do not doubt your honesty."

"That is madness, my friend, for if you leave me the note I will not give you the cash, if only to teach you a lesson in how to live."

"I do not believe you are capable of so dishonest an act."

"Nor am I; but in the case of something as simple as a bank note, which is no inconvenience to you in your pocket, and left here without your having received the cash, I could more easily persuade myself that I had given you the cash, despite anything you might say to me, than believe you were so stupid as to leave me the note without receiving it."

"You are right."

I go to the Park; I see Martinelli, and I thank him for having sent me his *Decamerone*.[3] He congratulates me on my reappearance in the world, and on the beautiful young lady whose slave I had become, whom Lord Pembroke had seen and found charming.

"What? What? Where did he see her?"

"With you in a carriage and four, at full trot on the road to Rochester,[4] only three or four days ago."

"Very well, I can now tell you that I took her to Calais and that I shall not see her again."

"Shall you rent your apartments again?"

"Never. I was too greatly punished for it, though love treated me well. Come to dine with me whenever you like."

Going toward Buckingham House,[5] I see in the shrubbery to my left a piece of indecency which surprises me. Four or five people at different distances were attending to their needs and showing their behinds to the passers-by.

"It is disgusting," I said to Martinelli; "those pigs should be facing us instead."

"Not at all, for then people would recognize them and would certainly look at them, whereas, showing us their arses as they do, they force us, unless we are especially interested in that part of the body, not to look in that direction."

"Your reasoning is excellent, my friend, but since it is something new for a foreigner, you will excuse me."

"You will have noticed that an Englishman who, walking in the street, needs to make water does not, as we do in our country, go and piss in somebody's doorway or his alley or his courtyard."

"So I have observed. They turn to face the middle of the street and piss there. But people going by in carriages see them, and that is as bad, I think."

"Who tells the people in carriages that they have to look?"

"Very true."

We go to the Green Park, where we come upon Lord Pembroke on horseback; he stops and exclaims when he sees me; I can imagine why, and I tell him that I regained my freedom four days since, and that I felt lonely at my excellent table.

"I am rather curious. I may come today."

He leaves, and, counting on it, I go home to order him a good dinner. Martinelli could not come; but he takes me out of the Park by a gate which I did not know, and he goes far enough with me to put me on the right road.

At the end of a street we see a crowd, at the center of which something curious must have been happening, for everyone was craning his neck to see. Martinelli approaches, stays there a few minutes, then tells me that I shall hear something strange.[3]

"The whole crowd," he said, "is eagerly watching a brave man who will probably die in a quarter of an hour from a blow on the temple he received in a fist fight with another man."

"Is there no remedy?"

"A surgeon who is there maintains that he will not die if he is allowed to bleed him."

"Who can forbid him?"

"That is what is astonishing. The people who forbid him are two men who have bet twenty guineas on his living or dying. One of them said, 'I wager he dies,' the other wagered that he would not die, and the wager was on. There stands the surgeon, wanting to bleed him; the man who wagered he would die will not let him, for if he lives the other will demand his twenty guineas. They refuse to hear of any compromise, so the man may die because of their accursed wager."

"By God, there's an unfortunate man and a pair of pitiless bettors."

"The Englishman has his own ideas on the subject of betting. There is a confraternity or a club called 'The Bettors,'[7] and if you are curious I will get you introduced there."

"Do they speak French?"

"Undoubtedly, for they are men of intelligence and distinction."[8]

"And what do they do?"

"They talk, and when one of them denies something that the other puts forth as a fact, if the other challenges him to bet he must bet, on pain of a fine which goes into the club treasury and which the members divide among them at the end of the month."

"My dear friend, introduce me to this delightful club, which will make me rich, for I shall not hesitate to speak out when I am of a different opinion, and I will not speak at all unless I am sure of what I am saying."

"Be careful, for they are sharp."

"But let us get back to the man who is dying from that blow in a fist fight. What will be done with the man who killed him?"

"His hand will be examined; and if it is found to be 'dangerous,'[9] he will be hanged; if they find his hand is like yours and mine, all that will happen to him is that his hand will be branded."

"I am at a loss; please explain to me. How is a 'dangerous' hand recognized?"

"When it is found to have been branded. Then it is certain that the man has killed another, and when his hand was branded he was warned to be careful not to kill still another, for he would go to the gallows."

"But if the man with the 'dangerous' hand—since there is such a thing—is attacked?"

"He shows his hand; and then everyone is bound to respect him and let him alone."

"And if he is forced?"

"Then he defends himself, and if he kills it means nothing, provided that he has witnesses."

"Fist fighting can easily cause death. I am surprised that it is permitted."

"It is only permitted on a wager. If the two who fight have not thrown a coin or two on the ground before fighting, which is proof positive of a wager, if death results the killer is sentenced to the gallows."

"O laws, O customs!"[10]

It was thus that I learned to know this proud nation. I had a good dinner prepared for the noble Lord, and he did not fail to come to it. Though only the two of us were present, our dinner lasted a long time, for I wanted commentaries on all the fine things I had learned that morning, and especially on the Bettors' Club. The amiable Lord advised me not to join it unless I was prepared to remain perfectly silent for at least a month.

"But if I am asked a question?"

"Evade it."

"Evade it? No doubt I shall do so if I am asked my opinion and I am unable to give it; but in the contrary case, when I am sure, the devil himself won't be able to make me keep still. They are not scoundrels, I hope?"

"Scoundrels? They are all noble, learned, rich, and epicures; but pitiless in accepting and in offering bets."

"But is the treasury well stocked?"

"Very poorly, for rather than pay the fine any one of them would rather lose his stake. Who will introduce you?"

"Martinelli."

"Yes, he will speak to Spencer,[11] who is a member. I have not wanted to join."

"Why?"

"Because I don't like to argue. But you are a strange man."

"What makes you say so?"

"A month shut up with a woman who was in London for fourteen months and whom no one could ever get to know or even to find out what her country is, and who was known only to you, a foreigner—it's something to nettle us all."

"How did you know that she was here for fourteen months?"

"Because she first lived in the house of an honest widow, where several people saw her; but she would never let anyone make her acquaintance. Your notice brought her into your hands."

"Unluckily for me, for I shall never love another woman."

"Oh, there'll be another in a week. Perhaps tomorrow, if you will come to dine with me in the country. I made the engagement by chance yesterday in Chelsea,[12] where a Frenchwoman who is a beauty asked me to give her dinner. I have sent my orders, and I have informed five or six of my friends who are fond of play."

"Play for stakes?"

"Of course."

"Does the charming Frenchwoman like to play?"

"No, but her husband does."

"What do you call him?"

"It is he who calls himself the Count of Castel-Bajac."[13]

"A Gascon."[14]

"Yes."

"Thin, tall, dark, and marked with smallpox."

"Just so. I am delighted that you know him. Isn't it true that his wife is a beauty?"

"I have no idea, for it was six years ago that I made his acquaintance, and I did not know that he was married then. I will come, and I am very glad to be of the company. However, I give you one warning: say nothing if he pretends not to know me. He may have good reasons for doing so. I can tell you a story in confidence tomorrow which is not to his credit. I did not know he was a gamester. I will be careful in the company of the bettors, and you, My Lord, be careful in tomorrow's company."

"I will give your Negro my address."

He rode away, and I went to see Mrs. Cornelys, who had written me a week earlier that her daughter was ill, and who complained that she had twice been told that I was not at home when she knew I was there. My only excuse was that I was in love, and she had to allow it; but Sophie's condition alarmed me. She was in bed with continual fever, extremely thin, and looking at me with eyes which told me that she was dying of grief. Her mother was in despair, for she loved her dearly; I thought she would murder me when I told her in the patient's presence that if she died it would be she who had killed her. At that the child said, "No, no," and flung her arms around her mother's neck and soothed her; but before leaving I took her aside and told her that Sophie was dying because she made her too afraid of her and treated her with unbearable tyranny.

"Send her to boarding school for two years," I said, "with nice girls of good family; tell her so this evening, and you will see that tomorrow she will be better."

She replied that a good boarding school, including instruction, cost a hundred guineas a year. I said that, after seeing what school it was, I could pay the master or mistress a year in advance from my own purse. At this offer, the woman, who was really in poverty despite her luxurious style of living, embraced me with tokens of the liveliest gratitude.

"Come with me this instant," she said, "and tell your daughter the news yourself. I want to see her face."

"Gladly."

"My dear Sophie," I said as I entered, "your mother is persuaded that a change of air will restore you to health. If you will go to one of the finest boarding schools in London for a year or two, I will lend her a hundred guineas at once."

"I can only obey my dear mother."

"It is not a matter of obedience. Would you like to go to boarding school? Answer me frankly."

"But would it please my mother?"

"Very much, my dear daughter, if you will go willingly."

"Most willingly."

The child's face became red as fire. I left her, asking her to let me have news of her. I went home to think sadly of Pauline.

The next morning at ten o'clock Jarba asked me if I had forgotten that I was engaged to dine at Lord Pembroke's.

"No, indeed. It is only ten o'clock."

"Very true. But we have twenty miles to travel."

"Twenty miles?"

"Yes, here is the address he left with me. We have to go to Saint Albans."[15]

I think it odd that His Lordship had not told me so; but such are the English. I travel post, which is not difficult in London, for there are post offices everywhere, and I go to his house in Saint Albans in less than three hours. Nothing is finer than the English roads, and nothing more attractive than the English countryside, it lacks only the vine. It is a peculiarity of the very fertile soil of the island that it cannot yield wine. Lord Pembroke's house was not of the largest, but big enough to lodge twenty masters. The lady had not yet arrived; he shows me his gardens, his baths, his gazebos, his underground hothouses for growing fruits out of season; and among other things he showed me a cock, chained in a coop, which really looked ferocious.

"What is that? It's a fine cock, but chained! Why?"

"Because he is ferocious. He loves hens, and he would run away in search of them, and he would kill all the cocks they belong to."

"And why do you condemn him to celibacy?"

"So that he will be in good condition to fight. Look, here is the list of his victories."

He opens a drawer, and he takes out a long sheet of paper on which he had recorded all the fights from which he had emerged the victor after killing his opponent. There were more than thirty of them. He shows me his very bright steel spurs. The cock shook when he saw them, and I could not help bursting into laughter. All on fire, the bird raised his feet to have the spurs put on. After that he shows me his steel helmet.

"But with these advantages he is sure to defeat his opponent."

"Not at all, for when he is fully armed he scorns an unarmed opponent"

"You amaze me, My Lord."

"You will no longer be amazed when you read this."

From a fourth drawer he takes a list showing his entire genealogy. He could prove twenty quarters of nobility, in the male line of course, for if he could have proved them in the female line too, His Lordship would have hung at least the Maltese Cross[16] around his neck. He told me that he had cost him two hundred guineas, but that he would not sell him for a thousand. I asked him if he had offspring; and he replied that he was working at it, but that it was difficult; I do not remember what difficulties he alleged. The English constantly offered my eager curiosity delightful peculiarities.

But up drives a carriage with a woman and two men. I see the scoundrel Castel-Bajac, and a thin man whom Castel-Bajac introduced to His Lordship as Count Schwerin,[17] nephew of the celebrated Field Marshal,[18] killed on what is called the field of honor. An English General Beckw . . . ,[19] who commanded a regiment in the service of the King of Prussia, and who was one of the guests, pays him compliments and says that he had died in his presence; the modest nephew then takes from his pocket the bloodstained ribbon of the Black Eagle[20] which the Marshal was wearing when he received his death wound.

"His Majesty,"[21] he informed the company, "permitted me to keep it"

"But your pocket," said an Englishman who was present, "is not the proper place for it."

His Lordship at once took possession of Madame. I examine her, and in comparison with Pauline she seems to me to be nothing. Whiter of complexion because she was blonde, less tall, and without the slightest air of nobility, she does not interest me. When she laughed all her beauty vanished. It is a great misfortune for a pretty woman when laughter makes her ugly—the same laughter which often has the power to make an ugly woman beautiful.

Lord Pembroke, whose place it was to do so, introduced his friends to the lady and the gentlemen, and when he names me, Castel-Bajac, who could have pretended not to know me under the name of Seingalt, expresses his pleasure and embraces me

We dine in high spirits on English fare, we drink punch, and it is Madame who insists on a little game of faro. His Lordship never plays; so it is General Beckw . . . who offers to make a bank to amuse the company. He puts down a hundred guineas and eight or nine hundred more in bank notes. He politely distributes twenty counters to each punter, saying that each counter is worth half a guinea. Wanting to stake gold against gold, I accept no counters. At the third deal Schwerin was the first who, having lost his twenty counters, asks for twenty more. The banker tells him that he carries no one on his word. The Field Marshal's nephew does not answer and stops playing. At the following deal the same thing happens to Castel-Bajac. Being seated beside me, he asks my permission to take ten guineas from me. I coldly reply that he would bring me bad luck, and I push away his hand. Madame says that her husband had forgotten to bring his portfolio. An hour later the General lays down the cards, and I take my leave, asking

His Lordship and the entire company to dine at my house the next day.

I was back at home by eleven o'clock, without having encountered any highwaymen, as I had expected to do. I had a small purse containing six guineas at their disposition. I had been taught that lesson. I had my cook waked and told him that I should have twelve people to dinner the next day. It was the first fine dinner I was giving. I found a note from Mrs. Cornelys telling me that she would come to dine with me on the following Sunday with "our" daughter, and that we would go to see the boarding school in which she intended to put her.

Lord Pembroke arrived first at my house with the beautiful Frenchwoman, in a carriage which barely seated two. The crowding was favorable for love. The others arrived one or two at a time, and the last were the Gascon and the Prussian.

We sat down at table at two o'clock, and we rose at four, all well pleased with my cook and even more so with my vintner, for despite the souls of forty bottles which we had in our bodies, none of us was drunk.

After coffee the General invited the whole company to sup at his house, and Madame Castel-Bajac asked me to make a bank. Not waiting to be urged, I made one of a thousand guineas, half in gold, half in bank notes. Having neither counters nor slips, I said that I would accept only gold against gold, and that I would stop when I saw fit, without announcing the last deal.

I was delighted to see that the two foreign Counts[22] paid their little debts to the General in bank notes. I changed two of the same notes which they offered me into guineas, and I changed the two notes they had given him for the General. I put these four notes aside under my snuffbox, and play began. Having no croupier, and allowing all the punters to stake, I had to deal very slowly. It was the two Counts who occupied my attention, for they always made mistakes to their own advantage. It annoyed me. Both of them having had the misfortune to lose, and both of them being, luckily for me, out of bank notes, Castel-Bajac took from his pocket a bill of exchange for two hundred pounds and threw it to me, asking me to discount it for him; I reply that I know nothing about bills of exchange. An Englishman looks at it, then hands it back to me, saying that he knows neither the drawer nor the drawee nor the endorser. "I am the endorser," says the Gascon, "and I think that suffices." Everyone laughs, except myself. I politely hand it back to him, saying that he can discount it at the Exchange. He leaves, muttering insults, and Schwerin follows him.

After the departure of the sharpers I continued dealing quietly until very late in the night. When I stopped I was the loser, because of the General, who I saw was having too good luck. Before leaving he took me aside with His Lordship to ask him to see to it that the two swindlers should not come to his house the next night, for if the Gascon had said to him half of what he had dared to say to me he would have had him shown out by the window. His Lordship replied that he could give the message only to his wife. I ask him if the four notes which had come from them, and which I had, might be forged. Seeing that they are brand-new, he replies with a laugh that it is possible.

"What would you do to make sure?"

"I would send them to the Bank[23] to be changed."

"And if the Bank found that they were forged?"

"I would put up with it, or I would have the man who gave them to me arrested."

After giving me the General's address, he left with the lady.

The next day at the Bank I was surprised by the cold indifference with which an unassuming man to whom I had given my four notes, asking him to give me guineas for them, handed them back to me, saying that they were forgeries. He smiled when I asked him to examine them a little more closely. He told me to return them to the person who had given them to me and make him pay me in good money, which I should not find it difficult to do.

I knew very well that it was in my power to have the scoundrels put in prison; but, feeling reluctant to do so, I decide to go to His Lordship's to learn where they were staying. His Lordship was still asleep, one of his footmen takes me to their lodging, and my presence surprises them. I tell them coolly enough that, the four notes they had given me being forgeries, they should at once give me forty guineas. Castel-Bajac replies that he has no money; but that the thing amazed him.

"I can only," he said, "return them to the person who gave them to me, always provided that the notes you have there are the ones we gave you."

At this counterproposal the blood rushes to my head, and I leave them. The same footman, who was waiting for me, takes me to a place where, after being put on oath, I am given a bill[24] which authorizes me to have them arrested. I go to the Alderman,[25] who undertakes to see to it, then I go home very much put out by the shameful business. I found Martinelli, who had come to ask me for dinner. I gave him an account of the matter, not telling him that the scoundrels were to be arrested. The philosopher said that, if he were in my place, he would burn the forged notes. Such heroism may have been mere boasting, but his advice was good. I did not follow it. Thinking to cheer me up, he said that he had agreed with Lord Spencer on a day for my introduction to the Thinkers' Club, and I replied that I no longer wanted to join it. One often feels resentment toward a wise man who gives one good advice which one has not the courage to follow.

Toward nightfall I went to the General's, where I found the Countess sitting on Lord Pembroke's lap. We supped gaily; the two wretches did not appear, and no mention was made of them. Getting up from supper, we went into another room, where the table for faro was ready. The General dealt until daybreak, and I went home having lost two or three hundred guineas. I went to bed, and I did not wake until very late.

A man was announced, I had him shown in, and, finding that he spoke only English, I had to summon Jarba to interpret for me. He was the chief constable, who told me that if I would pay for his journey he was sure he could arrest Castel-Bajac at Dover, for which place he had left at noon; he was sure to arrest him before nightfall. I replied, giving him a guinea, that the other would be enough for me, and that he should let the Gascon go to the devil.

The next day being a Sunday, the only day on which the extraordinary Mrs. Cornelys could go about in London, I had her to dinner at my house with my daughter, who, delighted to be on the eve of escaping from her mother's hands, had recovered her health. The boarding school was in Harwich,[26] and we went there after dinner.

The mistress of the establishment was a Catholic noblewoman who, despite her sixty years, still looked fresh and displayed wit and the manners of good society. Having been forewarned by Lady Harrington's recommendation, she gave the young Cornelys the most gracious reception. She had fifteen or sixteen girls at board, the eldest of whom was barely thirteen years of age. I saw them all in the garden, playing innocently together. When Her Ladyship introduced Sophie to them, saying that she was to become their fellow boarder, they all hastened to give her the fondest caresses. Five or six of the young ladies, and one of them more especially, seemed to me angels incarnate, and two or three of them were so ugly that they frightened me. These two extremes are seen in England more than anywhere else. My daughter was shorter than any of the others, but her little face was so pretty that she did not lose courage. She at once made up to all of them, talking with them as if she had known them for a long time. When Her Ladyship invited us to go through the house, they all followed us.

Each girl had a small room next to another which was separated from hers by a half-wall and in which lived a fellow boarder with whom she could talk. They ate four at a table, and six maids took care of them all. They had all kinds of masters, who came to give them lessons in a large room in which I saw harpsichords, harps, guitars, and tables on which there was everything needed for lessons in drawing. Thinking that I was Sophie's father, all the girls talked to me, and I saw that those who could not yet venture to speak French or Italian were mortified. I was in ecstasies. Their short dresses, with an English-style whale-bone corset which left their bosoms entirely bare, put my soul in a stupor.

After going over the whole house, we went with only the headmistress into a room where Mrs. Cornelys gave her the hundred guineas for a year in bank notes and took a receipt. They agreed that the little girl should enter as soon as she came with her bed and her few necessaries. Her mother took care of it all on the following Sunday.

Very early the next day the Alderman's man came to tell me that Count Schwerin was a prisoner in his house, and he gave me a note in which he asked me to come to speak with him. I decided to go when the man told me he had not a penny and that, the charge being one of forged bank notes, he was going to take him to Newgate.[27] I could not quite stomach the idea of letting him go to the gallows. So I went there, and I cannot describe how much I suffered at the sight of his endless tears, his despairing gestures, his admission of his crime, and the basenesses to which he descended to move me to pity. He swore that the notes had been given him by Castel-Bajac, but that he knew from whom he had bought them and that he was ready to tell me the person's name if I would set him free. I said that if he named the person from whom they came he was sure not to be hanged, but that I would keep him in prison nevertheless, sending him fourpence a day until he gave me my money. At that his cries began again, while he swore that he was in utter poverty and showed me his empty pockets. He then offered me, as security, his bloodstained ribbon of the Black Eagle, and I took it into my head that I should like to have it.

So I accepted it, giving him a receipt and undertaking to return it to him when he gave me forty pounds sterling. I wrote out my waiver, I paid the costs of his imprisonment, I burned the forged notes in his presence, and I let him go.

Two days later I saw the self-styled Countess Castel-Bajac appear at my house to tell me that, her husband and her lover having left, she did not know where to turn. She also complained bitterly of Lord Pembroke, who had also abandoned her after she had given him clear tokens of her affection. I said that he would have made a mistake to leave her before that, for he must have considered that she owed him something. She replied that it was true he had given her a good lesson. It finally appeared that, if I wanted to get rid of her, I had to give her what she needed to rejoin her wretched lover in Calais, for she swore to me that she did not want to see Castel-Bajac again, who in any case was not her husband. The reader will see these two persons reappear on the scene three years hence.

About this same time a tragicomic incident did not fail to afford me amusement.

An Italian came to me with a letter from my friend Balletti. He recommended the bearer of the letter to me, Signor Costantini[28] by name, a native of Vicenza, who was in London on business of great importance of which he would inform me. He asked me to be of use to him in any way in my power. Being myself the only judge of the extent of my powers and of my willingness to employ them, I told Signor Costantini that I greatly esteemed the friend who had sent him to me, and that hence he could count upon me.

"Signore," he said, "I arrived in London yesterday evening, and the long journey having cost me all the money I had, I now command only two guineas, but I know that my wife is here, she is rich, and I can easily find out where she lodges. You know that, as her husband, I can dispose of whatever she possesses."

"I know nothing about it."

"Then you do not know the laws of this country?"

"I do not."

"Too bad; but it is none the less true. I intend to go to her house tomorrow and turn her into the street with the dress she has on and nothing more, for all her furniture, her clothes, her diamonds, in short everything she possesses, is mine. May I ask you to be with me when I stage this fine scene?"

Very much surprised by the situation, and even more so by his proposal, I ask him if he had told my friend Balletti of the matter. He replies that he has confided in no one, and that I am the first person to whom he has spoken of it

I could not dismiss him as mad, for he had not the slightest appearance of being so, and seeing, furthermore, that the law which he cited very likely existed in England, I answered him briefly that I did not feel inclined to help him in his enterprise, of which in any case I completely disapproved, unless his wife had stolen from him all the things of which he alleged that she was then in possession.

"No, Signore. She stole nothing from me but my honor, and when she left me she possessed nothing but her talent. She came here, and she has made a great fortune. Am I not right to seize it, if only to punish her and avenge myself?"

"That may be so, but since you seem to me a sensible man I ask you what you would think of me if I consented without further ado to be your companion in an enterprise which, despite your arguments, I consider cruel. Add that I might know your wife and might even be her friend."

"I will tell you her name."

"I beg you to say no more, though I am not acquainted with any Signora Costantini."

"She has changed her name; she calls herself Calori[29] and she sings in the opera at the Haymarket."

"Now I know who she is, but you are wrong to have told me her name."

"It was because I do not doubt your discretion. I am going at once to find out where she lives. That is the chief thing."

He left me, drying his tears, and I pitied him. Nevertheless I was annoyed that he had confided his secret to me. Three or four hours later I went to see La Binetti,[30] who, after telling me that La De Amicis,[31] when she left London, had gone completely mad over the impresario Mattei,[32] who did not love her, told me all the stories I wanted to hear about all the *virtuose*[33] who were then in London. When she came to La Calori, she told me she had had several lovers who had given her a great deal, but that at the moment she had no one but the celebrated violinist Giardini,[34] with whom she was in love. I asked her where she came from and if she was married, and she replied that she was from Vicenza and that she did not believe she was married.

I had almost stopped thinking about this ugly matter when, three days after my conversation with La Binetti, I received a note from King's Bench Prison,[35] which I was surprised to find signed with the name Costantini. The unfortunate man told me that he considered me the only friend he could have in London, and so he hoped that I would have come to see him, at least to give him some good advice.

Thinking it all very strange, and not understanding how it was possible, I take a hackney carriage and I hurry to King's Bench. I find him in despair, with an old English attorney who spoke Italian and whom I knew. Costantini had been arrested on the previous evening on account of several notes to order drawn by his wife, which she had not paid when they fell due. According to these notes his wife appeared to owe the bearers about a thousand guineas. The attorney who was there was the depositary of the notes, which belonged to names which I did not know. There were five of them. He had come to propose some arrangements to the prisoner.

Very much surprised by this infamous trick, which I should not have believed to be such if I had not learned from La Binetti that La Calori, far from being in debt, was rich, I asked the attorney to leave, for I needed to talk with Signor Costantini privately.

"I am arrested," he says, "for debts of my wife's, and I am told that I must pay them because I am her husband."

"It is a trick your wife is playing on you. She found out that you are in London."

"She saw me from her window."

"Why did you put off executing your plan?"

"I would have carried it out this morning; but could I believe that my wife was in debt?"

"Nor is she. These notes are false. They were predated, they were drawn only yesterday. It is a bad business, which may cost her dear."

"But I am in prison."

"Stay there, and count on me. We shall meet again tomorrow."

Indignant at this scurvy trick, and determined to take up the cudgels for the unfortunate man, I go to tell Monsieur Bosanquet the whole story; he replies that tricks of the kind were extremely common in London and that ways of dealing with them had long been known there. He ended by saying that if I took an interest in the prisoner, he would put him in the hands of an advocate who would clear him, and who would make his wife and her lover, who had apparently instigated the thing, repent of trying it. I replied that I was interested in the man, and I asked him to act and even to stand surety for him if that was necessary, being myself ready to vouch for him. I gave him the man's name, and he advised me to take no further steps in the matter.

Five or six days later he came to tell me that Master Costantini had left the prison, and even England, or so the advocate who had undertaken his defence believed.

"How was that?"

"It is perfectly simple. His wife's lover himself, foreseeing the storm, must have persuaded him to accept a sum of money on condition that he would leave, and the poor wretch agreed. So the thing is over; but it is a bit of news which will arouse laughter and which will be read in the papers, and it will even be said that Giardini did very well when he advised Signorina Calori to play this fine part."

I learned later from La Binetti that she had him given two hundred guineas. I was very well pleased, and I wrote Balletti the whole story. Some years later I came upon La Calori in Prague.[36]

A Flemish officer who had served in France and to whose assistance I had come at Aix-la-Chapelle[37] had paid me several visits and had even dined at my house two or three times, and I was sorry that I had not yet, as in duty bound, gone to call on him at his lodging at least once; he made me blush when, running into me in London, he politely reproached me for it. He had his wife and daughter with him. A modicum of curiosity also made me want to go there. It was my evil Genius who took me there, for my good one always kept me from doing so.

When he saw me he fell on my neck, and as soon as he introduced me to his wife, calling me his savior, I had to accept all the compliments which rogues pay to decent people whom they hope to dupe. Five or six minutes later I see an old woman come in with a pretty girl. Monsieur Malignan introduced me, saying that I was the Chevalier de Seingalt of whom he had often spoken to them. The young lady, pretending surprise, said that she had known a Monsieur Casanova who looked very much like me; I replied that that, too, was my name, but that I did not have the happiness to remember her.

"I, too," she said, "had another name then; it was Augspurgher, though now my name is Charpillon;[38] and since you saw me and spoke to me only once, it is easily possible that you have forgotten me, the more so since I was then only thirteen years old. Some time afterward I came to London with my mother[39] and my aunts; we have been here now for four years."

"But where did I have the happiness of speaking with you?"

"In Paris, at the Palais Marchand,[40] you were with a charming lady; you gave me these buckles" (and so saying, she showed them to me on her shoes); "then, encouraged by my aunt, you did me the honor to embrace me."

I then remember her perfectly, and my reader may recollect that at the time I was with the beautiful Baret, the stocking seller.

"Mademoiselle, I remember the occasion very well, and I remember you, but I do not recognize your aunt."

"This lady is her sister, but if you will be good enough to come to tea with us, you shall see her. We are living in Denmark Street,[41] Soho. I will show you that I wrote down the very flattering compliment you paid me."

CHAPTER XI

La Charpillon and the fatal effects of my acquaintance with her.

AT THE name Charpillon I take from my portfolio the letter which the Procurator Morosini had given me at Lyons[1] and I hand it to her.

"What do I see! My dear Ambassador! And in all the three months you have been in London you have never thought of bringing me his letter?"

"It is true; I should have inquired; but since the Ambassador showed no particular eagerness, I have neglected this little duty, and I am grateful to the chance which enables me to perform it."

"Then come to dine with us tomorrow."

"I cannot, for Lord Pembroke told me to expect him."

"In company, or by himself?"

"By himself."

"I am glad of that. Expect me, too, with my aunt. Where do you live?"

I give her my address, assuring her that she will do me both an honor and a favor, and I am surprised to see her laugh

"Then you are the Italian," she says, "who two months ago posted on the door of his house at this address the strange notice which set everyone laughing?"

"I am he."

"I am told that it cost you dear."

"On the contrary. I owe that notice my happiness."

"It follows that, now that the lady has gone, you must be unhappy. No one knows who she was. Do you really make a secret of it?"

"Certainly; and I would rather die than reveal it."

"Ask my aunt if I didn't want to go to ask you for a room. But my mother would not let me."

"What need have you to find a cheap lodging?"

"None whatever; but I felt a need to laugh and to punish the audacious author of such a notice."

"How would you have punished me?"

"By making you fall in love with me and then treating you so that you suffered the pains of hell. Oh, how I should have laughed!"

"Then you believe it is in your power to make any man you choose fall in love with you, basely planning in advance to become the tyrant of him who has paid your charms the homage which is their due? It is the project of a monster, and it is unfortunate for men that you do not look like one. I shall profit by your frankness to be on my guard."

"In vain. Unless you forgo seeing me."

Since she smiled while maintaining this dialogue, I took it as it was natural to take it; but admiring in her a kind of intelligence which, together with her charms, at once convinced me that she did indeed have the power to make any man love her. It was the first sample of it which she gave me that first day on which I had the misfortune to make her acquaintance.

It was on that fatal day at the beginning of September 1763 that I began to die and that I ceased to live. I was thirty-eight years of age. If the perpendicular line of ascent is equal in length to that of descent, as it should be, on this the first day of November in the year 1797 I think I can count on nearly four years of life,[2] which in accordance with the axiom *motus in fine velocior* (''motion is increased in speed toward the end'')[3] will pass very quickly.

La Charpillon, whom all London knew, and who, I believe, is still alive,[4] was a beauty in whom it was difficult to find a defect. Her hair was light chestnut, her eyes blue, her complexion of the purest white, and her stature almost equal to Pauline's, counting in the two inches she would gain when she became twenty, for at that time she was only seventeen. Her bosom was small but perfect, her hands dimpled, slender, a little longer than most, her feet tiny, and her manners assured and well-bred. Her sweet, open countenance bore witness to a soul distinguished by delicacy of feeling and to the nobility of manner which is usually due to birth. It was on these two points that Nature saw fit to lie in her appearance. She ought rather to have told the whole truth there, and lied in all the rest. The girl had deliberately planned to make me unhappy even before she had come to know me; and she told me so.

I left Malignan's house, not like a sensual man who, having a passion for the sex, cannot but feel overjoyed to have met a girl with whom, having recognized her rare beauty, he feels sure that he will easily satisfy all the desires she has inspired in him, but stupefied and surprised that the image of Pauline, which I still had before my eyes, and which, each time I saw a woman who could lay claim to please me, imperiously entered my mind to make me scorn her, did not have the power to render this Charpillon incapable of taking me by surprise. I forgave myself, concluding that what had enchanted me was only novelty and the combination of circumstances, and that disenchantment would soon follow. ''I shall cease,'' I told myself, ''to find her marvelous as soon as I have slept with her; nor will that be long in coming"

How could I imagine that she would make difficulties? She had invited herself to dinner with me; she had been the dear friend of the Procurator, whom she had certainly not kept languishing and who must have paid her, for he was neither handsome nor young enough to have made her fall in love with him. Without even flattering myself that I could please her, I knew that I had money, that I was not stingy, and that she would not resist.

Lord Pembroke had become my friend after the charity I had shown Count Schwerin and my restraint in not demanding half of the amount from the General. He had told me that we would arrange a party which would give us a pleasurable day.

When he arrived and saw four places laid he asked me who the two others who would dine with us were, and he was surprised when he learned that they were La Charpillon and her aunt, and that she had invited herself as soon as she had known that it was he who was to dine with me.

"The girl having made me want very much to have her," he said, "I finally found her at Vauxhall one night with her aunt, and I offered her twenty guineas if she would come for a stroll with me in a dark walk. She consented, asking for the money in advance, and I was kind enough to give it to her. She came into the walk; but she immediately dropped my arm, and I did not find her again."

"You should have slapped her face in public."

"I should have brought trouble on myself, and everyone would have laughed at me. She's a fool, whom I now despise. Are you in love with her?"

"I am curious about her, as you were."

"She is a scheming wench who will do everything she can to trap you."

She arrives, and she says the most charming things possible to His Lordship, scarcely looking at me. She laughs; she herself recounts the trick she had played on him at Vauxhall, and she twits him with stupidity for giving her up because of a joke which, on the contrary, should have led him to love her the more.

"Another time," she said, "I will not run away from you."

"That is possible, for I will not pay you in advance."

"Fie! 'Pay' is an ugly word which dishonors you."

His Lordship praised her wit and only laughed at all the impertinent things she said to him in her pique at the indolent lack of attention which he accorded her remarks. After dinner she left us, after making me promise to come to dinner with her on the next day but one.

I spent the whole of the following day with the amiable Lord, who introduced me to the English bagnio,[5] an entertainment which costs a great deal and which I shall not describe, for it is well known to all those who have spent some time in London and have been willing to pay six guineas to enjoy its pleasures. We had two very pretty sisters, whose name was Garrick.

On the appointed day I went to La Charpillon's to dinner, as I had promised to do. She introduces me to her mother, who, though ill and haggard, comes back to my memory at once. In the year 1759 a Genevan named Bolomay[6] had persuaded me to sell her some jewelry for six thousand francs. She had given me two bills of exchange drawn on the same Genevan by herself and her two sisters; her name was Augspurgher. The Genevan who had accepted the bills had gone bankrupt before they fell due, and the three Augspurgher sisters had disappeared a few days later. So I am greatly surprised to find them in England, and still more surprised to be brought to their house by La Charpillon, who, knowing nothing of this underhanded dealing by her mother and her aunts, had not told her that Monsieur de Seingalt was the Casanova to whom they owed six thousand francs.

"Madame, I have the pleasure of recollecting you," were the words I said to her.

"Monsieur, I recollect you too. That scoundrel Bolomay——"

"Let us not speak of it, Madame; we will leave it for another day. I see that you have been ill."

"Deathly ill, but I am better now. My daughter did not announce you by your name."

"I beg your pardon: it is mine, as was the name I had in Paris, when I made her acquaintance without knowing that she was related to you."

Thereupon the grandmother, who was named Augspurgher like her daughter, comes in with the two aunts; and a quarter of an hour later three men arrive, one of whom was the Chevalier Goudar, whom I had known in Paris;[7] of the two others, whom I did not know, one was named Rostaing[8] and the other Coumon.[9] They were the three friends of the house, all of them professional sharpers, whose office was to bring in dupes and thus provide the means of subsistence which in turn provided theirs. It was to this infamous gang that I saw myself introduced, and although I was aware of it at once, I neither fled nor promised myself that I would never set foot in the place again. I thought that I risked nothing if I remained on the defensive and nursed no intention but that of entering into a relationship with the daughter; I considered these people merely creatures who had nothing in common with my undertaking. At table I fell in with the general atmosphere, I set the tone, I led them on, I was led on, and I became convinced that I would accomplish the whole of my purpose with no difficulty. The only thing which displeased me was a request which La Charpillon made of me after asking me to excuse her for having given me poor fare at her house. She asked me to invite her to supper with the entire company and to appoint the day. I immediately asked her to name it herself, and after consulting the scoundrels, she named it. Four rubbers of whist, at which I constantly lost, brought us to suppertime, and toward midnight I went home, bored and in love with La Charpillon.

Nevertheless I had the strength not to go to see her during the two following days. The third day being the one she had appointed for supper at my house, at nine o'clock I saw her with her aunt.

"I have come," she said, "to breakfast with you and to discuss a piece of business."

"Now, or after we have breakfasted?"

"Afterward, for we must be alone."

In the ensuing private conversation, after informing me of her family's situation at the time, she said that they would cease to be in straits if her aunt, who was in the other room, had a hundred guineas. With that amount she would compound the "balm of life" which would make her fortune. She discoursed on the virtues of the balm, on the large sales of which there could be no doubt in London, and on the profit which I myself would make, since, as was only right, I should have a half share with her in the enterprise; aside from all that, she said that, on receiving the hundred guineas, her mother and her aunts would undertake in writing to repay me the same amount at the end of six months. I replied that I would give her a definite answer after supper.

So saying, and being alone with her, I assume a lighthearted manner, the manner which a polished man assumes, when, in love, he wants to find his way to the favors to which he aspires, and I begin making the appropriate motions on the large sofa on which we were seated; but La Charpillon, with the same lightheartedness, resists my every movement and repeatedly forbids my gently caressing hands to do anything they would; she refuses me hers, she tears herself from my arms, turning her head away when she sees mine within range of giving her a kiss, and finally she gets up and, all smiles, goes to join her aunt in the other room. Forced to smile too, I follow her, and a minute later she leaves, bidding me good-by until that evening.

Left alone and reflecting on this first scene, I find it natural, to be expected, and, above all, in view of her need of the hundred guineas for which she had already asked me, not at all unpromising. I saw very well that I could not hope for her favors unless I gave her the money, and certainly I had no thought of haggling; but she must see too that she should not have it if she took it into her head to play the prude. It was for me to take such measures as would guarantee me against being tricked. Not wanting to dine, I go to walk in the Park, and toward nightfall I am home again.

The company arrives, it is not late, the beautiful child asks me to make a small bank for them, and, after bursting out laughing, which she does not expect, I decline.

"A game of whist, at least," she says.

"Then you are not in a hurry for my answer concerning the matter of which you know?"

"Of course I am. So you have made up your mind."

"Yes, come."

She follows me into the other room, where, after making her sit down on the same sofa, I tell her that I have the hundred guineas and that they are at her disposal.

"You must give them to my aunt, otherwise the gentlemen would think that I had obtained them from you by shameful concessions."

"Very well, I will give them to your aunt; you may count on it."

After these words I made the same approaches to her which I had made that morning, but always to no purpose. I ceased to press her when she said that I would never get anything from her either with money or by force; but that I could hope everything from her friendship when she saw that, being alone with her, I was gentle as a lamb. At that I got up, and she followed me.

Feeling my bile rising, I saw that I could conceal it only by joining in the whist game which had already been arranged. She was in very high spirits, and it annoyed me. Beside me at the table, she exasperated me by a hundred freedoms which would have raised me to the seventh heaven if she had not twice rebuffed me that same day.

When the company was leaving she called me aside to say that she would send her aunt to me in the other room if I had really decided to give her the hundred guineas. I replied that it would be necessary to write and that the time was not suitable for it, and when she asked me to fix a time I said, showing her a purse full of gold pieces, that the time would come when she made it come.

Reflecting after she left that the young hussy had undoubtedly laid a deliberate plan to cheat me, I prepared to renounce my pursuit. The failure humiliated me, but I saw a certain courage in accepting it. To distract myself I the next day began going to my daughter's boarding school, taking a basket of sweetmeats with me. I rejoiced Sophie's soul, as well as those of her schoolmates, with whom she shared them all. But the pleasure I felt was greater than theirs. I went there nearly every day. The journey took only an hour and a quarter.[10] I brought them all sorts of trinkets and small articles of attire which delighted them; Her Ladyship was politeness itself to me, and my daughter, who openly called me her dear papa, made me every day more convinced that I had won her heart as I had given her life. In less than three weeks I congratulated myself that I had forgotten La Charpillon and had replaced her by innocent affections, though one of Sophie's schoolmates pleased me a little too much for me to find myself entirely free from amorous desires.

In this state, one morning at eight o'clock I saw before me the coquette's favorite aunt, who said that her niece and the entire family were mortified that I had not put in an appearance since the supper I had given them, and especially herself, to whom her niece had given the hope that I would provide her with the means to compound her "balm of life."

"Yes, Madame, I would have given you a hundred guineas, if your niece had treated me like a friend. She refused me favors which even a Vestal[11] would have granted me, and you know that she is no Vestal."

"Permit me to laugh. She is lighthearted, a bit of a scatterbrain, she gives herself only when she is sure she is loved. She told me everything. She loves you, but she fears that your love is only a passing fancy. She is in bed with a bad cold, and she thinks she has a slight fever. Come to see her, and I am sure you will not leave dissatisfied.''

At these words all the desire which I had felt to possess the girl reawoke; and after a good laugh at myself for it, I asked her at what hour I should go there to be sure of finding her in bed. She said to go immediately, and to knock only once. I told her to go and wait for me.

How gratified I was to see that I was about to succeed in possessing her and that I had made sure I should not be tricked, for, having put my case to her aunt, and having her on my side, I had no more doubts.

I quickly put on a redingote, and in a quarter of an hour I am at her door. I knock once, and the aunt comes tiptoeing to open the door and tell me to come back in half an hour, for, having to take a bath, she was already naked in her tub.

''Damn it! one lie after another! The excuse is trumped up. I don't believe a word of it.''

''Truly I am not lying, and if you promise to behave I will take you to her room on the fourth floor. She can say what she pleases to me afterward, I'll pay no attention.''

''To her room? And she is in the bath? Are you deceiving me?''

''No. Follow me.''

She goes up, I follow her. She opens a door, she pushes me in, then she shuts it, and I see La Charpillon stark naked in the tub; pretending to think that it is her aunt, she asks her to bring her towels. She was in the most seductive position that love could ask; but no sooner has she seen me than she crouches down and gives a cry.

''Don't cry out, for I am nobody's dupe. Be still.''

''Go away.''

''No. Let me recover myself.''

"Go away, I say!"

"Be quiet, and fear no violence."

"My aunt shall pay me for this."

"She is an excellent woman and she will find a true friend in me. I will not touch you, but straighten up."

"What! Straighten up?"

"Take the position you were in when I entered."

"Certainly not, and I beg you to leave."

By dint of trying to double up more effectively, she displayed an even more seductive picture, pretending to trust in gentleness to persuade me to go, after seeing that anger had failed her. But when, though I promised not to touch her, she saw me resolved to quench as well as I could the fire she knew she had kindled in my soul, she turned her back on me, determined that I should neither think that she could take pleasure in seeing me, nor myself get any pleasure from the thought. I knew all this, but needing to recover my sanity, I had to sink to anything to appease my senses, and I was not sorry to see the cheat take effect very quickly. Just then the aunt came in, and I left without saying a word, rather glad to have acquired a feeling of contempt which assured me that feelings of love would have no more power over me.

The aunt overtook me at the door, and, asking me if I was pleased, told me to step into the parlor.

"Yes," I said, "very pleased to have made your acquaintance, and here is your reward."

So saying, I threw her a hundred-pound bank note to make her "balm of life" with, not bothering to wait for the receipt which she offered to give me. I was not brazen enough to give her nothing, whereas the ba . .[12] was more than sufficiently so to guess that I should not dare leave her unrewarded.

Back at home, after thoroughly considering what had happened and deciding that I was the victor, I rejoiced; and, recovering all my good humor, I felt certain that I would never again set foot in the house of those women. There were seven of them, counting two maidservants.

Their need to subsist had led them to adopt the course of rejecting no means to that end, and when in their councils they concluded that they had to employ men, they confided in the three I have named, who in their turn would have had no means of subsistence without them.

Thinking only of amusing myself, going to the theaters, to the taverns in the neighborhood of London, and to the boarding school where my daughter was, I happened to meet her at Vauxhall with her aunt and Goudar, five or six days after the scene by the bathtub. I tried to avoid her, but she at once came up to me, gaily reproaching me for my bad manners. I answered her harshly; but, pretending not to notice it, she entered an arbor, inviting me to drink a cup of tea with her. I said that I felt more inclined to sup, and she replied that in that case it was she who would accept an invitation from me. I am willing; I order for four, and to all appearances we are the best of friends. Her remarks, her gaiety, her charms, the power of which I had experienced, once again displaying themselves before my weak soul, now all the weaker from drink, I propose a stroll in the darker walks, hoping, I add, that she will not treat me as she had treated His Lordship. She replies sweetly enough, and with an appearance of sincerity which very nearly deceived me, that she wanted to be mine entirely and in the light; but that first she must have the satisfaction of seeing me call on her every day, like a true friend of the household.

"You shall see me there without fail, but now come into the walk and give me a little proof of your intentions."

"No! Absolutely not!"

At that I left her, refusing to take her home, and I went home to bed a little tipsy.

The next morning I heartily congratulated myself on her not having taken me at my word. The power which the creature had gained over me was irresistible and I was convinced that I had no other means of saving myself from becoming her dupe except either not to see her or to continue to see her and renounce enjoying her charms. The second course seeming to me impossible, I decided on the first; but the wench had determined not to let me put it into practice. The way in which she went about accomplishing her purpose must have been the result of her regular discussions with her whole infamous coterie.[13]

At home a few days after the little supper at Vauxhall, I saw before me the Chevalier Goudar, who began by congratulating me on my wise decision to see no more of the Augspurghers

"For," he said, "if you had continued to go there you would have fallen more and more in love with the girl, and she would have reduced you to beggary."

"Then you must think me a great fool. If I had found her accommodating, she would have found me grateful, but without going beyond my means in the proofs of it I should have given her; and if I had found her cruel I could any day have done what I have done already, and so she would never have reduced me, as you think, to beggary."

"Then you are firmly resolved not to see her again?"

"Yes, firmly."

"Then you are no longer in love with her?"

"I was in love with her, and I have learned how to cure myself of it. In a few days I shall have forgotten her completely. I was no longer thinking of her when the devil contrived that I should meet the four of you in Vauxhall."

"There you are! Be persuaded that the true way to be cured of an unhappy love is not to flee the seductive object, for, when one lives in the same country, it is only too easy to cross her path everywhere."

"What other way is there?"

"Enjoying her. It is possible that La Charpillon does not love you; but you are rich, and she has nothing. You could have had her for a certain sum of money, and you would have been far more pleasantly cured when you had found her unworthy of your constancy, for, after all, you know what she is.'"

"I would gladly have taken that course if I had not clearly seen her plan."

"You would have frustrated it by coming to an agreement with her. You should never have paid in advance! I know the whole story."

"What can you know?"

"I know that she has cost you a hundred guineas, and that you have not had a single kiss from her. For that amount you could have had her in bed. She herself boasts of having tricked you."

"She lies. I made her aunt a present of the amount, which she needs, she tells me, to make her fortune."

"Yes, to compound her 'balm of life'; but admit that, but for her niece, she would never have received it."

"I admit it; but tell me, please, what leads you to come to say these things to me today, you who are of her coterie?"

"What brings me here, I swear to you, is nothing but friendship for you, and as for your saying that I am of her coterie, I will set you right by telling you the incident which made me acquainted with the girl, and with her mother, her grandmother, and her two aunts.

"Sixteen months ago," he went on, "happening to be at Vauxhall, I saw the Venetian Ambassador, the Procurator Morosini, walking alone. He had just arrived to congratulate the King on his accession to the throne in the name of his Republic. Seeing His Excellency delighting in watching the young London beauties who were strolling here and there, it occurred to me to go to him and say that all those beauties were at his command and that he had only to throw his handkerchief at whichever one of them he was pleased to choose. My remark making him laugh, and continuing to stroll with me while I assured him that I was not joking, he asked me, pointing to a girl, if he could have her too. Not knowing her, I told him to continue his stroll, saying that I would join him presently with the answer. Having no time to lose, and certain, from her manner, that I was not about to make my proposal to a Vestal, I approach the girl and the lady who was with her, and I tell her that the Ambassador is in love with her and that I will bring him to her if she feels inclined to encourage his newborn passion. The aunt says that a nobleman of his rank could only honor her house if he came to it to make her niece's acquaintance. They give me their name and address, and the thing is done. I leave them, and before rejoining the Ambassador I happen upon a great connoisseur whom I ask who a certain Mademoiselle Charpillon, of Denmark Street Soho, may be."

"So it was La Charpillon?"

"None other. He tells me that she is a Swiss girl who is not yet a public woman but who to all appearances soon will be, for she is not rich and has a numerous family, all females. I at once overtake the Venetian, and telling him that his business is done, I ask him at what hour on the next day I may introduce him to the beauty, warning him that, since she has a mother and aunts, she will not receive him alone. He has no objection to that; he is even glad that she is not a public woman. He appoints an hour at which I am to go with him, incognito, in a hackney carriage, and I leave him. After informing the girl and her aunt of the hour, and adding that she must pretend not to know who he is, I go home. The next day I introduced him to them, and after spending an hour in perfectly decent conversation with the girl and her aunt without making any proposal, we left. On the way the Ambassador told me that he wanted to have her on the conditions which he would give me at his residence the next day in writing, and not otherwise.

"The conditions were that Mademoiselle should go to live in a small furnished house, which would cost her nothing and in which she was to receive no one. His Excellency would arrange for her to receive fifty guineas a month and would pay for supper whenever he chose to go to sleep with her. He instructed me to find him the house, if the contract, which must be signed by the girl's mother, was agreed to, and to act quickly. In three days I did and settled everything, but demanding a written agreement from the mother that she would give me her daughter for one night after the departure of the Ambassador, who it was known would remain in London only a year.''

At this point Goudar took from his pocket the agreement, which I read and reread with as much surprise as pleasure. Then he went on as follows:

''At the end of the year the Ambassador left, and the girl was free. She had Lord Baltimore,[14] Lord Grosvenor,[15] the Portuguese Envoy Saa, and several others, but none of them as his acknowledged mistress. I press the mother to make her give me a night, as she had agreed to do in writing; but she refuses to take me seriously, and the girl, who does not love me, laughs in my face. I cannot have her arrested, for she has not reached the required age; but in a few days I shall obtain a warrant for her mother's arrest, and all London will laugh. Now you know why I constantly go to her house; but you are wrong if you believe that I am involved in the plots which are hatched here. However, I can assure you that they are considering how to get you into their toils again, and that they will succeed if you are not very careful.''

''Tell the mother that I have another hundred guineas at her disposal if she can arrange for me to spend a night with her daughter.''

''Do you really mean that?''

''I do indeed, but I will not pay the money until the thing is done.''

''That is the one sure way not to be taken in. I undertake the commission with pleasure.''

I kept the brazen scoundrel to dinner with me. He was a man who, in the sort of life I was leading in London, could not but be useful to me. He knew everything, and he told me any number of amorous anecdotes which I was very glad to hear. He was, besides, known as the author of several works[16] which, though bad, showed that he had a certain wit. He was then writing his *Chinese Spy,* composing five or six letters a day at the coffeehouses at which he chanced to be. I amused myself by writing a number of them[17] for him, for which he was most grateful to me. The reader will see in what condition I found him some years later in Naples.

No later than the next day I am surprised in my room by La Charpillon herself, who, not gay but serious, tells me that she has not come for breakfast but to demand an explanation from me; at the same time she introduces Miss Lorenzi.[18] I bow to her.

"What explanation do you want, Mademoiselle?"

At these words Miss Lorenzi thinks it proper to leave us alone. She was ugly. It was the first time that I had seen her. I told Jarba to bring her breakfast and to tell the portress that I was at home to no one.

"Is it true, Monsieur, that you sent the Chevalier Goudar to tell my mother that you would give her a hundred guineas for a night with me?"

"It is true. Are a hundred guineas not enough?"

"I will thank you not to jest. It is not a question of bargaining. It is a question of learning if you think you have the right to insult me, and if you think I am one to put up with it."

"If you feel that you have been insulted I admit that I am in the wrong; but I did not expect as much. To whom was I to address myself? For directly to you leads to nothing. You are too fond of deceiving, and you exult only when you break your word."

"I told you that you should never have me either by violence or for money, but only when you have made me fall in love with you by your attentions. Now prove to me that I have failed to keep my word to you. It is you who have failed in your duty to me by your trick of surprising me when I was in the bath, and yesterday by sending to ask my mother to deliver me over to your brutality. Only a scoundrel would undertake that errand for you."

"Goudar a scoundrel? He is your best friend. You know that he loves you, and that he procured the Ambassador for you only in the hope of having you. The written agreement which is in his possession proves your wrongdoing. You are in debt to him. Pay him, and then call him a scoundrel if you can find yourself innocent by some other ethics than his. Do not cry, Mademoiselle, for I know the source of your tears. It is impure."

"You do not know it. I tell you I love you; and it is a cruel thing for me to find myself treated in this way by you."

"If you love me, you have chosen a very poor way to make me believe it."

"As you have to convince me of your esteem. You began with me as you would have done with a prostitute, and yesterday as if I were an animal without a will of my own, the mere slave of my mother. It seems to me that if you had any consideration you should at least have asked me directly, and not by the mouth of a vile go-between but in writing. I would have[19] answered you in writing, and then there would have been no possibility of deceit."

"Imagine that I did write to you; what would your answer have been?"

"Observe my frankness. I would have promised to satisfy you, without a word about the hundred guineas, simply on condition that you would pay court to me for only two weeks, coming to my house and never asking the slightest favor of me. We should have laughed, you would have become one of the family, we should have gone to promenades and plays together, and at last, having made me madly in love with you, you would have had me in your arms as you would have deserved to have me, not from compliance but from love. I am astonished that a man like you can be content that a girl whom he loves should give herself to him as an act of compliance. Do you not consider it humiliating, on the one side as well as on the other? I feel ashamed when I think—and I admit it to you—that I have never yet been moved by more than compliance. Alas for me! Yet I feel that I was born to love, and I believed that you were the man whom heaven had sent to England to make me happy. You have done the very opposite. No man has ever seen me cry. You have even made me unhappy at home, for my mother will never have the sum you offered her, even if it were to cost me only one kiss."

"I am truly sorry to have hurt you; but I see no way of mending it."

"Come to our house; that will mend it; and keep your money, which I despise. If you love me, come and conquer me like a reasonable lover and not like a brute; I will help you do it, for you must be sure now that I love you!"

This harangue won me over. I gave her my word that I would pay court to her every day and be for her what she wanted me to be; but not for longer than the time she had prescribed. She confirmed her promise, and her brow cleared. She rose, and when I asked her to give me one kiss as a pledge of her good faith, she said with a laugh that I must not begin by violating our conditions. I agreed, and I begged her pardon. She left me in love, and hence full of repentance for all my past conduct toward her. *Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur* ("To love and be wise is scarcely granted to a god").[20]

The adjurations and the arguments to which she treated me, and of which the account I have just given is but a feeble representation, would perhaps have had no power if she had sent them to me in a letter; but delivered *viva voce* they could not but put me in chains. In a letter I should have seen neither her tears nor her captivating features, which all pleaded for her before a judge already corrupted by the God of Love. I began going to see her late in the afternoon of that same day, and in the reception I was given, instead of seeing that they were mocking me in my defeat, I thought I heard applause for my heroism.

> *Quel che l'uom vede Amor gli fa invisibile*
> *E l'invisibil fa veder Amore*
>
> ("Love makes what a man sees invisible, and Love makes him see what is invisible.")[a]

I spent the whole of the two weeks without ever taking her hand to kiss it, and I never entered her house without bringing her a costly present, which she made of inestimable value by her enchanting grace and her show of boundless gratitude. In addition, to make the time pass more quickly I arranged some diversion every day, either at one of the theaters or on the outskirts of London. The two weeks must have cost me at least four hundred guineas. The last day finally came.

In the morning I timidly asked her, in her mother's presence, if she intended to spend the night in my house, or at home in her own bed with me. Her mother replied that we would decide that after supper. I agreed, not daring to point out to her that at my house the supper would have been tastier, and hence more costly and more inviting to love.

After supper the mother told me to leave with the company and to come back later. Although laughing to myself at this secrecy, I obeyed; and, returning, here I am at last in the parlor, where I see the mother and the daughter and a bed on the floor. I am free at last of any fear of being duped; but I am surprised that the mother, wishing me good night, asks me if I will pay the hundred guineas in advance.

"For shame!" said her daughter.

And the mother left. We locked the door.

It was the moment when my love was to begin its escape from slavery. So I go to her with open arms, but, though without harshness, she draws away, asking me to get into bed first while she makes ready to do likewise. I yield to her will, I undress, I get into bed, and, on fire with love, I see her undress, and when she has nothing on but her shift I see her blow out the candles.

Left in darkness, I complain, I say that it is impossible, she replies that she can sleep only in the dark. I think it base, but I control myself. Knowing that modesty could not enter in, I begin to foresee all the resistances whose purpose is to sour the pleasures of love, but I hope to overcome them.

No sooner do I feel that she is in bed than I approach to clasp her in my arms, but I find her worse than dressed. Crouched in her long shift, her arms crossed, and her head buried in her bosom, she let me talk as much as I will and never answers a word. When, tired of talking, I determine to act, she remains motionless in the same position and defies me to do it. I thought her behavior was meant to be a joke; but at last I am convinced that it is nothing of the sort. I see that I am duped, a fool, the most contemptible of men, as I see that the girl is the vilest of whores.

In such a situation love easily becomes rage. I lay hold of her as if she were a bolt of goods, but I can accomplish nothing; it seems to me that her accursed shift is the reason for it, and I succeed in tearing it open behind, from the top to her buttocks; thereupon, my hands becoming claws, I count on the most brutal violence on my part, but all my efforts were vain. I made up my mind to stop when I found my strength exhausted and when, having grasped her neck in one hand, I felt a strong temptation to strangle her.

Cruel night, heartbreaking night, during which I talked to the monster in every possible key: gentleness, anger, reasonableness, remonstration, threats, rage, despair, prayers, tears, vilification, atrocious insults. She resisted me for three whole hours without ever answering me, and without ever straightening up except once to prevent me from doing something which would in a way have avenged me.

At three o'clock in the morning, amazed, stupefied, feeling my head on fire, I decided to dress in the dark. I opened the door to the parlor, but finding the street door locked, I raised a row, and a maidservant came to open it for me. I walked home, accompanied by a night watchman[22] whom I went to Soho Square to find. I at once got into bed, but irritated Nature avenged herself by refusing me the rest I needed. When it grew light I took a cup of chocolate, which my stomach refused to keep down, and an hour later my shivering announced a fever which did not subside until the next day, leaving me unable to move my limbs. Ordered to stay in bed and to diet, I was sure that I should recover my strength in a few days; but what was balm to my soul was my certainty that I was cured of my insane love, for I felt that I was free from any thought of revenge. Shame had made me loathe myself.

The morning on which I had succumbed to the fever, I had ordered my manservant to shut my door to everyone, to announce no visitors to me, and to put any letters which might come for me into my desk, for I did not want to read them until I had recovered my health. It was on the fourth day that, feeling a little better, I asked Jarba for my letters. Among those which had come by post I find one from Pauline, who writes me from Madrid that Clairmont had saved her life in crossing a river, and that, not thinking she could find another servant as faithful, she had decided to keep him until she reached Lisbon, whence she would send him back to me by sea. At the time I thought she had done well; but as it turned out she caused me to lose Clairmont. I learned four months later that the ship on which he had taken passage had been wrecked, and, not seeing him again, I believed, as I believe today, that he was drowned.

Among the letters which had come by the "penny post''[23] I found two from La Charpillon's mother and one from herself. In the first of the two letters which the infamous mother wrote me on the morning after the night I had spent with her daughter, she told me, not knowing that I was ill, that her daughter was in bed with a high fever and covered with bruises from the blows I had given her, which obliged her to sue me in court. In the second letter, written the next day, she said she had learned that I was ill like her daughter and that she was sorry to hear it, her daughter herself having admitted to her that I might have reason to complain of her, but that she would justify herself at our first interview. The letter from La Charpillon was written on the third day. She said she confessed that she had been so much in the wrong that she was surprised I had not strangled her when I had her by the neck, and she swore that she would not have resisted it, for such was her duty in the cruel dilemma in which she had found herself. She said that, feeling certain that I had resolved not to go to her house again, she begged me to receive her at mine once only, since she was eager to inform me of something which would be of interest to me and which she could communicate to me only by word of mouth. In a note which Goudar had written me that morning at my door, he said that he had something to say to me and that he would come back at noon. I at once ordered him admitted.

The extraordinary man began by amazing me with a detailed account of all that had happened to me with La Charpillon during the four hours she had spent in bed with me, even down to the torn shift and the moment when she thought I would strangle her. He said that he had been informed of the entire scene by her mother, to whom the girl had given an exact account of everything. He said that she had not had fever, but that it was true that her whole body was covered with black marks, obvious signs of the blows she had received, and that her mother's great regret was that she had not received the hundred guineas, which I would certainly have paid in advance if her daughter had insisted.

"She would have had them in the morning," I said, "if she had been amenable."

"She had sworn to her mother that she would not be, and do not hope to have her without her mother's consent."

"But why does she not consent?"

"Because she maintains that as soon as you have enjoyed her you will leave her."

"That might be so; but after I had rewarded her adequately, whereas now she is left without being able to hope for anything more."

"Is that your firm resolve?"

"Most firm."

"It is your best course; but I want to show you something which will surprise you. We shall meet again in an hour."

An hour later he comes back, followed by a porter who brought an armchair[24] covered by a piece of cloth up to my room. As soon as we were alone Goudar uncovered the chair and asked me if I would like to buy it. I replied that I should not know what to do with it, besides which it was an unattractive piece of furniture.

"Nevertheless," he said, "the price asked for it is a hundred guineas."

I reply with a laugh that I would not give three for it, and this is what he then said to me:

"The chair you see here has five springs, all of which operate at the same time as soon as a person sits down in it. Their action is very rapid. Two seize the person's two arms and hold them fast; two more, lower down, take hold of his legs, spreading them as far apart as possible, and the fifth raises the back of the seat in such a way that it forces the seated person onto his coccyx."

After telling me this, Goudar sits down, the springs operate, and I see him held by the arms, and otherwise in the same position in which an obstetrician would put a woman whose labor he wanted to make easy.

"Get La Charpillon to sit here," he said, "and your business is done."

After laughing my fill, I tell him I do not want to buy it but that he will do me a favor if he will leave it[25] with me for only a day.

"Not even an hour unless you buy it, and the owner of the contrivance is waiting for me a hundred paces from here."

"Then return it to him and come back for dinner."

He told me what I had to do at the back of the chair to make the springs return to their places and so set him free. He covered it with the cloth again, he summoned the porter, and he left.

The action was infallible, and it was not avarice which kept me from buying the contrivance, for it must have cost its owner far more, but the fear which it inspired in me after I reflected a little. The crime could have cost me my life in the view of English judges, and besides I could not have brought myself deliberately to obtain possession of La Charpillon by force, still less by the action of this formidable contrivance, which would have made her die of fear.

At dinner I told Goudar that, La Charpillon having proposed to pay me a visit, I should have liked to keep the mechanical chair to convince her that I could have had my will of her if I had wanted to. I showed him the letter she had written me, and he advised me to let her pay the visit, if only for curiosity's sake.

Feeling in no hurry to receive the wench with those black marks on her face and bosom, which she would only have paraded to make me blush for my brutal fury, I spent eight or ten days without making up my mind to receive her, Goudar coming every day to inform me of the results of the councils held by the crew of females who were resolved to live only by trickery. He told me that La Charpillon's grandmother was a Bernese woman who had taken the name of Augspurgher without any right to it, being only the mistress of a citizen so named, by whom she had had four daughters; La Charpillon's mother was the youngest of them. This youngest daughter, who was pretty enough, having indulged in conduct not consonant with the wise regulations of the Swiss Government, had been the cause of a decree of exile from the canton for the entire family, which had gone to settle in Franche-Comté,[26] where they had lived for a time on the profits of the "balm of life," the manufacture of which the grandmother directed.

"It was there that La Charpillon was born. Her mother gave her that name, I do not know why, saying that her father was a Count of Boulainvilliers,[27] whose mistress she had been for three months. La Charpillon becoming pretty, her mother concluded that her great good fortune awaited her in Paris, and went there to live; but four years later, seeing that the sale of her balm did not suffice to support her, that La Charpillon, being still too young, did not find a man of substance to keep her, and that the debts she had incurred threatened her with prison, she decided to go to live in London, so advised by Monsieur Rostaing, who had become her lover and who, also burdened with debts, had to flee from France. Five or six months after her arrival in London the mother nearly died from the overdose of mercury she took to cure her of the cruel disease with which Rostaing admits that he infected her.

"Coumon is a Languedocian, an intimate friend of Rostaing's, who serves him, as he does the whole family, by bringing dupes whom he picks up in the coffeehouses of London to their house for games at whist. The profit is always honorably and equally divided into six parts; but what La Charpillon earns from the temporary relations into which she enters in the great nocturnal gatherings in the gardens of London is buried in secrecy; however, I know that her mother supports Rostaing."

Such is the story I learned from Goudar. The man introduced me to the most celebrated courtesans in London, and above all to Kitty Fisher,[28] who was beginning to go out of fashion. In a potshop where we were drinking a bottle of strong beer,[29] which is better than wine, he introduced me to a girl who served there, sixteen years of age, whom I thought a wonder of nature. She was Irish and a Catholic, and her name was Sarah.[30] I wanted to have her, but he would never permit it. He himself was trying to get possession of her, and he told me he was jealous of her. He did in fact get possession of her some time later, and the following year he left England with her. Then he married her. She is the same Sarah Goudar who shone at Naples, Florence, Venice, and elsewhere, always with him, and of whom I will speak four or five years hence. He had hatched the scheme of giving her to Louis XV, putting an end to the domination of Madame Du Barry, but a *lettre de cachet*[31] sent him running. Happy days of the *lettre de cachet*, alas, you are gone forever!

When La Charpillon, after looking in vain for a reply to her last letter, saw two weeks pass without hearing a word about me, she resolved to return to the assault. This must have been the result of an extremely secret council, for Goudar had told me nothing about it.

She was announced as having arrived at my door alone in a sedan chair, a thing so extraordinary that I at once decided to receive her. I saw her before me just as I was taking chocolate; I do not rise, I do not offer her any; but she modestly asks me for some, sitting down beside me and putting out her face for me to kiss, which she had never done before. I turn my head away, but this utterly unexpected refusal does not disconcert her:

"It is," she says, "these still visible marks from the blows you gave me which make my face distasteful to you."

"You lie, I never struck you."

"It makes no difference, your tiger's claws left bruises all over my body. Look, for you run no risk that what you see will have the power to seduce you. Besides, it is nothing you have not seen before."

So saying, the scheming wench rises and shows me the whole surface of her body marked here and there with bruises which were still livid despite their age. Coward that I was, why did I not turn my eyes away? Because she was beautiful, and because I loved her charms, and because charms would not deserve their name if they were not more powerful than a man's reason. I pretended to look only at the bruises. Fool that I was! She already knew that I was tasting the poison and even gulping it down; but suddenly she rearranges her clothing and sits down beside me again, sure that I wished the exhibition would continue longer; but I control myself and I say coldly that it had been her own fault if I had hurt her so badly, and that this was so true that I could not even be sure that I had done it.

"I know," she said, "that it is all my fault, for if I had been affectionate, as I ought to have been, I could now show you only the traces of kisses; but repentance blots out crime. I come to ask your forgiveness. May I hope for it?"

"You have it already. I hold nothing against you, and it is I who repent; but I have not yet been able to forgive myself. That is all. Now that you know all, you can leave and cease both to count on me and to trouble my peace in future."

"It shall be as you wish; I know all, it is true; but it is you who do not know all, and you shall know it, if you will permit me to spend another half hour with you."

"Since I have nothing to do, you may stay and say what you have to say."

Despite the haughty role which reason and honor laid it upon me to play, I was greatly touched and, what is far worse, I felt inclined to believe that the girl had come to me again not to deceive me but to persuade me that she loved me, and that she wanted at last to deserve my becoming her fond lover. The speech she made to tell me what I did not know required no more than a quarter of an hour, and she used two, constantly interrupting it by tears and countless digressions. The gist of it was that her mother had made her swear by her soul's salvation that she would spend the night with me as she had spent it, and that she had obeyed her. She offered to be mine as she had been Signor Morosini's, living with me, seeing no more of her mother or any of her relatives, and visiting no one except the people I wanted her to visit, while I was to allow her a certain sum each month, which she would turn over to her mother to keep her from troubling her with actions at law, since she was not old enough to claim independence.

She dined with me, and she made this proposal toward nightfall, when, having seen her listen unprotestingly while I said everything to her that she deserved to hear, I had become calm and resolved to expose myself to temptation once again. A little while before she left I said to her that we could live together as she had proposed, but that I absolutely insisted on sealing the bargain with her mother, and so she should see me at her house the next day. I saw that she was surprised.

It is clear that she would that day have granted me anything I could desire, and that in consequence there would have been no question of resistance in the future and that I should have been safe from any trickery. Then why did I not do what was no less than a duty I owed to myself? Because love, which makes a man a fool, persuaded me that, having that day been the creature's judge, it would have been base in me if I had gone on to become her lover. She must have left with a feeling of contempt and a determination to avenge herself for my coldness. But a man in love cannot see his mistakes until he is no longer in love. Goudar was amazed the next day when I told him of her visit. I asked him to find me a small furnished house for rent by the month in Chelsea, and he undertook to do so. That evening I went to see the scheming wench at her house, but in a sober mood, of the absurdity of which she must have been fully aware. As she was alone with her mother, I hastened to tell the latter my plan: a house in Chelsea, to which her daughter would go to live and in which I should be the master, and fifty guineas a month for her to use as she saw fit.

"I do not care to know," the mother replied, "what sum you will give her a month; but I insist that when she leaves my custody to live elsewhere she shall give me the hundred guineas she should have received from you when you went to bed with her."

I replied that she would give them to her. The girl said that, while the house was being found, she hoped that I would come to see her. I promised I would do so.

No later than the next day Goudar came to tell me that there were a score of houses for rent in Chelsea, and that I should do well to go there with him and have the pleasure of choosing. We went, I chose, and I paid ten guineas in advance for a month, taking a receipt and obtaining acceptance of all the conditions I wanted to stipulate. In the afternoon of the same day I went to seal the bargain with the mother in the daughter's presence, making them both sign the agreement, whereupon I told the daughter to pack her things and come with me. She quickly filled a trunk with her clothes, I had it taken to my new house in a hackney carriage, and a half hour later she appears, ready to leave with me. The mother asks me for the hundred guineas, I give them to her, having no fear of being tricked, for all the girl's possessions were already in my house. We leave, and we arrive in Chelsea, where she declares the house very much to her liking. We take a stroll until nightfall, we talk, we sup in high spirits, then we go to bed, where she grants me some favors sweetly enough, but as soon as I want to proceed to the heart of the matter I am disappointed to encounter difficulties. She alleges reasons of nature, I reply that I do not consider that condition repellent enough to keep me from proving my love to her; but she resists, raising objections which, though groundless, her sweetness and her caresses persuade me to admit, and she puts me to sleep.

On waking in the morning and seeing her sleeping, it occurs to me to convince myself that she had not been lying, and I quickly unlace what prevented me from seeing; she wakes and tries to stop me, but it was too late. I gently reproach her for deceiving me, and she sees me ready to forgive her and my love eager to confirm her pardon; but it is she who refuses to forgive me for having taken her by surprise. She is angry, I try to calm her, and at the same time to force her to yield, she will not, she opposes force to force, and, knowing her tricks, I determine to make an end, but calling her all the names she deserved. She begins to dress, laughing at me so impertinently I am driven to slap her face and give her a kick which knocks her out of the bed; she screams, she stamps her feet, the caretaker comes up, she opens the door to him, she speaks to him in English, with blood streaming from her nose. The man who, as my good luck would have it, spoke Italian, told me that she wanted to leave, and that he advised me not to try to stop her, for she could lodge a very serious complaint, in which case he would have to testify against me. I replied that she could go to the devil if she pleased. She then finished dressing, and after staunching the blood and washing her face, she left in a sedan chair. I spent a long hour there without moving, unable to decide upon anything. I pronounced myself unworthy to live, and I found the girl's behavior incomprehensible and incredible. I finally decided to have the scheming wench's trunk put in a hackney carriage and to go back to my house, where, overwhelmed by melancholy, I went to bed after ordering my door closed to all visitors.

I spent twenty-four hours in reflections, all of which ended by convincing me of my mistakes and making me despise myself. I believe that what follows after a long period of despising oneself is a despair which leads to suicide.

Just as I was going out, Goudar arrived and told me to go back upstairs, for he had something important to say to me. After telling me that La Charpillon was at home,[32] and, having one cheek swollen and black, let no one see her, he advised me to send her her trunk and to give up any claims I might have upon her mother, for she was in the right and determined to ruin me by a calumny which could both ruin me and cost me my life. The reader can easily imagine its nature,[33] and everyone knows how easy it is to make it effectual in London. He said that he had been urged by the mother herself, who did not want to injure me, to act as mediator. After spending the whole day with the man, complaining to the top of my bent like the utter fool I was, I told him to assure the mother that I had no intention of keeping her daughter's trunk, but that I wanted to know if she would have the courage to receive it from me in person.

He undertook to deliver my message, but rightly saying that he felt sorry for me. He said that I was about to walk into their toils again, and that he pitied me; but I did not believe that she would have the courage to receive me, for, according to the agreement she had signed, she would at least have to give me back a hundred guineas; but, contrary to my expectation, Goudar came and reported with a laugh that Madame Augspurgher hoped that I would always continue to be the good friend of her house. I went there at nightfall, I had the trunk put in her parlor, and I spent an hour there without ever opening my mouth, looking at La Charpillon, who was sewing and who now and again pretended to dry her tears, who never raised her eyes to my face, and who two or three times loosened the bandage round her head so that I could see in what a state my slap had put her face.

I continued to go there every evening, always without speaking to her, until I saw that every sign of the damage I had done her was gone. During those five or six days my repentance for having had the temerity to disfigure her produced upon my too kindly soul the fatal effect of leading me to forget all her misdeeds and making me so much in love with her that, had she but known it, she could have stripped me of all I had and reduced me to beggary.

Seeing her prettiness restored, and dying to have her in my arms once again, sweet and caressing as I had had her, even though it had been imperfectly, I sent her a magnificent pier glass made in one piece, and a tea and coffee service for twelve of Dresden china, writing her a loving note in which I called myself the basest of men. She replied that she expected me for supper alone in her room, when she would give me, as I deserved, the most unmistakable tokens of her fond gratitude.

Certain that my good fortune now awaited me, I thought I saw that I should long since have attained it if I had been clever enough to attack her on the side of sentiment. In the blind intoxication of enthusiasm, I decided to put in her hands the two bills of exchange for six thousand francs which Bolomay had made over to my order and which gave me the right to send her mother and her aunts to prison

Enchanted by the happiness which awaited me and by the heroic feelings which made me worthy of it, I go to her house at suppertime, and I am at once very glad not to see the two sharpers, whom I mortally hated. She receives me in the parlor, her mother being present, and I see with pleasure the pier glass over the fireplace and the Dresden china service set out in order on the mantelpiece. After countless fond expressions, she invites me to go up to her room, and her mother wishes us a happy night. We go up, and after a sufficiently appetizing supper, I take the two bills of exchange from my portfolio and tell her the whole story of them. I end by saying that I am putting them[84] in her hands to make her certain that, as soon as she has decided to be my mistress without reservations, I will endorse them to her order, and to assure her that I am far from thinking of using them to avenge myself for the base treatment I had received from her mother and her aunts. I only stipulate that she shall promise me that they will not leave her hands. She praises my generous act in the highest terms, she promises everything, and she goes and puts them in her jewel case. After that I think I may begin to give her proofs of my passion, and I find her gentle; but as soon as I try to persuade her to crown my flame, she resists, she presses me to her bosom, and she commands her tears to flow. I control myself. I ask her if she will change her mind in bed, she sighs, then she says no. I was not stricken dumb, I was entirely deprived of the power of speech. A quarter of an hour later I rose, and, with an appearance of the greatest calm, I took my cloak, my hat, and my sword.

"What!" she said. "Do you not want to spend the night with me?"

"No."

"Shall we see each other tomorrow?"

"I hope so. Good-by."

I left that accursed house, and I went home to bed.

CHAPTER XII[1]

Continuation of the preceding chapter, but far stranger.

THE NEXT morning at eight o'clock Jarba announces her

"She has dismissed her chairmen," he says.

"Say that I am asleep and tell her to go away."

But just then she comes in, and Jarba leaves us.

"Be so good," I say quietly, "as to give me back the two bills of exchange which I put in your hands last night."

"I haven't them with me; but why do you want me to give them back?"

At this question, which could only be answered by an explanation in full, I demolished the dike by which the black humor which was poisoning me was confined to the region about my heart. It escaped like a torrent, manifesting itself in invectives and terrible threats. It was an explosion which continued for a long time, and which my nature needed to preserve my life. When, disgracing my reason, my tears began to flow, she seized the opportunity to tell me that she had promised her mother that she would never give herself to anyone in her own house, and that she had now come to mine only to convince me that she loved me and that her desires were equal to those I felt, and indeed she would never leave it, if such was my wish.

The reader who thinks that, at this declaration, all my anger should have vanished, and that I should instantly have made myself sure of her sincerity and the submission inseparable from it, is mistaken. He does not know that the passage from irritated love to black anger is short and swift, while the passage from anger to love is long, slow, and difficult. The distance is the same; but when anger is seconded by indignation, a man becomes absolutely incapable of any fond feeling. To brute hatred indignation adds noble scorn, which, sprung from reason, strengthens him and makes him invincible. Its duration depends on his temperament. It does not yield until it no longer exists. My temperament was such that, in me, simple anger lasted only a moment: *irasci celerem tamen ut placabilis essem* ("I become angry quickly, even as I am quickly appeased"),[2] but when indignation has entered in, my proud reason has always made me inflexible until forgetfulness supervened to restore me to my original state.

When La Charpillon on that occasion offered herself completely to my desires, she knew, she was certain, that my anger or my pride would keep me from taking her at her word. This sort of knowledge, reader, is the daughter of philosophy in you and in me; but in a coquette it is the daughter of nature.

The young monster left me toward nightfall, to all appearances mortified, downcast, and disconsolate, saying only these few words:

"I hope you will come back to me as soon as you have come back to yourself."

She spent eight hours with me, during which she interrupted me only five or six times to deny suppositions on my part which were true but which it was vital to her not to let pass. I never troubled to have dinner brought, but it was so that I should not have to eat with her.

After she left I found myself in a condition in which my only need was to rest; but I took a bowl of broth, then I slept fairly well. On waking I found that I was calm, and, recollecting the previous day, I thought that La Charpillon had repented of her wrongdoing, of which I thought I had seen her convinced when she left. It seemed to me that I had become indifferent to her and to everything to do with her. Such was the state to which the God of Love brought me in London ("In the mid way of our life")[3] at the age of thirty-eight. It was the end of the first act of my life. The second closed on my departure from Venice in 1783. The third will apparently close here,[4] where I am amusing myself writing these memoirs. The comedy will then have ended, and it will have had its three acts. If it is hissed, I hope that I shall not hear anyone tell me so; but I have not yet informed my reader of the last scene of this first act, and it is, I believe, the most interesting.

Chi ha messo il piè sull'amorosa pania
Cerchi ritrarlo e non v'inveschi l'ale,
Che non è in somma amor se non insania
A giudizio de' savi universale.

("Let him who has set his foot on the birdlime of love try to draw it back, and not entangle his wings in it, for love is nothing but madness, according to the universal judgment of the wise.")[5]

I went to walk in the Green Park, where I saw Goudar coming to meet me. I needed the scoundrel. He said that he had come from La Charpillon's, where he had found everyone in high spirits, and that though he had several times brought the conversation around to me he had never succeeded in getting a word out of them. I told him that I despised her, together with her whole family, and he praised me. He came to dine with me, then we went to the Walsh[6] woman's, where the celebrated Kitty Fisher came to wait for the Duke of xx, who was to take her to a ball. She had on over a hundred thousand crowns' worth of diamonds. Goudar told me I could seize the opportunity to have her for ten guineas, but I did not want to do so. She was charming, but she spoke only English. Accustomed to loving only with all my senses, I could not indulge in love without including my sense of hearing. She left. La Walsh told us that it was at her house that she swallowed a hundred-pound bank note on a slice of buttered bread which Sir Richard Atkins,[7] brother of the beautiful Mrs. Pitt,[8] gave her. Thus did the Phryne[9] make a present to the Bank of London.[10] I spent an hour with Miss Kennedy, who had lived with the Venetian Secretary of Embassy Berlendis.[11] She became drunk and indulged in all sorts of wantonness; but the image of La Charpillon, which was always with me, left me no appetite for possessing the charming Irishwoman. I returned to my house, melancholy and discontented. It seemed to me that I ought to renounce La Charpillon for ever; but, in consideration of my own honor, I should not leave her with the victory or with reason to boast that she had got the two bills of exchange from me for nothing. I resolved to make her give them back to me, either willingly or by force. I had to find a way to do it; and here is what made me believe that I had found it.

Monsieur Malignan, at whose lodging I had made the infernal creature's acquaintance, came to invite me to dinner there. Since he had dined at my house more than once with his wife and daughter, I could not refuse him, the more so since he asked me to send him two dishes prepared by my excellent cook. However, I did not agree to go until I had asked him who the persons were whom he had invited. He named them, and, not knowing them, I promised I would go. It was on the next day but one. I found there two young ladies from Liège, one of whom very soon interested me; it was she who introduced her husband, whom Malignan had not introduced to me, and another young man who I thought was paying court to the other lady, who she said was her cousin. The company being to my liking, I was hoping to spend a pleasant day, when, just after we all sat down at table, in comes La Charpillon, who gaily says to Madame Malignan that she would not have come to ask her for dinner if she had known she had so many guests. She was warmly received, and was given the place at my left; at my right was the lady from Liège whom I had already found very agreeable.

I saw that I was caught. If La Charpillon had arrived before dinner was served, I should have found some excuse to leave; but it was too late for that. The course I adopted all through the dinner was to disregard the intruder completely and to devote all my attention to the lady from Liège. After we rose from the table Malignan gave me his word of honor that he had not invited her, and I pretended to believe him.

The two ladies and gentlemen were to embark for Ostend three or four days later, and, speaking of their departure, the agreeable lady said that she was sorry to leave England without having seen Richmond.[12] I at once asked her to grant me the favor and the honor of showing it to her no later than the next day, and, not waiting for her to answer me, I invited her husband, her cousin, and, one after the other, the entire company, except La Charpillon, at whom I did not even look. The excursion was applauded and the invitation accepted.

"Two carriages seating four," I added, "will be ready tomorrow morning at eight o'clock, and there will be exactly eight of us."

"And I will make the ninth," said La Charpillon, fixing her eyes on my face with unexampled effrontery, "and I hope, Monsieur, that you will not turn me away."

"Certainly not, it would be impolite. I will precede you all on horseback."

"No, no! I will hold Mademoiselle Émilie on my lap."

She was Malignan's daughter. A quarter of an hour later I leave the drawing room to attend to something and, coming back, I encounter the brazen hussy, who says that I have insulted her most outrageously, and that I owe her amends or she will avenge herself.

"Begin," I said, "by giving me back my bills of exchange, and we will discuss the matter afterward."

"You shall have them tomorrow."

About ten o'clock I leave the company, after promising that I will not go on horseback and that the two carriages will be at Malignan's house, where we will all breakfast. I made all the arrangements accordingly.

The next morning after breakfast Malignan, his wife, his daughter, and the two gentlemen got into one carriage, and I had to get into the other with the two beautiful ladies and La Charpillon, who appeared to have become the married lady's intimate friend. The arrangement could not but put me in a bad humor. We arrived at Richmond in an hour and a quarter, and after ordering a good dinner we went to see the apartments, then the gardens, the weather being superb. It was autumn.

The informality of our stroll affording her the opportunity, La Charpillon comes up to me and says that she wants to give me back my bills of exchange at her house. At that I reproach her with her constant course of deceit, her base character, and her infamous behavior, I call her a who . . .,[13] I name the men with whom she has been, I swear to her that I hate her, and that it is she who must fear my vengeance; but she was well versed in her trade, she let me talk, holding my arm and smiling, but asking me to speak softly, for I might be heard. I was heard, and I was glad of it

At noon we went to dinner, and La Charpillon, sitting beside me, indulged in innumerable wanton words and gestures, all intended to make everyone believe that she was in love with me, and not caring if anyone thought she was hurt by the scorn which I showed for all her advances. She really made me angry, for no one could help concluding that I was a fool and that she was openly mocking me. I suffered a great deal at that dinner.

After dinner we returned to the garden, and La Charpillon, stubbornly determined to triumph, clings to my arm, and, knowing all the sites, after a few turns she takes me to the maze.[14] It was here that she wanted to put her powers to the test. She pulls me onto the grass with her, and launches a full-scale amorous attack, with expressions of passion and the fondest love. By displaying the most interesting part of her charms to my sight, she finally succeeded in seducing me; but I still do not know if it was love or a strong desire for revenge which determined me to surrender. However that may be, everything made me sure that she was to be mine, that she could not wait to prove it to me, and that she certainly had no idea of putting any obstacle in my way.

With this thought in mind, I become gentle and tender, I recant, I ask her a thousand pardons, I swear that I will no longer demand that she give me the bills of exchange, and that all that I possess is hers, and after these preliminaries, signed and confirmed by fiery kisses, I think I see that she herself invites me to gather the laurel of victory, but just at the very moment when I am certain that I shall possess her, she curvets and throws me out of the saddle.

"What now! What insane behavior!"

"Enough of this, my dear friend. I promise to spend the night at your house, in your arms."

She was still in them as she spoke the words; but my soul, my blood, the tumult of my heart left me unable to do anything but satisfy myself. Holding her clasped in my left arm with all the strength which the extreme of fury gave me, I take from my pocket a knife with a pointed blade, I unsheathe it with my teeth, and I put the point of it to her throat, which was bare except for a thin collar. I threaten to kill her if she moves.

"Do whatever you will. I ask you for nothing but my life; but after you have satisfied yourself I will not leave this place. I shall have to be taken to the carriage by force, and nothing shall stop me from telling the reason for it."

She did not need to threaten me, for I had recovered my reason the moment after the one which had decided me to cut her throat. I rose without answering her by a single word, and after picking up my knife, my hat, and my walking stick, I set out to find my way back from the bowling green[15] where I had been within a hair's-breadth of my ruin.

Can anyone believe that she followed me, that she took my arm, as if nothing had happened? It is impossible that a seventeen-year-old girl can be what she was without having gone through a hundred skirmishes of the same sort. Once the feeling of shame is overcome, she grows used to it, and she glories in it. When we rejoined the company I was asked if I had felt ill; but no one noticed the least change in her.

We returned to London, where, saying that I felt indisposed, I thanked the company and went home.

This episode made the strongest impression on my mind. I could not sleep. I knew beyond doubt that if I did not resolve to avoid every chance of seeing the girl I was absolutely lost. Her countenance cast a spell which I could not resist. So I decided not to see her again; but at the same time, ashamed of the weakness I had shown in entrusting the two bills of exchange to her and in letting myself be tricked every time she had promised to return them to me, I wrote her mother a note in which I advised her to force her daughter to send them back to me, or to prepare for proceedings on my part which would make her suffer.

After sending her the note I went out to distract myself, and after dining at a tavern I went to see my daughter at her boarding school, then I returned home, where Jarba handed me a sealed letter which had come by the "penny post." I open it, and I see that it is signed Augspurgher. It was the answer from La Charpillon's mother. Here is what it contained: "I am very much surprised that you should address yourself to me to obtain the two bills of exchange for six thousand French livres which you say you deposited with her. She has just told me that she will return them to you in person when you have grown wiser and have learned to respect her."

Reading this impertinent letter sent the blood to my head so violently that I forgot my morning's resolution. I put pistols in my pocket and I make my way to Denmark Street, Soho, intending to cane the wench into giving me back my letters. I had taken the pistols only to keep the upper hand of the two sharpers who supped there every night. I arrive in a fury, but I walk past the door, for I see the hairdresser waiting to be admitted. This hairdresser was a handsome young man who went every Saturday after supper to put up her hair in curl papers. Going to the nearest street corner, I stop, reflecting that I should do better to wait until the hairdresser was gone. Taking my stand just around the corner, a half hour later I see Rostaing and Coumon come out of the house, and I am very glad of it. It meant that supper was over. I hear eleven o'clock cried, and I am surprised that the hairdresser is staying so late. Three quarters of an hour later I see a maidservant come out with a candle in her hand, looking for something which must have fallen out of the window. I enter without compunction, I open the door to the parlor, which was two steps from the street door, and I see, in the words of Shakespeare, the "beast with the two backs"[16] stretched out on the sofa: La Charpillon and the hairdresser. On my appearance the wench gives a cry, her fancy man breaks away from her; but my stick begins descending on him without mercy or reprieve, and without leaving him time to rearrange his clothing. La Charpillon was trembling between the wall and the end of the sofa, not daring, by leaving there, to face the rain of blows from my stick, which might descend on her. The uproar brings the maids, then the aunts, then the paralytic mother; the hairdresser flees, and the three furies let fly at me with insults and imprecations which I find so unjustified that my righteous wrath descends on the furniture. The first objects I broke to pieces were the handsome pier glass and the china service I had given them. Their words angering me more and more, I smashed chairs to bits by hitting them against the floor; then, picking up my cane, I announced that I would break their heads open if they did not stop shouting. Quiet then fell.

Having thrown myself down on the sofa, for I was exhausted, I order the mother to give me my bills of exchange; but just then in comes the night watch.[17] To this night watch, which consists of a single man who walks about his district all night carrying a lantern and a long stick, is entrusted the safety and the peace of the whole vast city. There is one such everywhere. No one dares not to respect him. Putting three or four crowns into his hand, I told him to go away. He left, I shut the door, and, returning to the sofa, I again demanded my bills of exchange from Madame Augspurgher.

"I haven't them, ask my daughter for them."

"Send for her."

The two maids say that, when I began breaking up the chairs, she had fled by the street door, and that they did not know where she might have gone. At this news, the mother and the aunts are in tears·

"My daughter alone at midnight in the streets of London!"

"My niece is lost, where has she gone?"

"Accursed be the hour when you came to England to make us all wretched!"

Thinking of the terrified girl running through the streets at that hour, I tremble.

"Go," I say coldly to the two maids, "and look for her in the neighbors' houses, you will certainly find her. Come back and bring me news that she is safe, and you shall each have a guinea."

They went out, and one of the aunts followed to tell them where they might find her.

But when they saw that I was taking a part in the search for the girl, that I was alarmed by the danger in her running away, then it was that their complaints, their reproaches began again with all the more vigor. I remained there without a word, not only seeming to tell them that they were right, but on the way to being convinced myself that all the fault was mine. I waited impatiently for the maids to return. They finally arrive an hour after midnight. Breathless, and showing every sign of despair, they say they have searched everywhere, she is nowhere to be found. I give them two guineas nevertheless, and I remain there motionless and in terror, reflecting on what a dreadful part the horrible fear which my fury must have inspired in her might play in the disappearance of the unfortunate girl. How weak and stupid is a man in love!

Extremely affected by the disastrous turn of events, I do not hide my sincere repentance from the old cheats. I implore them to have her sought for everywhere as soon as the next day dawns, and to let me know instantly, so that I can hasten to beg her forgiveness on my knees and never see her again as long as I live. In addition I promise to pay for all the furniture I have broken, and to leave my bills of exchange in their hands, signing a receipt with my name. Having thus, to the eternal shame of my reason, made honorable amends to those whose souls laughed at honor, I left, promising two guineas to the maid who should bring me the news that the unfortunate girl had been found.

At the door I found the watch, who was waiting to see me home. Two o'clock had struck. I flung myself on my bed, where six hours of sleep, though broken by hideous phantasms and agonizing dreams, probably saved me from losing my reason.

At eight o'clock in the morning I hear a knocking, I run to the window, and I see one of my enemies' maids; with my heart pounding I shout that she is to be shown up, and I breathe again when I learn that Miss Charpillon had just come home by sedan chair, but in a pitiable condition. She had at once gone to bed.

"I came at once to tell you the news, not for the two guineas, but because I pity you."

The word "pity" takes me in at once; I give her the two guineas, I make her sit down near me, and I ask her to tell me all the details of her return. I feel certain that the maid is honest, that she has my interests at heart, and that if need be she will serve me faithfully. I am very far from suspecting that she may have an understanding with the mother. But how could I be so excessively stupid? It was because I needed to be so.

She began by telling me that her young mistress loved me and that she only played a part in deceiving me because her mother insisted on it.

"I know that, but where did she spend the night?"

"She took refuge with a shopwoman beyond Soho Square, where she spent the whole night, sitting uncomfortably in the shop. She has just gone to bed with a high fever. I am afraid it will have consequences, for she is in her critical days."

"That is not true, for with my own eyes I saw the hairdresser——"

"Oh, that makes no difference. He is not so particular."

"She is in love with him."

"I do not think so, though she often spends hours with him."

"And you tell me she loves me?"

"Oh, that has nothing to do with it."

"Tell her that I will go to spend the day at her bedside, and bring me her answer."

"I will send the other maid."

"No. She does not speak French."

She left, and, not having seen her reappear, at three o'clock in the afternoon I resolve to go myself to see how she is. Scarcely have I knocked once before her aunt comes to speak to me at the door and asks me not to come in, swearing that if I come in I will either kill or be killed. Her two friends were there, furiously angry with me, and the poor girl was delirious from a burning fever. She did nothing but cry out, "There is my murderer, there is Seingalt. He wants to kill me. Save me."

"In God's name, go away."

I go home, in despair and certain that I have been told the simple truth. Sunk in melancholy, I spend the whole day without eating, for I cannot swallow, and the whole night unable to sleep, with violent chills. I drank strong spirits, hoping to make myself drowsy. All was in vain; I vomited bile, I felt very weak, and the next morning at nine o'clock I went to La Charpillon's door, which was opened only a crack, as on the day before. The same shameless aunt came to say, absolutely forbidding me to enter, that the poor girl had had two relapses, that she was in convulsions and delirious, that she still constantly thought she saw me in the room, and that Dr. So-and-so said that if her condition grew worse during the next twenty-four hours she would die.

"She was having her menses," she said, "and the fright stopped them. It is terrible."

"Accursed hairdresser!"

"Youthful weakness! You should have pretended not to see anything."

"G . d d . . n it![18] What are you saying? You Swiss filth! You think that is possible? Take this."

I left, giving her a ten-pound note. Coming out of the street, I meet Goudar; I tell him, I beg him, to go to see how La Charpillon is, and to come to spend the whole day with me if he can. My expression terrifies him, he goes; and an hour later he came to tell me that the whole household was in despair, for the girl's life was in danger.

"Did you see her?"

"No. They told me that she kept throwing herself out of the bed stark naked, and that no one could see her."

"Do you believe it?"

"A maid who has always told me the truth assured me that she had gone mad because her period had stopped. In addition she has a continual fever and convulsions. I believe it all, for it is the usual consequence of a great fright in a girl who is in her critical period. She said you are the cause of it."

I then told him the whole story, describing the inability to control myself which came over me when I saw the hairdresser. Goudar could only say that he was sorry for me; but hearing that I had not been able either to eat or to sleep for forty-eight hours, he wisely told me that such grief could cost me my life or my reason. I knew it, and I saw no remedy for it. He spent the day with me, and he was useful to me; I could not eat, but I drank a great deal; unable to sleep, I spent the night pacing back and forth in my room, talking to myself like a madman.

I kept sending my Negro all day to find out how she was; and he always brought me back ill-omened answers. On the third day I go to her door myself at seven o'clock in the morning. After I have been kept waiting in the street for a quarter of an hour the door is opened part way, and I see the weeping mother, who, not letting me in, tells me that her daughter is on her deathbed. Just then a thin, pale, tall old man comes out, saying to her in Swiss German that there is nothing to do but to trust in God and obey his will. I ask her if he is the physician; she replies that the time for a physician has passed, that he is a minister of the Gospel, and that there is another upstairs.

"She can no longer speak; in an hour at the most she will be no more."

At that moment I feel as it were an icy hand clutching my heart. I let her burst into tears, and I leave saying that it is true that I was the ultimate cause of her daughter's death, but that she was the first cause of it. My trembling legs take me home, resolved to give myself the death which I thought the surest. In accordance with this terrible determination, at which I arrive with perfect coolness, I order my door shut to everyone. Then I go to my room, I put my watches, rings, snuffboxes, purse, and portfolio in my strongbox, which I put in my desk. I then write a short letter to the Venetian Resident, in which I tell him that after my death all my possessions are the property of Signor Bragadin.[19] I seal my letter, I lock it up in the same desk with the strongbox in which I had all my money, my diamonds, and my jewels, and I put the key in my pocket, in which I keep only two or three guineas in silver. I also put in my pocket my good pistols, and I go out, firmly intending to drown myself in the Thames at the Tower of London.[20] In accordance with this resolve, formed and fostered not by anger or love but in the cold light of reason, I go to a shop to buy as many lead balls as my pockets could hold and the weight of which I could manage to carry as far as the Tower, to which I intended to go on foot. I set out for it, and, reflecting on what I am about to do, I conclude that I could take no wiser course, for, if I remained alive, I should be in hell every time the image of La Charpillon arose in my memory. I even congratulate myself on its costing me no effort whatever to adopt this course; in addition I rejoice that I am just enough to punish myself, having found myself guilty of the unforgivable crime of cutting short the life of a charming object which Nature had created for love.

I walked slowly because of the immense weight I was carrying in my pockets, which assured me that I should die at the bottom of the river before my body could reappear by rising to the surface. Halfway across Westminster Bridge,[21] I come upon Sir Wellbore Agar,[22] a rich and amiable young Englishman who enjoyed life by catering to his passions. I had made his acquaintance at Lord Pembroke's in Saint Albans, then he had dined at my house, then at General Beckwith's, and we had always spent our time together very gaily, conversing on topics dear to the young. I see him, and I try to pretend that I do not see him, but he comes and catches me by the lapels

"Where are you bound? Come with me, unless you are going to get someone out of prison, and we will have a good laugh"

"I cannot Let me go."

"What is the matter with you, my dear friend? I do not recognize you."

"Nothing is the matter."

"Nothing is the matter? You don't see your expression. You are on your way, I swear, to do something disastrous. It's plain from your face. There's no use denying it."

"I tell you there's nothing the matter. Good-by. I will go with you some other day"

"Come now, my friend! You have a black look. I won't leave you. I will go with you."

He looks at one side of my breeches, and he catches a glimpse of a pistol, he looks at the other, he sees the mate to it, he takes my hand, he says he is sure I am going to fight, and that, as my friend, he insists upon looking on, assuring me that he will not try to interrupt the meeting. I assure him with a smile that I am not going to fight, and, without thinking what it would lead to, I find myself saying that I was only going for a walk.

"Excellent," says he. "In that case I hope my company will be agreeable to you, as yours is precious to me. We'll dine at the 'Cannon.'[23] I will go now to send someone to tell the girl who was to dine with me alone to bring along a young Frenchwoman who—Goddamme!—[24] is charming. We will make two couples."

"My dear friend, pray excuse me, I am sad, I need to go somewhere by myself to get over it."

"You shall go tomorrow, if you still need to, but I assure you that three hours from now you will be gay. If not, I will keep you company in your gloom. Where do you intend to dine across the river?"

"Nowhere, for I am not hungry. I've eaten nothing for more than three days. I can only drink."

"You amaze me. Now I see the whole thing. It's a cholera morbus which can make you lose your mind, as one of my brothers did, who died of it."

The young man, so insistent, arguing so justly, seems to me not lightly to be dismissed. "I could," I said to myself, "carry out my plan after we part. The most I risk is living five or six hours longer;

> *Credete a chi n'ha fatto esperimento*
>
> ('Believe him who has had the experience),[25]

says Ariosto."

The reader can believe me when I say that all those who have killed themselves because of a great grief have only anticipated the madness which would have overcome their reason if they had not become their own executioners, and that hence all those who have gone mad could have escaped that misfortune only by killing themselves. I did not come to my resolve until I should have lost my reason if I had waited only one day more. Here is the corollary. A man should never kill himself, for it is possible that the cause of his grief will cease before madness sets in. This means that those whose souls are strong enough never to despair of anything are fortunate. My soul was not strong, I had lost all hope, and I was going to kill myself like a man of wisdom. I owe my salvation only to chance.

When Agar hears that I was going to the other side of the bridge only to amuse myself, he says that I may just as well turn back, and I let him persuade me; but a half hour later, unable to walk any longer because of the lead in my pockets, I ask him to take me to some place where I can wait for him, for I am completely exhausted. I gave him my word that I would wait for him at the "Cannon," and I went there. When I was safely in the tavern, I emptied my pockets of the too heavy packets, putting them in a closet.

While waiting for the pleasant young man, I reflected that he might prove to be the cause which would annul my suicide. He had already prevented it, for he had delayed it. "That being so," I reasoned to myself, not like a man who hoped but like a man who foresaw, "it is possible that Agar, Esquire,[26] is the being to whom I shall be indebted for my life." It remained for me to determine whether he was doing me good or evil. The conclusion to which, in accordance with my philosophy, I came again was that, in respect to absolute and decisive acts, we are our own masters only up to a certain point. I considered that in a certain sense it was by force that I found myself sitting there in the tavern waiting for the young Englishman to return, for it is certain that, taking only moral force into consideration, I had had to yield to force.

A quarter of an hour after he returned, the two young light-o'-loves, one of whom was French, came, bringing gaiety written on their charming faces. They were made for joy; they lacked nothing of all that could kindle desires in the coldest of men. I was fully aware of their merits, but since I did not give them the reception to which they were accustomed when men found them pleasing, they began to think me an invalid.[27] Though I was at death's door, I felt an assertion of my self-esteem which forced me to play a role resembling that of the man I ought to be. I gave lifeless and cheerless kisses, and I asked Agar to tell the English girl that if I were not half dead I should find her charming. They condoled with me. A man who has neither eaten nor slept for three days is certainly insensible to the seductions of Venus. Words would not have persuaded them if Agar had not told them my name. I had a reputation, and I saw that they were filled with respect. All three of them put their hopes in the influence of Bacchus. I was more than sure that they were mistaken.

The dinner being in the English style, that is, without soup, I was absolutely unable to swallow either a bit of roast beef [28] or a little pudding.[29] I ate nothing but some oysters, drinking some rather good Graves and enjoying Agar's skill in keeping them both occupied. At the height of the gaiety he suggested that the English girl dance the hornpipe[30] naked, and she consented, provided that we could find some blind musicians[31] and that we would all undress too. I said to Agar that I would do whatever he wanted, but that I could neither dance, for I could not stand on my legs, nor become such as the charms of our two heroines ought to make me. I was excused on condition that if the spectacle brought me to life I would follow their example, and the two girls swore that it would not escape them. The blindmen were found, they came; and we locked ourselves in.

While the blindmen, who had sat down, tuned their instruments, the two beauties and the athlete, who was twenty-five years of age, put themselves in the state of nature, and the performance began. It was one of those moments in which I learned many truths in this world. In that one I saw that the pleasures of love are the effect, and not the cause, of gaiety. The three bodies were magnificent, the dancing, the posturings, the gestures seductive; but no emotion told me that I was sensible to them. The male dancer maintained his conquering appearance even as he danced; I was astonished that I had never made the experiment on myself. After the dance he paid them both homage, going from one to the other, and he did not stop until he saw that Nature, in need of rest, declared him incapable. The Frenchwoman came to see if I showed any sign of life, and, finding me powerless, said that it was all over with me.

The girls dressed, and I asked Agar to give the French woman four guineas for me and to pay for everything, for I had only some small change. Could I have guessed that morning that, instead of going to drown myself, I should make one at so charming a party? My indebtedness to the Englishman made me put off my suicide until the next day. When the girls were gone, I wanted to leave Agar, but he would not let me. He insisted that I looked better than I had in the morning, that the oysters which I had eaten and had kept down showed that I was in need of distraction, and in short that I could be well the next day and eat dinner if I went with him to spend the night at Ranelagh House.[32] He persuaded me to go there. I left the waiter at the "Cannon" my six packets, telling him that I would come back for them the next morning at nine o'clock, and I got into a hackney carriage with Agar to obey the Stoic maxim which had been inculcated into me in my happy youth: *Sequere Deum* ("Follow the God").[33]

We enter the fine rotunda, which was full of people, with our hats pulled down over our eyes. We had our arms around each other's shoulders. I stop for a moment to wait until a woman who was dancing a minuet in front of me with marked grace, and only whose back I saw, should turn to repeat the same steps in the opposite direction. What made me want to see her face was that she had on a dress and a hat exactly like a dress and a hat which I had given to La Charpillon; in addition, she was of the same stature; but this last observation did not concern me, for at that moment La Charpillon must be dead or at least on her deathbed. The dancer, then, starts off in the other direction; I look at her, and I see La Charpillon herself. Agar told me afterward that at that moment he thought I would fall down in an epileptic fit: the arm I had around his shoulders shook and contracted spasmodically.

I overcome my surprise and my spasm by a salutary doubt. There may be only a resemblance. The young woman, her attention fixed on her partner, had not noticed me; I remain where I am, waiting for her to come back in my direction, when I should see her only a step away and face to face; but just then she raises her arms to make her curtsy at the end of the minuet, and I go up to her as if I wanted to take her for the next dance. She looks at me, and she at once turns and walks away. I say nothing, and certain of the fact, I feel that I must go to sit down. A cold sweat instantly bathed my whole body. Agar, convinced that I am on the verge of a fit, advises me to take a cup of tea, to which I reply by asking him to leave me alone and to go and amuse himself.

The revolution which, in less than an hour, had taken place in my entire being made me fearful of its consequences, for I was shaking from head to foot and a violent palpitation of the heart made me doubt if I could stand even if I dared to rise. How the strange paroxysm would end terrified me, I could not but think that it would kill me.

My fear was not groundless. Having proved unable to bring me to my death, it gave me a new life. What a prodigious change! Feeling that I had grown calm, I fixed my eyes with pleasure on the rays of light which made me ashamed; but my feeling of shame assured me that I was cured. What contentment! Having been immersed in error, I could not recognize it until after I had emerged from it. In the dark one sees nothing. I was so amazed at my new state that, not seeing Agar reappear, I began to believe that I should not see him again. "That young man," I said to myself, "is my Genius, who assumed his appearance to restore me to my senses."

It is certain that I should have been confirmed in this insane idea if I had not seen him reappear an hour after he left me. Chance might have decreed that Agar should find some girl who would have persuaded him to leave Ranelagh House with her. I should have gone back to London alone, but certain that I had not been saved by Agar. Should I have recovered my senses if I had not seen him until some days later? I do not know. Men easily go mad. There has always been a seed of superstition in my soul, of which I am certainly not proud.

Agar finally comes back, in high spirits but very uneasy about my condition. He is astonished to see me glowing with health and surprised to hear me making amusing comments on the objects which took my fancy in the beautiful rotunda.

"My friend," he said, "you are laughing, you are no longer sad "

"No. I am hungry, and I need to ask a great favor of you, if you have not some important business tomorrow which will prevent your granting it "

"I am free until day after tomorrow, and entirely at your service."

"Here is what I have in mind. I owe you my life—my life, I tell you. But, for your gift to be complete, I need to have you spend tonight and all day tomorrow with me."

"I am yours to command."

"Then walk about, and come back for me whenever you are ready."

"Let us go at once, if you like."

"Let us go."

On the way I tell him nothing. When we enter my house I find nothing new except a note from Goudar, which I put in my pocket. It was an hour after midnight. We are served supper, and Agar is surprised to see me eat with ravenous appetite. He laughs and congratulates me. After supping well, he goes to bed and I do likewise. I sleep very soundly until noon; I go to breakfast in his room, and I tell him every detail of the whole horrible story, which would have ended with my death if I had not happened to meet him halfway across

Westminster Bridge, and if he had not read my terrible resolve in my distracted countenance. At the end of the story I take his hand, I open my desk, I make him read my will, and, retrieving my purse, I give him the five or six guineas I owe him. After that I unseal Goudar's note, which contained only these few words:

"I am sure that the girl in question, far from being on her deathbed, has gone to Ranelagh with Lord Grosvenor"

Agar, young but very sensible, is thunderstruck. Convinced that he had saved my life, he congratulates himself, and we embrace. The character of La Charpillon and her mother's perfidy seem to him beyond belief, and as for the bills of exchange whose loss I regretted because, having them, I could have taken some slight revenge by sending her mother and her aunts to prison, he said that it was still in my power to have them arrested and force them to restore them to me, and the more so since I had kept the letter from the mother acknowledging the debt and admitting that I had only consigned them to her daughter on deposit.

I at once resolved to have them arrested, but I did not tell him so. After spending the whole day in high spirits with me, he left to sup with his mistress. I swore him eternal friendship, and I owed it to him. The reader will see hereafter the punishment the kind young man had to undergo for having served me so well.

Full of vigor the next morning, gay as a man who has just won a great victory, I go to the attorney who had served me in my case against Count Schwerin,[34] and he, after hearing the facts, told me that I was justified and that my right to have the scheming woman arrested was unquestionable. So I went to Holborn,[35] where I made a statement on oath, and I received the order to have the mother and the two aunts arrested. The man who had arrested Schwerin was willing to serve me again in the arrest of the women; but he did not know them, and he had to know them. He was sure he could obtain entrance to their house and take them by surprise; but he also had to be sure that the women he arrested were the ones named in the warrant.

"There might," he said, "be other women with them."

His objection was justified; so, having no one who could do the thing, for Goudar would never have undertaken it, I resolved that I would myself show the man into the house at an hour when I could be sure that the malefactors would all be together in the parlor.

I told him to be waiting in Denmark Street at eight o'clock, with a hackney coach at his orders, and to enter as soon as the door was opened for him. I assured him that I would enter at the same time, and that I would turn them over to him myself; and the thing was done accordingly in every particular. He entered the parlor with one of his constables, followed by me. I at once pointed out the mother and the two aunts to him, then I hurried away, for La Charpillon, dressed in mourning, standing with her back to the fireplace, though I only glanced at her, terrified me. I believed, and I felt, that I was cured; but the wound having only just healed over, I do not know what would have happened if at that moment she had had the presence of mind to throw herself on my neck and beg me to spare her mother and her aunts. As soon as I saw them all touched by the powerful rod,[36] I left, relishing the pleasure of vengeance, and almost certain that they would find no one to go bail for them; their pi..s,[37] who were there, were petrified.

The pleasure of revenge is great, and those who procure it are happy when they taste it; but they were not happy when they sought it. The happy man is the impassive man,[38] who, not knowing what it is to hate, never thinks of avenging himself. The animosity with which I had the three women arrested, and the terror in which I left their house as soon as I saw the girl, prove that I was not yet free. To be so completely, I had to forget her.

The next morning Goudar came to me in high spirits, showing every sign of great contentment. He said that what I had had the courage to do proved either that I was cured of my passion or that I was more in love than ever. He had just come from La Charpillon's, where he had found only the grandmother, in despair and consulting an advocate

He said that he had arrived at their house just as I was leaving it, and that he had stayed there until they had had to resign themselves to being taken to the house of the man who was executing my warrant. They had refused to go; they had insisted that he should wait until morning, when they were certain to find sureties, and their two bravoes had drawn their swords to prevent the man from using force; but the brave officer of the police had disarmed them and carried away their swords together with the three prisoners. The girl had wanted to go too, to keep them company; but she had left them in order to take every possible step to keep them from going to prison. Meanwhile the bailiff had them under guard at his house.

Goudar ended by saying that, as their friend, he would pay them a visit, and that if I were willing to enter into some arrangement he would be glad to act as mediator. I thanked him, and I said that the only way by which the women could get out of prison was to give me my money.

Two weeks[39] passed without my hearing anything more of the matter. No protests on their part, and no proposals for an arrangement. La Charpillon went to dine with them every day, and it was she who paid for their keep. It must have cost her a great deal, for they occupied two rooms and their cruel host did not allow them to send out for meals. If they had not agreed to it, he would have taken them to King's Bench.[40] Goudar said that La Charpillon had told her mother and her aunts that she would never bring herself to come to me to ask for their freedom, even if she were sure that merely speaking to me would reduce me to doing whatever she wanted. In her eyes I was the most loathsome of monsters. I went to see my daughter nearly every day, and I had completely recovered my good spirits.

During these two weeks I had looked everywhere for Agar in vain, and at last I was pleasantly surprised to see him enter my room one morning with a friendly and smiling countenance.

"Where on earth have you been hiding?" I asked him. "I have looked everywhere for you and not found you."

"It is Love, my dear friend, who has kept me in his impenetrable prison. I have come to bring you money."

"On whose behalf?"

"On the part of the Augspurgher ladies. Give me a receipt and the necessary declaration, for I am to go myself to restore them to the arms of the unhappy Charpillon, who has done nothing but weep for two weeks."

"I know her tears; but I wonder that she should have chosen as her protector the man who freed me from her chains. Does she know that I owe you my life?"

"All she knew was that we were at Ranelagh together on that evening you saw her dance when you thought she was dead; but she heard the whole story from me after she had made my acquaintance."

"I take it that she came to you to persuade you to speak to me in her favor."

"Not a bit of it. She came to tell me that you are a monster of ingratitude, for she loved you and she gave you unmistakable proofs of her affection; but now she loathes you."

"God be praised! But it is strange that she should have made you fall in love with her in order to obtain her revenge on me. My dear friend, she is fooling you, for it is you whom she is punishing."

"In any case it is a sweet punishment."

"I want you to be happy, but take care of yourself!"

Agar counted me out two hundred and fifty guineas, and I canceled my bills of exchange and renounced all my claims in writing. He went away satisfied. After this, did I not have reason to believe that the whole matter was ended? But I was sadly mistaken.

About that time the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick,[41] now the reigning Duke, married Princess Augusta, the King's sister. The Common Council,[42] having resolved to make him an English citizen and to give him the accompanying prerogatives, the Goldsmiths' Company[43] enrolled him among its members, having the Lord Mayor[44] and the Aldermen[45] give him the diploma in a gold box. The Prince, who was the first gentleman of our world, added this new luster to his nobility, which dated back fourteen centuries.

On this occasion Lady Harrington arranged that Mrs. Cornelys should make two hundred guineas. She lent her house in Soho Square to a cook who gave a ball and supper for a thousand persons[46] at three guineas a head. The groom, the bride, and the entire royal family, except the King and Queen, were present. For my three guineas I, too, was among the guests, but standing with six hundred others, the long tables in the great hall having accommodated only four hundred. I saw Lady Grafton[47] seated beside the Duke of Cumberland,[48] and astonishing all the other ladies by wearing her hair without powder and combed straight down in front so that it covered half of her forehead. They all exclaimed at it. They said that she was out of her mind, insane, absurd, and deserved to be booed, for she was making herself ugly; but in less than six months dressing the hair à la Grafton became general; it crossed the water and spread all over Europe, where it still persists, having, however, most unjustly, lost its name. It is the only fashion which can boast an antiquity of thirty-four years, though it was howled down on its first appearance. As in the case of spectacles in general, first receptions are to be distrusted. They are often wrong. A great many excellent plays, both French and English, failed at their first performances.

At this supper, for which the man who had produced it had received three thousand guineas, there was all

> *Che puote cor pensar può chieder bocca*
> ("That the heart could imagine and the
> mouth desire")[49]

in the way of both food and drink; but, since I did not dance and was not in love with any of the beauties who decorated the festival, I left at one o'clock in the morning. It was a Sunday, that sacred day on which in London no one fears prison except criminals. Nevertheless, this is what befell me.

Splendidly dressed, I was going home in a carriage, my Negro Jarba being up behind with another manservant whom I had recently engaged. The carriage has scarcely entered my street when I hear someone call my name:

"Good evening, Seingalt."

I put out my head and I reply:

"Good evening."

I instantly see men armed with pistols, two at the right, two at the left, and two others who had stopped the carriage; I hear them call out:

"By order of the King!"

My servants ask them what they want, and one of them replies that they mean to take me to Newgate Prison, for Sunday is no protection to criminals. I ask what crime I have committed; I am told that I shall learn that in prison. My Negro says that I have the right to know it before I go there; they answer that the judge is asleep; and he retorts that I will wait until he gets up, and the passers-by, who had stopped at the disturbance, cry out that I am in the right. The head constable gives in and takes me to his quarters in the City.[50] I found myself in a large room on the ground floor, in which there were nothing but some benches and large tables. My servants, after dismissing the carriage, came to keep me company, whereupon the six constables, declaring it their duty not to leave me, had me told that I must have food and drink brought for them. I ordered Jarba to satisfy them and to be mild and polite. I had to prepare to spend five hours there. The hour of the hearing was seven o'clock.

Having committed no crime, I could be there only as the result of a calumny, and knowing that justice in London was equitable, I was perfectly at ease, resolved to put up peaceably with a misfortune which could only be of short duration. If I had obeyed the old maxim, which I knew well, never to answer an unknown voice which addresses one at night, I should have avoided this misfortune, but the error was committed, so I could only be patient. I amused myself with humorous reflections on my swift passage from the most brilliant assembly in London to the infamous company in which I found myself, richly dressed as I was.

Dawn came at last, and the proprietor of the pothouse[51] where I was came downstairs to see who the criminal who had spent the night under his roof might be. His anger at his henchmen, who had not waked him to give me a room, made me laugh again, for he saw himself the loser by at least a guinea, which he would have made me pay for his courtesy. Someone finally announced that the magistrate[52] was sitting and that it was time to bring me into his presence. A sedan chair was called to carry me, for, dressed as I was, the mob would have thrown me into the gutter if I had gone on foot.

I enter a large room, where I find myself among fifty or sixty persons who at once fix their eyes on the barbarian who dares to show himself clad in such offensive finery.

At the far end of the room I see, seated in a raised armchair, the person who was apparently to inform me of what crime I was accused. He was the "sergens-fil," whom I prefer to call the "Criminal Court Magistrate." The accusations were read to him, he was addressed, he replied; and he hurriedly dictated the sentences, for the poor man was blind. He had a black bandage two inches wide which went around his head and covered his eyes. Since he could not see, it made no difference to him if they were covered. Someone beside me encouraged me, saying that he was a just judge, a man of intelligence, kind-hearted, and the author of several celebrated novels. In short, the man was Mr. Fielding.[53]

When my turn came the secretary who was beside him whispered it to him and, the complaint apparently naming me "Casanova, Italian," he called me by that name, telling me in perfect Italian to come forward for he had something to say to me. At that I made my way through the crowd and, arrived at the bar, I said:

"*Eccomi, Signore*" ("Here I am, My Lord").

All of the following dialogue between the honest magistrate and myself was conducted in Italian, and I wrote it down word for word the same day. I am happy to give my reader the following faithful and literal translation of it.

"Signor di Casanova, Venetian, you are sentenced to the prisons of His Majesty the King of Great Britain for the rest of your natural life."

"I am curious, Sir, to know for what crime I am sentenced. Will you be so good as to inform me of it?"

"Your curiosity is justified, Signor Venetian. In our country the courts do not consider that they have the right to sentence a person without informing him of his crime. You are accused, and the accusation is supported by two witnesses, of having attempted to scar a girl's face. It is she who calls upon the law to safeguard her against this outrage, and the law must safeguard her against it by sentencing you to prison. So prepare to go there."

"Sir, it is a calumny. It is possible, however, that, examining her own conduct, she may fear I might think of committing that crime. I can swear to you that I have never thought of such a base act."

"She has two witnesses."

"They are false ones. Who is this girl?"

"She is Miss Charpillon."

"I know her, and I have never given her anything but tokens of affection."

"Then it is not true that you intend to disfigure her?"

"It is false."

"In that case I congratulate you. You shall dine in your own house; but you must furnish two sureties. Two householders must vouch to us that you will never commit this crime."

"Who will dare to vouch that I will never commit it?"

"Two honest Englishmen whose esteem you have earned and who know that you are not a rogue. Send for them, and if they arrive before I go to dinner you shall be set free at once."

I go out at once, and the constables take me back to the place in which I had been. I give my servants in writing all the names of householders I can remember, charging them to tell them the reason which obliged me to inconvenience them. I urge them to make haste, and they leave. They were to come back before noon; but they did not come back, so the magistrate went to dinner. However, I comforted myself with the knowledge that he would sit after dinner too. But suddenly I hear most unpleasant news.

The chief constable, accompanied by an interpreter, comes to tell me that he is there to take me to Newgate.[54] This is the prison in London to which only the lowest and most miserable criminals are sent. I tell him through the interpreter that I am waiting for sureties, and that he can take me to prison at nightfall if they do not come. He refuses to do so. He says that as soon as my sureties arrived I would be fetched from the prison, so it should make no difference to me. The interpreter whispers to me that the man was certainly paid by the other side to do me the injury of putting me in prison, and hence that it was in my power to remain where I was by giving him money. I ask how much, and after speaking with him privately he comes to tell me that ten guineas would persuade him to keep me where I am until nightfall. I at once had him reply that I was curious to see Newgate Prison. So a hackney coach was sent for, and I was taken there.

Upon my entrance into that inferno, a crowd of wretches, some of whom were to be hanged within the week, applauded my arrival, at the same time jeering at my fine array. Seeing that I do not speak to them, they become angry and begin treating me to insults. The jailer[55] quiets them, assuring them that I do not speak English, and he takes me to a room, informing me of what it will cost me and of the prison rules, as if he were sure I was to stay there a long time.

But a half hour later in comes the same man who wanted to make ten guineas by keeping me in his house and who tells me that my sureties are waiting for me before the magistrate and that my carriage is at the door. I thank God, I go downstairs, and once more I am before the man with the bandaged eyes. I see there Mr. Pagus,[56] my tailor, and Maisonneuve,[57] my vintner, who greet me and congratulate themselves on being able to do me this small service. Not far from me I see La Charpillon with Rostaing, an attorney, and Goudar. My sureties go to give their names to a clerk, who questions them and who then goes to speak to the magistrate, who approves them and informs them of the amount for which they are to stand surety for me. They sign, and the magistrate immediately tells me to sign for twice the amount for which my sureties had signed, and at the same time affably tells me that I am free. I go to the clerk's table to sign, asking him how much the security comes to, and he replies that it comes to forty guineas, my sureties having vouched for twenty each. I sign, saying to Goudar that Miss Charpillon's beauty would perhaps have been rated at ten thousand if the magistrate had seen her. I ask the names of the two who had served as her witnesses, and I am shown the names of Rostaing and Bottarelli.[58] I cast a disdainful look at Rostaing, who was there, pale as a corpse; a feeling of pity keeps me from looking at La Charpillon. I asked the clerk if I had to pay the costs, and he answered no, which gave rise to a dispute between him and the attorney employed by the beauty, who stood there in the utmost mortification because she could not leave until the costs of my arrest were paid. During this time I saw three or four other Englishmen arrive, who had come to stand surety for me. They all begged me to forgive the English laws, which were too often hard upon foreigners. I finally got home, eager to go to bed after spending a day which was one of the most tiresome of my whole life.

CHAPTER XIII

Bottarelli. Letter from Pauline, in care of Senhor de Saa. The avenging parrot. Pocchini. The Venetian Guerra. I meet Sara again: my plan to marry her and follow her to Switzerland. The Hanoverian mother and daughters.

THE FIRST act of my comedy having ended in this fashion, the second began the next day. As I get out of bed, I hear a noise at my door, I go to the window to see what it is, and I see Pocchini,[1] the infamous scoundrel who had robbed me at Stuttgart and whom my reader may remember. He was trying to enter without waiting to be announced, and just then he saw me. I told him that I could not receive him, and I closed the window.

A quarter of an hour later in comes Goudar with a copy of an English newspaper called the *St. James's Chronicle*, in which there was a brief account of my adventure, beginning with my arrest as I left Soho Square and ending with my return to my house a free man by virtue of security amounting in all to eighty pounds sterling. My name and La Charpillon's were disguised; but Rostaing's and Bottarelli's were given in full,[2] the writer of the account praising them. I asked Goudar to take me at once to see Bottarelli, whose acquaintance I wanted to make. Martinelli, who arrived at the same time, insisted on going with me too.

On the fourth floor of a dilapidated house we enter a room where we see the picture of poverty, composed of a woman, four children, and a man writing at a table. The man was Bottarelli. He rises, I ask him if he knows me, he answers no, whereupon I tell him that I am the Casanova whom his testimony had sent to Newgate the day before.

"Signore, I am sorry for it; but look at my family. I was in need of two guineas; I will serve you for nothing when you wish it."

"Are you not afraid you will be hanged?"

"No, Signore, for a false witness is not sentenced to the gallows. The law provides that we shall be deported; but nothing is harder in London than to convict a witness of having testified falsely."

"I am told that you are a poet."

"Yes, Signore. I have lengthened the *Didone*[3] and shortened the *Demetrio*."[4]

I left the scoundrel after giving his wife a guinea from pure charity. She gave me a copy of a book by her husband entitled *The Secret of the Freemasons Exposed.*[5] He was a monk in Pisa, his native city, which he had left with her, a nun. He had married her in London.

About this time Senhor de Saa himself—which greatly surprised me—brought me a letter from my dear Pauline which confirmed the unhappy fate of my faithful Clairmont.[6] She had already become the wife of Count *Al.* What surprised me even more was that he swore to me that he had known who she was from the moment she arrived in London. Trying to make it appear that they know more than they really know is the weakness of nearly all diplomats. Yet Senhor de Saa was a perfect gentleman. La Charpillon had treated him almost as she had treated me.

But now for an event which cannot but interest every reader with a sense of humor.

Strolling about the city one morning, I came to a place called the "Parrot Market."[7] Seeing a pretty one in a brand-new cage, I asked what language it spoke, and I was told that, being very young, it spoke none. I gave the ten guineas which were asked for it and I sent it home. Resolved to teach it a few interesting words, I decided to put it near my bed and constantly say to it in French, "Miss Charpillon is more of a whore than her mother." I began the thing as a joke, and certainly with no malicious intention. In less than two weeks the obedient parrot learned the few words so well that it repeated them from morning to night, with the addition that, after uttering them, it gave a great burst of laughter, a thing which I had not meant to teach it.

It was Goudar who said to me one day that if I sent my parrot to the Exchange I could certainly get it sold for fifty guineas. I at once adopted his happy idea, not in a spirit of avarice but in order to have the pleasure of calling the scheming creature who had treated me so ill a wh . . . ,[8] and at the same time to be safe from the law, which is extremely severe in that respect.

So I entrusted the business to Jarba, my parrot being an appropriate piece of merchandise for an Indian.

For the first two or three days my parrot, which spoke French, did not have a large audience; but as soon as someone who knew the heroine noticed the praise which the indiscreet bird bestowed on her, the circle grew bigger, and people began bargaining for the right to own the cage. Fifty guineas appeared to be too much. My Negro wanted me to sell the whole thing more cheaply; but I would never consent to it. I had fallen in love with my avenger.

How I laughed when, at the end of seven or eight days, Goudar told me what effect my talking parrot, offered for sale on the London Exchange, had had upon La Charpillon's family. Since the person who was selling it was my Negro, no one had any doubt that it belonged to me and that I had taught it to speak. He said that the girl not only was not offended by the thing but that she thought it very amusing and laughed at it all day. The ones who were in despair were her aunts and her mother, who had consulted several advocates on the subject, all of whom had replied that there were no laws to punish a calumny the author of which was a parrot, but that they could make the joke cost me very dear if they could prove that the parrot was my pupil. For this reason Goudar warned me that I must be careful not to boast that the bird had gone to school to me, for two witnesses could ruin me.

The ease with which false witnesses can be found in London is really scandalous. One day I saw a notice put up in a window and bearing in capital letters the one word "witness." It meant that the person who lived in the apartment was a professional witness.

An article in the *St. James's Chronicle* said that the ladies who considered themselves insulted by the parrot must be very poor and entirely friendless, for if they had bought the parrot as soon as they learned of its existence the story would scarcely have become known. It said that the thing could only be a revenge, and, without naming me, it said that the author of it deserved to be an Englishman. Happening to encounter Agar, I asked him why he did not buy the parrot. He replied, laughing at first but then becoming serious, that the parrot amused everyone who knew the persons concerned, and he refused to say more. Jarba at last found a buyer, and he brought me fifty guineas. Goudar told me that it was Lord Grosvenor.[9] That nobleman loved La Charpillon, but as an occasional diversion and no more. This jest concluded my acquaintance with the coquette, whom I later often encountered in London at promenades and theaters without even remembering what had happened to me on her account, so indifferent had I become to her.

As I entered St. James's Park one day from the direction of Buckingham House, two girls who were drinking milk in a ground-floor room called to me. Not knowing them, I was going on, when a young officer in English uniform came running after me to say that the young ladies were Italian, that they knew me, and that they had something to say to me. I went there at once, thanking him.

I was surprised, when I entered the room, to see Pocchini, wearing a uniform, and to hear him gaily say that he had the honor of presenting his daughters to me. I replied coolly that I remembered my snuffbox and my watches, which two other daughters of his had stolen from me in Stuttgart. He said I was lying. At that I throw the rest of the milk in a glass in his face and I leave. I was without a sword. The English officer follows me and says that I shall not leave without granting satisfaction to his friend, whom I had insulted.

"Tell him to come out and go with you to the Green Park, and I promise to give him a caning in your presence, unless you want to fight in his place; but in that case give me time to fetch my sword. Do you know this man, whom you call your friend?"

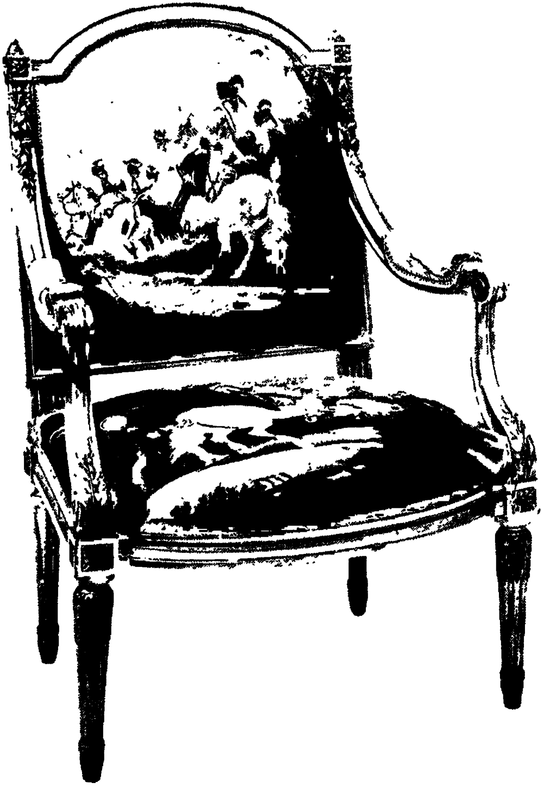
"No, but he is an officer, and it is I who took him to drink milk with his daughters and who brought you into our room."

"Very well, I will fight to the death to give you the satisfaction you demand; but I warn you that your friend is a thief and the pi..[10] for his daughters. Be off, I will wait for you."

After a quarter of an hour all four of them come out, the girls go to take a walk, and the Englishman and Pocchini follow me. Seeing people still about, I enter Hyde Park[11] and I stop.

Pocchini begins by addressing me; but I interrupt him, raising my cane and telling him that I will beat him with it if he does not draw his sword; he replies that he will never draw it against a man without a sword, and at that I give him a light blow. The coward cries out and calls me a bully, and the Englishman, after laughing loudly, asks me to excuse him, takes my arm, and we

The Thames at the Tower of London



English Armchair
Upholstered in Tapestry

retrace our steps, leaving the cursing coward to make off in another direction.

On the way I give him a detailed account of the fellow's dealings, and he admits that he is a scoundrel; but he says that unfortunately he is in love with one of his daughters. Arriving at St. James's Park, we see the two girls, and I laugh when I see Goudar between them. I ask him how he happens to know them, and he replies that their father the Captain, who had sold him some jewels, had introduced them to him. They laugh, and they ask me where I left him. I say that I gave him a caning; and they reply that I have done well. The Englishman, amazed at the infamous character of the wenches, begs my pardon, embraces me, and swears as he takes his leave that I shall not see him with them again.

A notion of Goudar's, with which I had the weakness to fall in, led me to dine with them at a tavern near Charing Cross.[12] The scoundrel got them drunk and, in the frankness of their intoxication, made them say more than enough to get their pretended father hanged. He did not live with them, but he visited them at night to make them give him whatever money they had earned. He often brought them men, and he had taught them to steal and to make the theft appear to be a joke when it was discovered. They gave him the stolen goods, and they did not know what he did with them.

At that I laughed to see Goudar, who had told me in the Park that he had made Captain Pocchini's acquaintance by buying jewels from him.

After this bad dinner I went home, leaving it to Goudar to see them to their lodging. He came the next morning to tell me that when they arrived there they were arrested and taken to prison; and that he had just come from the house in which the Captain lived, where the landlord had told him that he had not come home since the day before. The honest Goudar told me he would be sorry if he did not see the wretched man again, for he owed him ten guineas for a watch which the girls might have stolen but which was worth twenty.

Three or four days later he told me that Pocchini had left London with an English maidservant whom he had engaged, having gone to choose her in a place which he named to me, where there were always three or four hundred such, ready to enter the service of the first comer. The proprietor of the place vouched for their fidelity. Goudar had learned from the proprietor that the maid whom Pocchini had chosen was very pretty, and that he had left with her at once, going to the Thames to embark. Goudar declared it an excellent speculation. He regretted that the gold watch was still in his hands, for he was always afraid he would meet the man from whom the virtuous girls had stolen it. I never heard what became of them, but we shall meet Pocchini again a few years hence.

I went almost every day either to see my daughter at her boarding school or to spend a few hours with Dr. Maty[13] at the British Museum. One day I found with him an Anglican clergyman whom I asked how many different sects of Christians there were in England. Here is his answer, which I added to my memoirs that very evening:

"No one can be sure, for almost every Sunday a new one springs up and another perishes. A man, whether in good faith or to make his fortune, chooses one holy day or another to take his stand in some public place and speak, and immediately a few idle and curious passers-by gather around him. He expounds some passage in the Bible which, in his opinion, makes a difference in dogma. His interpretation pleases some of the idlers, who applaud him and invite him to come the following Sunday to a tavern, where they promise him a select company of listeners. He goes, he expounds his doctrine more forcefully, he is talked about, he maintains theses, his disciples increase in number, they give themselves some specious name, and there is the sect in its infancy, with the Government knowing nothing about it and indeed unable to learn anything about it until it manages to exert some political influence. I believe this is the way in which all the different sects of our religion began."

About this time Signor Steffano Guerra,[14] a Venetian patrician who was traveling by leave of the State Inquisitors, an eccentric of the first water, who after his travels returned to his country more ignorant than when he had left it, lost a suit against an English painter whom he had commissioned to paint a miniature portrait of one of the most beautiful ladies in London. Guerra had undertaken in writing to pay the English painter twenty-five guineas for the lady's portrait. When the painter finished his work he took it to him, and Guerra, declaring it a poor likeness, told him to keep it for himself and refused to pay him the money which he had agreed to pay. The Englishman, according to the custom of the country—for that is always the first step there—had the Venetian arrested, who at once gave bail and took the case before the appropriate judge. He was sentenced to pay. He appealed, he lost again, and finally he was obliged to pay. Guerra said that he had ordered a portrait, and that a picture which was not a likeness could not be called a portrait, and that therefore he could not be sentenced to pay. The painter said that it was a portrait because he had made it after the lady's face. The judge in his decision said that since Guerra had made the painter work, and he had to live by his work, he must pay him unless he could prove that the painter had not used all his talent to make the portrait a likeness. All England pronounced it a very just decision, and so did I. But Signor Guerra pronounced it unjust. The portrait and the suit cost him a hundred guineas.

Malignan's daughter died during these days of the smallpox at the same time that her father, at Bath, received a slap from a Lord who liked to play piquet and did not like it when those who played against him took it into their heads to improve upon fortune. I gave him money to bury his daughter and to leave the island. He died when he arrived in Liège, and his wife sent me word of it, assuring me that if he had lived he would have paid his debts.

Shortly after I arrived in London I learned that M. F.[15] was there as Chargé d'Affaires for the Canton of Bern.[16] I called at his lodging, and he did not receive me; nor did he return my call. I thought that, having got wind of certain familiarities in which I had indulged at Bern with the charming Sara, his younger daughter,[17] he did not want to put me in a position to renew them in London. Then, too, the man was a little mad. So I gave the matter no further thought, and I had entirely forgotten his discourtesy; but here is what happened to me six months later at a performance by the English comic opera troupe at Marylebone.[18] The entrance fee for the performances, at which one had to sit at a small table, was only a shilling, but one had to eat and drink, or at least drink a pot of beer.

I go, then, to the small theater, and by pure chance I sit down beside a girl without at once looking at her face; but two or three minutes later I see an enchanting countenance which I think is not new to me; but I attribute it to beauty itself, which can never appear new to a man in whose soul its divine lineaments are engraved. I see her in profile, then in half profile, and I feel certain that I am seeing her for the first time. However, I saw her smile when I looked at her, and it seemed that the persistence with which I stared at her must be the reason for it. One of her gloves drops at my feet, I pick it up and give it to her, and she thanks me in French, letting me see black eyes which pierce my soul.

"Then Madame is not English?" I say in a most submissive voice.

"Monsieur, I am Swiss, and you know me."

At this answer, which could not be fuller, I draw back my head, I look to her right, and I see Madame M. F. and, next to her, a girl,[19] and then Monsieur M. F. I rise to pay my respects to the lady, whom I esteemed, and I bow to her husband, who answers me only by a very cold inclination of the head. I ask her what her husband can have against me to account for such behavior, and she whispers to me that Passano[20] had written him dreadful things about me.

But what pleasure I then took in justifying myself to his daughter, who in three years had become such that I could not recognize her! She knew it, and her blush convinced me that she remembered all that had taken place between us in my housekeeper's[21] presence; but I was eager to know if she would admit it or if she would not think it her duty to disavow what she had every right to lay entirely to her own innocence. If Sara had conceived this plan I should have scorned her, for, with the intelligence I knew her to possess, she could not possibly have wanted to use it to overcome her temperament.

Having found some excuse to rise, she struck me by her presence. She was only in bud when I knew her in Bern; I now saw her in a maturity which was all the more seductive because it had only just flowered.

"Charming Sara," I said, "you have so dazzled me that I must ask you two questions necessary to the peace of my soul. Tell me if you remember our triflings at Bern."

"Yes."

"Tell me quickly if you are offended by my remembering them at this moment with extreme pleasure."

"No."

Who is the man in love who would have been willing to risk wounding her delicacy by asking her the third question? Sure that Sara would make me happy, and even flattering myself that she could not wait to do so, I surrendered to all the ardor of my desires, and I determined to convince her that I deserved her heart.

Since the man who served refreshments to people who ordered them was hovering near our table, I asked Madame M. F. to do me the favor of letting me offer them some green oysters.[22] She accepted after the usual demurrals, and after that I do not stop at oysters but during the hour and a half our supper lasted I had him bring everything that was proposed to me, surprised that I was offered a leveret, a most uncommon dish in London except on the tables of noblemen, who, having hunting preserves, are very jealous of them. Quantities of champagne, spirits, larks, pipits, truffles, and sweetmeats—I was not surprised when the waiter, showing me the bill, said that I must pay ten guineas; but I was amused by the zeal of M. F., who took it upon himself to protest the amount. I quietly asked him to lower his tone, I paid, and I rewarded the waiter with half a guinea. The honest Swiss, pale and serious an hour earlier, had become red-faced and affable. Sara looked at him and pressed my hand. I was exultant.

On our way down the short stairway after the performance, he asked me if I would name a time[23] at which he could come to pay his respects to me. For answer, I embraced him. His servant told him there were no hackney carriages and so they must wait. It was raining in torrents. A little surprised that he should have gone there with his whole family without having a carriage of his own, I urge him to use mine, which had a folding seat, and I send for a sedan chair for myself. He cannot refuse my carriage, but on condition that he will be the one to go in the sedan chair. I had to give in, and, taking the folding seat, I saw Madame M. F. and her two daughters home. On the way the lady expressed herself in the most obliging terms, putting the blame, though without rancor, on her husband for the discourtesy which had been shown me. When I replied that I would avenge myself by waiting on her assiduously in future, she pierced my heart by telling me that they were on the eve of their departure.

"We were to leave day after tomorrow," she said, "and our apartment must be vacated tomorrow, for the people who have rented it will come to occupy it the next day. Some business which my husband must finish obliges him to stay in London for another seven or eight days, so tomorrow we have two tasks on our hands: first to find ourselves a lodging, and next to move."

"Then you have not yet found a place to stay?"

"My husband says he is sure to find one tomorrow morning."

"Furnished, I suppose, for since you are about to leave you must have sold your furniture."

"It has all been sold, and we must have it transported to the purchaser at our own expense."

Hearing that M. F. had already found a lodging for himself, I thought that if I offered to lodge them, Madame F. might put me down as one of those who offer what they are sure will be refused, so I said nothing, very much displeased with my evil Genius,[24] who was making me lose the charming Sara just when I had found her again. My hope having lessened, my love grew weaker.

Arrived at the door of Madame's house, we get out, and the very politeness which obliges her to invite me to come upstairs shows me that she is only urging it upon me for form's sake. She lodged on the third floor and her daughters on the fourth. Everything being topsy-turvy, she asks me to go up with her daughters, since she had to speak with the landlady. There being no fire, Sara remains alone with me, her sister having gone to the next room to light one. Happy moment, which was, if that is possible, less than a moment! What charms! What an exchange of joy in two ecstasies which, on a bed already unmade, instantly became one! We had time neither to say a word to each other, nor to savor the nectar which Venus gave us, nor to reflect upon the precious gift bestowed on us by Love, Nature, and Fortune. Someone comes up the stairs, it is Monsieur M. F., it is over.

If the man had had eyes he would certainly not have recognized me. My whole face must have showed a perturbation of the most extraordinary kind. It must have been composed of a joy stifled at its birth, of the pallor of a fear which had just escaped being surprised, and of an infinite mingling of such shades of expression as are depicted on a countenance animated by feelings of fondness, gratitude, constancy, triumph, and exultation, all of them in tumult.

After making mincemeat of all the compliments which are always boring but at that moment were intolerable, I left, looking, I must suppose, distracted. I arrived at my house in such a state of enthusiasm that I determined to leave England with Sara, having no doubt that my company would be agreeable to the whole family. In the course of the night I made all my plans for the journey; and, greatly regretting that I had not managed to persuade Madame M. F. to accept an apartment in my house for the few days she was to remain in London, I rose at daybreak to oblige her to accept it even if her husband should have found another.

So I go there; and at the door, I come upon M. F., who tells me that he is going to rent two rooms for a week, since he has to vacate the apartment he is occupying on that very day. I reply that his wife had informed me of all the circumstances, that I myself had rooms enough to lodge him, and that I insisted that he give me the preference. I ask him to go upstairs with me; he says that the whole family is in bed; but we go up, and his wife exhausts herself in excuses. It is her husband who tells her that I want to rent him an apartment. He makes me laugh; I tell him that I do not want it to cost him a single copper, and that the pleasure he would give me would sufficiently pay me. After many polite demurrals, hearing me swear that he will not inconvenience me, he accepts. We agree that he shall come toward nightfall, and I return home to order my two apartments made ready, leaving it to M. F. to deal with having all his furniture conveyed to the person who had bought it. My satisfaction was extreme.

An hour later two young ladies are announced. I go down myself to see what they want and to tell them to leave, since I am busy; and I am surprised to see Sara and her sister. No sooner have they come upstairs and sat down than she tells me with great dignity that the principal tenant of the house in which they were living would not let them take out the furniture until he had received the forty guineas which her father owed him, despite the fact that a merchant in the City had assured him that he would pay the amount within the week.

"Here," she said, "is a note of Papa's, payable to the bearer at the place specified. Could you do my papa this small favor?"

I take the note, which was in English, and I give her a fifty-pound bank note, telling her that she can bring me ten pounds' change that evening. She thanks me unaffectedly; she leaves, and I see her to my door, charmed, delighted with the confidence she had shown in me by asking me for this small service. M. F.'s need for forty guineas does not lead me to suppose him in serious straits; and I am extremely glad to have been of some use to him and to have convinced him that he had been mistaken in treating me as of no account.

I dine sparingly in order to sup the better with the Swiss angel, the new object of my worship. After dinner I write letters to make the time pass more quickly; and toward nightfall M. F.'s valet arrives at my house with three large trunks, night bags, and boxes. He leaves, telling me that his master will very soon be there with the whole family; but six o'clock comes, and seven, and eight, and nine, and I am surprised to see no one. Not understanding the reason for it, I decide to go myself to see what is causing the delay.

I go upstairs, and the sight I see astounds me: M. F., his wife, and his daughters, who, as soon as they see me, dry their tears. I also see two shady-looking men. I guess at once what it must be, and assuming an air of gaiety, I say to M. F.:

"I would wager that some avaricious creditor has had you arrested for some debt which you cannot pay at once."

"That is so; but I am sure I shall be able to pay it in five or six days, and that is why I put off leaving until a week from tomorrow."

"Then you were arrested after you sent me your trunks?"

"A quarter of an hour later."

"And what have you been doing for these four hours?"

"I have sent to find sureties."

"And why did you not send for me?"

"I am obliged to you, but you are a foreigner; only householders[26] can serve as sureties."

"Even so you should have sent to let me know, for I have had an excellent supper prepared for you, and I am dying of hunger."

What increased the lugubriousness of the scene and made my playful tone a little too saucy was the room, in which there were only three chairs and a candle whose long wick gave a smoky light. It occurred to me that his debt might exceed my means, which made me hesitate to ask him what amount was in question.

Sara being the only one in the family who spoke English, I ask her if she has asked the man who brought the warrant how much he needed to set them free. She replies that he was asking only a security of a hundred and fifty pounds, or the same sum in ready money, because of a bill of exchange drawn by her father. She makes him repeat the information, and the man displays the bill.

"And when your father has paid," I ask Sara, "shall we go to supper?"

The question draws a smile from her, I give the amount to the man, who hands me the bill, and I put it in my portfolio, saying to M. F. that he shall pay it to me before he leaves England.

After this scene I embraced M. F., who for once was crying for joy, then Madame, then her daughters, and

I saw the four of them to my house on foot, raising all their spirits except Madame's, who could not overcome her melancholy

After supping well and enjoying the pleasure of seeing M. F. tipsy, I admired the charming Sara, who, proffering countless excuses for having forgotten it, handed me a ten-pound bank note, the change from the fifty I had given her that morning.

My pleasure was no less perfect when I saw that they were delighted with the apartments which I had had made ready for them. Wishing them a good night's sleep, I said that I would board them until they left, and that if my company was agreeable to them I would take them to Switzerland myself.

On waking in the morning I cast a summary glance at my physical and moral state, and I find that I am happy; I examine my feelings, and I perceive them to be so well justified that I do not complain of not being in control of them. A heroic sensibility whose pure spring is in my soul makes me lenient toward a sensuality of which I had too often been the victim in my past life. I loved Sara, and I felt so certain of possessing her heart entirely that I put desires out of my mind. Desires arise from needs, they are troublesome, they are inseparable from doubt, they torture the mind. Sara was mine, and she had given herself to me when no possibility of interest could have made the source of her passion suspect.

I go up to see her father, whom I find unpacking his trunks, and, seeing his wife downcast, I ask her if she is feeling well. She replies that her health is perfect but that, being afraid of the sea, she could not be cheerful on the eve of taking a sea voyage. M. F. asks me to excuse him for his not being able to breakfast with us; he must go to finish some business. The young ladies come down, and we breakfast. I ask Madame why she has not opened all her trunks. She replies with a smile that one would be quite enough to contain the possessions of the whole family, and that she is going to sell everything they do not need. Seeing some handsome coats, a great deal of fine linen, and other things of value, I say it is really a pity; she answers calmly that the things are all very well in their way, but that the satisfaction of paying debts is still better. I earnestly say that she should sell nothing; that, since I have decided to go to Switzerland with her, I will pay her debts myself; and that she can repay me at her convenience. She is astonished, and she says she had not believed that I was speaking seriously.

"Perfectly seriously," I reply, "and here is the object of my hopes."

So saying, I take Sara's hand, and I press my lips to it. She blushes and, looking at her mother, makes no reply.

Thereupon Madame M. F. treated me to a very long discourse in which I saw candor and wisdom in their fairest light. She gave me a frank and detailed account of the situation of the family, and of her husband's inadequate means. She excused him for having contracted debts in London in order to live there above the reach of poverty; but she modestly condemned him for having insisted on bringing his whole family with him. He could have lived there alone, limiting himself to one servant; but with the family the two thousand crowns a year which the Bernese Government gave him had simply not gone far enough. She told me that her old father[26] had had influence enough to persuade the Government to pay his debts, but that to make up for it the Government had decided not to continue sending a Chargé d'Affaires[27] to London. A banker, she said, would be entrusted with receiving the interest on the capital sums which the Republic possessed in England. She said she believed that Sara was happy to have pleased me, but that she was not sure her husband would consent to the marriage.

At the word "marriage," which had not entered my mind before, I saw Sara blush, and the idea pleased me; but I foresaw difficulties.

On returning to my house M. F. said to his wife that two secondhand dealers would come in the afternoon; but, thereupon telling him my plan to accompany him to Switzerland, I easily convinced him that he should keep all his possessions, doing no more than to become my debtor for two hundred guineas, on which he would pay me interest until he was in a position to return them to me. Delighted by my proposal, he insisted on drawing up the contract in proper form that day, and the next day we confirmed it in the office of Monsieur Vanneck,[28] who signed it as witness. At the same time I gave him back his bill of exchange and his note for forty guineas, giving him ten more to make the amount an even two hundred

We did not speak of marriage, his wife having told me that she would mention my proposal to him in private.

It was on the third day that he came down to my room alone to discuss the matter with me. He told me that his wife had informed him of my intentions, which were an honor to him, but that he absolutely could not give me Sara, for he had promised her to Monsieur de W.[29] before he left Bern, and that family interests prevented him from going back on his word, the more so since his father[30] would never, so long as he lived, give his consent to a union which difference of religion could not but make unhappy. All in all, this exposition did not displease me. I said that the circumstances might change with the passing of time, and in the meanwhile it would satisfy me if he would grant me his friendship without stint and would leave it entirely to me to arrange for the journey we were to make. He swore, embracing me, that he set the greatest store by my friendship, that he would take no part in the arrangements for our journey, and that he was delighted, as was his wife, that his young daughter had won my heart.

After this frank explanation, I gave Sara, in the presence of her father and mother, all the indications of my affection which I could give her without infringing on decency and on the respect which I owed them. Sara visibly breathed only love.

It was on the fifth day that I went up to her room, and that my love became ardent, for I found her still in bed and alone. After the first time I had not again been in a situation of freedom with her. I throw myself on her neck, covering her face with kisses, and I see her tender but cold. My fire increases, I hope to quench it, and she resists, gently but strongly enough to raise a barrier to my desires. I ask her with all the sweetness of love why she opposes my ecstasy. She begs me to ask no more of her than she was granting.

"Then you no longer love me."

"Oh, my dear friend, I adore you."

"Then why this refusal after you have given me entire possession of yourself?"

"It is the one thing that contents me. You made me happy. I saw you as much in love as I, and that should be enough for us."

"It is impossible, my dear Sara, that your change of attitude does not have a reason. If you love me, renouncing yourself must be painful to you."

"It is, my dear friend, but I must bear it. The reason which determined me to fight against my passion does not spring from weakness but from what I owe myself. I have contracted obligations toward you which I cannot pay you with my person except by degrading myself in my own eyes. When I gave myself to you, when you gave yourself to me, we owed each other nothing. My soul, being now in slavery, shrinks from giving what, when it was free and in love, it gave to love. It rejoiced in itself."

"Oh, my dear Sara! What strange metaphysics, inimical to me and even more to yourself! It leads your mind to invent sophisms which deceive you. Have some consideration for my delicacy, and be reassured. No, my angel, you owe me nothing."

"Admit that you would have done nothing for my father if you did not love me."

“I will not admit it, my dear friend. My esteem for your mother could easily have led me to do the same thing. Consider, after all, that, lending him a small amount, it is possible that I did him that slight service without thinking of you.”

“It is possible, but I cannot help believing the contrary. No, I cannot bring myself to pay the debts of my mind at the expense of my heart.”

“On the contrary, sensibility should make your heart all the more ardent.”

“It could not be more so.”

“I am indeed unfortunate! Can what I have done to lay me open to punishment? Do you not understand, my divine Sara, that you are punishing me?”

“Alas! spare me that cruel reproach, I beg you, and let nothing diminish your affection. Let us go on loving each other.”

This dialogue is only the hundredth part of what kept us engaged until dinnertime. Madame M. F. came in, and, seeing me sitting at the foot of her daughter's bed, she laughed and asked me why I did not let her get up.

I answered her with serene tranquility that a most interesting subject had made two hours pass only too quickly.

Going to my room to dress, and reflecting on the change in the enchanting girl, I decide that her resolve could be only momentary. I even attributed it to an extraordinary increase in her passion. I felt certain that the fit could be only of the briefest duration. I needed to believe it, for otherwise I did not feel that I had the strength to play up to a whim which, after all, smacked of novel-reading.

So we dined in very high spirits, and in everything we said Sara and I presented her mother and father with a picture of perfect friendship beyond any possibility of change. I took them to the Italian opera which was being given at Covent Garden, then we returned to my house, where, after a good supper, we went to bed in the most perfect peace of mind.

I spent the whole of the next morning in the City, settling my accounts with the bankers who still had money of mine, and I had them all give me bills on Geneva, for my departure was settled, and I took a fond farewell of the honest Bosanquet.[31] I could stay in London only five or six more days. In the afternoon I hired a carriage for Madame M. F., who had to pay some farewell visits, and I paid one of the same to my daughter's boarding school, where she, shedding tears, begged me to take care of her; then I decided to call on her mother, for Sophie had made me promise to do her that favor.

At supper that evening we talked of our journey, which was to be entirely arranged by me, and M. F. agreed with me that, instead of going by way of Ostend, we should do better to take ship for Dunkirk.[32] M. F. had only a few small pieces of business to finish. He had paid all his debts, and he told me that he would arrive in Bern with some fifty guineas still in his purse after paying two-thirds of the cost of the journey.

I had to agree to his doing so, but I was determined never to show him the accounts. I hoped that in Bern I should succeed in obtaining Sara's hand as soon as I made sure of her consent, for I had not yet talked to her about it.

It was on the next day, after breakfasting with the whole family, and Sara's father having gone out on business, that I took Sara's hand in her mother's presence and I asked her in tones of the most perfect love if I could be sure she would grant me her heart if, when we were in Bern, I could succeed in obtaining her father's consent, her mother having assured me that I should certainly have hers. Scarcely has the subject been raised before Madame M. F. rises, saying in the most amiable way that since our discussion might well take a long time she would leave us until noon, and, so saying, she took her elder daughter with her and went to pay calls.

Sara, immediately returning to the subject, said that she could not understand how I could have any doubt of her consent, after the proofs of her affection which she had given me, and after the unmistakable tokens of it which I had received. With her face the picture of candor, love, and gratitude, she said that if she became my wife she was sure that she would never cease to be happy, that she would never have any will but mine, and that when she followed me nothing in her native country could make her regret it.

My softened soul cannot resist the energy and the sweetness of these words. I clasp the amorous Sara in my arms, and I see her sharing my transports; but she implores me to restrain them when she sees me on the verge of giving her that proof of them which every fond lover feels that he must share with the object of his adoration. Clasping me in her arms, she implores me not to demand of her what she is not willing to give me until she should be mine by the bond of marriage.

"What! you have the heart to drive me to despair? Consider that your resistance may cost me my life. Good God! Is it possible that you should love me and that at the same time this fatal resolve should not be abhorrent to your love? Yet you want me to be sure that you love me."

"Yes, my loving friend, be sure of it."

"Alas, that certainty cannot suffice me if you divorce it from a proof which ever accompanies it."

Seeing my tears flow, Sara was touched to the point of feeling a faintness which obliged her to throw herself on the bed, which was only two steps away. Her pallor frightened me. I made her smell some drops[33] which I had in a flask, at the same time rubbing her temples, and she opened her eyes, offered me her lips, and seemed to be contented by a kiss which assured her that my soul had grown calm.

In this situation the mere thought of taking advantage of her condition to satisfy my desires would have horrified me if it had entered my mind. Not being in a deep enough faint not to have seen my restraint, she recovered her faculties, which were perhaps restored to her by the ardor of the kisses which I printed on her lips, her eyes, her arms, and her beautiful hands. Sitting up again, she said that I had now given her further proof of my tender affection.

"What! can you imagine that I could have been base enough to take advantage of your faintness to procure an enjoyment which you would not have shared?"

"Certainly not; yet I would not have resisted, but perhaps I should have ceased to love you."

"Good God! Can I believe my ears? Divine creature! You hold me spellbound. I am lost."

After saying this, I sat down at her bedside, and I gave myself over to the most melancholy reflections, which Sara never once interrupted. Finally her mother came back and asked her why she was lying down. She replied that she had felt unwell.

Her father, too, came back soon afterward, and we dined, but in very low spirits. What had happened to me, and what I had learned directly from the lips of a girl whose heart was as pure as her passion was strong, had plunged me into the deepest dejection. After this last scene, I had nothing left to hope for; and knowing my temperament, I knew that I must think about myself. It had been only six weeks since God had helped me to throw off the chains in which La Charpillon had bound my will even though I had known all the baseness of her character; and I now saw myself in danger of becoming the victim of an angel whose virtues my reason could not but admire. It was impossible for me to be governed by them, and, not even certain that she would become my wife, I foresaw my destruction. She would have been the cause of it; and I should not have had the poor consolation of having the right to complain of it.

Such were my reflections after her fainting fit, and they could not act in me until after they had ripened.

In the City there was a sale of choice merchandise which was to be parceled out by means of a lottery; Sara had read the announcement of it in some newspaper. I invited her and her mother to go to the City with me to take chances in the lottery.

It was a sort of fair in — Square, at which the women who owned them disposed of a number of fine articles at their proper price, but by means of a lottery. An article, for example, which was worth ten guineas was drawn for when ten tickets at a guinea each had been sold; the person who had drawn the lucky ticket when his turn came won it.

We found the place full of people of the greatest distinction, among them the Countess of Harrington and her daughters Lady Stanhope and Lady Amelia. The mother had a strange case on her hands at the time. She was having officers of the law make an investigation at her house to find the thief [34] who had stolen six thousand pounds sterling from her husband, whereas all London had no doubt that she herself had made away with the money.

Madame M. F. declined to take part in the lottery, but she did not think she should deny my request to her daughters to take tickets on my behalf. So I gave them a few guineas, and they were lucky. That is to say that, for ten or twelve guineas which they lost, they took home merchandise worth sixty. After the usual demurrals they allowed me to make them a present of it all. There were a length of fine linen, two Indian dresses, and a ruby necklace which, it having fallen to Sara, her father undertook to sell before they went back to Switzerland, where sumptuary laws[35] were in force.

In love with Sara, and sure that she would no longer grant me more than trifling favors, I did not put off speaking my mind. After supper, before we rose from the table I informed the amiable family that, not being certain that Sara could become my wife, I had decided to put off my visit to Bern until some other time. Her father said that it was a wise decision, and that I could maintain a correspondence with his daughter. She seemed to assent, but I saw that she showed no eagerness to comply.

I spent a cruel night. It was the first time in my life that I found that I was loved and yet unhappy because of the strangest of whims. Weighing the reasons which she alleged, and finding them groundless, I ended by concluding that my caresses had offended her.

In the course of the three last days I several times found myself alone with her, but never let myself indulge in transports, thereby earning sweet tokens of her gratitude in the form of childish caresses. I finally learned that if enforced abstinence usually exacerbates love, it can also have the opposite effect. In the long run Sara would have reduced me to indifference, for I should never have found her unworthy of my friendship. A different character, a Charpillon who deceived me and made me furious, in short a coquette who keeps hope forever alive and whom one never obtains, at last arouses scorn and often hatred.

They all set off, taking ship on the Thames for Ostend.[36] I went with them as far as the estuary, then returned by water. I gave Sara a letter for Madame W. This Madame W. was the learned Hedwig,[37] of Geneva, whom Sara did not know. Two years later[38] Sara became the wife of another Monsieur W., and she was happy.

Nowadays when I ask for news of my old acquaintances from people coming from their countries, or natives of them, I listen to them attentively; but the interest they arouse in me is less strong than the interest I take in some fragment of history, some incident five or six centuries old and unknown to all the learned. For our contemporaries, and even for the companions of our early follies, we feel a kind of contempt which may very well spring from the contempt which at certain moments we feel for ourselves. Four years ago I wrote a letter to Madame G.[39] in Hamburg. My letter began as follows:

"After a silence of twenty-nine years." She did not even answer me. When my reader learns who Madame G. is he will laugh. Two years ago I had set out for Hamburg; but my guardian Demon made me return to Dux.[40]

At the opera in Covent Garden Goudar came to me to ask me if I wanted to go to La Sartori's[41] concert, at which I should see a brand-new English girl to whom La Sartori herself was giving singing lessons. She spoke Italian. She was a jewel. I must, he said, make haste, for the first nobleman who saw her would make off with her on the instant.

Having just lost Sara, I was not anxious to make a new acquaintance, but I had to see the girl. I went there; I was bored, and that pleased me. However, she was pretty. A Livonian who called himself Baron Henau,[42] young and with an interesting face, appeared to be smitten by the charming pupil of the *virtuosa* Sartori. After supper she offered us tickets at a guinea for a new concert, and I took two, giving one of them to Goudar. The Livonian Baron took fifty and paid her for them on the spot. I at once saw that he wanted to capture her by storm, and his attitude pleased me. I thought he was wealthy. I let him take me in. He made himself agreeable to me, and we became friends. The reader will soon see the consequences of this fatal friendship.

To forget Sara, I needed another Sara. She was the pretty Irish girl [43] who brought us our bottle of strong beer when we went to the pothouse where she served; but Goudar was jealous of her.

Walking with him in the Park, I go on ahead to let him talk with two girls whose faces, so far as I could see them under their hats, struck me as pretty. This is what he said to me after he let them go.

"A Hanoverian lady,[44] a widow and the mother of five daughters, came here two months ago, bringing all of them with her. She lives in a house on Leicester Fields Square.[45] She is appealing to the Court for reparation for the damage done her by a detachment of the army then commanded by the Duke of Cumberland.[46] The mother being ill, or so it is said, keeps to her bed and lets no one see her. She sends her two elder daughters to solicit the recompense for which she asks. They are the two girls you just saw. But they can accomplish nothing. I have even been told that the Ministers no longer give them a hearing. They are all of them pretty. The youngest is fourteen years of age and the eldest twenty-two. They speak German, French, and English; they politely receive everyone who goes to call on them, though all of them always remain in the room. They accept money if it is offered them, but they do not ask for it. I went there three or four days ago from curiosity, and they received me quite well; but since I did not give them anything I dare not go back there by myself. If you are curious, let us go there."

"How can I help being curious after hearing your account of them? Let us go at once; but if the one I find attractive does not grant me some favors I will not give them the usual guinea."

"You will not give it, for they do not even allow one to take them by the hand."

"Are they Charpillons?"

"Very likely. But you will see no men there."

We go up to a second floor, and in a large drawing room I see three pretty girls and a sinister-looking man. I pay them the usual compliments, which, though they acknowledge them by curtsying, do not lighten their air of gloom. Goudar goes to the man and speaks to him, and the man replies. Goudar shrugs his shoulders and tells me that we have come at a bad moment.

"The man," he says, "is a bailiff, who insists that he will take the mother to prison unless she pays the landlord twenty guineas she owes him, and they haven't a copper among them. When he has taken her to prison the landlord will turn all the girls out into the street. They will then go to stay in the prison with the mother, and their lodging will cost them nothing."

"That is not so. They can eat there if they pay for it, but they could not stay there, for only the prisoners are given lodging in prison."

I ask one of the girls where their sisters are.

"They have gone," she answers, "to look for money, for sureties will not do; the landlord insists on ready money at once."

"What do you owe twenty guineas for?"

"For the rent of the apartment and some meals; and we have nothing to sell."

"A sad situation. And what does your mother say?"

"She is ill in bed; at the moment she is crying. She is absolutely incapable of leaving her bed; and they want her to go to prison. The landlord has just given her the comfort of saying that he will have her carried there."

"What barbarity! But I think you pretty, and I am rich. I could be of some good to you if you were good to me."

"I do not know what good you are talking about."

"Your mama can tell you. Go and talk with her."

"Sir, you do not know me. We are decent girls and, what is more, girls of good birth."

After uttering these words, the little beauty turned away to cry. The two others, who were as pretty as she, stood there not saying a word. Goudar said to me in Italian that unless we consoled the poor creatures in due form we were cutting a very poor figure there, and we went down the stairs.

CHAPTER I[1]

The Hanoverian mother and daughters.

JUST AS we reach the street door we meet the two sisters on their return, looking more calm than sad. I see two beauties who astonish me; but what surprises me even more is one of them dropping me a curtsy and saying:

"Are you not the Chevalier de Seingalt, Monsieur?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, and very much distressed by your misfortune."

"Would you do me the honor to go upstairs again?"

"I cannot; I have urgent business."

"I ask you for only a quarter of an hour."

I cannot refuse. The girls were the two elder daughters. The one who had asked me to go up spent the quarter of an hour giving me an account of her family's misfortune in Hanover, their journey to the Court of St. James's to obtain reparation, their fruitless efforts, the necessity they had been under to go into debt in order to live, the illness which prevented their mother from acting in person, the barbarity of the landlord, who, refusing to wait any longer, was going to send their mother to prison and turn them out into the street, and the further and even more cruel barbarity of all their acquaintances, from whom they had just asked help and who had refused it.

"We have, Monsieur, nothing to sell, nothing; and today we have only two shillings to buy bread to live on."

"Who are those who, knowing you, have the heart to abandon you in such distress?"

"So-and-so, So-and-so, So-and-so, Lord Baltimore,[2] the Marchese Caraccioli,[3] the Neapolitan Ambassador, Lord Pembroke."[4]

"It is unbelievable, for I know that the three last are high-minded, rich, and generous. There must be some good and weighty reason, for you are all beautiful; and to these gentlemen beauty is a letter of credit at sight."

"Yes, Monsieur, there is a reason. These high-minded and rich noblemen abandon and despise us. Our situation does not inspire pity in them because, they say, we are fanatics. We refuse to grant them favors which are contrary to our duty."

"That is to say, they find you attractive, and they maintain that you should be willing to quench the desires which you kindle in them, and they refuse you their money because, feeling no pity for them, you will not grant them the slightest favor. Is that it?"

"Exactly."

"In that case they are right."

"They are right?"

"Certainly. I think as they do. We abandon you to your duty. Ours is to keep our money to foster the passions which, at the same time that they war on us, give us happy moments. We care neither to be considered virtuous nor to pay beauties who seduce us by their charms, only to make us languish afterward. I will go so far as to tell you that your misfortune at this juncture is that all of you are pretty; you would easily find twenty guineas if you were ugly; I would give them to you myself, for then I should not lay myself open to two cutting reproaches. No one would say that I had performed this act of benevolence because I was a slave to my inclination for gallantry, nor could anyone say that I had helped you in the hope of obtaining what, according to your doctrine, I shall never obtain."

It was the only way to talk to the girl, who was gifted with charms and a dazzling eloquence. I saw that she was taken aback. I asked her how it happened that she knew me, and she replied that she had seen me at Richmond[5] with La Charpillon.[6] I thereupon told her that La Charpillon had cost me two thousand guineas, and that she had never granted me a kiss; but that it would not happen to me again. Her mother then called to her, she went to see what she wanted, and she came out a moment later to say that she begged me to come in, for she had something to discuss with me.

I go in, and I see a woman forty-five years of age, sitting up in bed and not looking as if she were ill. Keen eyes, an intelligent countenance, and a crafty air warned me to be on my guard; it comes to me that she looks rather like La Charpillon's mother.

"What can I do to serve you, Madame?"

"Monsieur, I heard all that you said to my daughters. You did not speak to them like a father, you will admit."

"Madame, I am a professed libertine, and if I had daughters I am sure they would not need the services of a preacher. I told your daughters what is my opinion, and what must be your opinion too if you are wise. I can feel only admiration for girls who insist on parading their virtue; I shall never be their friend. If your daughters want to be virtuous, well and good; but let them not go about tempting men. I take my leave, and I assure you I shall not see them again."

"One moment, Monsieur! My husband was Count So-and-so.[7] They also deserve respect for their birth."

"In that case what greater respect can I show them than not to see them again?"

"Does not our situation arouse your pity?"

"Very greatly, but I fight against what it inspires in me, because they are pretty."

"What a reason!"

"A very strong one. I should be said to have been duped by my feeling. If they were ugly, I would give you twenty guineas on the spot, and I should be admired; but since they are pretty, if you want twenty guineas you shall have them tomorrow morning; but I must have one of your daughters tonight."

"What language to a woman of my station! No one has ever said such a thing to me."

"Forgive my frankness, and permit me to leave your presence, asking you to excuse me. Good-by, Countess."

"We are today reduced to eating nothing but bread."

"If that is the case, I will dine with them and I will pay for dinner for them all."

"You are too strange. They will be gloomy, for I am about to be taken to prison. You will be bored. Instead, give them what you would spend."

"No, Madame. For my money I want at least to enjoy with my eyes and my ears. I will have your arrest put off until tomorrow. By tomorrow, Providence may have intervened."

"The landlord refuses to wait."

"Leave that to me."

I then tell Goudar[8] to ask the landlord what he will take to send the bailiff away for only twenty-four hours. Goudar goes, and comes back to tell me that the landlord will dismiss the bailiff if I will give him a guinea and find him a surety who will pay him the twenty guineas if Madame absconds during the twenty-four hours.

My vintner[9] lived in the house next door; I tell Goudar to wait for me; I run there, and I persuade him to talk with the landlord and give him the written security he demands, together with a guinea, which I give him. After that I go upstairs again, and I give the girls the good news that they have time to enjoy themselves until the next day. A quarter of an hour later, as soon as the bailiff was gone, I explain to Goudar the agreement to which I had come with the mother, and I ask him to arrange for a dinner for eight to be brought in. Goudar goes, and having already obtained the entrée to Madame's room, I enter it, bringing with me all her daughters, who were amazed at the way in which I had completely upset all the rules and regulations of the household.

"Here, Madame," I say, "is all I have been able to do for you. Your daughters are charming, they were all born for love, they all interest me equally, I have procured you a respite of twenty-four hours for nothing, I shall dine and sup with them without asking for a kiss, and if tomorrow you have not changed your way of thinking I will withdraw the twenty-guinea security which I have had put up, and I will trouble you no longer."

"What do you mean by 'changing my way of thinking'?"

"Sending a virtue of which I am the sworn enemy to the devil."

"My daughters will never prostitute themselves, either to you or to any other man."

"And I will sing their praises all over London as models of virtue, and I will go and spend my money with girls as wanton as I am. La Charpillon shall have been the last to trick me."

"You took a terrible revenge. I laughed heartily at your parrot. You are a vicious man."

"Extremely vicious. Believe me, you have made a very undesirable acquaintance today."

Goudar returned after attending to everything, and we took leave of Madame, who thought it unbecoming to show herself to Goudar too. I was the only man, according to her, to whom she had done that honor in London. Our English dinner was good enough; but the pleasure I felt was extreme when I saw the five Countesses eating with ravenous appetites. My vintner next door sent me six bottles of Pontacq,[10] which, enchanted by such a land of Cockaigne, they emptied like heroines; but the poor creatures, unaccustomed to wine, all became tipsy. Their mother had devoured everything I sent her and drunk a bottle of an old wine which she preferred to Pontacq. Despite their tipsiness I kept my word, and neither Goudar nor I took any liberties with them. We supped in equally high spirits, and no less abundantly, and after a big bowl of punch I left them, in love with them all and at a loss to foresee if I should have the strength to acquit myself as well the next day.

"It all depends," said Goudar, as he saw me home, "upon not giving them a penny before the climax. You began by playing the part of a rake; if you do not keep it up you are done for."

I saw that he spoke as a past master, and I determined to convince him that I knew as much about it as he did.

Impatient the next day to learn the result of the council which the invalid mother must have held with the five daughters, I went to their lodging at ten o'clock. The two elder sisters were not there; they had gone out at eight o'clock to call on all the people whose hearts they hoped to touch and whom they had not had time to visit on the previous day. The three younger girls came running to me, like little water spaniels making much of their master when he comes home; but not only do they turn away their pretty faces when they see me put mine forward to kiss them, they refuse me their hands too. I tell them they are in the wrong, and I knock at their mother's room; she asks me to come in and thanks me for the charming day I had given them.

"I have come to see if I am to withdraw my security."

"It is for you to say, but I do not believe you capable of it."

"There you are mistaken, Countess. You know the human heart, but you have not studied the mind, or you imagine that everyone's mind is less intelligent than yours. I inform you that all your daughters put me in ecstasies yesterday; but, should it kill me, I will give you no token of friendship until you have abandoned your infamous system of ethics."

"Infamous?"

"Yes, infamous; I said enough to you on the subject yesterday. Good-by, Madame."

She did not want to let me go, but, neither listening to her nor looking at the young enchantresses, I made my way down the stairs, and I went to see Maisonneuve, my vintner, to tell him to withdraw the security. Then with the heart of a tiger, I went to call on Lord Pembroke, whom I had not seen for three weeks. As soon as I mentioned the Hanoverians to him he burst out laughing, and he said that there was nothing for it but to force the b . . . . . s to become proper wh . . . s.[11]

"They came here yesterday to tell me the state they are in, and, far from helping them, I laughed at them. They had nothing to eat, and I did not even allow my hand to give them a guinea; they got a dozen out of me on three occasions by making me hope, and then they disappointed me. They are all cast in the same mold as La Charpillon."

I told him what I had done and what I hoped to do at the cost of twenty guineas—but paid afterward. For the eldest, and then as much again for each of the four others.

"I had the same idea, but I do not believe you will get your way, for Baltimore offered two hundred guineas for all of them, and the bargain fell through because they demanded the money in advance. They called on him yesterday, and he gave them nothing. They disappointed him five or six times. We'll see what they will do when their mother is in prison. You'll see that we shall get them cheaply."

I go home to dine, Goudar arrives, he had just been at their house, the bailiff was there, he had told them that he would wait only until four o'clock; the two elder sisters had vainly spent four hours going everywhere in search of people who would be charitable. They had sent a dress to the pawnbroker[12] to get money for something to eat. I thought it inconceivable.

I expected to see them at my house, and I guessed rightly; we were at dessert when they appeared before us. The eldest sister used all her eloquence to persuade me to keep my security in force another day; but she finds me inflexible unless she will fall in with a plan which I will explain to her in my bedroom. She comes, leaving her sister with Goudar; whereupon, making her sit down beside me, I put twenty guineas in front of her as the price of her favors. She scorns them. I find her refusal galling; I consider myself insulted; I use force, supposing that her resistance will be slight; I am mistaken; she threatens to scream, and at that I calm myself, but I ask her to go; and she leaves with her sister.

I go to the theater with Goudar, and afterward I go to my vintner Maisonneuve, to learn what has happened. He tells me that the bailiff had had the mother carried to his house, that the youngest daughter had insisted on following her, and that he had no idea where the four others were.

I go home, very much distressed. I felt that I had treated them too harshly; but I saw all four of them before me just as I was going to supper. The eldest, who was always the spokesman, told me that their mother was in prison and that they would all spend the night in the street if I refused them a room, even one without a bed.

"You shall have," I said, "rooms and beds; and I will have a fire lit for you; but I want to see you eat. Sit down."

They sat down, everything to be found in the kitchen was brought, and they ate, but gloomily and drinking only water. Annoyed by this behavior, I told the eldest that she could go to bed on the third floor with her sisters; but that she must leave at seven o'clock in the morning and not come to my door again. They went upstairs.

The eldest sister came into my room an hour later, just as I was going to bed, saying that she must speak with me privately. I ordered Jarba[13] to leave.

"What will you do for us," she said, "if I spend the night with you?"

"I will give you twenty guineas, and I will lodge and board you all so long as you remain amenable."

She began to undress, without a word in answer, and she came into my arms after vainly asking me to put out the candles. I found nothing but submission. She let me do what I would, and that was all; she did not honor me with a single kiss. The celebration lasted no more than a quarter of an hour. My only resource was to imagine that I had Sara[14] in my arms. In amorous intercourse illusion is a necessity.[15] Her cowardly stupidity made me so angry that I got up, I gave her a twenty-pound note, and I told her to dress and go to her room.

"Tomorrow morning," I said, "you shall all leave, for I am not pleased with you. Instead of giving yourself to love, you have prostituted yourself. Shame on you!"

She dressed, and she left without answering me, and I went to bed very ill pleased.

The next morning at seven I saw before me the second sister, whose name was Victoire.[16] She had waked me. I asked her very coldly what she wanted. She replied that she hoped to make me pity them enough to keep them in my house a few more days, and to count on her gratitude.

"You must forgive my sister," she said, "who has already told me everything. She could not give you tokens of love because she is in love with an Italian who is in prison for debt."

"I suppose you are in love with some man too."

"No. I love no one."

"Then you could love me?"

So saying, I embrace her, and I find her gentle and loving. I tell her that she has won the day, and she replies that her name is Victoire. Victoire gave me two delicious hours, which more than made up to me for the bad quarter of an hour I had spent with her sister.

After the performance I told her that I was wholly hers and that she had only to have her mother carried to my house as soon as she was set free, and I saw that she was astonished when I gave her twenty guineas; she did not expect it, so she showed her gratitude as lovingly as possible. I was the happiest of men; I ordered dinner and supper for eight every day, and I had my door closed to everyone, except to Goudar. Spending money like water, I was heading for ruin, and I thought of going to replenish my purse in Lisbon.

Toward noon the mother arrived in a sedan chair and at once went to bed. I went to see her, and I listened without surprise to all the praises she bestowed on my virtues. She wanted to make me believe that she was certain the forty guineas I had given her daughters were not in compensation for their favors. I left her to enjoy her hypocrisy.

I took them to the performance at Covent Garden,[17] where the castrato Tenducci[18] surprised me by introducing his wife to me; I thought he was joking, but it was true. He had married her and, having already had two children, he laughed at those who said that, being a castrato, he could not have any. He said that a third testicular gland, which had been left him, was enough to prove his virility, and that his children could not but be legitimate since he recognized them as such.

Back at the house, I supped deliciously with all the girls, and Victoire came to bed with me, delighted to have conquered me. She said that her sister's lover, who was a Neapolitan and who claimed to be the Marchese della Pettina,[19] would marry her as soon as he was freed from prison, that he was expecting money, and that her mother was delighted that her daughter was to become a Marchesa.

“How much does he owe?”

“Twenty guineas.”

“And the Neapolitan Envoy lets him stay in prison for that trifling amount?”

“He refuses to receive him, because he left Naples without his King’s[20] permission.”

“Tell your sister that if the Neapolitan Envoy will tell me that he has a right to the name he uses, I will have him out of prison tomorrow.”

I went to invite my daughter to dinner together with one of her schoolmates of whom I was very fond, leaving her six guineas to buy herself a fur-lined coat. She said she would send them to her mother, and she asked me to invite her to dinner too. I told her to do it herself. Back in London, I went to see the Marchese Caraccioli. He was a most agreeable man, whose acquaintance I had made in Turin.[21] I found with him the celebrated Chevalier d’Éon,[22] and I did not need to take him aside to ask him for information about the young man in prison.

“He is,” he replied, “what he says he is, but I will not receive him or give him money until he arranges for the Marchese Tanucci[23] to write me that he has permission to travel. At that time I will get him out of prison.”

I asked him no more questions, and I amused myself for an hour listening to the Chevalier d’Éon tell him his situation. He had abandoned his post at the Embassy because of ten thousand francs which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Versailles had refused to pay him and which were his by right. He had put himself under the protection of the laws of England, and, after obtaining two thousand advance subscriptions at a guinea, he had in the press a large quarto volume[24] in which he made public all the letters he had received from the Ministry in the past five or six years. About this same time an English banker deposited twenty thousand pounds sterling in the Bank of London, offering to wager[25] them that the Chevalier d'Éon was a woman. A company took up the wager; but neither of the two parties could be declared the winner unless Monsieur d'Éon would allow himself to be examined in the presence of witnesses. He had been offered ten thousand guineas, but he had laughed at the bettors. He always said that an examination of the sort would dishonor him, whether he was a man or a woman. Caraccioli said that it could dishonor him only if he were a woman; but I maintained the contrary. At the end of a year the wager was declared void; but three years later[26] he received a pardon from the King, and he appeared in Paris dressed as a woman and wearing the Cross of St. Louis.[27] Louis XV had always known the secret; but Cardinal Fleury[28] had taught him that monarchs should be impenetrable; and the King remained so all his life.

Back at home I gave the lovesick Hanoverian twenty guineas, telling her to have her Marchese come to dinner with me, for I wanted to make his acquaintance. I thought she would die with delight

It was just then that Augusta, who was the third of the sisters,[29] in collusion with Victoire and apparently with her mother as well, made up her mind to earn twenty guineas. She did not find it difficult. She was the one whom Lord Pembroke had wanted to have. The thing was arranged at once, and Victoire, to my great satisfaction, yielded her place to her.

The five girls were like five excellent dishes which an epicure is determined to taste. My good appetite made me think that the last was always the best. So Augusta remained my mistress.

On the following Sunday I found myself entertaining a large number of guests. Mrs. Cornelys, who did not fear to be arrested on Sundays, was there with her son, and Sophie was embraced in turn by all the Hanoverians, who devoured her with kisses. I gave a hundred to Miss Nancy Stein,[30] her schoolmate, who was thirteen years old and who set me on fire. They were attributed to fatherly love. Miss Nancy, whom I thought something divine, was the daughter of a rich merchant. I told her that I wanted to make her father's acquaintance, and she replied that I should see him at three o'clock. I at once gave orders that he should be admitted.

The person who, in this brilliant company, cut a very sorry figure was the poor Marchese della Pettina; he was not at his ease in it. He was a tall, thin young man, not ill built; but he was revoltingly ugly and as stupid as possible; he thanked me for what I had done for him, saying that, by seizing the opportunity to be of service to him, I had done a good stroke of business, for he was sure that the day would come when he would do a hundred times as much for me. Yet the Hanoverian was in love with him.

My daughter took me to my room to show me her fine fur-lined coat, and her mother followed her to congratulate me on the splendid seraglio I had acquired, saying that she had often thought of providing herself with a male one, but that she had foreseen that there would be insuperable difficulties. I can well believe it. The bit . . ![31]

At table we were very gay. I was between my daughter and Nancy Stein. I felt happy. Mr. Stein arrived while we were still eating oysters. He repeatedly embraced his daughter, with all the affection of the English; it is peculiar to that nation. "I could eat you up," the Englishman said as he kissed his daughter; and he spoke the truth. A kiss is nothing but the expression of a desire to eat the object one kisses.

Mr. Stein had dined, but he nevertheless ate four dishes of twenty-five escalloped oysters, which my cook prepared to perfection; and he did great honor to the oeil-de-perdrix[32] still champagne. We spent three hours at table, and we spent the rest of the day on the fourth floor, around a harpsichord on which Sophie accompanied the airs which her mother sang. Her son played brilliantly on his transverse flute. Mr. Stein vowed to me that he had never in his life enjoyed a greater pleasure, the more so because, the day being Sunday, it was a forbidden pleasure. I took the risk and I was lucky. At seven o'clock the Englishman presented my daughter with a pretty ring and took leave of me, taking her back to the school with his daughter. The Marchese della Pettina told me that he did not know where to look for a room; I replied that he could find one anywhere, and I gave his fiancée a guinea, telling her to give it to him and to ask him not to come to my house again until I invited him.

When everyone had left, I took all the girls to her room to see their mother, who was in good health, eating, drinking, and sleeping well. She did not read, still less write; but she was not bored, when she went to prison she insisted on being carried, she was always in bed, and her only happiness was to do nothing. However, she told me that she was always thinking about her daughters, who were happy only because of the laws she laid down for them. I could scarcely keep from laughing. Having Augusta on my lap, I asked the mother for permission to give her a kiss, whereupon she preaches a sermon justifying the kiss of paternal affection.

The next morning I saw the Marchese Caraccioli passing my window; he asked me if he might come up, and I begged him to do me the honor. I sent for the eldest sister, telling him that she was to marry Signor Pettina as soon as his money arrived. Here is what he said to her:

"He is a Marchese, he is poor, he will never receive a soldo, and when he goes back to Naples he will be locked up by order of the King, and when he comes out his creditors will have him sent to prison in the Vicaria." [33]

This salutary advice had no effect.

After the Envoy left, I was to go for a ride on horseback. Augusta comes to tell me that, if I like, her sister Hippolyte[34] will go with me.

"She rides like an equerry; last year at Pyrmont[35] she made a brilliant impression."

"That's amusing. Tell her to come down."

She begs me to grant her the favor and assures me that she will do me honor.

"I am willing, but you have no men's clothes to dress in."

"That is true."

"Then we will ride tomorrow."

I spent the whole day having everything she needed made for her, and I fell in love with her when Pagus,[36] my tailor, had to measure her for breeches. Everything was to be ready for the next day. The horseback ride kept us amused all during supper. Hippolyte, in the greatest delight, came to my room to put her sister Augusta to bed. I began by pretending to trifle; but Augusta herself made the trifling become serious; she advised her sister to spend the night with us, and she followed her advice, so certain of my consent that she did not even ask me for it. In the morning I gave her twenty guineas, more than satisfied with the night I had spent.

Pagus came with fawn-colored velvet breeches and a matching vest, which became her perfectly. Hippolyte was surprisingly beautiful. We mounted, followed by Jarba; we dined at Richmond, and we did not come home until evening. But at table I noticed that Gabrielle,[37] who was the youngest of the sisters, was looking sad. Asked the reason for her sadness, she answers that she can ride just as well as Hippolyte. I comfort her by saying that I will give her the pleasure on the next day but one, and she could not be happier. Hippolyte swears to me that she has nothing but courage, and that she has never ridden; but the other assures me that she will ride as well as her sister. I promise to take them both, and they are satisfied.

The charming Gabrielle, aged fifteen, saw me to my room, and her kind sisters left me alone with her. She began by telling me that she had never had a lover, and she unresistingly let me convince myself that it was true.

Of all the five sisters, Gabrielle was the one who would have made me constant, if I had been capable of constancy; she was the only one who made me regret her mother's departure when she decided to leave a few days later. In the morning I added a ring to the twenty guineas which went without saying, and we spent the day having a habit made for her so that she could ride the next day with her sister; but she chose green.

Gabrielle, docilely following her sister's instructions, rode as if she had gone to riding school for two years. We went at a walk until we were outside the city, then at full gallop to Barnes,[38] where we stopped for an hour to have breakfast. We covered the ten miles in twenty-five minutes. The rays which shone from the faces of the two girls in the intoxication of their delight were fiery; I adored them and adored myself. But just as we were mounting again Lord Pembroke arrives and stops. He was on his way to Saint Albans.[39] He admires the two girls, who are sitting on their capering horses, he does not recognize them, he asks me if he may pay his addresses to them. I reply that he may. He approaches them, and he recognizes them. After a brief conversation I see that he is astonished; he congratulates me; he asks me if I am in love with Augusta; I lie, saying that I love only Gabrielle; he asks me if he may come to my house, and I assure him that it will give me great pleasure. He promises to come as soon as possible, and we leave him.

We give our horses their heads, and we return to London. Gabrielle, completely exhausted, at once went to bed. I left her asleep after giving her lively tokens of my constant love. I ordered supper served.

Gabrielle slept until the next morning, and when she waked to find herself in my arms she began philosophizing.

"How easy it is," she said, "to make oneself happy in this world when one is rich! And how hard it is to be powerless to do so when one sees happiness around one and knows that one cannot attain it because one has no money! Yesterday I was the happiest girl on earth. Why cannot I be so every day!"

I philosophized too, but gloomily; I saw myself near the end of my resources, and I thought of Lisbon. If I had been rich the Hanoverians would have kept me in their chains to the end of my life. It seemed to me that I loved them not as a lover but as a father, and the thought that I slept with them was no impediment to my feeling, since I have never been able to understand how a father could tenderly love his charming daughter without having slept with her at least once. My inability to entertain such a conception has always convinced me, and convinces me still more forcibly today, that my mind and my material part are one and the same substance. Gabrielle, speaking with her eyes, told me that she loved me, and I was sure that she was not deceiving me. Can one conceive that she would not have had that feeling if she had had what is called virtue? That is another idea which I find incomprehensible.

The next day the Englishman Pembroke came to our house, and our dinner with the noble Lord was very gay. Augusta bewitched him. He made her proposals the only effect of which was to set her laughing, for he always stipulated that he would not pay until after he had received her favors, a condition which she would never accept. Nevertheless, when he left he gave her a ten-pound note, which she accepted with great dignity. The next morning he wrote her a letter to which I will return in a moment. A half hour after His Lordship left, my girls' mother sent for me. Here is what she said to me in private, after a most feeling prologue on the subject of the unfailing kindnesses with which I blessed her whole family.

"Convinced as I am," she said, "that you love my daughters like the fondest of fathers, I want them to become your real daughters. I offer you my hand and my heart; be my husband,[40] and you shall be their father, their master, and mine. What is your answer?"

I should have burst out laughing if I had not been overwhelmed by astonishment, indignation, and scorn. What effrontery! Sure that her proposal would disgust me, in making it to me she had no other object than to convince me that she believed my affection for her daughters was innocent. She knew the contrary; but by doing as she did she intended to justify herself; she insulted me, but that was nothing to her. Not to attack her openly, I replied that her proposal did me great honor, but that it was of such consequence that I must ask her for time before I gave her my answer.

In my room I found the sweetheart of the wretched Marchese, who told me that her happiness depended on a certificate from the Neapolitan Envoy stating that her lover was really the Marchese della Pettina. He needed only the certificate to obtain two hundred guineas at once. It was what he needed to return to Naples with her immediately, where she was sure that he would marry her. He would, she said, have no difficulty in obtaining the King's pardon. She appealed to me, only I could obtain her this favor from the Neapolitan Envoy. I promised I would go to see the Marchese Caraccioli for the purpose that very day.

I went there, and the intelligent Marchese made no difficulty about attesting that the person who used the name, and who had recently come out of prison, was what he claimed to be, so far as the name was concerned. I saw her beside herself with joy when, coming home, I handed her the certificate.

CHAPTER II[1]

Augusta becomes Lord Pembroke's mistress by a contract drawn up in due form. The King of Corsica's son. Monsieur du Clau, or the Jesuit Lavalette. Departure of the Hanoverians. My balance sheet. Baron Henau. The Englishwoman and the keepsake she leaves me. Daturi. My flight from London. The Count of Saint-Germain. Wesel.

WHEN WE rose from table my maid handed Augusta a letter, which she could not give me to read, for it was written in English; but she explained it to me, in her sisters' presence. His Lordship[2] offered her fifty guineas a month, guaranteed for three years, lodging at Saint Albans, table and servants, if she would accept him as her lover, to say nothing of what she could expect from his gratitude if she found herself able to love him.

I told her that I could give her no advice in the matter, and she went upstairs to her mother, who refused to come to a decision without consulting me, for, as she put it, I was the wisest and most virtuous of men. The upshot of the consultation was that, as soon as His Lordship had furnished a merchant well known on the Exchange as guarantor of the contract, her daughter should accept, for her conduct would be such that she could be sure His Lordship would end by marrying her.[3] Nothing else, the mother declared, was possible. Otherwise she would never have consented to it, for her daughters, being

Countesses, were not the sort of girls to be anyone's mistress. So Augusta wrote accordingly, and in three days His Lordship concluded the business, coming to dine at my house with the merchant who signed the contract, at the foot of which I also, in all honor, signed as witness and as a friend of the mother, into whose presence I escorted the merchant, who saw her sign away her daughter, and acted as the witness. She declined to see His Lordship; she embraced her daughter, with whom she made a secret agreement whose purport I never learned. But the same day on which Augusta left my house was made memorable by another singular event.

The day after the one on which I gave the certificate to the Marchese della Pettina's fiancée, I took my dear Gabrielle horseback riding with Hippolyte. On returning home I found at the door the man who went by the name of Mr. Frederick[4] and who was said to be the son of the King of Corsica, Theodore, Baron von Neuhoff,[5] who, as everybody knew, had died in London. Mr. Frederick said that he wished to speak with me privately, and I let him come up. When we were alone he said that he knew I was acquainted with the Marchese della Pettina, and since he was about to get a bill of exchange for two hundred guineas discounted for him, he needed to know if he was well enough off in his own country to make it certain that he would honor the bill when it fell due.

"I must know this," he said, "for the persons who will discount the note want me to endorse it."

"I know him; but I will tell you nothing of his resources, for I first made his acquaintance here, and it is from the Envoy of the King of Naples that I know beyond doubt that he is what he claims to be."

"If the persons to whom I have broached the matter do not take it up, would you discount it? You should have it cheap."

"I am not in business. I am not interested in profits of this sort. Good-by, Mr. Frederick."

The next morning Goudar came to tell me that Monsieur du Clau[6] wanted to speak with me.

"Who is he?"

"He is the celebrated Jesuit Lavallette whose bankruptcy ruined the Society of Jesus in France. He retired here, and he must command a great deal of money; I advise you to hear what he has to say. I met him in a reputable house, and, knowing that I am acquainted with you, he addressed himself to me. What can you risk by listening to him?"

"Very well. You may take me to see him."

He leaves, he arranges the hour, and after dinner we go to call on the man, whose face I am very much interested in seeing; he begs my pardon, and after Goudar leaves he shows me a bill of exchange of the Marchese della Pettina's, who is asking him to discount it; he had told him that he could inquire of me concerning his resources, for his rank was known to everyone in London. I give Father Lavallette du Clau the same answer I had given the son of the late King of Corsica. I leave him, angry with the fool of a Pettina, who was causing me all this trouble. I see that he is intriguing, and I decide to have the Hanoverian tell him to put an end to it.

I did not find an opportunity that day. The next day I went horseback riding with my girls. At dinner I had Lord Pembroke, who had obtained Augusta. I waited until evening to speak to her elder sister, who had gone out and did not come back. At nine o'clock I receive a letter from her, containing one in German to her mother. She told me in a few words that, certain she could not obtain her mother's consent, she had gone away with her lover, who had raised money enough to return to his country, where he would marry her. She thanked me for all I had done for her, and she begged me to give the enclosure to her mother, to comfort her, and to make her listen to reason, assuring her that she had not gone off with an adventurer but with a man of a rank equal to her own. I show my three girls their eldest sister's letter, and I tell them to go up with me to their mother's room. Victoire said that we should wait until the next day, for the terrible news would prevent her from sleeping. We supped gloomily.

I saw the girl ruined, and I reproached myself with being the cause of it, for if I had not got him out of prison he could have done nothing. The Marchese Caraccioli had been right to tell me that I had done a stupid good deed. I consoled myself a little in the arms of my dear Gabrielle.

How I suffered the next morning when I had to calm the despair into which the mother fell when she read the German letter! She wept, she talked wildly, she blamed me because I had got him out of prison and then had let him see her daughter in my house. One should never point out their errors to people in distress, for after giving their sorrow full vent, they admit them all, and they feel under an obligation to the person who has let them talk on uncontradicted.

After this incident I spent two very happy weeks with Gabrielle, whom Hippolyte and Victoire regarded as my wife. Riding horseback nearly every day, Gabrielle had become as skillful as her sister; she made me happy, and I made her so in every way, and especially in the constancy which led me always to treat her sisters simply as good friends, without ever letting the memory that I had slept with them encourage me to take liberties which would have offended her. I had had dresses made for them, I had supplied them with linen, I lodged them well and fed them well; and, enjoying all the pleasures to be enjoyed in London, they adored me like a little god who made them happy; they pretended, and tried to believe, that it would never end.

On my side I was approaching the exhaustion of all my material and moral resources. I had no more money, I had sold all my diamonds and all my other precious stones; I had nothing left but snuffboxes, watches, cases of various sorts, and sundry trifles of which I was fond and which I did not have the heart to sell, for I should not have received a fifth of what they had cost me. It had been a month since I had paid either my cook or my vintner; but I saw no reason to be any more perturbed than they were; entirely occupied by my love for Gabrielle, I thought of nothing but keeping her affection by countless attentions. Upon this happy state of indolence, Victoire intruded one morning to tell me sadly that her mother had decided to go back to Hanover. She no longer hoped for anything at Court, she had nothing more to do in London. She said that she wanted to take her bones to her native country and that she must lose no time, for, despite her good appetite, she felt nearer to death every day.

"And when does she intend to carry out this splendid plan?"

"In three or four days."

"And without a word to me, as if she were leaving an inn?"

"No, on the contrary, she told me that she wants to talk with you privately."

I go upstairs, and she complains that I never come to see her, ending by saying that, since I had scorned the hand she had offered me, she no longed wanted to lay herself open to criticism or even to calumny. She thanked me for all that I had done for her daughters, adding that she was leaving before she lost the three who remained to her. In any case, she said that I was at liberty to go with her, and to stay as long as I pleased in a country house she owned near the capital. I could answer her only that she was a free agent, and that my situation did not permit me to marry.

On the same day Victoire sent to tell her attorney that her mother wanted to speak with him; he came, he carried out all her instructions, and three days later everything had been arranged for her to leave on the packet for Ostend. It was when I rose that morning that

I learned from Victoire that they were to be on board at four o'clock; nevertheless, Hippolyte and Gabrielle insisted on going riding, as we had decided we should do the day before. The girls enjoyed it; but I was inconsolable, as I usually was when I had to part from the object of my love. Back at the house I went to bed, I refused to dine, and I did not see the three sisters until after they had packed all their things. When I told Gabrielle that her leaving me made me miserable, she could think of no answer but that I was at liberty to go with her. When it was time for them to leave, I got up, not wanting to see their mother in my room; I saw her in hers, lying on the sofa, two men being ready to carry her to my carriage, which was at the door. My servants had attended to having all her possessions taken on board the boat. After seeing that I should not give her anything for the journey, she told me, in an outburst of sincerity, that she had in her purse a hundred and fifty guineas which I had given to her daughters, all three of whom were there in tears.

When my servants came back to tell me that they were gone, I ordered my door shut to everyone. I spent three days in gloom, making up my accounts. In the month I had passed with the Hanoverians I had spent all the money I had received from my jewels, and I was more than four hundred pounds sterling in debt to my vintner and all the other merchants who supplied my daily table. Determined to go to Lisbon[7] by sea, I sold the cross of my order, six or seven gold boxes, after removing the portraits[8] they contained, all my watches except one, and two trunks full of clothes. After paying everyone, I found myself with eighty guineas at my disposal. I left my fine house, and I went to lodge at Mrs. Mercier's,[9] a hundred paces from Soho Square, for a guinea a week, keeping only my Negro servant, whom I had every reason to believe faithful. Having taken these steps, I wrote Signor Bragadin[10] to send me two hundred zecchini[11] at once by a sight bill; I did not need to take more from the money I must have in Venice, from which I had taken nothing for five years.

In this situation, and firmly resolved as I was to leave London not only not a copper in debt but without borrowing even a guinea from anyone, I quietly awaited the bill of exchange from Venice in order to say good-by to everyone and to set sail for Portugal to see what Fortune might have in store for me there. Two weeks after the Hanoverians left, toward the end of February 1764, I go, led by my Evil Genius, to the "Cannon" tavern[12] to dine, as I always did, in a room alone. The table had been laid for me, when I see Baron Henau[13] come in, napkin in hand, to tell me that, if I wished, I could have my dinner sent into the room next door, where he was alone with his mistress.

"I am grateful to you, for a man alone becomes bored."

I see the young Englishwoman with whom I had dined at La Sartori's,[14] and to whom the Baron had been so generous. She spoke Italian, she was talented and charming; I am delighted to find myself in her company, and we dine gaily. After two weeks of abstinence it is not surprising that the pretty English girl aroused desires which I nevertheless concealed, for her lover, who set the tone, treated her with respect. I could do no more than say that I thought the Baron the most fortunate of men. Toward the end of dinner, noticing three dice on the mantelpiece, she quickly goes to get them and says:

"Let us play for a guinea, which we will spend on oysters and champagne."

We do so, it falls to the Baron to pay, he rings, the waiter comes, and he obeys. As we are eating the oysters she says:

"Let us play for which of us will pay for dinner."

We play, and it falls to her. Sorry to see myself getting off scot-free, I invite the Baron to stake two guineas against me, hoping that I shall lose them; but not a bit of it, luck is against him; he loses, I offer him his revenge, he loses, I tell him I will stay with him up to a hundred guineas, he thanks me, and he plays on, hoping to recoup, and in half an hour he owes me a hundred guineas. He asks me to go on, I reply most politely that luck is against him and he might be cleaned out, and that I should be sorry to profit by it. At this refusal he curses Fortune and the indulgence I seemed to be showing him; he rises, he takes his walking stick and he leaves, saying that he will pay me when he returns.

Left alone with the pretty English girl, I am surprised to hear her say that she was sure I had been playing on half shares with her.

"If you guessed that such was my intention, you must also have guessed that I find you charming."

"I observed that too."

"And do you regret it?"

"On the contrary, provided that my first guess was right."

"I promise you fifty guineas as soon as he pays me."

"Yes, but he must know nothing about it."

"And he shall not."

No sooner was this agreement reached than I give her proof of the reality of my inclination, very well pleased by her acquiescence and heartily welcoming this glimmer of good fortune at a time when gloom alone seemed to be my portion. Our business was hastily concluded, for our door was not locked. I had time to ask her only her address and at what hour she was at home, and especially if I must be very careful in her lover's presence, to which she answered only that he did not give her enough to expect her to be his alone. I put her address in my pocket, promising that I would go to spend the following night with her.

The Baron comes back just when we have concluded our arrangements. He tells me that he has gone to a merchant to discount the bill of exchange which he throws on the table before me, and that he had refused to accept it, despite the fact that it was at sight on one of the leading houses in Cadiz and drawn to his order by a reputable house in Lisbon. He shows me his endorsement, I look at the amount of the note, I see millions, and I am at a loss to understand it; he laughs and tells me that the millions were maravedis,[15] which, paid in pounds sterling, came to about five hundred pounds. I said that if the signature of the drawers was known, it was surprising that the merchant had refused to discount it for him.

"Why don't you go to your banker's?"

"I know none. I came here with a thousand lisbonines[16] in my pocket, which I have spent. I did not think of obtaining letters of credit. I cannot pay you unless this note is discounted. If you know anyone at the Exchange, you could do me the favor"

"If the signature is known, I will get it done for you tomorrow morning"

"In that case I will make it over to your order at once."

He signs his name on it. I promise to return his note to him or to give him his money at noon the next day; he gives me his address, he invites me to dine with him, and we part.

Early the next morning I go to Vanneck, who declines to discount the bill; I find Bosanquet, who tells me that Mr. Lee[17] needed it and would accept it at once; I go there, he tells me that my note is better than bank notes; he calculates, he shows me his figures, and he gives me five hundred and twenty pounds and some shillings, after first, of course, having me endorse it. I at once go to the Baron's, I show him the figures, and I give him his money in good bank notes. He thanks me, he gives me two fifty-pound bank notes, then we dine, we talk of his beautiful mistress, I ask him if he is very much in love with her, he says he is not because she has other lovers. He even says that if she pleases me I need only speak out.

"For ten guineas you can sup with her."

I think the Baron's frankness very commendable, I nevertheless have no intention of going back on my word to the beauty. I went to her house, and as soon as she learned that I had brought her the fifty guineas she ordered an elegant supper, then she gave me so pleasant a night in her arms that it banished all my gloom. When, on leaving, I gave her the fifty guineas, she told me that she would give me supper whenever I wished for six. Pleased with her honesty, I promised to visit her often.

The next day I received by the penny post[18] a short letter in bad Italian from a man who signed himself "your godson Daturi."[19] He was in prison for debt, and he appealed to my charity to give him a few shillings for food. I had nothing to do; the word "godson" aroused my curiosity, I take a hackney carriage, and I go to the prison to see this unknown "godson" Daturi. I see a handsome youth twenty years of age, who takes his baptismal certificate from his pocket; I see his name, and mine as his father's gossip, his mother's name, the parish in Venice in which he was born, and I remember nothing. He undertakes to recall it all to me if I will hear him out, for his mother has talked to him about me countless times, telling him how she had known me and giving him hope that he would come upon me somewhere in Europe. Hearing his story I remembered everything, and even more than he could hope, for there were things which his mother had not told him. The young man whom I had held at the font as the son of Daturi, who was an actor, was perhaps my own son. He had gone to London with some acrobats to play the *pagliaccio*,[20] he had quarreled with the troupe, he had been dismissed, he had gone into debt to the amount of ten pounds, and he had been put in prison. After his story, without telling him anything about the circumstances of his birth, I had him released and I told him to come to my lodging every morning for two shillings to live on.

A week after this work of charity I found myself with a bad case of a foul disease which I had already had three times[21] and of which I had been cured by dint of mercury and my excellent condition. In the course of the week I had spent three nights with Baron Henau's fatal Englishwoman, whom I should never have met if Goudar had not taken me to La Sartori's. This disease, which it is not permissible to name in decent society, overtook me at a very poor time, that is to say, at a very unfortunate juncture, for it can never come at a good time. I was on the eve of taking a sea voyage across the entire Atlantic Ocean,[22] and, though Venus was born in that element,[23] the air of her birthplace is extremely bad for those who are suffering from her noxious influences. I consider my situation, and I resolve to take the great cure[24] immediately in London. In six weeks, I was certain, I could recover my health and arrive in Portugal fit to meet any demands on my person.

I go out, and I do not, as I had more than once done at the beginning of my pilgrimage through this world, go like a fool to reproach the Englishwoman who had infected me; instead I go to a learned surgeon to strike my bargain with him and to shut myself up in his house. To this end I pack my trunks, as if I were about to take ship to leave England, except that I send my Negro with all my fine linen to my laundress, who lived six miles from London and had the finest customers in the city.

On the very morning when I was all ready to leave Mrs. Mercier's house to stay at the surgeon's, I am handed a letter brought by messenger. I open it and see that it is signed Lee; he writes me what I copy from the original letter, which I have before my eyes:

"The bill of exchange which you gave me is forged, send me at once the 520 pounds I gave you, and if the person who cheated you does not return them to you, have him arrested. I beg you not to force me to have you arrested tomorrow. Lose no time, for your life is at stake."

I was alone, and very glad to be alone so that I could throw myself on my bed and let my body relieve itself of a terrifying cold sweat, and have time to calm myself after a fit of shivering which took me from head to foot. I saw the gallows before me, inescapably, for no merchant would give me five hundred and twenty guineas on the spot, and the trial which would end by my being sentenced to be hanged would not be put off for a month. If I had a month before me, I should certainly have had five hundred and twenty guineas from Venice; but things of this sort are not easily arranged in London. Burning with the fever which had followed my shivering fit, I take pistols, which are ready loaded, I tell my Negro to wait for me, and I say the same to Daturi, who was on the stairs waiting for me, expecting to receive the two shillings which I gave him every day.

I go to Baron Henau's, intending to blow out his brains if he does not at once give me the money, or to keep him in my sight until I had had him arrested. I arrive at his house, I go upstairs, and the landlady tells me that he had left for Lisbon four days earlier.

The Baron was a Livonian, who was hanged at Lisbon four months later. I learned it at Riga two months after his misfortune overtook him. I mention it now for fear I shall forget it when my reader is at Riga with me at the beginning of October of this year.

As soon as I learned that he had gone, I saw that I must at once decide on a course. I had only ten or twelve guineas; it was not enough. I go to the Venetian Jew Treves,[25] to whom I had been recommended by the Venetian banker Count Algarotti[26] and whose services I had never employed. I consider neither Bosanquet nor Vanneck nor Salvador,[27] because they might already know of my situation. I go to Treves, who had nothing to do with those important bankers, and I at once ask him to discount a bill of exchange which I immediately draw on Count Algarotti in the paltry amount of a hundred Venetian zecchini, and I write the advice to Signor Algarotti, telling him to apply for reimbursement to his relative Signor Dandolo,[28] who had recommended me to him. The Jew at once discounts the bill in cash.

Lee had given me twenty-four hours, and the worthy Englishman was incapable of going back on his word to me; but nature did not allow me to trust in it. I did not want to lose my linen or three broadcloth coats with linings of a different color which were at my tailor's. I take Jarba to my room, and I ask him if he would rather I should give him twenty guineas on the spot and dismiss him, or if he would prefer to remain in my service, undertaking to leave London in a week to join me in the place from which I should write him that I had stopped to wait for him.

"Sir, I do not want a copper, I wish to remain in your service, I will join you wherever you let me know that you are. When shall you leave?"

"In an hour; but it can cost me my life if you tell anyone."

"Why do you not take me with you?"

"Because I want you to bring me my linen, which is at the laundress's. I intend to give you now approximately what money you will need to join me."

"I do not want anything. You shall pay me what I have spent when you see me in your presence. Wait."

He goes to his little room; he comes back at once, and he shows me sixty guineas which he had and offers them to me, saying that he had credit enough to get another fifty. I refuse, but his act makes me sure of him. So I tell him that in four or five days Mrs. Mercier will give him the letter telling him where he is to come, and I instruct him to buy a small trunk to pack my linen and my laces in.

After that I go to my tailor, who had the broadcloth in lengths for the coats he was to make me and the gold braid for one of them. I let him know that I want to get rid of it all, and he buys it from me himself for thirty guineas, which he pays me on the spot. After that I go to La Mercier's, I pay her a week's lodging for my Negro, I put my luggage on a carriage, and I go with

Daturi to sleep at Rochester.[29] I could not go farther. The young man saved me. I was in convulsions and delirious. I ordered post horses to take me to Sittingbourne;[30] and he would have none of it. He astonished me. He went for a doctor, who had me bled instantly, and six hours later he pronounced me fit to leave. The next morning I was at Dover, where I stopped only half an hour because the tide, the captain of the packet boat told me, would not let me stay longer. He did not know that it was just what I wanted. I paid the usual six guineas for the crossing, which took six hours because there was very little wind. From Dover I wrote my Negro to come to join me at Calais, and Mrs. Mercier wrote me that she had given him my letter; but my Negro did not come. My reader will learn two years hence where I found him. I stopped at Calais, and I at once went to bed in the "Golden Arm,"[31] where I had left my post chaise. The best doctor in Calais at once came to take care of me. My burning fever, complicated by the venereal poison which was circulating in my veins, put me in a state which made the doctor despair of my life. On the third day I was at death's door. A fourth bleeding exhausted all my strength and kept me in a lethargy of twenty-four hours' duration, which, followed by a salutary crisis, restored me to life; but it was only after a strict course of diet and treatment that I was in a condition to leave two weeks after I arrived.

Weak, distressed that I had had to leave London at the cost of considerable loss to Mr. Lee, that I had had to run away, that I had found my Negro unfaithful, that I must abandon my plan of going to Portugal, that I had no idea where to go, that my health was so undermined that it was doubtful if I should recover it, that I looked frightful, had lost flesh, that my skin was yellow and all covered with pustules impregnated with celtic humors,[32] which I had to think about dispersing, I got into my post chaise with my godson Daturi, who, sitting behind, acted as my servant and performed that office very well. I had written to Venice to send me at Brussels the bill of exchange for a hundred pounds sterling which I was to have received in London, to which I did not dare to write. I changed horses at Gravelines[33] and went on to spend the night at the "Conciergerie" [34] in Dunkirk.

The first person I saw upon leaving my chaise was the merchant S., the husband of the Teresa[35] whom my reader may remember, the niece of Tiretta's[36] mistress, whom I had loved nearly seven years earlier. He recognizes me, he is amazed to find me so changed; I tell him that I am recovering from a severe illness, I ask him for news of his wife, he says that she is in good health and that he hopes I will come to dine with him the next day. I reply that I must leave at daybreak, but he will not listen to reason; he insists on my seeing his wife and their three young children; and since I had made up my mind to leave the next morning he said he would come back with his wife and his whole family. How could I refuse? I replied that he should sup with me.

The reader may remember how I loved this Teresa, whom I had resolved to marry. I remembered it only to feel the more unhappy, knowing how distasteful she would find the creature I had become.

She came a quarter of an hour later with her husband and her three sons, the eldest of whom was six years of age. After the usual compliments, and the unpleasant truth, which bored me, concerning the poor state of my health, she sent the two younger boys home, keeping only the eldest to sup with me, for she had good reason to believe that he would be of interest to me.[37] The boy was charming, and since he looked very much like his mother her husband never doubted that he was the boy's father in law and in nature. I laughed to myself at finding children of mine all over Europe. At table she gave me news of Tiretta. He had entered the service of the Dutch East India Company,[38] and he had taken part in a revolt in Batavia,[39] where his complicity had been discovered and he might well have been hanged if he had not, as I did in London, had the good luck to escape by flight. It is not very difficult in this world, when one lives the life of adventure, to get oneself hanged for trifles if one has not one's wits about one and is not very careful.

The next day I went by way of Ypres to Tournai,[40] where, having seen two grooms exercising horses, I asked to whom they belonged.

"To the Count of Saint-Germain,[41] the adept, who has been here for a month and who never goes out. He is going to make the fortune of our province by establishing manufactories. Everyone who passes through the city wants to see him, but he remains in seclusion."

Such an answer makes me want to see him. No sooner have I arrived at the inn than I write him a note in which I inform him of my wish and ask him to name a time. Here is his answer, which I still have and which I only translate into French.[42]

"My occupations make it necessary for me to receive no one; but you are an exception. Come at the time which is most convenient for you; you will be shown to my room. There will be no need for you to speak either my name or yours. I do not offer you half of my dinner, for my food is suitable for no one, least of all for you if you still have your old appetite."

I went there at nine o'clock. He had a beard an inch long, and more than twenty distilling flasks containing liquids, some of which were in digestion on sand at its natural temperature. He told me that he was working on colors to amuse himself, and that he was establishing a manufactory of hats to please Count Cobenzl,[43] Plenipotentiary of the Empress Maria Theresa in Brussels. He said that he had given him only twenty-five thousand florins, which would not be enough, but that he would make up the difference. We spoke of Madame d'Urfé, and he told me that she had poisoned herself [44] by taking too strong a dose of the universal medicine.

"Her will shows," he said, "that she thought she was pregnant, and she could have been so if she had consulted me. The operation could not be easier, but it is impossible to be sure if the offspring will be male or female."

When he learned what my disease was, he begged me to remain in Tournai only three days and to do as he told me. He assured me that I should leave with all my pustules discharged. After that he would give me fifteen pills which, taken one at a time, would completely cure me in fifteen days. I thanked him for everything, and accepted nothing. After that he showed me his archeus,[45] which he called Atoeter.[46] It was a white liquid in a small phial like several others which were there. They were sealed with wax. On his telling me that it was the universal spirit of nature, and that the proof of it was that the spirit would instantly leave the flask if the smallest hole were made in the wax with a pin, I asked him to perform the experiment for me. He thereupon gave me a phial and a pin, telling me to do it myself. I pierced the wax, and I instantly saw the phial empty.

"It is magnificent, but what use is it?"

"I cannot tell you."

Ambitious, as usual, not to let me go without having astonished me, he asked me if I had any coins, and I took those I had from my pocket and put them on the table. He then rose, telling me nothing of what he was going to do. He took a burning coal, which he put on a metal plate, then he asked me for a twelve-sou piece[47] which I had there before me, he put a small black grain on it, and he put the coin on the coal, then he blew on the coal with a blowpipe, and in less than two minutes I saw with my own eyes that my coin turned red. He then told me to wait until it cooled, which took place in a minute. After that he told me, with a laugh, to pick up my coin and take it with me, for it was mine. I saw at once that it was gold, but, though I was sure he had removed mine by sleight-of-hand and substituted the gold one, which he could very easily have silvered, I did not want to reproach him with it. After praising him, I told him that, another time, in order to be sure of astonishing the most clear-sighted of men, he should tell him beforehand what transmutation he was about to perform, for then a thinking man would have looked carefully at his silver piece before he put it on the burning coal. He replied that those who could doubt his knowledge were not worthy to speak to him. Such talk was characteristic of him. This was the last time I saw that celebrated and learned impostor, who died in Schleswig six or seven years ago.[48] The twelve-sou piece was pure gold. Two months later in Berlin I gave it to Earl Marischal Keith,[49] who showed an interest in it

I left Tournai the next day at four o'clock in the morning, and I stopped in Brussels to await the answer to the letter I had written to Signor Bragadin in Venice asking him to have the amount of the bill of exchange I was to have received in London paid to me there. I received his letter five days after I arrived, with a bill of exchange for two hundred Dutch ducats[50] on Madame Nettine.[51] I was thinking of staying there to take the great cure, when Daturi came to tell me that he had just learned from a ropedancer that his father, his mother, and his whole family were in Brunswick, where, if I would go there, he assured me that I should find whatever attendance I could want and that I should be made to feel perfectly at home. He persuaded me at once. I knew the Hereditary Prince, who now reigns;[52] in addition I was curious to see Daturi's mother after twenty-one years.[53] So I left for Brussels immediately, but at Roermond[54] I felt so ill that I began to think I could not continue my journey. Passing through Liège, I went to see Madame Malignan,[55] finding her a widow and in poverty. Thirty-six hours in bed made me believe I could bear up, and I left in my post chaise, which kept me in despair because the post horses were not accustomed to shafts; I resolved to get rid of it at Wesel. No sooner had I arrived at the inn than I went to bed, and I told

Daturi to discuss exchanging it for a four-wheeled carriage.

The next morning I was very much surprised to see General Beckwith[56] in my room. After the usual questions and condolences on the state of my health, the General said that he would himself buy my chaise and would give me a carriage in which I could travel comfortably all through Germany, and the thing was done then and there; but when the worthy Englishman heard my account of the condition I was in, he persuaded me to take the cure at Wesel, where there was a young physician, a graduate of the school at Leiden,[57] who was very cautious and very skillful. Nothing is easier than to change the mind of a sick and melancholy man, who has no plan, who is in search of fortune, and who, with *Sequere Deum*[58] as his maxim, does not know where it may await him. General Beckwith, who was in garrison with his regiment at Wesel, immediately sent for Dr. Peipers,[59] and insisted on being present at my whole confession and even at my examination. I do not want to disgust my reader by describing the wretched state I was in. The young doctor, who was gentleness itself, told me to lodge at his house, where his mother and his sisters would give me all the attendance I could want, and where he assured me that I should be cured in six weeks if I would obey all his instructions. The General encouraged me to make up my mind to it, and I felt inclined to do so, for I wanted to be able to amuse myself in Brunswick, and not go there only to arrive paralyzed in every limb. So I assented, despite my son, who hoped for the honor of getting me cured in his house. Dr. Peipers would not hear of any fixed agreement. He said that when I left I should give him what I pleased, and that he would certainly be well satisfied with it. He left to have his room made ready for me, for he had only one, saying that I could go there an hour later. I had all my baggage taken there, and I arrived at his house in a sedan chair, holding a handkerchief before my face, ashamed to show myself to the mother and sister of the worthy doctor, who was there in company with several girls at whom I did not dare to look

As soon as I was in my room Daturi undressed me and I went to bed.

CHAPTER III

My cure. Daturi beaten by soldiers. Departure for Brunswick. Redegonda. Brunswick. The Hereditary Prince. The Jew. My stay in Wolfenbüttel. Library. Berlin. Calzabigi and the lottery in Berlin. Mademoiselle Belanger.

AT SUPPERTIME the doctor came to my room with his mother and one of his sisters, both of whom assured me that they would accord me every attention. Their good character was depicted on their faces.

As soon as they withdrew he informed me of the system he would follow to restore me to health. A sudorific decoction and mercurial pills were to free me from the poison which was carrying me to the grave. I must adhere to a strict diet and refrain from all mental exertion. I assured him that he would find me obedient to all his directions. He promised to read the newspaper to me himself twice a week, and he at once gave me the news that Madame de Pompadour was dead.[1]

So I am condemned to a rest which, according to him, was necessary to the success of his treatment, but which, on the other hand, was murderous, for I felt that the boredom would kill me. The doctor himself feared it, and he advised me to let his sister come and do needlework in my room with two or three girls who were her dear friends. My bed being in an alcove with curtains, they would not inconvenience me. I asked him to procure me the diversion, and his sister was delighted to be able to do me the favor, for the room I occupied was the only one in the house with windows on the front. But this foresight on my doctor's part was fatal to Daturi.

Having been educated in nothing but his profession, the youth could only be bored to spend the entire day with me; so when he saw that, having excellent company, I could do without him, he ceased to think of anything but amusing himself all day, roaming about now in one part of the city, now in another. On the third day of our stay in Wesel he was brought home at nightfall badly beaten. He had gone to amuse himself in a guardhouse with some soldiers who had picked a quarrel with him, and who had ended by giving him a masterly thrashing. He was in a pitiable state. Covered with blood and with three teeth[2] missing, he wept as he told me of his misfortune, begging me to avenge him. I sent my doctor with the story to General Beckwith, who came to tell me that he did not know what he could do about it and that the only service he could render me was to send him to the hospital to be cured. Having no broken bones, he recovered his health in a week, and I sent him to Brunswick with a passport from General Salenmon.[3] The three teeth he had lost in the affray saved him from the risk of being made a soldier, as he might have been if he had had them all.[4] He set out on foot, and I promised I would go to see him as soon as I was well enough to leave.

He was a handsome, well-built youth. He could scarcely write, and he had been taught nothing but ropedancing and the art of pyrotechnics.[5] He was courageous, and he had pretensions to honesty. He was a little too fond of wine, and he had no more than the usual inclination for the fair sex. I have known a number of men who owed their success to women, despite their indifference to the sex.

At the end of a month I was in good health and able to leave, though I had become very thin. The idea of myself which I left in Dr. Peipers's house is not like me so far as my character is concerned. He thought me the most patient of men, and his sister and her pretty friends the most modest. All my virtues came from my illness. To judge a man, one must examine his conduct when he is healthy and free; ill or in prison, he is not the same.

I presented Fräulein Peipers with a dress, and I gave the doctor twenty louis. On the day before my departure I received a letter from Madame du Rumain,[6] who, having learned from my friend Balletti[7] that I was in need of money, sent me a draft for six hundred florins on the Bank of Amsterdam. She wrote me that I was to repay her the amount at my convenience; but she died before I could fulfill the obligation.[8]

Having decided to go to Brunswick, I could not resist the temptation to go to Hanover. When I remembered Gabrielle,[9] I still loved her. I was not thinking of stopping there, for I was no longer rich, and my convalescent state prescribed that I should husband my returning health. I wanted only to surprise her, paying her a short visit at her estate, on which she had told me that she was living near Stöcken.[10] Curiosity also entered in.

So I had decided to leave at daybreak, all alone in the carriage which the English General had given me in exchange for my two-wheeled one; but it was not to be.

A note from the General, in which he asks me to come to supper with him, where I will find guests from my own country, obliges me to accept the invitation. If we remain at table until late in the night, I am prepared to leave still later. So I go to General Beckwith's, after promising my doctor that I will abstain from any excess.

What a surprise when, entering the room, I see the Parmesan Redegonda,[11] with her swine of a mother! She did not at once recognize me; but her daughter instantly named me, saying that I had grown very thin. I told her that she had grown more beautiful, and it was true. Eighteen months added to her age could only have increased her charms. I told her that I had just got over a serious illness, and that I was leaving for Brunswick at dawn.

"And so are we," she replied, looking at her mother.

The General was delighted to see that we knew each other, and adds that we could go there together, and I reply with a smile that it would be difficult, unless the Signorina's mother had adopted new principles. She replies that she is the same as ever

The company wants to go on playing. The General was dealing at a small faro bank. There were two or three other ladies and some officers, and the stakes were very small. He offers me a *livret*,[12] and I decline, saying that I never play when I am traveling.

At the end of the deal the General says to me that he knows why I am not playing, and he takes some English bank notes from his portfolio.

"These are the same notes," he says, "which you gave me in payment in London six months ago.[13] Take your revenge. They come to four hundred pounds sterling."

"I have no wish," I say, "to lose as much as that. I will lose only fifty guineas, in paper too, to amuse you."

So saying, I take from my purse, in which I had two hundred ducats in gold, the bill of exchange which the Countess du Rumain had sent me.

He goes on dealing, and at the third deal I find I am ahead by fifty guineas, which he pays me in English paper as soon as I said that I had had enough. Just then supper is announced, and we go to sit down at table.

Redegonda, who had learned French very well, amused the whole company. She was to enter the service of the Duke of Brunswick,[14] as second musical *virtuosa*, by contract with Nicolini,[15] and she had just come from Brussels. She complained of having undertaken to make the journey by post coaches, in which she was very uncomfortable, and so much so that she was sure she would arrive in Brunswick very ill.

"Here is the Chevalier de Seingalt," says the General to her, "who is all alone and whose carriage is excellent. Go with him."

Redegonda smiles, Redegonda's mother asks me how many seats my carriage has, and the General answers for me that it seats two. The mother then says that the thing is impossible, for she did not let her daughter travel alone with anyone. At this reply everyone burst into laughter, including Redegonda, who, after laughing, said that her mother was always afraid that someone would murder her.

The conversation then turned to other subjects, and we remained at table in high spirits until one o'clock. Redegonda, without much urging, sat down at the harpsichord and sang an air which pleased the entire company.

When I made to leave, the General invited me to breakfast, saying that the post coach did not leave until noon and that I owed the courtesy to my beautiful compatriot, and she joined in, reproaching me with certain occurrences at Florence and Turin,[16] where she had nothing to reproach me with; but I yielded, though I went off to bed, being in need of sleep.

The next morning at nine o'clock I take leave of the doctor and his whole family and I go to the General's on foot for breakfast, having left orders that, as soon as the horses were harnessed, my carriage was to be ready at his door, for I was determined to leave after breakfast without fail. A half hour later Redegonda arrives with her mother, and I am surprised to see her with her brother,[17] who had served me as temporary valet while I was in Florence.

After the breakfast, which was very gay, my carriage being there ready, I make my bow to the General and the whole company, all of whom had left the room to see me set off. Redegonda, asking me if my carriage is comfortable, gets in, and I simply get in after her, without having the slightest plan in mind; but my surprise was not small when, no sooner had I got in than I saw the postilion start off at a fast trot. I was on the verge of calling to him to stop, but, seeing Redegonda laughing at the top of her lungs, I let him go on, ready, however, to order him to stop as soon as Redegonda, having laughed her fill, should tell me that it was enough. But not a bit of it. We had already gone half a league before she began to speak

"I've been laughing so hard," she said, "to think what interpretation my mother will put on this godsend of a joke, for I meant to get into your carriage only for a moment; then I laughed at the postilion, who certainly could not have been carrying me off by your order."

"Certainly not"

"But my mother will think the contrary. Isn't it amusing?"

"Most amusing; but I am very glad it has happened. My dear Redegonda, I will take you to Brunswick, and you will be better off here than in the post coach."

"Oh, that would be carrying the joke too far. We'll stop at the first post station, and wait there for the coach."

"You may do so if you like; but not I! I shall certainly not oblige you to that extent."

"What! You would have the heart to leave me at the post station all alone?"

"Never, my charming Redegonda. You know I have always loved you. I am ready to take you to Brunswick, I say again."

"If you love me you will wait and restore me to the arms of my mother, who must be in despair."

"My dear heart, do not expect that."

The young madcap began laughing again, and while she laughed I formed and perfected the charming plan of taking her with me to Brunswick.

We arrived at the station; there were no horses; I won the postilion over, and after some light refreshments we arrive at the next post station about nightfall, having found the road bad. I order horses, and I let Redegonda say what she will. I knew that the coach would arrive there before midnight, and that the mother would regain possession of her daughter. It was a disappointment which I would not stomach. I went on all night, and I stopped at Lippstadt, where, despite the unusual hour, I ordered a meal. Redegonda needed sleep as much as I did; but she had to resign herself when I quietly told her that we should sleep at Minden. At that I saw her smile, for she well knew what she had to expect. We stopped there, and we spent five hours in the same bed. She only resisted a little for form's sake. If she had had an honest mother when I made her acquaintance at La Palesi's[18] in Florence, I should never have become involved with La Corticelli,[19] who brought me all kinds of trouble. After my too short stay in Minden I stopped that evening in Hanover, where, at an excellent inn, we supped choicely. I found there the same waiter who had been at the inn in Zurich when I waited at table on the ladies from Soleure.[20] Miss Chudleigh had dined there with the Duke of Kingston,[21] then she had left for Berlin. He had made them an iced *salbottière*[22] with ten lemons, of which they had eaten only a little; we took advantage of it, then we retired to a bed made up in the French manner.

What woke us the next morning was the noise of the post coach arriving. Whereupon Redegonda starts protesting that she will not have her mother finding her in bed, and I start summoning the waiter to tell him not to bring to our room a woman who, on leaving the coach, would demand to be brought there; but it was too late. Just as I am opening the door, in comes the mother with her son, and finds us both in our shifts. I tell her son to wait outside, and I close my door. The mother begins scolding and complaining that we have deceived her, and she threatens me if I will not give her back her daughter. Her daughter, telling her the story in detail, convinces her that only chance had made her leave with me. Her mother finally consents to believe her.

"But," she says to her daughter, "you cannot deny, you wanton, that you slept with him."

She replies with a laugh that that was another matter, and that nobody does any harm asleep. She goes and kisses her, and she calms her by telling her that she will get dressed and will make the journey to Brunswick with her in the coach.

Peace having thus been made, I dressed, I ordered horses, and, after giving them breakfast, I went on to Brunswick, where I arrived three hours before them. Redegonda made me lose my desire to pay a visit to Gabrielle, who must have been with her mother and her two sisters on the estate[23] of which she had told me the name.

I went to lodge at a good inn,[24] and I at once sent Daturi word that I had arrived. I saw him appear before me elegantly dressed and impatient to introduce me to the magnificent Signor Nicolini, who was the theatrical impresario-general for the city and the Court. This man, who was thoroughly versed in his trade and who enjoyed the good will of the generous Prince his master, to whom his daughter Anna[25] was mistress, lived in luxury. He insisted on putting me up, but I managed to excuse myself. However, I accepted his invitation to his table, which was worthy of my consideration not only for his excellent cook but also for the charm of the company, which was far more likely to give pleasure than one made up of persons of quality, where gaiety freezes in the chill of etiquette. Nicolini's was made up of people of talent. Votaries, male and female, of music and the dance offered my mind the most satisfying of pictures. I was convalescing, and I was no longer rich. Otherwise I should not have ended my stay in Brunswick so soon. No later than the next day Redegonda came there to dinner. Everyone knew, though I do not know how, that it was with me she had traveled from Wesel to Hanover.

On the next day but one the Crown Prince of Prussia[26] arrived from Potsdam to see his future wife,[27] daughter of the reigning Duke. He married her in the following year, and everyone knows that the marriage turned out badly[28] because of a passing fancy of the charming Princess's, which cost the man who had dared to seduce her, or who had let himself be seduced, his head. In the latter case she did a grave wrong in accusing him.

There were magnificent entertainments at Court, and the Hereditary Prince,[29] now the reigning Duke, was gracious to me. I had made his acquaintance in Soho Square at the great picnic supper on the day after he received the freedom of the City of London.[30]

It was twenty-two years since I had loved Daturi's mother. Remembering her beauty, I was curious to see her again. Age had damaged her so cruelly that I was sorry I had made her receive me. I saw that she was ashamed of her ugliness; but her ugliness enabled me not to blush for my former inconstancy. The transition from beauty to ugliness in the face of a woman whose features are of a decided cast is too easy.

On a great plain some distance from the city the Hereditary Prince reviewed six thousand infantrymen in the service of Brunswick. I went; it rained in torrents all day, and the spectators, both foreigners and the native nobility, and chiefly ladies, were very numerous; among others I saw the Honorable Miss Chudleigh, who asked me when I had left London. That celebrated lady was wearing a muslin dress with nothing under it but a shift, and the heavy rain had so soaked it that she looked worse than naked. She seemed to enjoy it. The other ladies sheltered from the downpour under tents. The rain was not allowed to impede the maneuvers of troops who did not fear fire.

Having nothing to do in Brunswick, I was thinking of leaving for Berlin to spend the rest of the summer more agreeably. I needed a greatcoat, I buy the cloth from a Jew who offers to discount foreign bills of exchange for me, if I have any. Nothing could be simpler. I had the draft for fifty louis on the Bank of Amsterdam which

Madame du Rumain had sent me; I take it from my portfolio, and I offer it to the Israelite. After reading it carefully, he says he will come back in half an hour to discount it for me in Dutch ducats. He comes back with the money. The bill was to my order, Seingalt, and I endorse it by signing that name, and he goes away, satisfied with the two per cent he has made, the usual profit on all bills of exchange drawn on the Bank of Amsterdam. No later than the next morning I see in my room the same Jew, who tells me to return his money and take back my bill, or to give him security until the return of the post by which he would learn if my bill of exchange was accepted as good by the banker on whom it was drawn.

Astonished by the fellow's insolent behavior, and certain that my bill was good, I tell him that he is mad, that I am sure of my bill, and that I will give him no security. He replies that he means to have either the money or security, in default of which he will have me arrested, for I was known. At these words the blood rushes to my head, I take my walking stick and, after administering five or six blows, I turn him out, I shut my door, and I dress to go to dine at Nicolini's. I tell no one what has happened.

Determined to leave in two or three days, the morning after this incident I go for a walk outside the city, and I encounter the Hereditary Prince alone on horseback, followed by a groom at a hundred paces. I bow to him, I see him stop, I approach.

"So you are about to leave?" the charming Prince asks me affably. "I learned of it this morning from a Jew who came to tell me that you had given him a caning because he demanded security from you for a bill of exchange which he discounted for you, and which he was given reason to believe was forged."

"I do not remember, Monseigneur, what I may have done in a first impulse of well-justified anger against a scoundrel who dared to threaten that he would prevent my leaving, saying that I was known; but I know that my honor forbids me to withdraw my bill and to give security, and that nothing but arbitrary authority could prevent me from leaving.”

“That is true, for it would be an injustice; but the Jew is afraid he will lose the hundred ducats, he says that he would not have given them to you if you had not mentioned my name.”

“He lies.”

“He says that you signed with a name which is not yours.”

“He lies again.”

“In short, he is a Jew who has had a beating, or so he claims, and who is afraid of being duped. He is a creature who moves me to pity, and whom I want to prevent from looking for some way to keep you here until he learns that the bill you made over to his order has been honored in Amsterdam. I will myself have the bill taken up from him this very morning, for I have no doubt of its genuineness. Thus you are free to leave whenever you choose. Good-by, Monsieur de Seingalt; I wish you a very good journey.”

After this compliment the Prince left, not waiting for any answer I might give him. I might have told him that, by himself having the bill taken up from the Jew, he made it possible for him to say that His Highness had done me that favor, and that the whole city would believe it, to the injury of my honor.

Princes endowed with a pure heart and a magnanimous soul often lack the attention to detail necessary to spare the delicacy of the person to whom they wish to give an obvious token of their esteem. The Prince's action toward me was a little too much due to his generous character. He could not have treated me differently if he had supposed me a scoundrel and yet had wished to convince me that he forgave me, by taking upon himself all the bad consequences of my dishonesty. “And perhaps that is what he thinks,” I said to myself a moment after he left. "Why is he interfering? Why does he not pretend to know nothing of this ugly business? Is it the Jew whom he pities, or is it I? If it is I, I must teach him a lesson, though without humiliating the hero."

Such are my reflections on my way to my lodging at the conclusion of our dialogue. I consider his wishing me a good journey very much out of place at that particular time. Such a piece of politeness, coming from a Prince whom I could not but regard as sovereign, actually became an order to leave.

I therefore resolved neither to remain in Brunswick, for by remaining there I could have given occasion for a verdict in the Jew's favor, nor to leave, for I could have given the Prince reason to think that by leaving I was profiting by the kindness he had shown me in making me a present of the fifty louis which I should have returned to the Jew if I had been guilty.

In accordance with this reasoning, arrived at by prudence, rarefied by honor, and worthy to have been hatched by a sounder head than mine, I order horses, I pack my trunk, I dine, I pay the innkeeper, and without troubling to take leave of anyone I go to Wolfenbüttel, intending to stay there for a week and sure that I shall not be bored, for it is there that the third-finest library in Europe[31] exists. I had long wanted very much to examine it at my leisure.

The learned librarian, all the more polite because his politeness was as devoid of ceremony as it was of affectation, told me on my first visit that he would not only put a man at my disposition in the library to fetch me all the books I asked for, but that he would bring them to my room, not excepting the manuscripts which are the chief treasure of that celebrated library. I spent a week without ever leaving it except to go to my room, and without ever leaving my room except to go to it. I did not see the librarian again until the last day, to thank him an hour before I left. I lived in the most perfect peace, never thinking of the past or of the future, my work preventing me from knowing that the present existed. I see today that to be a true sage in this world I should have needed only a concatenation of very small circumstances, for virtue always had more charms for me than vice. In short, I was never wicked, when I was so, except in the exuberance of my heart. From Wolfenbüttel I carried away a great number of views on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which one finds in no scholiast and of which the great Pope[32] had no knowledge. Some of them are to be found in my translation of the *Iliad*,[33] the rest are here[34] and will remain lost. I will burn nothing, not even these memoirs, though I often think of it. I foresee that I shall never find the right time to do it.

I returned to Brunswick and to the same inn, and I at once sent word of my arrival to my godson Daturi. How glad I was when I became convinced that no one in Brunswick knew that I had spent that week only five leagues away! He told me that people said that before I left I had taken the bill of exchange back from the Jew, and that nothing more was said about it. Yet I was sure that the reply must have come from Amsterdam, and that the Hereditary Prince must have known all the time that I was in Wolfenbüttel. My godson invited me to dinner at Nicolini's. It went without saying, for I had not taken leave of him, and I wanted to set off the next day. And now for what happened to me at dinner, and which had to stand me in stead of full satisfaction.

We had come to the roast when a valet of the Hereditary Prince entered with the stupid Jew whose insolence I had punished in an access of anger.

"I am ordered, Monsieur," he said, "to beg your pardon for having suspected your bill of exchange on the Bank of Amsterdam of being a forgery. I have been punished by losing the two per cent which I should have gained by keeping it for myself."

I replied that I wished that that had been the only punishment he had received.

The impresario Nicolini did not fail to plume himself on the satisfaction which His Most Serene Highness had had me accorded at his table, and I was willing to flatter his vanity. Toward nightfall I asked him if he had any commissions for me in Berlin, and I took my leave; but now for what made me put off my departure for another day

At my inn I found a note from Redegonda, who, after complaining that I had never once called on her during my stay in Brunswick, asked me to come to breakfast with her in a small house outside the city, directions for reaching which she gave me. She told me that I should find her not with her mother but with a young lady who was an old acquaintance of mine, whom I should be very glad to see again. She asked me to come without fail at the hour she named.

I loved Redegonda, and I had neglected her in Brunswick, not so much on account of her mother as because I was not in a position to make her some handsome present. So I thought I should not fail to appear at her breakfast, curiosity also making me want to see the girl whom she called an old acquaintance of mine.

So I went to the house at the appointed hour, and I found her, beautiful and charming, in a parlor on the ground floor, with a young *virtuosa* whom I had known when she was a child, the same year that I had been imprisoned under the Leads. I pretended to be glad to see her again; but, giving my principal attention to Redegonda, I did my utmost in the way of polite excuses and then of polite compliments on the pretty little house in which I saw her. She said that she had rented it for six months, but that she never slept there.

After coffee we were about to go for a stroll in the garden, when we saw the Prince come in politely asking Redegonda, with a very gracious smile, to excuse him for the chance which had led him to interrupt her conversation.

At that I understood everything, and I understood why the beauty had urged me in her note to keep the appointment without fail. In ten or twelve days Redegonda had made a conquest of the charming Prince, who was always disposed to gallantry but who during the first year of his marriage to a sister of the King of England[35] felt it incumbent on him to pursue his amours incognito. We spent an hour strolling, talking of London and Berlin and never saying a word about the bill of exchange or the Jew. I saw him delighted by my praise of the library at Wolfenbüttel, and laughing heartily when I said to him that but for the nourishment of good books the bad food I had eaten there would have killed me.

After paying Redegonda a very gracious compliment, he mounted his horse a hundred paces from the house. Left alone with my fellow countrywoman, far from urging her to grant me favors, I advised her to cherish the personage who had just left us; but she would never admit to anything.

I went back to my inn for the rest of the day, and I left the next morning at dawn.

At Magdeburg an officer to whom I gave a letter from General Beckwith showed me all the most secret parts of the fortress[36] and kept me for three days in company with girls and gamesters. I took good care of my health and I replenished my purse, contenting myself with honesty.

I went straight to Berlin, not caring to stop at Potsdam, since the King was not there. The sandy roads made me spend three days traveling eighteen short German leagues.

I went to lodge at once at the "City of Paris."[37] In this inn I found everything I could wish, both for my comfort and my straitened means. The mistress of the inn, whose name was Rufin and who was French, being thoroughly well versed in her trade, had given her establishment a most favorable reputation. A half hour after my arrival she came to my room to ask me if I was satisfied with it and to settle terms with me for everything. She had a common table, and she made those who wished to eat in their rooms pay double. I said that I did not want to eat at the common table, and that, eating in my room, I did not want to pay more, leaving it to her to diminish the portions, and she agreed to it on condition that I should sup with her at a small table, which would cost me nothing and at which the only company would be her friends. To repay her, as in duty bound, for her politeness, I accepted her condition with expressions of friendship. Being tired from the journey, I did not begin supping with her until the next day. She had a husband who did the cooking and never came to the table, and a son who did not come to it either. The people with whom I supped were an old gentleman, very sensible, and very agreeable company, who lodged in a room next to mine and who was Baron Treyden,[38] whose sister was married to the Duke of Kurland, Jean Ernest Birhen or Biron.[39] This amiable man became my friend, and remained so during all of the two months I spent in Berlin. A merchant from Hamburg, named Greve,[40] with his wife whom he had just married and whom he had brought to Berlin to see the wonders of the Court of a warrior King. The woman was as amiable as her husband. I paid assiduous but perfectly honorable court to her. A very cheerful man, whose name was Noël,[41] who was the sole and greatly cherished cook of the King of Prussia. He came to supper with his wife only seldom, for he seldom had the time for it. Noël had only a scullery boy, and the King of Prussia never had another cook. I met his father in Angoulême, famous for his good pâtés. Noël, Minister[42] of the French Directory[43] at The Hague, is, I am told, the son of the cook, whom in any case I found to be most amiable. But for Noël's skill, the famous atheistic physician La Mettrie[44] would not have died of the indigestion to which he fell a victim at Lord Tyrconnel's,[45] for the excellent pâté which cost him his life had been made by Noël. La Mettrie very often supped with La Rufin during his lifetime, and I was very sorry not to have made his acquaintance. He was learned, and excessively gay. He died laughing, though there is no death more painful, it is said, than death from indigestion. Voltaire told me that he did not believe there had ever been on earth a more determined atheist or one who better supported his position, and I was convinced of it when I read his works. It was the King of Prussia himself who, in the presence of the Academy,[46] delivered his funeral oration, in which he said that it was no wonder that La Mettrie admitted only matter, for all the mind [47] which could exist was in his possession.

It is only to a King who takes it into his head to become an orator that a witticism can be permitted in the gravity of a funeral oration. However, the King of Prussia was never an atheist; but it makes no difference, for belief in a God never influenced either his morals or his acts. It is claimed that an atheist, who, preoccupied with his philosophy, thinks of God, is better than a theist who never thinks of him.

The first call I made in Berlin was on Calzabigi,[48] younger brother of the Calzabigi with whom I had joined at Paris in 1757 to establish the lottery which was first called the Military School Lottery and then, after the death of Pâris-Duverney,[49] the Royal Lottery.

This Calzabigi, whom I found in Berlin, had left both Paris and his wife, who was still known as La Générale Lamothe,[50] to establish the same lottery in Brussels, where, having wanted to live in luxury, he went bankrupt in 1762, despite all that Count Cobenzl [51] had done for him. Forced to leave, he arrived at Berlin in some style and presented himself to the King of Prussia. A rather good speaker, he persuaded the King to establish the lottery in his domains, conferring the directorship on him and giving him the fine title of Councilor of State.[52] He promised His Majesty a revenue of at least two hundred thousand crowns,[53] asking for only ten per cent on the receipts for himself, and the operating expenses.

It was all granted him. The lottery had been established for two years, it was doing well, and fortunately had never suffered an unlucky drawing; but the King, who knew that the unlucky drawing could come, and who could not help fearing it, signified to Calzabigi that he no longer wanted the lottery to continue on his responsibility. He turned it over to him, contenting himself with a hundred thousand crowns; this was what the Italian opera cost him [54]

I arrived at Calzabigi's precisely on the day when the King had sent him notice of this disagreeable decision.

After talking to me of our former dealings and of our vicissitudes, he told me of this unexpected occurrence. He said that the current drawing would still be on the King's responsibility, but that he must have notices put up informing the public that, beginning with the next drawing, His Majesty would take no part. He needed a capital of two million crowns, or he foresaw the end of the lottery, for there would be no one to risk his money in it if he were not sure he would be paid if he won. He offered me ten thousand crowns a year if I could persuade the King to let the lottery continue on his responsibility; and reminding me of the time seven years earlier, when, arriving in Paris, I had been able to convince the whole Council of the Military School that the lottery was certain to make a profit, he urged me to undertake the same thing.

"The augury spoke clearly," he said, "and there is no superstition in believing that it is the Good Genius of the lottery which brought you to Berlin precisely yesterday."

I laugh at his illusion, and I feel sorry for him. I demonstrate to him the impossibility of convincing a mind which says, "I am afraid and I don't want to be afraid any longer." He invites me to stay for dinner, and he introduces Madame Calzabigi to me. I am surprised on two counts: the first is that I thought La Générale Lamothe was still alive, the second, that in Madame Calzabigi I recognize Mademoiselle Belanger.[55] I pay her the usual compliments, I ask her for news of her mother, she sighs and begs me not to speak to her of her family, for she could recollect only misfortunes.

I had known Madame Belanger in Paris, the widow of an exchange broker, who had only this rather pretty daughter and who I thought was well off. Seeing her married, and apparently complaining of her lot, I understand nothing, and I do not feel much curiosity; but after making me give my opinion on his excellent cook, my good friend also wanted my opinion on his horses and his elegant carriage. He asked me to escort his dear wife on a drive in the park and to stay for supper, for it was his best meal. He had a great deal of work to do, the next day but one being the day of the drawing.

We were scarcely in the carriage before I asked her by what fortunate combination of circumstances she had become my friend's wife.

"His wife," she replied, "is still alive, so I have not the misfortune to be his wife; but everyone in Berlin believes that I am. When my mother died three years ago, I was left with nothing, for she lived on an annuity. Having no relatives rich enough for me to call upon them for help, and not wanting help from someone who would have given it to me only at the price of my honor, I lived for two years on the money I obtained from the sale of all my poor mother's furniture and belongings, going to lodge with a kind woman who did tambour work and who made her living by it. I paid her so much a month, and I learned. I never went out except to go to mass, and I was dying of melancholy. The more my money diminished, the more I trusted in divine Providence; but having finally come to the point where I had not a sou, I appealed to Signor Brea,[56] of Genoa, whom I believed incapable of deceiving me. I asked him to find me a good situation as a chambermaid, thinking it not too much to suppose that I had all the talents necessary for that employment. He promised to bear it in mind, and five or six days later he offered me the following employment and indeed persuaded me to accept it.

"He read me a letter from Signor Calzabigi, whom I had never met, in which he commissioned him to send him to Berlin a decent girl, of good birth, well brought up and reasonably pretty, for he intended to keep her with him in the position of his wife and to marry her on the death of his real wife, who, being old, could not live long. Since the girl for whom he asked him could not be supposed to be rich, he instructed him to give her fifty louis to outfit herself, and another fifty for her journey from Paris to Berlin with a maid. Signor Brea was legally empowered to undertake on Signor Calzabigi's behalf that when the young lady arrived in Berlin she would at once be received by him as his wife and presented as such to all the persons who should frequent his house. He would keep a chambermaid of her choice for her, she should have a carriage and horses, and he would supply her with a wardrobe appropriate to her position, giving her so much a month for pin money, as was usual. He undertook to give her her freedom at the end of a year if his company or Berlin should prove displeasing to her, and in that case to give her a hundred louis, leaving her all that he had given her or had had made for her use. But if the young lady consented to remain with him, waiting for the time when he would marry her, he would settle ten thousand écus on her by a deed of gift, which she would bring him as her dowry when she became his wife, and if he should die before then she would have the right to pay herself ten thousand écus from all his possessions.

"With all these excellent conditions," she went on, "Signor Brea persuaded me to leave my native country and come here to dishonor myself, for it is true that everyone pays me the honors due to a wife, but it is beyond likelihood that people should not know that I am not so. I arrived here six months ago; and for six months I have been wretched."

"Wretched? Has he not fulfilled the conditions stipulated between you and Signor Brea?"

"He has fulfilled them all; but his poor health does not permit him to hope that he will outlive his wife, and since the ten thousand écus which he made over to me by deed of gift cannot become my dowry if he dies, I shall have nothing, for he is riddled with debt, and his many creditors will pay themselves from his household goods instead of me. Add that I cannot bear him, precisely because he loves me too much. You can understand my meaning. He is killing himself little by little, and he makes me wretched."

"In any case you can return to Paris six months hence, or do whatever you please as soon as you are set free. You will receive a hundred louis, and you will be well outfitted."

"Then I should enter upon the last stage of my dishonor in Paris instead of entering upon it here. In short, I am unhappy, and the good Brea is the cause of it; but I cannot hold it against him, for he did not know that his friend here has nothing but debts. Now that the King is about to withdraw his guarantee, we foresee the end of the lottery, and Calzabigi's bankruptcy follows inevitably."

Since nothing was exaggerated in Mademoiselle Belanger's narrative, I had to agree that she was to be pitied. I advised her to try to sell the deed of gift for ten thousand écus which Calzabigi had executed for her. He could not have an objection to her doing so. She replied that she had thought of it; but that to accomplish it she needed a friend, for she foresaw that she could not sell it except at a great loss. I promised her I would think about it.

At supper we were four. The fourth was a young man who had been employed in the *castelletto*[57] of the lottery in Paris, and who had followed Calzabigi first to Brussels, then to Berlin, to share his fortunes. He seemed to be in love with La Belanger, but I did not think she had granted him her favors. He was in charge of the *castelletto,* and he was General Secretary of the lottery. At dessert Calzabigi asked me to give my opinion on a proposal which he had written and which he wanted to publish to obtain a capital of two million, which he needed in order to maintain his credit. At that the lady withdrew to go to bed.

This woman, who could not be more than twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, Nature had made to please. She had no sparkling wit, but she had that knowledge of the usages of society which in a woman counts for more than wit. Her confidence in me inspired me to no more than friendly feelings, and I was glad of it.

Calzabigi's proposal was brief and clear. He invited all those whose wealth was generally known not to put a sum in cash in the treasury of the lottery but to set down their names for some amount which there was no doubt of their ability to cover. If the lottery should lose in a drawing, the subscribers would have to meet the loss, each paying his pro rata share; when there was a profit from any drawing, they would divide it in accordance with the same scale. I promised to give him my thoughts in writing the next day. The capital had to amount to three million crowns. I left him until dinnertime the next day.

Here is the form, entirely different from his, which I gave to his proposal. 1. A capital of only one million should be enough for him. 2. The million was to be divided into a hundred shares at ten thousand crowns each. 3. Each shareholder must give his name to a designated notary, who must answer for the shareholder's solvency. 4. The dividend was to be paid three days after each drawing. 5. In case of loss the shareholder must reestablish his share, again before a notary. 6. A cashier, chosen by four-fifths of the shareholders, should supervise the cashier of the lottery, who would remain the depositary of the receipts in cash. 7. Winning tickets should be paid the day after the drawing. 8. On the day before the drawing, the cashier of the lottery should give the shareholders' cashier an accounting of the receipts and lock the cashbox with three keys, one to remain in his hands, the second in those of the other, and the third in those of the Director-General of the lottery. 9. The only ventures the receivers of the lottery would accept should be on the simple drawing, the ambo, and the terno, and the quaterna[58] would be abolished as making the lottery risk too great a loss. 10. Neither on the terno, the ambo, nor the drawing would it be permitted to stake more than a crown or less than four groats, and no ventures would be accepted after twenty-four hours before the drawing. 11. One-tenth of the receipts should belong to Signor Calzabigi, Director-General of the lottery, but all the operating costs should devolve upon him. 12. He should have the right to own two shares without having the notary answer for his solvency.

When Calzabigi read my proposal I saw from his expression that he did not like it; but I predicted to him that he would find shareholders only on these conditions or on conditions even more unwelcome.

He had reduced the lottery to a sort of *biribissi*;[59] his luxurious style of living gave offense; it was known that he was getting more and more into debt, and the King could not help fearing some piece of roguery one day or another, though he had a comptroller on the watch who could count.

The last drawing under the King's sanction took place, and the numbers which came out of the wheel of fortune amused the whole city. The lottery lost twenty thousand crowns over and above all the receipts, and the King of Prussia at once sent them to his Privy Councilor Calzabigi. It was said that, when the news of the loss was brought to him, he burst out laughing, saying that he expected it and congratulating himself on the blow being light in comparison with what it might have been.

I thought it my duty to go to supper with the Director to comfort him. I found him in consternation. He made the painful but well-founded reflection that this unfortunate drawing would render it more difficult to find wealthy men inclined to furnish the capital for the lottery. It was the first time the lottery had lost, and the thing had happened at the worst possible time.

However, he did not lose courage, and he began the next day to take steps, informing the public, by a printed announcement, that the receiving offices of the lottery would remain closed until new capital had been obtained to provide security for all those who would continue to risk their money.

CHAPTER IV

Lord Keith. Appointment with the King of Prussia in the garden of Sans Souci. My conversation with the monarch. La Denis. The Pomeranian cadets. Lambert. I go to Mitau. My excellent reception at the Court and my administrative tour.

IT WAS on the fifth day after my arrival in Berlin that I presented myself to the Earl Marischal, who after the death of his brother was called Keith.[1] I had last seen him in London, on his way from Scotland, where he had been repossessed of his properties, which had been confiscated when he had followed King James. The King of Prussia had had influence enough to obtain this grace for him. He was then living in Berlin, resting on his laurels, enjoying his retirement, always in the King's favor, and taking no more part in anything at the age of eighty years.

Simple in his manner, as he had always been, he told me that he was glad to see me again, immediately asking me if I was passing through Berlin or if I intended to remain there for some time. My vicissitudes being known to him in part, I said that I should be glad to settle there if the King, giving me some employment suitable to my small talents, would graciously take me into his service. But when I asked him for his countenance in the matter, he said that his speaking to the King about me beforehand would do me more harm than good. Priding himself on knowing men better than anyone else, he liked to judge them for himself, and it very often happened that he found desert where no one else had suspected it, and vice versa. He advised me to write him that I aspired to the honor of speaking with him.

"When you speak with him," His Lordship said, "you may tell him in passing that you know me, and then I think he will ask me about you, and I know that what I shall reply will not harm you."

"I, unknown as I am, write to a King with whom I have no connection! It would not enter my mind to do such a thing."

"Do you not wish to speak with him? That is the connection. There should be nothing in your letter but the declaration of your wish."

"Will he answer me?"

"Have no doubt of it. He answers everyone. He will write you where and at what hour he will be pleased to see you. Do it. His Majesty is now at Sans Souci.[2] I am curious to learn what sort of conversation you will have with a monarch who, as you see, acts in a manner which proves that he has no fear of being taken in."

I did not delay for a single day. I wrote to him in the simplest style, though most respectfully. I asked him when and where I might present myself to His Majesty, and I subscribed myself "Venetian," dating my letter from the inn where I was staying. On the next day but one I received a letter written by a secretary, but signed "Fédéric."[3] He wrote me that the King had received my letter and had ordered him to inform me that His Majesty would be in the garden of Sans Souci at four o'clock

I go there at three, dressed in black. I enter the courtyard of the palace by a small door, and I see no one, not a sentinel, not a porter, not a footman. Everything was in the deepest silence. I go up a short flight of stairs, I open a door, and I find myself in a picture gallery.[4] The man in charge of it offers me his services, but I thank him and decline, saying that I am waiting for the King, who had written me that he would be in the garden.

"He is," he said, "at his chamber concert, at which he is playing the flute, as he does every day immediately after his dinner. Did he give you an hour?"

"Yes, four o'clock. Perhaps he has forgotten."

"The King never forgets. He will come down at four o'clock, and you had better go to wait for him in the garden."

I go there, and soon afterward I see him, followed by his reader Catt[5] and a pretty spaniel. Scarcely has he seen me before he approaches, and, taking off his old hat with a mocking look, he names me by my name and asks me in a terrifying voice what I want with him. Surprised by this reception, I am at a loss; I look at him, and I say nothing.

"What is this? Speak. Are you not the man who wrote to me?"

"Yes, Sire; but I no longer remember anything. I thought that the King's majesty would not dazzle me. It shall not happen another time. The Lord Marischal should have warned me."

"So he knows you? Let us walk. What did you want to talk to me about? What do you think of this garden?"

At the same time that he asks me what I want to say to him, he tells me to talk to him about his garden. To anyone else I should have replied that I had no knowledge of gardens; but to a King, who supposed that I was a connoisseur, I should have appeared to be giving the lie. So, at the risk of giving him a specimen of my bad taste, I replied that I thought it magnificent.

"But," he said, "the gardens of Versailles are far finer."

"No doubt, Sire, if only because of the fountains."

"True; but if there are no fountains here it is not my fault. I have spent three hundred thousand crowns in vain to bring water here for them."[6]

"Three hundred thousand crowns? If Your Majesty spent them all at once, the fountains should be here."

"Aha! I see you are a hydraulician."

Was I to tell him that he was mistaken? I was afraid of offending him. I bent my head. Which is to say neither yes nor no. But the King did not care—thank God—to converse with me on that science, of which I knew not even the first principles. Without pausing for so much as a moment he asked me what the forces of the Republic of Venice were at sea in time of war.

"Twenty rated ships, Sire, and a great number of galleys."

"And for land forces?"

"Seventy thousand men, Sire, all subjects of the Republic, taking only one man per village."

"That is not true. You seem to want to make me laugh by talking such nonsense to me. But you are certainly a financier. Tell me what you think about taxes."

It was the first conversation I had had with a King. Observing his style, his outbursts, his sudden shifts, I thought I was called upon to play a scene of Italian improvised comedy, where, if the actor is at a loss, the groundlings hiss him. So I answered the proud King, assuming the financier's arrogance and adjusting my expression to match, that I could talk to him about the theory of taxation.

"That is what I want, for the practice does not concern you."

"Considered as to their effects, there are three kinds of taxes, one of which is ruinous, the second necessary, unfortunately, and the third always excellent."

"I like that. Go on."

"The ruinous impost is the royal tax, the necessary one is the military, the excellent one is the popular."

"What does all that mean?"

I had to take my time, for I was making it up.

"The royal tax, Sire, is the one which the monarch imposes on his subjects to fill his coffers."

"And it is always ruinous, you say."

"Without doubt, Sire, for it destroys circulation, the soul of commerce and the support of the State."

"But you consider the military tax necessary."

"But unfortunately so, for war is certainly a misfortune."

"Perhaps. And the popular?"

"Always excellent, for the King takes it from his subjects with one hand and with the other pours it into their bosom in very useful institutions and in measures calculated to increase their happiness."

"You doubtless know Calzabigi?"

"I ought to know him, Sire. Seven years ago we established the Genoese lottery in Paris."

"And in what category do you put that tax, for you will grant me that it is one?"

"Yes, Sire. It is a tax of the excellent kind when the King assigns the profit from it to the support of some useful institution."

"But the King may lose by it."

"One time in ten."

"Is that the result of certain calculation?"

"As certain, Sire, as all political calculations."

"They are often erroneous."

"I beg Your Majesty's pardon. They are never so when God is neutral."

"It is possible that I think as you do on the subject of moral calculation, but I do not like your Genoese lottery. I consider it a swindle, and I should not want it even if I had material proof that I should never lose by it."

"Your Majesty thinks like a wise man, for the ignorant people could not risk their money in it unless they were carried away by a fallacious confidence."

After this dialogue, which, all in all, does only honor to the intelligence of that illustrious monarch, he vacillated; but he did not find me at a loss. He enters a peristyle[7] enclosed by a double colonnade, and he stops before me, looks me up and down, then, after thinking a moment:

"You are," he says, "a very fine figure of a man."

"Is it possible, Sire, that after a long, rigorously scientific dissertation Your Majesty can see in me the least of the qualities which are the glory of your grenadiers?"

After a kindly smile, he said that since Lord Marischal Keith knew me he would speak to him about me, then he saluted me, taking off his hat, as he never failed to do, no matter to whom, with the greatest generosity.

Three or four days later the Earl Marischal gave me the good news that I had won the King's favor, and that His Majesty had told him that he would think about giving me some employment. Extremely curious to see at what he would employ me, and nothing urging me to go elsewhere, I decided to wait. When I did not sup at Calzabigi's the company of Baron Treyden at my hostess's table afforded me great pleasure, and, the weather being extremely fine, walking in the park made the whole day pass agreeably for me.

Calzabigi very soon obtained permission from the King to operate the lottery on the responsibility of anyone he chose, paying him six thousand crowns in advance at each drawing; and he at once reopened his receiving offices, after brazenly informing the public that the lottery would operate on his responsibility. His lack of credit did not prevent the public from staking, and in such numbers that the receipts gave him a profit of nearly a hundred thousand crowns, with which he paid a good share of his debts; and he took back the obligation for ten thousand écus which he had executed for his mistress, giving her the amount in cash. The Jew Ephraim[8] took the ten thousand écus, guaranteeing her the capital and paying her interest at six per cent.

After this lucky drawing Calzabigi had no difficulty in finding guarantors for a million divided into a thousand shares, and the lottery continued for two or three years without calamities; even so, Calzabigi went bankrupt and returned to Italy to die. His mistress married and returned to Paris.

During this time the Duchess of Brunswick,[9] the King's sister, came to pay him a visit with her daughter, whom the Crown Prince married the next year.[10] On this occasion the King came to Berlin and had an Italian opera performed for her at the small theater in Charlottenburg.[11] On that day I saw the King of Prussia dressed as a courtier, wearing a coat of lustrine with gold braid on all the seams and black stockings. His appearance was most comical. He entered the theater with his hat under his arm and escorting his sister, leading her by the hand and drawing the looks of all the spectators, for only the very old could remember seeing him appear in public except in a uniform and boots.

But at the performance what surprised me was to see the celebrated Denis[12] dance. I did not know that she was in the King's service, and, strong in the warrant of a very old acquaintance with her, I at once decided to pay her a visit in Berlin the next day.

When I was twelve years old my mother, having to leave for Saxony, had me come to Venice for a few days with my kind Doctor Gozzi.[13] Having gone to the theater, what seemed to me very surprising was a girl eight years old who, at the end of the play, danced a minuet with enchanting grace. The girl, whose father was the actor who played the part of Pantalone,[14] so charmed me that I afterward entered the box in which she was undressing to pay her my respects. I was dressed as an abate, and I saw her greatly surprised when her father told her to stand up so that I could embrace her. She did so most graciously, and I was most awkward. But I was so filled with happiness that I could not help taking from a woman who was selling jewelry there a small ring which the little girl had thought pretty but too expensive, and making her a present of it. She then came and embraced me again, with her face full of gratitude. I paid the woman the zecchino which was the price of the ring, and I went back to my Doctor, who was waiting for me in a box. My heart was in a pitiful state, for the zecchino I had given for the ring belonged to my master the Doctor, and although I felt that I was desperately in love with Pantalone's pretty daughter, I felt even more strongly that what I had done could not have been more foolish, not only because I had spent money which was not mine but because I had spent it like a dupe to obtain only a kiss.

Obliged the next day to account to the Doctor for his zecchino, and not knowing where to borrow it, I spent a most uneasy night; but the next day it all came out, and it was my mother herself who gave my master the zecchino; but I still laugh today when I think of how ashamed it made me feel. The same woman who had sold me the ring at the theater came to our house when we were dining. Showing pieces of jewelry which were declared too expensive, she praised me, saying that I had not thought the price of the ring I had given the Pantaloncina[15] too high. No more was needed to bring an accusation down on me. I thought I should end it all by asking to be forgiven and saying that it was love which had made me commit the crime, assuring my mother that this was the first and last it would make me commit. At the word "love" everyone did nothing but laugh, and I was so cruelly made fun of that I firmly resolved that it should be the last love of my life; but thinking of Giovannina, I sighed; she was so named because she was my mother's godchild.[16]

After giving me the zecchino, she asked me if I wanted her to invite her to supper; but my grandmother objected, and I was grateful to her for it. It was on the next day that I went back to Padua with my master, where Bettina[17] easily made me forget the Pantaloncina.

After this incident I never saw her again until that evening in Charlottenburg. Twenty-seven years had passed. She must have been thirty-five years of age. Had I not learned her name, I should not have recognized her, for at the age of eight her features could not be formed. I could not wait to see her alone in her room and to learn if she remembered the incident, for I did not think it possible that she could recognize me. I asked if her husband Denis was with her, and I was told that the King had banished him[18] because he ill-treated her.

So the next day I am driven to her house, I send in my name, and she receives me politely, saying, however, that she did not believe she had ever had the pleasure of seeing me anywhere before

It was then that I gradually awakened the greatest interest in her by talking to her of her family, her childhood, and the grace by which she enchanted Venice when she danced the minuet; she interrupted me to say that she was then only six years old, and I replied that she could not have been more, as I was only ten when I fell in love with her

"I could never tell you so," I said, "but I have never forgotten a kiss you gave me at your father's order in return for a little present I made you."

"Say no more. You gave me a ring. You were dressed as an abate. I have never forgotten you either. Is it possible that it is you?"

"It is I."

"I am delighted beyond measure. But since I do not recognize you, it is impossible that you should recollect me."

"Certainly, for if I had not been told your name I should not have thought of you"

"In twenty years, my dear friend, the face takes on a different form."

"Say rather that at the age of six one's features are not yet molded."

"You can be a good witness that I am only twenty-six years old, despite the evil tongues which make me ten more."

"Let them talk. You are in the flower of your years and made for love; and I consider myself the happiest of men now that I have been able to tell you that you are the first to have inspired amorous feelings in my soul."

After this exchange, we quickly became affectionate; but experience had taught us both to stop where we were and to leave anything else until later.

La Denis, still young, beautiful, and fresh, reduced her age by ten years; she knew that I knew it, nevertheless she wanted me to accept it, and she would have hated me if, like an idiot, I had chosen to demonstrate a truth to her which she knew as well as I did. She did not care about what I was bound to think, she left that to me. It is even possible that she considered I should be grateful to her for giving me a warrant, by her very plausible lie, to rid myself of ten years as she was doing, and she declared herself ready to bear witness for me if the occasion arose. Diminishing their ages is a sort of duty for women of the theater, principally because they know that, despite all their talent, the public turns against them when it becomes known that they are old.

Considering the fine sincerity with which she had let me see her weakness a very good omen, I had no doubt that she would be kind enough to accept my fond addresses and not make me languish long. She showed me over her whole house, and seeing her lodged with the greatest elegance in every respect, I asked her if she had a particular friend, and she replied with a smile that everyone in Berlin believed that she had, but that everyone was wrong about the principal characteristic of the friend she had, for his relation to her was more that of a father than of a lover.

"Yet you deserve a real lover, and I think it impossible that you can do without one."

"I assure you that I do not give it a thought. I am subject to convulsions, which are the bane of my life.

I wanted to go to the baths at Teplitz,[19] where I am assured that I should be cured of them, and the King refused me permission; but I shall have it next year."

She saw that I was ardent, and thinking that I saw her pleased by my restraint, I asked her if she would take it amiss if I visited her frequently. She replied with a laugh that, if I did not mind, she would say she was my niece or my cousin. At that I said to her, without laughter, that it could be true, and that she was perhaps my sister. The arguments for this probability leading us to speak of the fondness which her father had always felt for my mother, we proceeded to caresses which, between relatives, have never been suspect. I took my leave when I felt that I was about to carry them too far. Showing me to the stairs, she asked me if I would dine with her on the next day. I accepted.

Returning to my inn on fire, I reflected on the concatenation of events, and at the end of my reflections I thought that I paid my debt to Eternal Providence by admitting to myself that I was born fortunate.

When I arrived at La Denis's the next day, all the people she had invited to dinner were already there. The first who fell on my neck to embrace me was a young dancer named Aubry,[20] whom I had known in Paris as a member of the *corps de ballet* at the Opéra, then at Venice as leading serious dancer and famous for having become the lover of a most illustrious lady and at the same time the paramour of her husband, who otherwise would not have forgiven his wife for setting up as his rival. Aubry played against the two of them, and he had so shown his mettle that he slept between the husband and the wife. At the beginning of Lent the State Inquisitors sent him to Trieste. Ten years later I find him at La Denis's, where he introduces his wife to me, also a dancer, and known as La Santina,[21] whom he had married in Petersburg, whence they were on their way to spend the winter in Paris. After Aubry's compliments I see approaching me a fat man who says that we were friends twenty-five years before, but that we were so young that we could not recognize each other.

"We knew each other in Padua," he said, "at Doctor Gozzi's, and I am Giuseppe dall'Oglio." [22]

"I remember. You were engaged for the service of the Empress of Russia[23] as a very accomplished violoncellist."

"Exactly so. I am now on my way back to my country, not to leave it again; and this is my wife, whom I introduce to you. She was born in Petersburg, and she is the only daughter of the famous violin teacher Madonis.[24] In a week I shall be in Dresden, where I look forward with particular pleasure to embracing Signora Casanova, your mother.[25]

I was delighted to find myself in this choice company, but I saw that recollections twenty-five years old were displeasing to my charming Madame Denis. I turned the conversation to the events in Petersburg which had raised the great Catherine to the throne, and Dall'Oglio told us that, having taken some part in the conspiracy,[26] he had prudently decided to ask permission to resign his post; but that he had become rich enough to be able to spend all the rest of his life in his native country without needing anyone.

La Denis then told us that only ten or twelve days earlier she had been made acquainted with a Piedmontese named Odart,[27] who had also left Petersburg after having directed the entire conspiracy. The reigning Empress had ordered him to leave, making him a present of a hundred thousand rubles.[28]

He had bought an estate in Piedmont, thinking that he should live a long life there in peace and prosperity, for he was only forty-five years old; but he chose the wrong place. Two or three years later a thunderbolt entered his room and killed him in an instant. If the blow fell on him from an all-powerful and invisible hand, it was not that of the Guardian Genius of the

Russian Empire seeking to avenge the death of the Emperor Peter III, for if that unhappy monarch had lived and reigned he would have been the cause of countless misfortunes.

Catherine, his wife, recompensing them generously, sent away all the foreigners who helped her to rid herself of a husband [29] who was her enemy, and the enemy of her son[30] and of the whole Russian nation; and she showed her gratitude to all the Russians who had helped her to ascend the throne. She sent on their travels all the noblemen who had reasons not to like the revolution.

It was Dall'Oglio and his pretty wife who made me think of going to Russia if the King of Prussia did not give me such employment as I wanted. They assured me that I should make my fortune there, and they gave me excellent letters.

After they left Berlin I became La Denis's lover. Our intimacy began one evening after supper when she was seized by a fit of convulsions which lasted all night. I spent it at her bedside, and the next morning I received the recompense rightly due to constancy. Our amorous relation continued until I left Berlin. Six years later I renewed it in Florence, and I will speak of it when I come to that time.

A few days after Dall'Oglio left, she was kind enough to take me to Potsdam to show me everything worth seeing there. No one could find anything to object to in our intimacy, for she had already told the world in general that I was her uncle, and I always called her my dear niece. Her protector the General [31] had no doubt that she was such, or pretended not to doubt it.

At Potsdam we saw the King parading his First Battalion, every soldier of which had a gold watch in the fob of his breeches. It was thus that the King rewarded the courage with which they had subjugated him as Caesar subjugated Nicomedes[32] in Bithynia. No secret was made of it

The room in which we slept at the inn where we put up faced a corridor through which the King passed when he left the palace. The window blinds being closed, our hostess told us the reason for it. She said that La Reggiana,[33] a very pretty dancer, stayed in the same room in which we were, and that the King having seen her stark naked as he went by one morning had immediately ordered her windows shut; that had been four years earlier, but they had never been opened again. He was afraid of her charms. His Majesty, after his amour with La Barberina,[34] became entirely negative. Later we saw in the room in which the King slept portraits of La Barberina, of La Cochois,[35] sister of the actress whom the Marquis d'Argens[36] married, of the Empress Maria Theresa before her marriage, with whom his desire to be Emperor had made him fall in love.

After admiring the beauty and elegance of the apartments in the palace, it was surprising to see how he himself was lodged. We saw a small bed behind a screen in one corner of the room. No dressing gown and no slippers; the valet who was there showed us a nightcap which the King put on when he had a cold; usually he kept on his hat, which must have been awkward. In the same room I saw a table in front of a sofa, on which were writing materials and some half-burned notebooks;[37] he told us that it was the history of the last war, and that the accident which had set fire to the notebooks had so annoyed His Majesty that he had abandoned the work. But he must have taken it up again later, for after his death it was published,[38] and it was little esteemed.

Five or six weeks after my brief conversation with the famous monarch, the Earl Marischal told me that the King offered me a post as tutor to a new corps of noble Pomeranian cadets[39] which he had just established. Their number being set at fifteen, he wanted to give them five tutors; thus each tutor would have three of them, and would have a salary of six hundred crowns and board with his pupils. The fortunate tutor thus needed the six hundred crowns only for clothing. His only duty would be to accompany them everywhere, and to Court too on gala occasions, wearing a gold-laced coat. I must make up my mind as quickly as possible, for four were already appointed, and the King did not like to wait. I asked His Lordship where the academy was, so that I could go to see the place, and I promised him a reply no later than the next day but one.

I needed a self-possession which was not in my nature to keep from laughing at this absurd proposal from a man in other respects so intelligent. But my surprise was still greater when I saw the quarters of these fifteen gentlemen from prosperous Pomerania. I saw three or four drawing rooms almost without furniture, a number of rooms in which there was nothing but a wretched bed, a table, and two wooden chairs, and the young cadets, all twelve or thirteen years of age, ill combed, ill dressed in uniforms, and all with the countenances of peasants. I saw them cheek by jowl with their tutors, whom I took to be their valets, and who looked at me closely, not daring to imagine that I was the colleague whom they expected. Just as I was thinking of leaving, one of the tutors puts his head out a window and says:

"The King is arriving on horseback."

His Majesty comes upstairs with his friend Q. Icilius[40] and goes to inspect everything. He sees me, and he says not a word to me. I had the glittering cross of my order on a ribbon around my neck[41] and an elegant taffeta coat. I was dumfounded when I saw the great Frederick in a sort of fury looking at a chamber pot which was near a cadet's bed and which displayed to the curious eye the tartarous sediment which must have made it stink.

"Whose bed is this?" said the King.

"Mine," replied a cadet.

"Very good, but it is not you I am angry with. Where is your tutor?"

The fortunate tutor thereupon presented himself, and the monarch, addressing him as "clodhopper," gave him a thorough dressing down. The only consideration he showed him was to tell him he had a servant at his orders, and that it was his duty to see that the place was kept clean.

After watching this cruel scene, I slipped away, and I went to the Earl Marischal's, impatient to thank him for the brilliant lot which Heaven was offering me through his agency. He could not but laugh when I told him the whole thing in detail, and say that I was right to scorn such a post; but he said at the same time that I must go to thank the King before I left Berlin. However, he undertook to tell His Majesty that I had found the post unsuitable. I told His Lordship that I was thinking of going to Russia; and I began in earnest making my arrangements for the journey. Baron Treyden encouraged me in the enterprise, promising to recommend me to his sister the Duchess of Kurland, and I at once wrote to Signor Bragadin to get me an introduction to a banker in Petersburg who would pay me the monthly sum I needed to live there in comfort.

Propriety demanded that I go there with a servant, Fortune presented me with one when I was at a loss to find him. A youth from Lorraine came to La Rufin's carrying all his possessions under his arm. He told her that his name was Lambert,[42] that he had just arrived in Berlin, and that he wanted to lodge at her inn.

"Certainly, Monsieur, but you must pay me from day to day."

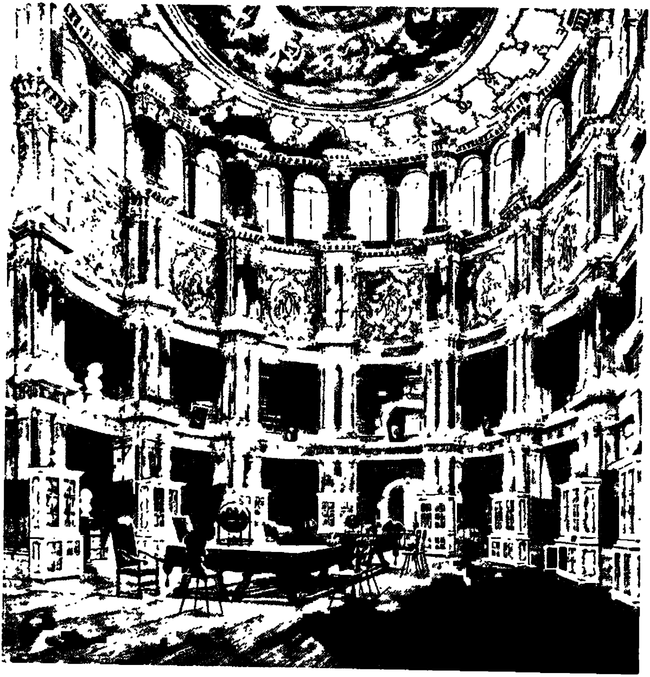
"Madame, I haven't a copper; but I shall have money from home when I write them where I am."

"Monsieur, I cannot put you up."

Seeing him leaving with a mortified air, I told him that I would pay for him for that day, and I asked him what he had in his bag.

"Two shirts," he replied, "and a score of books on mathematics."

I took him to my room, and finding him fairly well educated, I asked him what chance had brought him to the condition he was in.



Library of the Duke of Brunswick in Wolfenbüttel

"At Strassburg," he said, "a cadet from such-and-such a regiment slapped my face in a coffeehouse. The next day I went to him in his room and I killed him on the spot. I at once went back to the room in which I was lodging, I put my books and some shirts in this bag, and I left the city with only two louis and a passport in my pocket. Always traveling on foot, my money lasted me until this morning. Tomorrow I shall write to Lunéville, where my mother is, and I am sure that she will send me money. I intend to ask for a post in the Engineers Corps here, for I think I know enough to make myself useful, and if worst comes to worst I will turn soldier."

I told him that I would have him given a servant's room and money for food until he received the help he expected from his mother. He kissed my hand.

I did not think him an impostor, for he stammered; nevertheless, I at once wrote to Baron von Schaumburg[43] in Strassburg to find out if what he had told me was true.

The next day I talked with an officer of the Engineers Corps, who told me that he had so many well-educated young men in the regiment that no more were taken unless they were content to serve as common soldiers. I thought it a pity that the youth should have to resign himself to this step. I began spending hours with him, compass and ruler in hand, and, finding him well taught, I thought of taking him to Petersburg with me, and I told him so. He replied that I would be his good angel, and that he would serve me during the journey in any capacity I wished. He spoke French badly, but since he came from Lorraine I was not surprised; what did surprise me was that not only did he not know even the rudiments of Latin, but, writing a letter at my dictation, he misspelled every word. Seeing me laugh, he showed no shame. He said that he had gone to school only to learn geometry and mathematics, being very glad that the boring subject of grammar had nothing to do with the sciences. But, skilled in analysis though he was, the fellow was extremely ignorant in all the other branches of knowledge. He knew nothing of society, and in his manners and his bearing he was in no way different from a real peasant

Ten or twelve days later Baron von Schaumburg wrote me from Strassburg that no one knew Lambert and that there had not been a cadet in his regiment, the name of which I gave him, who had been killed or wounded. When I showed him the letter to reproach him with his lie, he said that, wanting to enter the military service, he had thought he must prove that he was brave, and that I must excuse him, as I must for his telling me that his mother would send him money. He expected money from no one, and he assured me that he would serve me faithfully and that he would never lie. I laughed, and I told him that we should leave in five or six days.

I went to Potsdam with Baron Bodissoni,[44] of Venice, who wanted to sell the King a painting by Andrea del Sarto,[45] intending to let the King see me too, as the Earl Marischal had advised me to do.

I saw him at the parade, on foot. No sooner did he see me than he came to me and asked me when I expected to leave for Petersburg.

"In five or six days, Sire, if Your Majesty gives me permission"

"A good journey to you. But what do you hope for in that country?"

"What I hoped for here, Sire—to please its ruler."

"Have you a recommendation to the Empress?"

"No, Sire, I have only one to a banker"

"That is really worth much more. If you come this way on your return, I shall be glad to have you tell me news of that country Good-by."

Such are the two conversations I had with that great King, whom I did not see again. After taking leave of all my acquaintances, and receiving from Baron Treyden a letter to Baron Keyserling,[46] Grand Chancellor at Mitau, which enclosed one to Her Highness the Duchess, I spent the last evening with my sweet Denis, who bought my post chaise. I left with two hundred ducats in my pocket, which would have sufficed me for the rest of my journey, if I had not lost half of them at Danzig at a party with young merchants. This little misfortune prevented me from spending several days at Königsberg, where I had a letter of recommendation to Field Marshal Lehwald,[47] who was its Commandant. I stayed there only one day, to have the honor of dining with the amiable old man, who gave me a letter to General Voeikov[48] at Riga.

Having money enough to arrive in Mitau like a nobleman, I engaged a four-seated carriage and six horses, and in three days I arrived at Memel, with Lambert, who slept through the whole journey. At the inn I found a Florentine *virtuosa* named Bregonzi,[49] who treated me to countless caresses, saying that I had loved her when I was still a boy and an abate. She told me circumstances which showed me that the thing was decidedly possible, but I could never remember her face. I saw her again six years later in Florence when I saw La Denis, who was lodging in her house.

About noon on the day after I left Memel a man who was all by himself in the open country, and whom I at once saw was a Jew, came to tell me that I was on a strip of territory belonging to Poland and that I must pay a certain duty on any merchandise I might have; I tell him that I have no merchandise, and he replies that he must search me. I tell him he is mad, and I order my coachman to drive on. The Jew goes to the horses' reins, the coachman does not dare get rid of the scoundrel with his whip, I get out with my cane and my pistol in hand, and after receiving a few blows he leaves me, but during the affray my traveling companion did not even trouble to get out of the carriage. He told me that he did not want the Jew to be able to say that we were two against one.

I arrived in Mitau[50] two days after this encounter, and I went to lodge opposite the palace.[51] There were only three ducats left in my purse.

The next morning at nine o'clock I called on Baron Keyserling, who had scarcely read Baron Treyden's letter before he introduced me to the Baroness his wife and left me with her to take Her Highness the Duchess her brother's letter.

Madame Keyserling had me served a cup of chocolate by a Polish maid whose beauty was dazzling. She stood before me, saucer in hand, with her eyes cast down, as if she wanted to leave me free to examine her rare beauty. At that time I was overtaken by a whim which I could not resist. I adroitly take from my pocket my three solitary ducats, and, putting my cup back on the saucer, I put the three ducats there with it, and I talk to the Baroness in reply to the questions she had asked me about Berlin.

A half hour later the Chancellor came back to tell me that the Duchess could not receive me at once, but that she invited me to supper followed by a ball. I at once excuse myself from attending the ball, saying, as was the fact, that I had only summer attire and a black coat. It was the beginning of October, and the weather was cold. The Chancellor went back to Court, and I went back to my inn.

A half hour later a chamberlain came to bring me Her Highness's compliments and to say that the ball would be masked, and so I could go to it in a domino. One could be got from the Jews.

"The ball," he said, "was to have been in evening dress; but Court messengers were sent to tell all the nobility that it would be masked because a foreigner who was passing through Mitau had sent his trunks on ahead."

I replied that I was sorry to have been the cause of the change; but he assured me that, on the contrary, a masked ball was freer and more to the taste of the Duchy. After telling me the hour he left.

Prussian money not passing current in Russia, a Jew came to ask me if I had any Friedrichsthaler,[52] offering to exchange them for ducats without any loss to me. I replied that I had only ducats, and he said that he knew it and even that I gave them very cheaply. As I did not understand what he meant, he said that he would give me two hundred ducats if I would have him repaid them in rubles at Petersburg. A little surprised to find him so easygoing, I said that I would take only a hundred, and he paid them over to me on the spot. I gave him an assignment on the banker Demetrio Papanelopulo,[53] for whom Dall'Oglio had given me a letter. He thanked me, and he left, saying that he would send me some dominoes. Lambert followed him to order some stockings from him. He told me a moment later that he had told the innkeeper that I threw ducats out the window, having given three to one of Baroness Keyserling's chambermaids.

So it is that nothing in the world is easy or difficult except as the result of how one goes about it, and also according to the whims of Fortune. I should not have found a copper in Mitau had it not been for my piece of bravado with the three ducats. It was a wonder, which the girl must have at once made known, and the Jew, to profit by the exchange, at once came running to offer ducats to the magnificent nobleman who thought so little of them.

I had myself carried to Court at the appointed hour, where Baron Keyserling at once presented me to the Duchess, and she to the Duke, who was the celebrated Biron,[54] or Birhen, who had been the favorite of the Empress Anna Ivanovna and the Regent of Russia after her death, then was sentenced to live in Siberia for twenty years. He was six feet tall, and one saw that he had been handsome; but age makes beauty disappear. On the next day but one I had a long conversation with him.

A quarter of an hour after my arrival the ball began with a polonaise. Since I was a foreigner, the Duchess thought it her part to grant me the honor of dancing with her. I did not know the dance; but it is so easy that everyone knows it without having had to learn it. It is simply a procession composed of a number of couples, the first of which has the privilege of directing the turns to right or left. Despite the uniformity of the steps and gestures, the dance helps the couples to display their grace. It is the most majestic and the simplest of all dances in which all the persons present at a ball can show themselves.

After the polonaise there were minuets, and a lady who was rather old than young asked me if I knew how to dance the "Amiable Conqueror."[55] I said that I did, not at all surprised by the lady's wish, for she might well have shone in it in her youth. It had not been danced since the days of the Regency.[56] The younger women thought it wonderful.

After an elaborate contradance, through which I escorted Mademoiselle de Manteuffel,[57] the prettiest of the Duchess's four ladies in waiting,[58] she sent me word that supper had been served. So I went to offer her my arm, and I found myself seated beside her at a table laid for twelve, at which I was the only man. The other eleven were all old dowagers. I was surprised that in the small city of Mitau there were so many matrons of that age among the nobility. The Duchess did me the honor constantly to address me, and at the end of the supper she offered me a glass of what I thought was Tokay; but it was only old English beer. I praised it. We went back to the ballroom.

The same young chamberlain who had invited me to the ball introduced me to all the noble ladies of the city; but I did not have time to pay court to any of them.

The next day I dined at Baron Keyserling's, and I turned Lambert over to a Jew to be properly dressed.

The following day I was invited to dine at Court with the Duke, where I saw only men. The old prince kept me talking. The conversation toward the end of dinner having turned to the resources of the country, which consist only in mines and in semimetals, I made bold to say that such resources, being dependent upon exploitation, became precarious, and to justify my assertion I talked on the subject as if I had known it perfectly both in theory and in practice. An old chamberlain who had charge of all the mines in Kurland and Zemgale,[59] after letting me say all that enthusiasm brought to my mind, himself discoursed on the subject to make some objections but at the same time to approve all the plausible things I had found to say concerning the considerations of economy on which the whole utility of the exploitation depended.

If I had known when I began speaking as an expert that I was being heard by a true expert, I should certainly have said far less, for I was extremely ignorant on the subject; but I should have lost by it, for I should not have made the impression I did. It was the Duke himself who was pleased to think that I knew a great deal.

After dinner he took me to his study, where he asked me to give him two weeks if I was not in a great hurry to reach Petersburg. On my declaring myself at his orders, he said that the same chamberlain who had spoken to me would take me to see all the establishments he had in his duchies, where I would be so good as to write down all my observations on the economy with which they were conducted. I at once consented, and it was arranged that I should leave the next day. The Duke, very much pleased by my readiness to satisfy his wish, at once sent for the chamberlain, who promised to be at the door of my inn at dawn with a carriage and six.

No sooner had I got home than I packed, and I ordered Lambert to be ready to leave with me with his case of mathematical instruments, and when I told him what was afoot he assured me that, though he was not acquainted with the science in question, he would be glad to put all his knowledge at my disposal.

We left at the hour appointed, three in the carriage, with a manservant up behind and two others preceding us on horseback, armed with saber and musket. Every two or three hours we came to some place where we changed horses; and we refreshed ourselves by eating something and drinking good wine from the Rhine or from France, of which we had an abundant supply in the carriage.

In our tour, which continued for two weeks, we stopped at five places where there were establishments for workers in copper mines or iron mines. In order to write something everywhere, I did not need to be an expert, but only to reason soundly, principally on the economical conduct of the operation, which was what the Duke had principally urged upon me. In one place I corrected what I found useless, and in another I prescribed an increase in the working force in order to increase the revenue. At one of the principal mines, where thirty workmen were employed, I prescribed a channel leading from a small river which, though very short, because of its incline should, on the opening of a sluice gate, turn three wheels which would enable the director of the mine to dispense with twenty men; and under my guidance Lambert produced a perfect plan of the installation, measured the altitudes, drew the sluice gate and the wheels, and himself set out the markers indicating the elevations of the terrain along the channel on either side to its termination. By means of other channels I drained whole valleys in order to recover greater quantities of the sulphurs and vitriols with which the terrains which we examined were impregnated.

I returned to Mitau delighted not to have practiced any imposture but to have reasoned and discovered in myself a talent I had not known that I possessed. I spent the whole of the next day putting my observations in final form, and having the drawings which I annexed to them copied on a larger scale.

The day after that I went to present the Duke with all my observations, for which he showed himself extremely grateful, and at the same time I took my leave of him, thanking him for the honor he had done me. He said that he would have me driven to Riga in one of his carriages, and that he would give me a letter for Prince Charles,[60] his son, who was in garrison there. The wise old man, ripe in experience, asked me if I would rather have a jewel or its value in money. I replied that from such a prince as he I preferred to receive money, though the honor of kissing his hand was enough for me. At that he gave me a note ordering his cashier to pay me at sight four hundred albertsthaler.[61] I received them in Dutch ducats, struck at the mint in Mitau. The albertsthaler is worth half a ducat. I went to kiss Her Highness the Duchess's hand, and I dined for the second time with Baron Keyserling.

The next morning the young chamberlain whom I knew brought me the Duke's letter to his son and wished me a good journey, saying that the Court carriage which was to take me to Riga was at the door of the inn. I left well satisfied, with the stammering Lambert, and, after changing horses halfway through the journey, I was at Riga at noon, where I at once sent the Duke's letter to his son, Major-General in the Russian service, Chamberlain, and Chevalier of Alexander Nevski.[62]

CHAPTER V[1]

My stay in Riga. Campioni. Sainte-Hélène. D'Aragon. Arrival of the Empress. Departure from Riga and my arrival in Petersburg. I go everywhere. I buy Zaïre.

PRINCE CHARLES DE BIRON, youngest son of the reigning Duke, Major-General in the Russian service, Chevalier of Alexander Nevsky, informed in advance by his father, received me very well. Thirty-six years of age, with a pleasant though not handsome face, polite without stiffness, speaking French well, he told me in a few words all that I could expect from him if I thought of staying in Riga for some time. His table, his friends, his pleasures, his advice, and his purse were what he offered me; no lodging, for his own was cramped; but he at once found me fairly comfortable quarters; he called on me at once, and he made me come to dinner with him at once, just as I was. The first person who struck me was Campioni,[2] the dancer, of whom, my reader may remember, I have spoken two or three times in these memoirs. Campioni was a man above his profession. He was made for good society, polished, obliging, a libertine, without prejudices, fond of women, of good food, of high play, prudent, discreet, and living with equanimity both when Fortune favored him and when she turned against him. We were both delighted to find each other there. Another guest was a Baron de Sainte-Hélène,[3] of Savoy, with his young wife, who, though not ugly, was insignificant. The Baron, portly and fat, was a gamester, a trencherman, a heavy drinker, who possessed the art of getting into debt and persuading his creditors to wait. It was his only talent, for in all other respects he was extremely stupid. Another guest was an Adjutant of the Prince's, who was his familiar spirit. A young lady twenty years of age, pretty, tall, and thin, dined at his side; she was his mistress.[4] Very pale, melancholy, abstracted, eating almost nothing because, she maintained, everything was bad; in addition, she said she was ill. Her face was the very picture of discontent. The Prince from time to time tried to induce her to laugh, to cheer up, to drink some wine; she refused everything with disdain and even with resentment; whereupon the Prince made fun of her and laughingly told her that she was being ridiculous. Nevertheless we spent an hour and a half at table gaily enough. After dinner the Prince had business, and, after telling me that, in default of anything better, his table should be mine morning and evening, he left me in the care of Campioni.

This old friend, my fellow countryman, saw me to my lodging and, before showing me Riga, took me to his house to make me acquainted with his wife and his whole family. I did not know that he had married again. I found his supposed wife to be a very agreeable Englishwoman, thin, and full of wit; but she did not interest me as much as his daughter, who was only eleven years old, but who was as intelligent as if she had been eighteen; in addition, she was pretty, she danced well, and she accompanied herself on the mandolin in little airs. This unripe girl, a little too affectionate, at once conquered me, her father congratulated her, but her mother mortified her by calling her a pissabed—a deadly insult for a girl of precocious intelligence.

In the course of our walk Campioni brought me up to date on everything, beginning with himself.

"I have been living with this woman for ten years," he said. "Betty, whom you think charming, is not my daughter; the others are. I left Petersburg two years ago, and I live well here from a dancing school which I keep, at which I have pupils of both sexes who do me honor. I gamble at the Prince's, where I sometimes win and sometimes lose, without ever having been able to win enough to pay a creditor who persecutes me because of a bill of exchange I issued in Petersburg. He can put me in prison, and I expect it every day. The bill is for five hundred rubles. He will not accept payments on account. I am waiting for the big freeze, and then I will find a way to escape by myself, and I will go to Poland, from where I will send my wife money enough to live on. The Baron de Sainte-Hélène will escape too, for he holds out against his creditors only by his eloquence. The Prince, whom we go to see every day, is very useful to us, for at his house we can play; but if some calamity befell us from which we could be saved by money alone, he could not help us, for, riddled with debts as he is, he has no money, and the daily expense he has to meet is too large in comparison with his revenue. He plays, and he always loses. His mistress costs him a great deal, and she makes him wretched with her ill-humor, for she demands that he keep his word to her. He promised to marry her after two years, and on that condition she let him give her two children. She will have nothing to do with him now, for she fears he will give her a third. So she is a constant annoyance to him, and you will never see her anything but very peevish, as you saw her today. He found her a lieutenant who would be ready to marry her, but she wants at least a major"

The next day at dinner the Prince had as guests the Commanding General, Voeikov,[5] for whom I had a letter from Marshal Lehwald,[6] Baroness Korff,[7] of Mitau, Madame Evtinov,[8] and a beautiful young lady who was to marry the Baron Budberg[9] whom I had known at Florence, Turin, Augsburg, and Strassburg, and whom I may have forgotten to mention. All these acquaintances made me spend three weeks very agreeably, during which I was particularly delighted by General Voeikov, who had been in Venice fifty years earlier, when the Russians were called Muscovites and the creator of Petersburg[10] was still alive. He made me laugh by his praise of the Venetians of those days, whom he supposed to be the same at the time he was talking to me.

It was from the English merchant Collins[11] that I had the news that the self-styled Baron Henau,[12] who had given me the forged bill of exchange in London, had been hanged in Portugal. He was a Livonian, the son of a poor shopkeeper and employed as a clerk in his business.

At that time a Russian, who had been in Poland on a mission from his Court, having to return to Petersburg, had the misfortune to stop at Riga, where he lost twenty thousand rubles on his word at faro at the Prince of Kurland's. The dealer was Campioni. The Russian signed bills of exchange in payment for the amount; but as soon as he was in Petersburg he went to the Tribunal of Commerce[13] to protest his own bills, declaring them null and void, in consequence of which not only were the winners defrauded of the large sum on which they were counting, but play was forbidden under strict penalties even in the houses of general staff officers. The Russian who committed this base act was the same man who betrayed Elizabeth Petrovna's[14] confidence, when she was making war on the King of Prussia, by informing her nephew Peter, proclaimed successor to the throne, of all the orders which she sent to her generals. Peter in turn passed all the information on to the King of Prussia, whom he worshiped.[15] On Elizabeth's death Peter III made him Chief Judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, announcing with the most shameless lack of discretion of what nature his obligations to him were. The faithless

Minister did not consider that it dishonored him. Campioni was the dealer, but it was the Prince who had made the bank; I had a ten per cent interest in it, which was to be paid to me when the Russian honored the first of his bills of exchange; but when I said to the Prince at table that I did not believe the Russian would pay, and that I would gladly sell my share for a hundred rubles, the Prince took me at my word and paid me; so I was the only one to profit from the game.

At this same time[16] the Empress Catherine II, wanting to see the states of which she had become the ruler, and also to let herself be seen, passed through Riga on her way to Warsaw, where she had gained the preponderant influence by putting her old acquaintance Stanislaus Poniatowski[17] on the throne. It was at Riga that I saw that great princess for the first time. I witnessed the affability and the smiling sweetness with which she received the Livonian nobility in a great room, and the kisses on the lips which she gave to all the noble young ladies who came to kiss her hand. Those who surrounded her were the Orlovs[18] and the three or four others who had been at the head of the conspiracy. To amuse her faithful servants she told them most graciously that she would make them a small faro bank of ten thousand rubles. The sum, in gold, was immediately brought, together with cards. Catherine sat down, took a pack, pretended to shuffle, held it out for anyone to cut, and she had the pleasure of seeing her bank broken on the first deal. It could not be otherwise unless the punters were fools, for, the pack not having been shuffled, one knew what would be the winning card as soon as one had seen the card before it. She left the next morning for Mitau, where she was received under triumphal arches of wood, either because stone was too scarce or because there had not been time to build them so solidly.

But the next day at noon there was general consternation when it became known that a revolution was even then breaking out in Petersburg. There had been an armed attack on the fortress of Schlüsselburg,[19] in which he was held, in an attempt to free the unfortunate Ivan Ivanovich,[20] who had been proclaimed Emperor in his cradle and whom Elizabeth Petrovna had dethroned. Two officers who were garrisoned in the fortress and to whom the illustrious prisoner was entrusted killed the innocent Emperor to prevent his being carried off, and captured the bold man[21] who had ventured the great stroke by which, if he had succeeded, he was sure to have risen to the highest fortune. The death of the innocent Emperor had created such a sensation in every part of the city that the prudent Panin,[22] fearing an uprising, at once sent courier after courier to inform Catherine that her presence was necessary in the capital. For this reason she left Mitau twenty-four hours after she arrived there, and, instead of going to Warsaw, she returned at full gallop to Petersburg, where she found submission and tranquility. Policy decreed that she should reward the murderers of the unfortunate Emperor, and she sentenced to the executioner's ax the man who in his ambition for greatness had tried to bring about her downfall.

Everything that has been said about her having an understanding with the murderers is pure calumny. Her soul was strong, but not evil. When I saw her at Riga she was thirty-five years of age and had reigned for two years. Though she was not beautiful, whoever examined her had reason to be pleased, finding her tall, well built, gentle, easy of access, and above all never perturbed.

At this same time a friend of the Baron de Sainte-Hélène arrived from Petersburg on his way to Warsaw. He was the Neapolitan Marchese Dragon, who called himself D'Aragon,[23] a great gamester, a fine figure of a man, and with the courage to risk his life, sword in hand, whenever anyone worth the trouble picked a quarrel with him. He was leaving Russia because the Orlovs had persuaded the Empress to prohibit games of chance. It was thought strange that the Orlovs should have had gaming prohibited, for they lived by nothing else before they took that other, more dangerous road to fortune; yet there is nothing strange in it. The Orlovs knew that gamesters who have to live by play are necessarily cheats; they were therefore right to obtain the prohibition of an occupation in which one could survive only by trickery. They would not have done it if they had not attained to opulence. On the whole, they were good-hearted. Alexis[24] had acquired the scar on his face in a pothouse. The man who had given it to him with a knife was one from whom the bearer of the scar had won money. As soon as Alexis found himself rich, the first person whose fortune he made was the man who had scarred him.

This Neapolitan Dragon, whose first accomplishment was to win at cards, and whose second was to handle his sword well, having left Copenhagen in the year 1759 with the Baron de Sainte-Hélène, went to Petersburg by way of Stockholm and of Viborg in Ingria.[25] It was still the reign of Elizabeth; nevertheless Peter, Duke of Holstein,[26] designated to be her successor, cut a great figure. Dragon took it into his head to go to the fencing school where that prince often went to amuse himself practicing with the foils. Dragon, with his Neapolitan swordplay, defeated everyone. The Grand Duke Peter took umbrage at the Neapolitan Marchese Dragon who had come to Petersburg to defeat the Russians at fencing. So one morning he took a foil, he defied him to come on, and he beat him hollow for two full hours, at the end of which he left congratulating himself on having been victorious over the Neapolitan who had defeated all the best Russian swordsmen, thus having shown that he was better than all the others.

After the prince was gone Dragon bluntly said that he had let himself be beaten for fear of offending him. This boast, as might be expected, was immediately carried to the Grand Duke, who flew into a rage and swore that he would force him to do whatever he knew how to do, and at the same time he sent a command to the foreigner to be at the fencing school the next day.

Dragon d'Aragon having gone there, the prince, as soon as he saw him, reproached him for what he had said. D'Aragon denied nothing, he said that he had feared to fail in the respect he owed him; but the prince replied that he would have him banished from Petersburg if he did not beat him as he had boasted he could do.

"In that case," replied the Neapolitan, "Your Highness shall be obeyed; you shall not touch me, and I hope that instead of being angry you will grant me your protection "

They spent the whole morning fighting in every possible fashion, and the Grand Duke was never able to touch D'Aragon. The prince at last threw down his foil, made him his fencing master, and gave him a commission as Major in his regiment of Holstein Guards. Soon afterward he asked him for permission to hold a bank at faro at his Court, and three or four years later he found himself in possession of a hundred thousand rubles, which he was taking with him to the Court of the new King Stanislaus, where all games were permitted. When he arrived in Riga Sainte-Hélène presented him to Prince Charles, who asked him to show his mettle the next morning, foil in hand, against himself and two or three of his friends. I was one of them. He beat us all. His diabolical skill having angered me, for I knew that I was excellent, I found myself saying to him that I should not be afraid of him with bare swords. He at once calmed me by saying that with bare swords his style of fighting would be entirely different. The Marchese left the next day and at Warsaw he found sharpers[27] so proficient that, not wasting their time fencing with him, in less than half a year they won all his money.

A week before I left Riga, where I stayed for two months, Campioni departed incognito, helped to escape by the excellent Prince Charles; and three or four days later the Baron de Sainte-Hélène likewise made off from his creditors without taking leave of them. He wrote a note to the Englishman Collins, to whom he owed a thousand crowns, that, as a man of honor, he was leaving his debts where he had made them. I shall speak of these three persons in the course of the next two years. Campioni left me his Schlafwagen,[28] which obliged me to travel to Petersburg with six horses. I left his daughter Betty with great regret, and I maintained a correspondence with her mother during all the time I was in Petersburg. I left Riga on December 15th, in atrociously cold weather, but I did not feel it. Traveling day and night, shut up in my Schlafwagen, which I never left, I arrived there in sixty hours. This speed was due to the fact that at Riga I had paid in advance for all the stages, so that I received a post passport from the Governor of Livonia, who was a Marshal Braun.[29] The journey is about equal to the one from Lyons to Paris, for the French league is about equal to four versts[30] and a quarter. On the coachman's seat I had a French manservant, who offered me his services as far as Petersburg gratis, asking only for permission to ride in front of my carriage. He served me very well, poorly clad though he was, bearing up under three nights and two days of very severe cold and nevertheless remaining in good health. I did not see him again in Petersburg until three months after my arrival, when, covered with gold braid, he sat beside me at the table of Count Chernichev,[31] as *uchitel*[32] to a young Count who was sitting beside him. I shall have occasion to speak of the office of *uchitel* in Russia. The word means "tutor."

Young Lambert, lying beside me in my Schlafwagen, did nothing but eat, drink, and sleep, without ever saying a word to me, for he could only talk in his stutter about mathematical problems, in which I was not interested at every hour of the day. Never the least attempt at a joke or at an amusing or critical observation on what we saw; he was boring and stupid; which gave him the privilege of never being bored. At Riga, where I presented him to no one because he was not presentable, all he did was to go to a fencing school, where, having picked up an acquaintance with some idlers, he went to a pot-house to get drunk on beer with them; I did not know how he got the small amount of money he needed for it.

During all the short journey from Riga to Petersburg I stopped only a half hour at Narva,[33] where it was necessary to show a passport which I did not have. I told the Governor that, being Venetian and traveling only for my pleasure, I had never thought I should need a passport, my Republic not being at war with any power and there being no Russian envoy in Venice.[34]

"If Your Excellency nevertheless finds difficulties," I said, "I will go back where I came from; but I will complain to Marshal Braun, who gave me a post passport, knowing that I had obtained a passport from no power."

The Governor thought for a little, then he gave me a sort of passport, which I still have, with which I entered Petersburg not only without being asked if I had any other but without my luggage being searched. From Caporya[35] to Petersburg there is nowhere to eat or sleep except in a private house which does not belong to the post. It is a desert in which not even Russian is spoken. It is Ingria, where the people speak a special language[36] which has nothing in common with other languages. The peasants of the province amuse themselves stealing what little they can from travelers who lose sight of their carriages for a moment.

I arrived in Petersburg just when the first rays of the sun were gilding the horizon. As we were exactly at the winter solstice, and I saw the sun appear, at the end of a vast plain, at precisely twenty-four minutes after nine o'clock, I can assure my reader that the longest night in that latitude lasts eighteen hours and three quarters.

I went to lodge in a wide, handsome street called the Millionnaya.[37] At a very reasonable rent I was given two rooms in which I saw not a piece of furniture; but two beds, four chairs, and two small tables were brought at once. I saw immensely big stoves; I thought it would take a great quantity of wood to heat them, but the fact proved to be exactly the contrary; only in Russia is the art of building stoves known, as the art of making cisterns or wells is known only in Venice. When it was summer I examined the inside of a big rectangular stove twelve feet high and six feet wide which was in the corner of a large room; inside it I saw, from the grate where the wood was burned to the top of it, where the pipe began by which the smoke first escaped, to escape afterward through the chimney—I saw, I say, channels[38] all of which led upward in serpentine bends. These stoves keep the room which they heat warm for twenty-four hours by means of the hole at the top, which is at the end of the large pipe and which a servant closes, by pulling a cord, as soon as he is sure that all the smoke from the wood is gone. As soon as he sees, through the small window at the bottom of the stove, that all the wood has become embers, he shuts in the heat above and below. Very rarely is a stove heated twice a day, except in the houses of great noblemen, where the servants are forbidden to shut the stoves at the top. The reason for this prohibition is very wise. It is as follows:

If it happens that a master, arriving tired from hunting or a journey and needing to go to bed, orders his servant to heat the stove, and if the servant, either by inadvertence or from haste, shuts the stove before all the smoke is gone, the sleeping man does not wake again. He commits his soul to his creator in three or four hours, moaning and not opening his eyes. Whoever first enters the room in the morning finds the air heavy, stifling, he sees the man dead, he opens the window at the bottom of the stove, a cloud of smoke bursts out of it, he opens the door and the windows, but the man does not revive, he looks in vain for the servant, who has run away, but who is found with astonishing ease and who is hanged without mercy, though he swears that he did not do it on purpose. An excellent policy, for were it not for this wise law, any servant could poison his master with impunity.

After coming to terms both for heat and for food, and finding everything cheap (which is no longer the case, everything there being now as dear as in London),[39] I bought a chest of drawers, and a large table at which I could write and to put my books and papers on.

The language which I found known to everyone in Petersburg, except the common people, was German, which I understood with difficulty but in which I expressed myself about as I do today. Immediately after dinner my landlord told me that there was a masked ball at Court, gratis, for five thousand people. The ball went on for sixty hours. It was a Saturday. The landlord gives me a ticket, which was necessary and which the masker had only to show at the entrance to the Imperial Palace.[40] I decide to go to it; I had the domino which I had bought in Mitau. I send for a mask, and chairmen carry me to the Court, where I see a great number of people dancing in several rooms in which there were orchestras. I walk through the rooms, and I see buffets at which all those who were hungry or thirsty were eating and drinking. Everywhere I see joy, freedom, and the great profusion of candles which lighted all the places to which I went. As I should expect, I find it all magnificent, superb, and worthy of admiration. Three or four hours passed very quickly. I hear a masker saying to another near to him:

"There's the Empress, I am sure; she thinks no one can recognize her; but you will see Grigori Grigorievich Orlov[41] in a moment; he has orders to follow her at a distance; he is wearing a domino not worth ten kopecks,[42] like the one you see on her."

I follow him, and I am convinced of it, for I hear more than a hundred maskers say the same thing as she passes, all of them, however, pretending not to recognize her. Those who did not know her bumped against her in making their way through the crowd, and I imagined the pleasure she must take in the assurance it gave her that she was not recognized. I often saw her sit down among people who were conversing in Russian, and who were perhaps talking of her. In so doing she exposed herself to unpleasantness, but she had the rare satisfaction of hearing some truths, which she could never flatter herself that she heard spoken by those who were paying court to her without masks. At a distance from her I saw the masker who had been given the name of Orlov, though he never lost sight of her; but in his case everyone recognized him because of his great stature and the way he always kept his head bent forward.

I enter a room in which I see a contradance in the form of a quadrille, and I am pleased to find it being danced perfectly in the French manner; but what takes my attention from it is a man who enters the room alone disguised in the Venetian manner, bautta,[43] black cloak, white mask, cocked hat as in Venice. I feel sure that he is a Venetian, for a foreigner never succeeds in dressing exactly as we do. He comes by chance to watch the contradance beside me. It occurs to me to accost him in French; I say that I had seen many men in Europe disguised in the Venetian manner, but never one so successfully as he, to the point that one would take him for a Venetian.

"I am Venetian."

"Like myself."

"I am not joking."

"Nor am I."

"Then let us speak Venetian."

"Speak, I will answer you."

He then speaks to me, and I see from the word *Sabato,* which means Saturday, that he is not Venetian.

"You are," I say, "a Venetian, but not from the capital, for you would have said *Sabo.*"

"I admit it; and from your language I judge that you may be from the capital. I thought the only Venetian in Petersburg was Bernardi."[44]

"You see that it is possible to be mistaken."

"I am Count Volpati,[45] of Treviso."

"Give me your address and I will call on you and tell you who I am, for I cannot tell you here." [46]

"There it is."

I leave him, and two or three hours later what attracts me is a girl in a domino, who was surrounded by several maskers and who was speaking Parisian in falsetto in the style of the balls at the Opéra.[47] I do not recognize her by her voice, but from her language I am sure that she is someone I know, for there were the same catchwords, the same exclamations, which I had made fashionable in Paris wherever I went at all frequently: "Oh, how agreeable!" "The dear man!" A number of these phrases, which I had originated, arouse my curiosity. I stay there, not addressing her, having the patience to wait until she unmasks to steal a look at her face; and at the end of an hour I am able to do it. She has to blow her nose; whereupon, to my great surprise, I see La Baret,[48] the stocking seller at the corner of the Rue Saint-Honoré, whose wedding party at the Hôtel d'Elbeuf [49] I had attended seven years earlier. What had brought her to Petersburg? My old love reawakens, I approach her, and I say in falsetto that I am her friend from the Hôtel d'Elbeuf.

It stops her short, she does not know what to say to me. I whisper into her ear "Gilbert," "Baret," truths which could be known only to her and to a lover; she begins to become curious, she talks only to me; I talk to her of the Rue des Prouvaires,[50] she sees that I know everything about her, she rises, she leaves the company she was with and comes to walk with me, begging me to tell her who I am when I assure her that I had been her fortunate lover. She begins by asking me to tell no one what I knew about her, she says that she left Paris with Monsieur de Langlade,[51] Councilor of the Parlement of Rouen, that she had left him later for a comic opera impresario[52] who had brought her to Petersburg as an actress, that she called herself Langlade, and that she was being kept by Count Rzewuski,[53] the Polish Ambassador

"But who are you?"

Certain, by then, that she could not refuse me amorous visits, I showed her my face. Mad with joy as soon as she recognized me, she said that it was her good angel who had brought me to Petersburg, for Rzewuski having to return to Poland, it was only on a man like myself that she could count to enable her to leave Russia, where she could no longer bear to be and where she had to practice a profession for which she felt she was not born, for she could neither act nor sing. She gave me her address and an hour, and I let her pursue her way about the ball, extremely delighted to have made this discovery.

I went to a buffet, where I ate and drank very well, then I returned to the crowd, where I saw La Langlade talking with Volpati. He had seen her with me and he had gone to pump her to find out who I was; but, preserving the secrecy which I had enjoined on her, she had told him I was her husband, and she called to me by that name, saying that the masker refused to believe it was true. The young madcap's confidence was of the sort that is made at a ball. After several hours I was ready to go back to my inn; I took a sedan chair, and I went to bed, intending not to rise until it was time to go to mass. The Catholic church was served by Recollect monks,[54] who wore long beards. After sleeping deeply, I am surprised, when I open my eyes, to see that it is not yet light. I turn over on the other side, I go back to sleep, but I wake again a quarter of an hour later, and I feel sorry for myself because I can only sleep in short naps. When day appears I rise, thinking that I had spent a very bad night; I call, I dress, I send for a hairdresser, and I tell the servant to hurry, for, it being Sunday, I want to go to mass; he replies that it is Monday, that I had spent twenty-seven hours in my bed; I understand, I laugh, and I persuade myself that it is true, for I felt I was dying of hunger. That is the only day which I can say

I really lost[55] in my life. I had myself carried to the house of Demetrio Papanelopulo, who was the Greek banker with whom I had a credit of a hundred rubles a month. I found myself very well received, on Signor dall'Oglio's[56] recommendation; he invited me to come to dine with him every day, and he at once paid me the month which was already due, showing me that he had honored the draft I had executed in Mitau. He found me a manservant, for whom he vouched, and a carriage by the month for eighteen rubles, which came to a little more than six zecchini. The cheapness of it astonished me; but it is no longer so today. He insisted that I dine there that day, and it was at his table that I made the acquaintance of young Bernardi, the son of the one who had been poisoned because of suspicions the story of which it is not for me to tell.[57] The young man was in Petersburg trying to obtain payment of the sums for which his late father was the creditor for diamonds which he had sold to the Empress Elizabeth. He was lodging at Papanelopulo's, and he ate his meals there, paying him board. Count Volpati came after dinner and told of the encounter he had had at the ball with an unknown man who must be Venetian and who had promised to call on him. Since he knew me only by name, he supposed it could only be I as soon as the banker introduced me to him, and I did not deny it.

The Count was about to leave; he was already in the *Gazette,* as was the custom in Russia, where no one was given a passport until two weeks after the public was informed that he was about to leave.[58] For this reason the merchants very easily give credit to foreigners, and foreigners think twice before they contract debts, for they can hope for no grace. Bernardi could not wait to be rid of Count Volpati, who was the lover of a dancer named La Fusi,[59] with whom he could not hope to accomplish anything until after his departure. This Fusi, after Volpati left, managed things so well with the young, inexperienced man in love that she got him to marry her, which did him the greatest harm in the eyes of the Empress, who had him paid and would not listen to those who solicited some post for him. Two years after I left he died, and I do not know what became of his widow.

The next day I took a letter to the then Colonel Pyotr Ivanovich Melissino,[60] now a General in the Artillery. The letter was from Signora dall'Oglio, whose lover he had been. He received me very well, he presented me to his extremely agreeable wife, and he invited me to supper once and for all. His house was managed in the French style; there was gaming, and afterward everyone supped informally. There I met his elder brother,[61] who was Procurator of the Synod[62] and who was married to a Princess Dolgoruki; the game played was faro; the company was made up of people who could be relied on neither to go about complaining of their losses nor boasting of their winnings; thus it was certain that the Government would not find out that the law against gaming was being broken. The person who kept the bank was a Baron Lefort, the son of the celebrated one.[63] The one I saw there was then in disgrace because of a lottery he had set up in Moscow at the coronation of the Empress, and for which she herself had provided the funds to amuse her Court. The lottery having gone bankrupt because of a lack of management, calumny had laid the disaster to the Baron by raising the suspicion that he was the guilty party. I played for small stakes, and I won a few rubles. Supping beside him, I improved the acquaintance, and, seeing him at his own house later, he informed me of his vicissitudes. Speaking of gaming, I praised the noble indifference with which Prince xxx had lost a thousand rubles to him. He laughed, and he told me that the exalted gamester whose noble disinterest I had admired did not pay.

"But honor?"

"Honor is not lost here on that account. There is a tacit understanding that a person who loses on his word pays if he wants to, and if he does not want to that is his privilege. The person who won from him would make himself ridiculous by demanding payment."

"It is a system which entitles the banker to refuse to carry anyone on his word."

"Nor does the gamester take offense at it. He leaves, or he puts pledges on the table. There are young scions of the highest nobility who have learned to cheat and who boast of it; a Matiushkin[64] defies all the foreign sharpers to win from him. He has just obtained leave to travel for three years. He says he is sure he will come back to Russia very rich."

At Melissino's I made the acquaintance of a young officer of the Guards named Zinoviov,[65] a relative of the Orlovs, who introduced me to the English Envoy Macartney,[66] a handsome young man of great intelligence, who had the weakness to fall in love with Mademoiselle Shitrov,[67] one of the Empress's ladies in waiting, and the boldness to get her with child. The Empress considered this English freedom an impertinence, forgave[68] the young lady, who danced very well at the Imperial Theater, and had the Envoy recalled. I met the brother of the lady in waiting, already an officer,[69] a handsome youth of great promise. At the exalted spectacle of a performance at the Court itself, at which I saw Mademoiselle Shitrov dance, I also saw Mademoiselle Sievers dance; she is now Princess N. N.,[70] whom I saw four years ago at Dresden with her daughter, who was very well brought up and clever at drawing. Mademoiselle Sievers enchanted me. I fell in love with her without ever being able to tell her so, for I was never introduced to her. She danced to perfection. The castrato Putini[71] enjoyed her good graces, which he certainly deserved both by his talent and his intelligence. He even lodged at Count Sievers's. It was the castrato Putini who brought to Petersburg the Venetian chapelmaster Galuppi,[72] called Buranello, who arrived there the next year, when I was leaving.

Demetrio Papanelopulo introduced me to the Cabinet Minister Olsuviev,[73] heavy and fat, full of wit, and the only man of learning I knew in Petersburg, for he had not become learned by reading Voltaire but by having gone to Uppsala to study[74] in his youth. That rare man, who loved women, wine, and choice viands, invited me to dine at Locatelli's[75] at Ekaterinhof,[76] an imperial residence which the Empress had given to the old theatrical impresario for his lifetime. He was astonished when he saw me; but I was even more so to see that he had become a caterer, for that was what he did at Ekaterinhof, where, for a ruble a head, without wine, he gave excellent meals to all who went there. Monsieur Olsuviev introduced me to another Secretary of the Cabinet, Teplov,[77] who was fond of handsome youths, and whose virtue was that he had strangled Peter III, who had kept the arsenic from killing him by drinking lemonade. The person who introduced me to the third Secretary of the Cabinet, Yelagin,[78] who had spent twenty years in Siberia, was the dancer Mécour,[79] his mistress, to whom I had brought a letter from La Santina,[80] whose acquaintance I had made when she passed through Berlin. A letter from Dall'Oglio which I took to Luini,[81] a castrato musician very skilled in his art, handsome and extremely agreeable, gained me a most cordial reception in his house, where the table was exquisite. La Colonna,[82] who was first singer, was his mistress. They lived together to torment each other. I did not see them in agreement even one day. It was at his house that I made the acquaintance of another castrato, well versed in his art and agreeable, whose name was Millico[83] and who, constantly going to the house of the Master of the Imperial Hunt, Naryshkin,[84] mentioned me to him so often that the amiable nobleman, who had some smattering of letters, wanted to make my acquaintance. He was the husband of the celebrated Maria Pavlovna.[85] It was at the Master of the Hunt's magnificent table that I made the acquaintance of the *kaloyer*[86] Platon,[87] now Archbishop of Novgorod, then preacher to the Empress. This Russian monk understood Greek, spoke Latin and French, he was intelligent, he was handsome; it was natural that he should make his fortune in a country where the nobility have never condescended to intrigue for ecclesiastical dignities.

I took a letter from Dall'Oglio to Princess Dashkov,[88] who lived three versts from Petersburg, exiled from the Court when, after helping the Empress to mount the throne, she expected to share it with her. Catherine humbled her ambition. I found her dressed in mourning because of the death of the Prince her husband, who had died in Warsaw. It was she who spoke of me to Monsieur Panin[89] and who three days later wrote me a note in which she said that I could go to see him whenever I wished. I thought it admirable behavior on the Empress's part: she had disgraced Princess Dashkov, but she did not prevent her chief Minister from paying court to her every evening. I heard from people worthy of credence that Count Panin was not Princess Dashkov's lover but her father. The Princess is today the President of the Academy of Sciences. Its learned members would blush to have a woman at their head if they had not found her a Minerva. What is still wanting in Russia is the spectacle of some celebrated woman commanding its armies.

A thing which I saw[90] with Melissino, and which struck me, was the ceremony of the blessing of the waters on the Day of the Epiphany, performed on the Neva covered with five feet of ice. The children are baptized by immersion, being plunged into the river through a hole made in the ice. On that particular day, it happened that the pope who was doing the immersing let the child he was putting into the water slip from his hands.

"*Drugoi*," he said.

That is, "Give me another one"; but what I found wonderful was the joy of the father and mother of the drowned child, who certainly could only have gone to Paradise, having died at that fortunate moment.

I took the letter from the Florentine Signora Bregonzi,[91] who had given me supper in Memel, to the friend whom she had assured me I could persuade to be useful to me. The friend was a Venetian named Signora Roccolino;[92] she had left Venice to sing on the stage in Petersburg, knowing no music and never before having practiced the profession. The Empress, after laughing at her for her folly, sent her word that there was no position for her; but what did Signora Vincenza (for so she was called) do then? She struck up an intimate friendship with a Frenchwoman, the wife of one Proté,[93] a French merchant who lodged at the Master of the Hunt's. This woman, who was in possession of that nobleman's heart, was at the same time the confidant of his wife Maria Pavlovna, who, not loving her husband, was delighted that the Frenchwoman freed her from the obligation of submitting to her matrimonial duties if he took it into his head to demand them of her. But La Proté was the most beautiful woman in Petersburg. In the flower of her age, to all the graces of gallantry she joined the most refined taste in dress. No woman could adorn herself as she did; extremely gay in company, she united all voices in her favor; when La Proté was mentioned in Petersburg everyone was jealous of the Master of the Hunt's good fortune in possessing her. Such was the woman whose confidant Signora Vincenza had become. She invited to her house the men who were in love with her and who were worthy of consideration, and La Proté never failed to go there. Signora Vincenza did not scruple to accept the presents which gratitude procured her from one direction or another.

As soon as I saw Signora Vincenza I recognized her; but, at least twenty years having passed since what had happened between us had taken place, she showed no surprise that I had forgotten it, and she took care not to remind me of it. Her brother, whose name was Montellato, was the man who, one night when I was leaving the Ridotto,[94] came to murder me in the Piazza San Marco, and it was in her house that a plot had been hatched which would have cost me my life if I had not jumped out the window into the street. She gave me exactly the reception which one gives to a dear fellow countryman, an old friend whom one encounters far from home; she told me her misfortunes in detail, and at the same time she boasted of her courage. She needed no one, she said, and she lived gaily with the most agreeable women in Petersburg.

"I am amazed," she said, "that, dining at the Master of the Hunt Naryshkin's as often as you do, you have not met the beautiful Madame Proté, she is the Master of the Hunt's heart and soul; come and take coffee with me tomorrow, and you will see a prodigy."

I go there, and I find her above praise. Being no longer rich, I use my wit to make an impression on her; I ask her what her name is, she says that it is Proté, I reply that she thereby declares herself to be "*pro me*"; I explain the pun[95] to her; I jest, I tell her stories, I let her know that she has set my soul on fire, I do not despair of coming to be happy in time, and the acquaintance is made. From then on I never went to the Master of the Hunt's without going to her room before and after dinner

About this time, the Polish Ambassador having returned to Warsaw, I had to break off my liaison with La Langlade, who accepted an advantageous proposal which Count Bryus[96] made her. I then ceased to go to her house. That charming woman died six months later of smallpox. I longed to make progress with La Proté. To that end, I gave a dinner at Locatelli's in Ekaterinhof, to which I invited Luini with La Colonna, a Guards officer named Zinoviov,[97] La Proté, and Signora Vincenza with a violinist who was her lover. The gaiety of the dinner having set the guests on fire, after coffee each cavalier tried to disappear with his lady, profiting by which I began to take possession of the beauty, without, however, coming to the heart of the matter because of an interruption. We all went out to see what Luini, who had gone hunting, would bag in the park; he had brought his guns and his dogs for the purpose. Having left the imperial residence a hundred paces behind with Zinoviov, I point out to him a peasant girl whose beauty was surprising; he sees her, he agrees, we walk toward her, and she runs away to a hut, which she enters; we enter it too, we see her father, her mother, and the whole family, and she herself in a corner of the room, like a rabbit afraid that the dogs it saw would devour it.

Zinoviov—who, parenthetically, is the man who spent twenty years in Madrid as the Empress's envoy—talks to the father in Russian for a long time; I see that the subject is the girl, for her father calls her and I see her come forward obediently and submissively and stand before the two of them. A quarter of an hour later he leaves, and I follow him, after giving the fellow a ruble. Zinoviov tells me that he had asked the father if he would give her into service, and that the father had replied that he would be willing, that he must get a hundred rubles because she still had her maidenhead.

"You see," he said, "that there is nothing to be done."

"What do you mean? Suppose I were willing to give the hundred rubles?"

"Then you would have her in your service, and you would have the right to go to bed with her."

"And if she did not want it?"

"Oh, that never happens. You would have the right to beat her."

"Then suppose that she is willing. I ask you if, after enjoying her and finding her to my liking, I could go on keeping her."

"You become her master, I tell you, and you can even have her arrested if she runs away, unless she gives you back the hundred rubles you paid for her."

"And if I keep her with me, how much a month must I give her?"

"Not a copper. Only food and drink, and letting her go to the bath every Saturday so that she can go to church on Sunday."

"And when I leave Petersburg can I make her go with me?"

"Not unless you obtain permission and give security. Though she has become your slave, she is still first of all the slave of the Empress."

"Excellent. Arrange it for me. I will give the hundred rubles, and I will take her with me, and I assure you I will not treat her as a slave; but I put myself in your hands, for I should not want to be cheated."

"I will strike the bargain myself, and I assure you that I shall not be cheated. Do you want me to do it at once?"

"No, tomorrow; for I do not want the company to know of it. Tomorrow morning I will come to your house at nine o'clock."

We all returned to Petersburg together in a phaeton, and the next morning at the appointed hour I was at Zinoviov's, who was delighted to do me this small favor. On our way he said that if I liked, in a few days he would get me together a seraglio of as many girls as I could want. I gave him the hundred rubles.

We arrive at the peasant's hut, the girl being there. Zinoviov explains the matter to him, the peasant thanks St. Nicholas[98] for the good fortune he has sent him, he talks to his daughter, I see her looking at me, and I understand that she says yes. Zinoviov then tells me that I must assure myself that she is a virgin, since in signing the agreement I must state that I had bought her for my service as such. My upbringing made me reluctant to insult her by examining her; but Zinoviov encouraged me, saying that I would be doing her a favor by enabling myself to testify to the fact to her parents. At that I sat down and, taking her between my thighs, I explored her with my hand and found that she was intact; but to tell the truth I would not have called her a liar even if I had found her maidenhead gone. Zinoviov counted out the hundred rubles to the father, who gave them to his daughter, whereupon she put them in her mother's hands, and my manservant and the coachman came in to sign as witnesses to what they did not know. The girl, whom I at once gave the name Zaïre,[99] got into the carriage and drove to Petersburg with us dressed as she was in coarse cloth and without a shift. After thanking Zinoviov I stayed at home for four days, never leaving her until I saw her dressed in the French style, simply but neatly. My martyrdom was not knowing Russian; but it was she who, in less than three months, learned Italian—very badly, but well enough to tell me whatever she wanted to. She began to love me, then to be jealous; once she came very near to killing me, as my reader will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

Crèvecoeur. Baumbach. Journey to Moscow. Continuation of my adventures in Petersburg.

ON THE same day that I took Zaïre home with me I dismissed Lambert. He got drunk every day, I no longer knew what to do with him. There was no opening for him except as a common soldier. I obtained a passport for him, and I gave him what money he needed to return to Berlin. Seven years later in Görz[1] I learned that he had entered the Austrian service.

Zaïre, having become so pretty by the month of May that, wanting to go to Moscow, I did not dare to leave her in Petersburg, I took her with me, dispensing with a manservant. The pleasure I took in hearing her talk to me in Venetian was inconceivable.[2] On Saturdays I went to the Russian baths[3] to bathe with her in company with thirty or forty other people, both men and women and all stark naked, who, looking at no one, supposed that no one looked at them. This lack of modesty had its source in innocence of intention. I was amazed that no one looked at Zaïre, who seemed to me the original of the statue of Psyche which I had seen in the Villa Borghese.[4]

Her breasts were not yet developed, she was in her thirteenth year; nowhere did she show the indubitable imprint of puberty. Snow white as she was, her black hair made her whiteness even more brilliant. But for her accursed jealousy, which was a daily burden to me, and the blind faith she had in what the cards which she consulted every day told her, I should never have left her.

A young Frenchman with a handsome face, whose name was Crèvecoeur[5] and who showed that he had had an upbringing worthy of his birth, arrived in Petersburg with a Parisian girl whom he called La Rivière,[6] young and not ugly, but who had no talent, and no education except that which is acquired by all girls in Paris who offer their charms for sale. The young man came to bring me a letter from Prince Charles of Kurland, who said no more to me than that if I could be of use to the couple he would take it as a favor. He brought me the letter, accompanied by his fair lady, at nine o'clock in the morning, just as I was breakfasting with Zaïre.

"It is for you to tell me," I said, "in what way I can be of use to you."

"By admitting us to your company, by introducing us to your acquaintances."

"As for my company, I am a foreigner, it amounts to very little. I will go to see you, you shall come to me when you like, and I shall find it a pleasure; but I never eat at home. As for my acquaintances, you must see that, as a foreigner, I should go beyond what is permissible if I presented you and Madame. Is she your wife? I shall be asked who you are and what has brought you to Petersburg. What am I to say? I am surprised that Prince Charles did not send you to others."

"I am a gentleman from Lorraine. I came here to amuse myself; Mademoiselle Rivière there is my mistress."

"I cannot imagine to whom I can introduce you on those grounds, and in any case I think that you can see the customs of the country and amuse yourselves without needing anyone. The theaters, the promenades, even the pleasures of the Court are open to all. I imagine that you are not short of money."

"On the contrary, I have no money, and I expect none from anyone."

"And I have none left either; and you astonish me. How can you have been so foolish as to come here without money?"

"It is she who says that we need none except from day to day. She made me leave Paris without a copper, and until now she seems to be right. We have managed to live everywhere."

"Then it is she who has the purse."

"My purse," she said, "is in the pockets of my friends."

"I understand, and I see that you must find friends in all the inhabited globe; if I had a purse, for friendship of that kind I would open it to you too. But I am not rich."

Baumbach,[7] of Hamburg, whom I had known in England, from which he had fled because of debts, had come to Petersburg, where he had had the good fortune to enter the military service; son of a rich merchant, he had a house, servants, and a carriage, he liked prostitutes, good food, and play, he got into debt in all directions. He was ugly, lively, and filled with the spirit of libertinism. He arrives at my lodging just in time to interrupt the conversation I had begun with the strange young woman whose purse on her travels was in her friends' pockets. I introduce Monsieur and Madame, telling him everything except the matter of the purse. Baumbach, in ecstasies over the encounter, makes advances to La Rivière, who receives them in the manner of her trade, and in a quarter of an hour I laugh to see that she was right. Baumbach invites them to dine at his house the next day, and begs them to go with him that very day to Krasni-Kabak,[8] where he will give them an informal dinner; he asks me to be one of the party, and I accept. Zaïre asks me what is afoot, for she does not understand French, and I tell her. She says that since it is to be a party at Krasni-Kabak, she wants to go there too, and I say that she may, for it was pure jealousy and I feared the consequences, which consisted in ill-humor, tears, and fits of despair, which had more than once driven me to beat her; it was the best way to convince her that I loved her. After the beating she became affectionate little by little, and peace was made with the rites of love.

Baumbach, very well pleased, went to attend to some business, promising to return at eleven o'clock, and while Zaïre got dressed, La Rivière treated me to a discourse intended to convince me that so far as knowledge of the world went I was the most ignorant of men. What astonished me was that her lover was not at all ashamed of the role he played. The only excuse he could offer me was that he was in love with the wench; but I could not accept it.

Our party was gay. Baumbach talked only to the adventuress, Zaïre sat on my lap the greater part of the time, Crèvecoeur ate, laughed in season and out of season, and went for a walk; the beauty challenged Baumbach to play quinze[9] for twenty-five rubles, which he lost very gallantly and which he paid her, obtaining nothing in exchange but a kiss. Zaïre, very glad to have been on an excursion during which she feared I would be unfaithful to her, said a thousand amusing things to me about the Frenchwoman's lover, who was not jealous of her. She could not understand how she could bear having him so sure of her.

"But I am sure of you, and yet you love me."

"That is because I have never given you reason to think me a wh. . . ."[10]

The next day I went to Baumbach's alone, being sure that I should find there some young Russian officers, who would have annoyed me too much by flirting with Zaïre in their language. At Baumbach's I found the traveling couple, and the two Lunin brothers,[11] then Lieutenants, now Generals. The younger of the two brothers was blond and pretty as a girl; he had been loved by the Secretary of the Cabinet Teplov,[12] and, like an intelligent youth, he not only defied prejudice, he deliberately set about winning the affection and esteem of all men of position, in whose company he was always to be found, by his caresses. Having supposed the Hamburger Baumbach to have the same inclination which he had found Monsieur Teplov to possess, and not being mistaken, he would have thought it insulting to me not to make me of their company. With this idea in mind he took a place beside me at table, and he lavished such pretty attentions on me during dinner that I really thought he was a girl in men's clothing.

After dinner, when I was sitting before the fire between him and the traveling Frenchwoman, I declared my suspicion to him, but Lunin, jealous of the superiority of his sex, immediately displayed his, and, curious to know if I would remain indifferent to his beauty, he laid hold on me, and thinking himself convinced that he had pleased me, put himself in a position to make himself and me happy. And it would have happened if La Rivière, angry that a youth should infringe on her rights in her presence, had not taken him by the waist and forced him to put off his exploit to a more suitable time.

The struggle made me laugh; but not having been indifferent to it I saw no reason to pretend that I was. I told the wench that she had no right to interfere in our business, which Lunin took to be a declaration in his favor on my part. Lunin displayed all his treasures, even those of his white bosom, and defied the wench to do as much, which she refused, calling us b . . . . . . ; we replied by calling her a wh . . . ,[13] and she left us. The young Russian and I gave each other tokens of the fondest friendship, and we swore that it should be eternal.

The elder Lunin, Crèvecoeur, and Baumbach, who had gone for a walk, came back at nightfall with two or three friends who easily consoled the Frenchwoman for the poor entertainment we had given her.

Baumbach made a bank at faro, which continued until eleven o'clock, when he had no more money, and we supped. After supper the great orgy began. La Rivière held her own against Baumbach, the elder Lunin, and his friends the two young officers. Crèvecoeur had gone to bed. I and my new friend alone appeared to keep our heads, calmly watching the encounters which quickly succeeded one another, each different from the last, and of which poor Crèvecoeur's mistress always bore the brunt. Offended that she interested us only as spectators, she from time to time vented her spleen against us in the most cruel sarcasms; but we laughed at them. Our attitude was like that of two virtuous old men who look with tolerance on the extravagances of unbridled youth. We parted an hour before dawn.

I arrive at my lodging, I enter my room, and by the purest chance I avoid a bottle which Zaïre has thrown at my head and which would have killed me if it had struck me on the temple. It grazed my face. I see her throw herself down in a fury and beat her head on the floor; I run to her, I seize her, I ask her what is the matter with her, and, convinced that she has gone mad, I think of calling for help. She calms her frenzy, but bursting into tears and calling me "murderer" and "traitor." To convict me of my crime she points to a square of twenty-five cards, in which she makes me read in symbols the whole of the debauch which had kept me out all night. She shows me the wench, the bed, the encounters, and even my sins against nature. I saw nothing; but she imagined that she saw everything.

After letting her say everything necessary to relieve her furious jealousy, I threw her accursed abracadabra into the fire, and, looking at her with eyes in which she could see both my anger and the pity I felt for her, and telling her in so many words that she had very nearly killed me, I declare that we must part for ever on the morrow. I say it was true that I had spent the night at Baumbach's, where there was a wench, but I naturally deny all the excesses she accused me of. After that, needing sleep, I undress, I get into bed, and I go to sleep, despite everything that, lying down beside me, she did to win her pardon and assure me of her repentance.

After five or six hours I am awake, and, seeing her sleeping, I dress, thinking how best to get rid of a girl who, one day or another, might very well kill me in her jealous rages. But how could I carry out my intention when I saw her on her knees before me, despairing and repentant, begging me to forgive her, to take pity on her, and assuring me that in future I should find her as gentle as a lamb? The upshot of it was that, taking her in my arms, I gave her unmistakable tokens of the return of my affection, on condition, which she swore to fulfill, that she would not consult the cards again as long as she lived with me. I had decided to go to Moscow three days after this occurrence, and I filled her with joy by assuring her that I would take her with me. Three things in particular had made the girl love me. The first was that I often took her to Ekaterinhof to see her family, where I always left a ruble; the second was that I had her eat with me when I invited people to dinner; the third was that I had beaten her two or three times when she had tried to keep me from going out

Strange necessity for a master in Russia: when the occasion arises, he has to beat his servant! Words have no effect; nothing but stirrup leathers produce one. The servant, whose soul is only that of a slave, reflects after the beating, and says: "My master has not dismissed me, he would not have beaten me if he did not love me, so I ought to be attached to him"

Papanelopulo[14] had laughed at me when, at the beginning of my stay in Petersburg, I said to him that, being fond of my Cossack, who spoke French, I wanted to attach him to me by kindness, chastising him only with words when he drank himself senseless on spirits.

"If you do not beat him," he said, "the day will come when he will beat you."

And it happened. One day when I found him so much the worse for drink that he could not wait on me I thought it best to scold him in harsh words, threatening him only by raising my walking stick. As soon as he saw it in the air, he ran at me and seized it; and if I had not instantly knocked him down he would certainly have beaten me. I dismissed him then and there. There is no better servant in the world than the Russian, tireless at work, sleeping on the threshold of the room in which his master sleeps so that he can run to him as soon as he calls, always submissive, bandying no words with him even when he is clearly in the wrong, and incapable of stealing from him; but he becomes a monster or an imbecile when he has drunk a glass of spirits, and it is the vice of all the common people. A coachman exposed to the severest cold, often all night long, at the door of a house where he is keeping watch over his horses, knows no other way of maintaining his resistance than to drink brandy. If he drinks two glasses of it he may fall asleep on the snow, where he sometimes does not wake again. He dies frozen. The misfortune of losing an ear, the whole nose except the bone, a piece of cheek, a lip, frequently occurs if one is not careful. A Russian saw that I was about to lose an ear one day when I arrived at Peterhof [15] in a sleigh, the cold being very dry. He at once rubbed me with a handful of snow until the whole cartilage which I was going to lose came back to life. Asked how he had known that I was in danger, he said that is easy to know, for the part attacked by the cold turns extremely white. What surprised me, and what I still find incredible today, is that the lost part sometimes comes back. Prince Charles of Kurland assured me that he lost his nose one day in Siberia, yet he got it back again the following summer. Several muzhiks[16] assured me of the same phenomenon

During this time the Empress had a commodious wooden amphitheater built, as large as the whole square in front of her palace, which was built by the Florentine architect Rastrelli.[17] The amphitheater, intended to accommodate a hundred thousand spectators, was the work of the architect Rinaldi,[18] who had been in Petersburg for fifty years and who never wanted to return to his native Rome. In the interior of this edifice Catherine intended to give a tournament for all the valiant cavaliers of her Empire. There were to be four quadrilles, in each of which a hundred warriors, richly clad in the costume of the nation they represented, were to contend, jousting against each other on horseback, for prizes of great value. The whole Empire had been informed of the magnificent festival, which was to be given at the sovereign's expense; and the Princes, Counts, and Barons began to arrive from the most distant cities with their fine horses. Prince Charles of Kurland had written me that he would arrive too. It had been decided that the day on which the festival would take place would be the first day of fair weather; and nothing was more sensible, for a whole fair day without rain or wind or threatening clouds is a very rare phenomenon in Petersburg. In Italy we count on good weather; in Russia they count on bad. I laugh when Russians traveling in Europe talk of their fine climate. It is a fact that during the whole of the year 1765 there was not one fine day in Russia; the irrefutable proof of which is that it was impossible to hold the tournament.[19] The wooden structure of the amphitheater was covered over, and it was held the next year. The horsemen spent the winter in Petersburg; those who did not have money enough to stay went home. One of the latter was Prince Charles of Kurland.

Everything being arranged for my journey to Moscow, I got into my Schlafwagen with Zaïre, with a manservant who spoke Russian and German up behind. For eighty rubles an *izvozchik*[20] contracted to take me to Moscow in six days and seven nights with six horses. It was cheap, and, not taking the post, I could not expect to travel faster, for the journey was seventy-two Russian stages, which made five hundred Italian miles[21] more or less. It seemed to me impossible, but that was his business.

We left when the cannon shot from the citadel told us that day was done; it was toward the end of May, when one no longer sees any night in Petersburg. But for the cannon shot which announces that the sun had sunk below the horizon, none would know it. One can read a letter at midnight there, the moon does not make night lighter. People say it is beautiful, but it annoyed me. This continual day lasts for eight weeks. During that time no one lights candles. It is different in Moscow. Four and a half degrees of latitude less than at Petersburg make a candle always necessary at midnight.

We reached Novgorod in forty-eight hours, where the *izvozchik* allowed us five hours' rest. It was there that I saw something which surprised me. Invited to drink a glass, the coachman looked very gloomy, he told Zaïre that one of his horses would not eat, and he was in despair, for he was sure that, not having eaten, it could not go on. We all go out with him, we enter the stable, and we see the horse listless, motionless, with no appetite. Its master began haranguing it in the gentlest of tones, giving it looks of affection and esteem calculated to inspire the animal with sentiments which would persuade it to eat. After thus haranguing it, he kissed the horse, took its head in his hands and put it in the manger; but it was useless. The man then began to weep, but in such a way that I was dying to laugh, for I saw that he hoped to soften the horse's heart by his tears. After weeping his fill, he again kisses the beast and again puts its head in the manger; but again to no purpose. At that the Russian, in a towering rage at such obstinacy in his beast, swears vengeance. He leads it out of the stable, ties the poor creature to a post, takes a big stick, and beats it with all his strength for a good quarter of an hour. When he can go on no longer, he takes it back to the stable, puts its head in the trough, whereupon the horse eats with ravenous appetite, and the *izvozchik* laughs, jumps up and down, and cuts a thousand happy capers. My astonishment was extreme. I thought that such a thing could happen only in Russia, where the stick has such virtue that it performs miracles. But I have thought that it would not have happened with a donkey, which stands up under a beating much more stubbornly than a horse. I am told that today blows are not as much in fashion in Russia as they were at that time. The Russians, unfortunately, are beginning to become French.[22] A Russian officer told me that, from the time of Peter I, who, when he was displeased, rained blows from his stick on his Generals, the Lieutenant had to receive his Captain's blows with submission, the Captain the Major's, the Major the Lieutenant-Colonel's, the latter the Colonel's, who in turn had to receive them from the Brigadier-General. All this has changed today. I learned this at Riga from General Voeikov,[23] who had been brought up by the great Peter and who was born before the birth of Petersburg.[24]

I think I have said nothing about that city, which is today so celebrated and whose existence I still consider precarious, when I think of it today. It required a genius like that of that great man, who amused himself by giving the lie to Nature, to think of building a city which was to become the capital of his whole immense Empire in a place where the terrain cannot be less favorable to the labors of those who doggedly try to make it fit to hold up the palaces which are every day built there of stone, at enormous expense. I am told that the city has reached maturity today, to the glory of the great Catherine; but in the year 1765 I saw it still in its infancy. Everything seemed to me ruins built on purpose. The streets were paved in the certainty that they would have to be repaved six months later. I saw a city which a man in a hurry must have had built in haste; and in fact the Czar gave birth to it in nine months. But the nine months were its time of coming to birth; the child had perhaps been conceived long before. Contemplating Petersburg, I reflected on the proverb: *Canis faestinans caecos edit catulos* ("A bitch in a hurry bears blind pups");[25] but a moment later, admiring the great design, I said, with utmost respect: *Diu parturit leaena sed leonem* ("The lioness is long in giving birth, but she bears a lion").[26] A century from now I prophesy a magnificent Petersburg, but raised at least twelve feet, and then the great palaces will not fall into ruin for lack of piling. The barbarous architecture brought there by the French architects and fit only to build houses for marionettes will be proscribed; and Monsieur Betskoi,[27] a man of intelligence be it said, will no longer exist to give the preference over Rastrelli and Rinaldi to a Delamotte,[28] a Parisian who astonished Petersburg by constructing a four-story house the wonderful thing about which, according to him, was that no one could either see or guess where the staircases were.[29]

We arrived in Moscow as our man had promised us we should do. It was not possible to arrive there more quickly, traveling always with the same horses; but by post one goes there rapidly

"The Empress Elizabeth," a man who was there said to me, "made the journey in fifty-two hours."

"I can well believe it," said a Russian of the old school, "she issued an ukase in which she prescribed the time, and she would have got there still faster if the time she prescribed had been shorter."

It is a fact that in my day it was not permitted to doubt the infallibility of an ukase; whoever ventured to doubt that an ukase, which means "decree," could be carried out was considered guilty of lèse-majesté. In Petersburg I was crossing a wooden bridge with Melissino, Papanelopulo, and three or four others, when, one of them hearing me criticize the meanness of the bridge, said that it would be built of stone by the day of a certain public function on which the Empress was to cross it.[30] Since it was only three weeks to the day, I said it was impossible; a Russian, looking at me askance, said that it was not to be doubted, for there had been an ukase; I was going to reply, but Papanelopulo pressed my hand and made me a sign to say nothing. In the end the bridge was not built, but that did not put me in the right, for, ten days before the day, the Empress issued a second ukase in which she decreed that it was her good pleasure that the bridge should not be built until the following year.

The Czars of Russia have always used, and still use, the language of despotism in everything. One morning I saw the Empress dressed in men's clothing to go riding. Her Grand Equerry, Prince Repnin,[31] was holding the bridle of the horse she was to mount, when the horse suddenly gave the Grand Equerry such a kick that it broke his ankle. The Empress, with a look of astonishment, ordered the disappearance of the horse and announced that death would be the punishment of anyone who dared in future to bring the offending animal before her eyes. The title which is still given today to all Court posts is a military title, which shows the nature of the government. The Empress's head coachman has the rank of colonel, as does her head cook; the castrato Luini had the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and the painter Torelli[32] had only the rank of captain, since he had only eight hundred rubles a year. The sentinels who stand with crossed muskets at the inner doors of the Empress's apartments ask the person who wants to enter what his rank is, to learn if they are to uncross their muskets to let him go in; the word is *Kakoi rang?* ("What rank?") When I was asked this question for the first time, and the meaning was explained to me, I was at a loss; but the officer who was there asked me how much I had a year, and when I answered him that I had three thousand rubles he at once gave me the rank of general, and I was allowed to pass. It was in this room that a moment later

I saw the Empress stop at the door and take off her gloves to give the two sentinels her beautiful hands to kiss. It was by this sort of informal behavior that she kept the affection of this body of guards, which was commanded by Grigori Grigorievich Orlov, and on which the safety of her person depended in case of a revolution.

Here is what I saw the first time that I followed her to her chapel where she was going to hear mass. The *protopapas,* or bishop,[33] received her at the door to offer her the lustral water, and she kissed his ring at the same time that the prelate, decorated with a beard two feet long, bent his head to kiss the hand of his sovereign, who was at once his mistress in things temporal and his patriarch. During the whole mass she showed no sign of devotion; hypocrisy was unworthy of her, with a smiling glance she dignified now one now another of the congregation, from time to time speaking to her favorite, to whom she had nothing to say; but she wanted to glorify him by showing all who were present that it was he whom she distinguished and set above all others.

One day as she left the opera house, where Metastasio's *Olimpiade*[34] had been performed, I heard her say these exact words:

"The music of this opera has given everyone the greatest pleasure, and so I am delighted with it; but I was bored listening to it. Music is a beautiful thing, but I do not see how one can love it passionately, unless one has nothing important to do and to think about. I am having Buranello[35] brought here now; I am curious to see if he will be able to make music become something to interest me."

This is the style in which she always spoke. I will report in the proper place what she said to me on my return from Moscow. We lodged at a good inn, where I was given two rooms and where my carriage was put in a stable. After dinner I engaged a two-seated carriage, and I took a hire valet who spoke French. My carriage was for four horses, for the city of Moscow is made up of four cities,[36] and one has to drive great distances through unpaved or badly paved streets if one has many visits to make. I had five or six letters, and I wanted to leave them all; sure that I should not get out of the carriage, I took with me my dear Zaïre, who, a girl of thirteen, was curious about everything. I do not remember what feast the Greek Church was celebrating that day, but I still remember the deafening ringing of bells which I heard in every street, for I saw churches everywhere. Wheat was being sown then for the harvest in September, and we were laughed at for sowing it eight months earlier than they did, whereas not only is it unnecessary but it can only make the harvest smaller. I do not know who is right, but it is possible that we are all right.

I took to their addresses all the letters I had received in Petersburg from the Master of the Hunt, from Prince Repnin, from my banker Papanelopulo, and from Melissino's brother. The next morning I received visits from all the persons to whom I had been sent. They all invited me to dinner with my dear girl. I accepted the dinner of the first to come, who was Monsieur Demidov,[37] and I promised all the others that I would go to them in turn on the following days. Zaïre, instructed in the role she was to play, was enchanted to show me that she deserved the distinction I was conferring on her. Pretty as a little angel, wherever I took her she was the delight of the company, who did not care to inquire if she was my daughter, my mistress, or my servant. In this respect, as in many others, the Russians are an admirable people. Those who have not seen Moscow cannot say that they have seen Russia, and those who have known Russians only in Petersburg do not know the Russians, for at Court they are all different from what they are by nature. In Petersburg they can all be considered foreigners. The citizens of Moscow, and especially the rich ones, pity all those whom rank, interest, or ambition has "expatriated"; for their fatherland is Moscow, and they consider

Petersburg nothing but the cause of their ruin. I do not know if this is true, but I say what they say.

At the end of a week I had seen everything: manufactories, churches, old monuments, natural-history collections, libraries, which did not interest me, the famous bell,[38] and I observed that their bells are not hung so that they swing, like ours, but immovably. They are rung by a rope fastened to the end of the clapper. I found the women prettier in Moscow than in Petersburg. They are gentle by nature and very accessible, it is enough to offer to kiss their hands to obtain the favor of a kiss on the lips. As for the fare, I found it profuse and without delicacy. Their table is always open to all their friends; and a friend brings five or six people to dinner without notice, sometimes even arriving when dinner is ended. It is unheard of for a Russian to say: *"We have dined, you have come too late."* They have not the baseness of soul required to utter those words. It is for the cook to see to it, and dinner begins over again; the master or the mistress makes much of the *gosti*.[39] They have a delicious drink[40] the name of which I have forgotten, but better than the sherbet[41] one drinks in Constantinople in the houses of all the great nobles. They do not give their servants, who are very numerous, water to drink, but a concoction which is not unpleasant to the taste, which is healthy and nutritious, and so cheap that with a ruble they make a large cask of it. I observed the great devotion they all have for St. Nicholas.[42] They pray to God only through the intercession of this saint, whose image must stand in a corner of the room in which the master of the house receives visitors. The person who enters bows first to the image, then to the master; if the image by some chance is not there, the Russian, after looking all over the room for it, is nonplused, does not know what to say, and loses his head. The Russian is in general the most superstitious of all Christians. His language is Illyrian,[43] but his liturgy is entirely Greek; the common people do not understand a word of it, and the clergy, themselves ignorant, are delighted to keep them in ignorance. I was never able to make a *kaloyer* who spoke Latin understand that the only reason why we Romans, when we sign ourselves with the cross, move our hand from the left shoulder to the right, while the Greeks move theirs from right to left, is that we say *spiritus sancti* while they say, in Greek, *agios pneuma.*

"If you said *pneuma agios,*" I said to him, "you would sign yourselves as we do, or we would do it as you do if we said *sancti spiritus.*"

He replied that the adjective had to be before the substantive, because one could not utter the name of God without preceding it by an honorific epithet. Of this caliber are almost all the differences which separate the two sects, to say nothing of a great number of lies, which I found among them as among us.

We returned to Petersburg in the same way in which we had come from it; but Zaïre would have wished me never to leave Moscow. Being with me at every hour of the day and the night, she had become so much in love that I was distressed when I thought of the moment when I should have to leave her. The day after my arrival I took her to Ekaterinhof, where she showed her father all the little presents I had given her, telling him in great detail all the honors she had received as my daughter, which made the good man laugh heartily.

The first piece of news which I heard at Court was of an ukase ordering the building of a temple, to be dedicated to God, in the Morskaya,[44] opposite the apartment in which I was living. It was Rinaldi whom the Empress had chosen to be the architect of it. Philosopher[45] that he was, he had told her that he must know what emblem he was to put above the portal of the temple, and she replied that he was to use no emblem, simply writing GOD in large letters there, in whatever language he chose.

"I will put a triangle."

"No triangle GOD, and that is all."

Another piece of news was the flight of Baumbach, who had been caught at Mitau, where he believed he was safe; but Monsieur de Simolin[46] had arrested him. The poor fool was in custody and his case was serious, for it was a matter of desertion. However, he was spared the full penalty and sent to garrison in Kamchatka.[47] Crèvecoeur and his mistress had left with some money, and a Florentine adventurer named Bilioti[48] had fled, taking eighteen thousand rubles from Papanelopulo; but a certain Bori, Papanelopulo's familiar spirit, had caught him in Mitau too, and had brought him back to Petersburg, where he was in prison. During these days Prince Charles of Kurland arrived, and he sent me word of it at once. I went to call on him at the house in which he was staying, which belonged to Monsieur Demidov, who, owning iron mines, had taken it into his head to have the house built entirely of iron. Outside walls, stairway, doors, flooring, partitions, ceiling—everything was of iron, except the furniture. He did not fear fire. The Prince had brought with him his mistress, ill-humored as ever, whom he could no longer put up with because she was really intolerable, and he was to be pitied, for he could only get rid of her by giving her a husband, and a husband such as she demanded was not to be found. I paid her a visit, but she bored me so much with her complaints of the Prince that I did not go back again. When the Prince came to see me and saw my Zaïre, and reflected how little my happiness, and hers, cost me, he learned how every sensible man who needs to love should keep a concubine; but man's stupid hankering after luxury spoils everything and turns every sweet to bitterness for him.

I was thought happy, I liked to appear so, and I was not happy. From the time of my imprisonment under the Leads I had become subject to internal hemorrhoids which troubled me three or four times a year, but at Petersburg it became serious. An intolerable pain in the rectum, which returned every day, made me melancholy and wretched. The octogenarian physician Sinopaeus,[49] whom I told of it, gave me the unhappy news that I had an incomplete fistula, of the sort called blind, a sinus which had formed in my rectum. There was no remedy but the cruel lancet. According to him I must make up my mind to undergo the operation at once. The first thing was to find out the height of the sinus, and to that end he came to my lodging on the day after I had confided in him, with a good surgeon who examined my intestine by introducing a lint probe covered with oil into my anus; drawing it out, he learned its height and extent by observing the place on the probe where the little stain from the running humor of the fistulous cavity had remained. The little cavity of my sinus, the surgeon told me, was two inches away from the sphincter; the base of the sinus might be very big; my pain came from the fact that the acrid lymph which filled the sinus was corroding the flesh to open a way of escape, which would make my fistula complete and the operation easier. After this opening which nature would bring about, he said, I should be relieved of the pain but be much more inconvenienced by the continual flow of pus which I should have in the region. He advised me to be patient and to wait for this beneficial effect of nature. He said, thinking that it would comfort me, that complete fistula in the anus was a very common complaint throughout the province in which the excellent water of the Neva was drunk, for it had the faculty of purifying the body by forcing out the noxious humors. For this reason everyone in Russia who suffers from hemorrhoids is congratulated. My incomplete fistula, by obliging me to live in accordance with a regimen, was perhaps good for my health.

The Colonel of Artillery Melissino invited me to a review three versts from Petersburg, where the Commanding General, Alexis Orlov, was to give dinner to the principal guests at a table set for eighty. The party were to see a drill with the cannon which was supposed to fire twenty times a minute. I went with the Prince of Kurland, and I admired the exact fulfillment of the expectation. The field cannon, served by six artillerymen and loaded by them twenty times in one minute, fired as many shots while advancing toward the enemy. I saw it, holding a watch with a second-hand. In three seconds, the cannon was swabbed out at the first, loaded at the second, and fired at the third.

At the big table I found myself beside the French Secretary of Embassy,[50] who, wanting to drink in the Russian fashion and thinking that Hungarian wine was as light as champagne, drank it to such purpose that when he rose from table he could not stand. Count Orlov set things to rights by making him go on drinking until he vomited, and then he was carried off asleep.

In the high spirits which reigned at the dinner I enjoyed some samples of the country's wit. *Fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum* ("Who has not been made eloquent by many cups?").[51] Since I did not understand Russian, Monsieur Zinoviov, who was seated beside me, explained all the witticisms of the guests which were followed by applause. They were delivered, glass in hand, as a toast to someone, who must reply in the same strain.

Melissino rose, holding a large goblet filled with Hungarian wine. Everyone fell silent to hear what he would say. He toasted his General, Orlov, who was opposite him at the other end of the table. Here is what he said:

"*May you die on the day you find yourself rich.*"

The applause was general. He was praising Monsieur Orlov's great generosity. He might have been criticized, but in lively company one does not consider so curiously. I thought Orlov's reply more sensible and more noble, though no less Tartarian,[52] for it, too, had to do with death. Rising in his turn, holding a big goblet,

"*May you never die,*" he said, "*except by my hands.*"

Still louder clapping.

The wit of the Russians is forceful and striking. They care nothing for subtlety or elegance of expression; they go to the point roughshod.

At this same time Voltaire had sent the Empress his

Philosophy of History,[53] written for her and dedicated to her in a dedication six lines long. A month later a whole edition of the same work, three thousand volumes in all, arrived by water and disappeared entirely in a week. All the Russians who could read French had the book in their pockets. The leaders of the Voltaireans were two very intelligent noblemen, a Stroganov[54] and a Shuvalov.[55] I saw some verses by the former as fine as those of his idol, and twenty years later a superb dithyramb[56] by the latter; but the subject of it was the death of Voltaire, which seemed to me very strange, for a poem of that genre was never used for a sad subject. In those days Russians with pretensions to literature, whether they were noblemen or the more lettered among the military, knew, read, and praised only Voltaire, and, after reading all that Voltaire had published, believed that they were as learned as their idol; I told them that they should read the books from which Voltaire had taken his learning, and they would perhaps come to know more than he. "Beware," a wise man said to me in Rome, "of arguing with a man who has read only one book."[57] Such were the Russians in those days; but I have been told, and I believe it, that they are profound today. In Dresden I knew Prince Beloselski,[58] who, after being Ambassador in Turin, returned to Russia. The Prince was determined to geometrize the human intelligence; he analyzed metaphysics; his little book classified the soul and reason; the more I read it, the more highly I admire it. It is a pity that an atheist can put it to wrong use

But here is a sally of Count Panin's, tutor to Paul Petrovich,[59] heir presumptive to the Empire, who was so submissive to him that, at the opera, he did not dare to applaud an air sung by Luini until he had given him permission.

When the courier bringing the news of the sudden death of Francis I,[60] the Roman Emperor, arrived, the Empress was at Krasnoe-Selo,[61] the Count-Minister was in the palace at Petersburg with his august pupil, who was then eleven years of age. The courier came at noon to deliver the dispatch to the Minister, who stood facing those who were present at his audience, of whom I was one. Paul Petrovich was at his right. He unseals the dispatch, he reads it in a low voice, then he says, addressing no one in particular:

"Here is important news. The Roman Emperor has died suddenly. Full Court mourning, which Your Highness," he said to the Prince, looking at him, "will wear three months longer than the Empress."

"But why am I to wear it longer?"

"Because, as Duke of Holstein, Your Highness has a seat in the Diet of the Empire, a privilege," he added, turning to the bystanders, "which Peter I so greatly desired and was never able to obtain."

I observed the attention with which the Grand Duke listened to his mentor, and how well he managed to hide the joy he felt. This method of instruction pleased me greatly. Give ideas to the young mind, and leave it to disentangle them. I praised it to Prince Lobkowitz,[62] who was there, and who carried my reflections even further. Prince Lobkowitz made everyone like him; he was preferred to his predecessor Esterházy,[63] and that is saying a great deal, for Esterházy had won all hearts. Prince Lobkowitz, with his high spirits and his affability, was the life of every occasion which he attended. He was paying court to the Countess Bryus,[64] who was the reigning beauty, and no one believed that he was unsuccessful.

At that time a great infantry review[65] was held twelve or fourteen versts from Petersburg; the Empress was there, with all the ladies of the Court and the principal courtiers; two or three villages near the place had houses, but so few that it was very difficult to obtain lodgings in them; even so, I wanted to attend it, partly to satisfy Zaïre, who was ambitious to show herself in my company. The festivities were to go on for three days, there were to be fireworks made by Melissino, a mine was to blow up a fort, and there were to be a number of military maneuvers on a great plain, which should furnish a most interesting spectacle. I went there in my Schlafwagen with Zaïre, having no doubt that I should obtain the lodging, whether good or bad, which I needed. It was at the time of the solstice, and there was no night.

We arrive at eight o'clock in the morning at the place where, on this first day, the maneuvers went on until noon, and afterward we stop in front of a tavern, where we have food brought to us in the carriage, for the place was so full that we could not have found room. After dinner my coachman goes everywhere to look for some sort of lodging, but none is to be found. What of it?—not wanting to go back to Petersburg, I decide to lodge in my carriage. That was what I did for all the three days, and what was declared excellent by all those who had spent a great deal and who had been very poorly lodged. Melissino told me that the Empress had declared my expedient very sensible. My house, of course, was movable, and I placed myself at the points which were always the safest and the most convenient in respect to the place where the maneuvers were to be held on that particular day. In addition my carriage was expressly made to afford perfect comfort on a mattress, for it was a sleeper. I was the only person who had such a carriage at the review; visits were paid me, and Zaïre shone in doing the honors of the house in Russian, which I was very sorry I did not understand. Rousseau, the great J. J. Rousseau, ventured to declare the Russian language a dialect of Greek.[66] So stupid a mistake does not seem to be consonant with a genius so rare, yet he fell into it.

During the three days I often conversed with Count Tott,[67] the brother of the one who then held a post in Constantinople, who was known as Baron de Tott. We had first known each other in Paris, then in The Hague, where I had the good fortune to be useful to him. He was then away from France in order to avoid difficulties into which he would have run with his fellow officers at the Battle of Minden.[68] He had come to Petersburg with

Madame Soltikov,[69] whose acquaintance he had made in Paris and with whom he had fallen in love. He lodged in her house, he went to Court, where he was well regarded by everyone. He was very gay, his mind was well furnished, and he was also a handsome young man.[70] Two or three years later he was ordered by the Empress to leave Petersburg, when the war against the Turks was brought on by the troubles in Poland.[71] It was claimed that he was maintaining a correspondence with his brother, who was then working at the Dardanelles to prevent the passage of the Russian fleet commanded by Alexis Orlov. I do not know what became of him after he left Russia.

He greatly obliged me in Petersburg by lending me five hundred rubles which I have never had an opportunity to return to him, but I am not dead yet

During these days Monsieur Maruzzi,[72] a Greek man of business who had been a merchant in Venice and who had given up business in order to become a free man, arrived in Petersburg, was presented at Court, and, having a pleasant countenance, was introduced to all the great houses. The Empress distinguished him because she was considering making him her Chargé d'Affaires in Venice. He paid court to Countess Bryus; but his rivals did not fear him; rich though he was, he was afraid to spend, and in Russia avarice is a sin which women do not forgive.

During this time I made journeys to Tsarskoye-Selo, Peterhof, Oranienbaum, and Kronstadt;[73] one should see everything when one goes anywhere and wants to say one has seen everything. I wrote on several subjects in an attempt to enter the civil service, and I presented my productions, which were seen by the Empress; but my efforts were useless. In Russia only men who are expressly sent for are regarded. Those who go there by their own choice are not esteemed. Perhaps this is right.

CHAPTER VII

I see the Czarina. My conversations with that great sovereign. La Valville. I leave Zaïre. My departure from Petersburg and my arrival in Warsow. The Princes Adam Czartoryski and Sulkowski. The King of Poland, Stanislaus Poniatowski, called Stanislaus Augustus I. Theatrical intrigues Branicki.

I WAS thinking of leaving at the beginning of the autumn, and both Monsieur Panin and Monsieur Olsuviev kept telling me that I ought not to go until I could say that I had spoken to the Empress. I replied that I regretted it too, but that, having found no one who would present me, I could only complain everywhere of my bad luck.

It was finally Monsieur Panin who told me to take a walk early in the Summer Garden,[1] where she went very often and where, meeting me by chance, it was likely that she would speak to me. I gave him to understand that I should like to meet Her Imperial Majesty on a day when he was with her. He named the day, and I went there.

Strolling by myself, I looked at the statues bordering the walk, which were of inferior stone and very badly executed, but which became comic by reason of the names engraved on them. A weeping statue offered the reader the name of Democritus, a laughing one was Heraclitus, an old man with a long beard was named Sappho, and an old woman with shrunken breasts was Avicenna.[2] They were all in the same style. Just then I see, halfway down the walk, the sovereign advancing, preceded by Count Grigori Orlov and followed by two ladies. Count Panin was at her left, and she was speaking to him. I stand aside to let her pass, and as soon as she is within range she asks me, with a smile, if the beauty of the statues had greatly interested me; I reply, following her, that I thought they had been put there to impose on fools or to arouse laughter in people who had some acquaintance with History.

"All I know," she replied, "is that my worthy aunt,[3] who in any case was not one to trouble about investigating trifles of the sort, was imposed on; but I hope that you have not found everything you have seen in our country as absurd as these statues."

I should have offended against both truth and good manners if, to this frankness on the part of a lady of her caliber, I had not shown her that in Russia what was laughable was nothing in comparison with what was admirable; and thereupon I entertained her for more than an hour on everything of every sort which I had found remarkable in Petersburg.

The course of my remarks having led me to mention the King of Prussia, I pronounced a eulogy on him, but at the same time respectfully taking the monarch to task for his habit of never letting the person who was answering a question he had put to him finish his answer. She then gave a gracious smile, and she asked me for an account of the conversations I had had with him, and I told her everything. She was kind enough to say that she had never seen me at the *courtag*.[4] This *courtag* was a concert of instrumental and vocal music, which she gave in her palace every Sunday after dinner and to which everyone could go. She walked up and down at it, and she spoke to those to whom she wished to accord that honor. I said that I had been to it only once, it being my misfortune that I was not fond of music. She then said, smiling and looking at Monsieur Panin, that she knew someone else who had the same misfortune. She meant herself. She stopped listening to me to speak to Monsieur Betskoi, who was approaching, and, Monsieur Panin having left her, I also left the garden, delighted with the honor I had been accorded.

Of medium stature, but well built and with a majestic bearing, the sovereign had the art of making herself loved by all those who she believed were curious to know her. Though not beautiful, she was sure to please by her sweetness, her affability, and her intelligence, of which she made very good use to appear to have no pretensions. If she really had none, her modesty must have been heroic, for she had every right to have them.

Some days later Monsieur Panin told me that the Empress had twice asked him for news of me, and that he was sure I had pleased her. He advised me to watch for opportunities to meet her, and he assured me that, having already had a taste of my quality, she would signify to me that I should approach her whenever she saw me anywhere, and that if I wanted employment, she might think of me.

Though I did not myself know for what employment I might be fitted in a country which, furthermore, I did not like, I was nevertheless very glad to know that it might be easy for me to obtain some sort of access to her Court. With this idea in mind, I went to the garden every morning. Here is a full account of the second conversation I had with her. Seeing me from a distance, she sent me word by a young officer to approach her.

As there was talk everywhere of the tournament which the bad weather had prevented from being held, she asked me, for the sake of asking me something, if a show of the sort could be given in Venice, and I answered by discoursing at some length on the sort of shows which could not be given there, and on those which were given there[5] and which could not be given anywhere else, which amused her; and in this connection I said that the climate of my native country was more fortunate than that of Russia, for fair days were common there, while in Petersburg they were very rare, despite the fact that foreigners found the year there younger than anywhere else.

"That is true," she said, "for in your country it is eleven days older."

"Would it not be," I went on, "an act worthy of Your Majesty to adopt the Gregorian calendar?[6] All the Protestants conformed to it, and England did so too, fourteen years ago, excising the last eleven days of February, and she has already gained several millions by it. In this general agreement Europe is astonished that the old style remains in force here, where the sovereign is the visible head of her Church, and where there is an Academy of Sciences. It is thought, Madame, that the immortal Peter, who ordered that the year should begin on the first of January,[7] would also have ordered the abolition of the old style, if he had not thought he should conform to England, which was then the moving spirit of all the commerce of your vast Empire."

"You know," she said, affably and slyly, "that the great Peter was not a learned man."

"I believe, Madame, that he was a great deal more. The monarch was a true and sublime genius. What served him instead of learning was a delicate tact which led him to judge rightly of all that he saw and thought could increase the happiness of his subjects. It was the same genius which always kept him from making a misstep, and which gave him the strength and the courage to root out abuses."

The Empress was about to answer me, when she saw two ladies to whom she sent word to approach.

"I will answer you with pleasure on another occasion," she said, and turned to the ladies.

The "other occasion" arrived a week or ten days later, when I thought that she no longer wished to speak to me, for she had seen me and had not sent to summon me.

She began by telling me that what I wanted her to do for the glory of Russia was already done.

“All the letters,” she said, “which we write to foreign countries, and all the public acts which may be of interest to History, we countersign with the two dates, one under the other, and everyone knows that date which is in advance by eleven days is the modern one.”

“But,” I ventured to object, “at the end of this century the extra days will become twelve.”

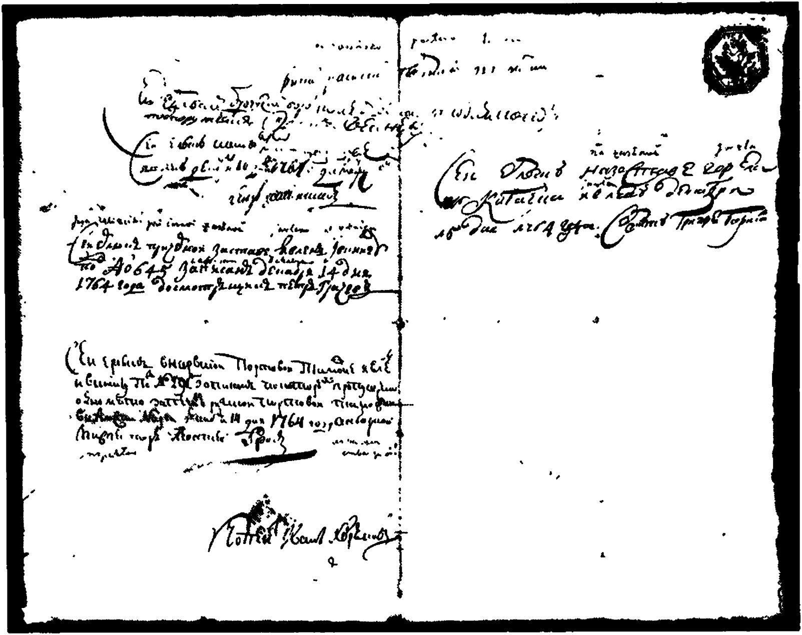
“Not at all, for that has also been done. The last year of this century, which, in accordance with the Gregorian reform, will not be bissextile[8] among you, will not be so among us either. Thus no real difference remains between us. Is it not true that this reduction suffices as soon as it stops the progress of the error? It is even fortunate that the error is one of eleven days, for that being the number which is added every year to the epact,[9] we can say that your epact is ours, with only the difference of a year. We even have it together during the last eleven days of the tropical year.[10] As for the celebration of Easter, we must leave it to take care of itself. You have the equinox set at the twenty-first of March, we have it at the tenth, and the same objections which the astronomers make to you, they make to us; sometimes it is you who are right, sometimes it is we, for after all the equinox often arrives one, two, or three days later or earlier; and as soon as we are sure of the equinox, the law of the March moon[11] becomes of no account. You see that you are often not in agreement even with the Jews, whose embolism[12] is said to be perfect. To conclude, this difference in the celebration of Easter does not disturb public order or the due maintenance of it, or cause any change in the important laws pertaining to government.”

“What Your Majesty has just said is very wise and fills me with admiration; but Christmas——”

“It is only there that Rome is in the right, for you were going, I think, to tell me that we do not celebrate it during the days of the solstice, when it should be celebrated. We are aware of it. Permit me to say to you that it is a carping observation. I prefer letting this slight error remain to causing all my subjects great pain by removing from the calendar eleven days which would take away their birthdays or their name days from two or three million souls, and even from them all, for it would be said that with unheard-of despotism I had deprived everyone of eleven days of life. People would not complain aloud, for that is not the way here, but they would whisper to one another that I am an atheist and that I am clearly attacking the infallibility of the Council of Nicaea.[13] This laughably simple-minded criticism would not make me laugh. I have much more agreeable things to laugh at."

She had the pleasure of seeing me surprised and of leaving me in my surprise. I felt certain that she had studied the subject on purpose to dazzle me, or that she had conferred with some astronomer after I had mentioned the reform to her in our last conversation. Monsieur Olsuviev told me some days later that it was quite possible that the Empress had read some little treatise on the subject which said everything about it that she had said to me and even more, and that it was also possible that she was perfectly well versed in the subject.

With great modesty of manner, she expressed her opinion precisely, and her mind seemed as imperturbable as her humor, whose even tenor was shown by her smiling countenance. Since she had made a habit of it, it could not cost her much effort; but that takes nothing from the merit of the thing, for to do it one must have a strength above the ordinary impulses of human nature. The Empress's bearing, the very opposite of that of the King of Prussia, showed me a genius far greater than the latter's. The kindly exterior by which she offered encouragement assured her of profiting, whereas the other, with his brusqueness, was in danger of being the loser by it. Catherine, with her undemanding manner, could demand more and obtain it. When one examines



Customs Authorization for Casanova's Journey from Riga to St. Petersburg the life of the King of Prussia one admires his courage, but one sees at the same time that, but for the aid of Fortune, he would have been defeated, and when we examine that of the Empress of Russia we do not find that she counted much on the help of the blind goddess. She accomplished things which, before she mounted the throne, appeared great enterprises to all Europe; it seems that she wanted to convince all Europe that she found them small.

In one of those modern journals in which the journalist abandons his proper function to draw the reader's attention to himself, making bold to reveal his thoughts without a care for the reader whom they may offend, I read that Catherine II died happy,[14] as she had lived. She died, as everyone knows, a sudden death. Now this journalist, calling such a death happy, informs us, without telling us, that it is such a death which he would wish for himself. That is all very well—every man to his taste; and we can wish it to him since that is what he wants. But if, for such a death to be happy, it is necessary to suppose that the person whom it suddenly strikes wished for it, who told him that Catherine desired it? If he supposes the desire in her because of the profound intelligence which everyone attributed to her, we might ask him by what right he decides that a profound intelligence must regard a sudden death as the happiest of all deaths. Is it because he so regards it himself? But if he is not a fool, he ought to fear he may be wrong; and if he is in fact wrong, he is proved a fool. So the journalist is convicted of being a fool whether he is wrong or not wrong. To know which he is, we should have to question the late Empress today.

"Are you well satisfied, Madame, to have died a sudden death?"

"What nonsense! You could only put such a question to a woman in despair or to a woman who, because of her poor constitution, had to fear a painful death after a long and cruel illness. I was happy, and I was in very good health. No greater misfortune could befall me, for it is perhaps the only one which, not being a fool, I had no reason ever to expect. The misfortune prevented me from finishing a hundred things, which I should very easily have finished if God had granted me the least little illness the slightest symptom of which could have made me foresee the possibility of my death; and I can assure you that, to prepare myself for it, I should not have needed to have my doctor predict it to me. But not a bit of it. It was an order from Heaven which obliged me to set out on the greatest of journeys, without leaving me time to pack my things, when I was not ready. Am I to be called happy in having succumbed to this death because I did not have the grief of seeing it arrive? Those who suppose that I should not have had the strength to resign myself peacefully to a law of nature common to all mortals must have seen in me a cowardice with which, to tell the truth, I do not believe I ever in my life gave anyone reason to suspect that I was tainted. In short, I can swear to you today, naked spirit as you see me, that I should confess myself satisfied and happy if the too severe decree of Heaven had granted me only twenty-four hours of good sense before my last moment. I should not complain of its injustice."

"What, Madame! You accuse God of injustice?"

"How could I do otherwise, since I am damned? Do you believe it possible that a damned soul, even if on earth it had been the guiltiest of the living, can consider just a decree which condemns it to be unhappy for all eternity?"

"Indeed I consider it impossible, for recognizing the justice of your sentence would to a certain extent console you."

"That is very well argued, and a damned soul must be inconsolable for ever."

"Nevertheless, there are philosophers who, because of your sudden death, pronounce you happy."

"Fools, you should say, for everything I have said to you shows that my sudden death proves me unfortunate, even were I happy today.”

“A powerful argument. May I make bold to ask you, Madame, if you admit the possibility of an unhappy death followed by eternal happiness, or of a happy death followed by eternal punishment?”

“Neither is among possibilities. Eternal happiness is a continuation of the contentment of the soul at the moment when it departs from matter, as eternal damnation must be that of a spirit which departs from it feeling torn by remorse or vain regrets. But enough, for the torment to which I am condemned does not permit me to say more to you.”

“Tell me, I beg you, what that torment is.”

“Boredom. Farewell.”

After this long poetic digression the reader will be grateful to find me returning to my subject.

Monsieur Panin having told me that the Empress would leave for Krasnoe-Selo in two or three days, I let myself be seen, foreseeing that it would be for the last time. So I went to the garden; but, rain beginning to fall, I was about to leave, when she sent for me to come to a room on the ground floor in which she was walking with Grigori Grigorievich and another lady.

“I forgot,” she said, with an air of dignity tempered by the most polite condescension, “to ask you if you think the correction of the calendar is without error.”

“The correction itself confesses it, Madame, but the error is so small that it cannot produce a perceptible change in the length of the solar year until nine or ten thousand years hence.”

“I have come to the same conclusion, and, that being the case, it seems to me that Pope Gregory should not have admitted the error. The legislator must never show either weakness or a concern with trifles. I was tempted to laugh, a few days ago, when I saw that, if the correction had not done away with the radical error by suppressing the bissextile year at the end of the century, the world would have had one year more in the course of fifty thousand years, during which time the equinox would have moved a hundred and thirty times, always backward, through all the days of the year; and Christmas would have been celebrated in summer ten or twelve thousand times. The Supreme Pontiff of the Latin Church found an easy acceptance for his wise reform which he would not have met with in my Church, scrupulously attached as it is to its ancient usages."

"Yet I believe that Your Majesty would have found your Church obedient."

"I have no doubt of it; but what a grief for my clergy to see themselves forced to deny their due to a hundred saints whose festivals fall on one of the eleven excised days! You have only one each day,[15] but we have ten or twelve. I will tell you further that all the ancient States are attached to their ancient laws; they say that if they have survived they cannot but be good. I have been told that your Republic begins the year on the first of March,[16] and I think that this custom, far from denoting barbarism, is an honorable monument celebrating her long life. In addition, I think that one is less wrong to begin the year on the first of March than on the first of January. But does it not cause some confusion?"

"None, Madame. The two letters M. V.[17] which we add to the date during the months of January and February make any mistake impossible."

"Venice is also distinguished by her arms, which obey no rule of heraldry, since the representation itself cannot, properly speaking, be called an escutcheon. She is also distinguished by the amusing figure she makes of her patron the Evangelist, and by the five Latin words she addresses to him, in which, I am told, there is a grammatical error.[18] An error to be respected because of its antiquity. But is it true that you do not divide the twenty-four hours of the day into twice twelve?"

"Yes, Madame: and we begin counting them at the beginning of the night."[19]

"What will not habit do! It seems easier to you. Whereas I should find it very difficult."

"Your Majesty, looking at a watch, would know how many hours of the day were still left, and, to find it out, would not need to hear the cannon shot from the citadel which informs the public that the sun has passed to the other hemisphere."

"That is true; but for your one advantage of knowing the hour at which the day ends, we have two. We know that at twelve o'clock in the day it is always noon, and always midnight at twelve o'clock at night."

She spoke to me of the customs of the Venetians, of their love for games of chance, and in that connection she asked me if the Genoese lottery was established there.

"I was urged," she said, "to permit it in my domains, and I should have consented; but on condition that the amount risked should never be less than a ruble, in order to keep the poor from playing, who, incapable of reckoning, think it is easy to get a *terno*."

In reply to this observation, which was based on profound wisdom, I made her a very low bow. This was the last conversation I had with that great lady, who was able to reign for thirty-five years without ever making a crucial mistake and without ever departing from moderation.

Not long before I left, I gave an entertainment at Ekaterinhof for all my friends, with a fine display of fireworks which cost me nothing. It was a present from my friend Melissino; but my supper at a table for thirty was exquisite and my ball brilliant. Despite the slimness of my purse, I thought it incumbent on me to give my good friends this token of my gratitude for all the kindnesses they had shown me.

Since I left with the actress Valville,[20] it is here that I must tell my reader how I made her acquaintance.

I went all alone to the French theater, and I took a seat in a third-tier box beside a very pretty lady who was there all alone and whom I did not know. I speak to her, now to criticize, now to praise the work of an actress or actor, and she always replies with an intelligence as seductive as her charms. Enchanted by her, toward the end of the play I make bold to ask her if she is Russian.

"I am a Parisian," she replied, "and an actress by profession. My stage name is Valville, and if you do not know me I am not surprised, for I arrived here only a month ago, and I have acted only once, in the role of the soubrette in *Les Folies amoureuses.*"[21]

"Why only once?"

"Because I did not have the good fortune to please the sovereign. But since I am engaged for a year she ordered that I be paid the hundred rubles which are due me every month, and at the end of the year I shall be given a passport, my journey will be paid for, and I will leave."

"I am sure that the Empress thinks she is doing you a favor by paying you when you do not have to work."

"She must certainly think so, for she is not an actress. She does not know that, by not acting, I lose more than she gives me, for I am forgetting my profession, which I have not yet learned completely."

"You should let her know that."

"I wish she would grant me an audience."

"That is not necessary. You certainly have a lover."

"No one."

"It is unbelievable."

No later than the next morning I send her a note in the following terms:

"I wish, Madame, to enter upon a liaison with you. You have inspired in me desires which trouble me and which I challenge you to satisfy. I ask you to invite me to supper, wanting to know in advance how much it will cost me. Having to leave for Warsaw next month, I offer you a place in my sleeping carriage, which will cost you only the inconvenience of letting me lie beside you. I know how to obtain a passport for you. The bearer has orders to wait for an answer, which I hope to read in terms as clear as those of this note."

Here is her answer, which I received two hours later:

"Having, Monsieur, the great art of breaking off any liaison with the greatest ease when I find it ill assorted, I have no difficulty in consenting to enter into one. In regard to the desires I have inspired in you, I am sorry that they trouble you, for they flatter me, and I could bring myself to satisfy them only in order to make them stronger. As for the supper which you ask of me, you will find it ready this evening, and we will bargain afterward for what follows it. The place which you offer me beside you in your sleeping carriage will be precious to me if, in addition to my passport, you have influence enough to get my journey to Paris paid for me. I hope that you will not find my terms less clear than yours. Good-by, Monsieur, until this evening."

I found La Valville all alone and very pleasantly lodged; I approached her, and she received me as if we were old friends. Proceeding at once to what interested her more than anything else, she said she would consider herself fortunate to leave with me, but that she doubted if I could get the necessary permission. I repeated that I was sure of it if she would present such a petition to the Empress as I would write for her, and she promised to present it, giving me ink and paper to write it at once. Here it is, in a few lines:

"Madame, I beg Your Imperial Highness to consider that, remaining here for a year doing nothing, I should lose my art all the more easily since I have not yet learned it completely. Hence your generosity becomes more harmful than useful to me; it would fill me with gratitude if Your Imperial Highness would carry it so far as to give me permission to leave."

"What?" she said. "No more than that?"

"Not one word more."

"You say nothing about the passport or the money for the journey, and I am not rich."

"Present this petition, and either I am the greatest fool on earth or you will have not only the money for your journey but all your salary for a year."

"That would be too much."

"It is certain. You do not know the Empress, and I know her. You must have it copied, and present it in person."

"I will copy it myself. My hand is very legible. I really feel as if I had composed it myself, for it is exactly in my style. I believe you are more of an actor than I am, and I want to begin studying under you this very evening. Let us have supper."

After a light and sufficiently choice supper, which La Valville seasoned with countless amusing Parisian expressions which I knew well enough, she made no difficulty about granting me the rest. I went downstairs only for a moment to dismiss my carriage and tell my coachman what to say to Zaïre, whom I had already told that I might go to Kronstadt and spend the night there. He was a Ukrainian, of whose loyalty I had more than once had proof; but I saw at once that, if I became La Valville's lover, I could no longer keep her with me.

In this actress I found the same character and the same qualities which one finds in all French girls who, having charms and some sort of education, consider that merit enough to entitle them to belong to only one man; they want to be kept, and the title of mistress is far more flattering to them than that of wife.

During the intermissions she told me some of her adventures, which made me guess her whole story, which was not long. The actor Clairval,[22] who had gone to Paris to recruit a troupe of players[23] for the Court at Petersburg, having met her by chance and found her intelligent, had convinced her that she was a born actress, even though she had never had any notion of it. The idea had dazzled her, and she had signed the agreement and received one from the recruiter without even troubling to look at his credentials. She had left Paris with him and with six others, actors and actresses, among whom she was the only one who had never in her life appeared on the stage.

"I thought," she said, "that just as among us a girl enters the Opéra in the chorus or the ballet without ever having learned to sing or dance, one joined a company of actors in the same way. How could I have thought anything else when an actor like Clairval told me that I was born to shine on the stage and proved it to me by taking me with him? Before giving me a written engagement he insisted only on hearing me read and making me learn two or three scenes from different plays, which he had me act in my room with him, who, as you know, plays valets to admiration; and certainly he did not mean to deceive me. He deceived himself. Well, two weeks after we arrived here I made my debut, and I got what they call a 'slap in the face,' about which I really don't care, for I don't feel it."

"Perhaps you were afraid."

"Afraid! Just the contrary. Clairval told me that if I had been able to show a little fear the Empress, who is kindness itself, would have thought it her duty to encourage me."

I left her in the morning after seeing my petition written out in her hand and excellently copied. She assured me that she would present it herself the following morning, and I accepted her invitation to a second supper for the day when I should have parted from Zaïre, whose story I told her. She praised my discretion.

French girls who have sacrificed themselves to Venus, if they have intelligence and some education, are all of the same stamp as La Valville; they have neither passion nor temperament, and so they do not love. They are accommodating, and their project is always one and the same. Able to break off a liaison at will, they enter into one with the same facility and always in a smiling humor. This is not from stupidity, but from a deliberate system. If it is not the best one, it is at least the most convenient.

Back at my lodging, I found Zaïre apparently calm, but sad; this displeased me more than anger, for I loved her; but I had to make an end and prepare to suffer all the grief which her tears would cause me. Knowing that I must leave and that, not being Russian, I could not take her with me, she was concerned about what was to become of her. She would belong to the man to whom I should give her passport, and she was very curious to know who he would be. I spent the whole day and the night with her, giving her tokens of my affection and of the grief I felt at being obliged to part from her.

The architect Rinaldi, a man of sense, who was seventy years of age[24] and who had been in Russia for forty, was in love with her; he had told me several times that I should be doing him the greatest favor if I would leave her to him on my departure, offering to give me twice what she had cost me, and I always answered him that I would never leave Zaïre to anyone with whom she would not have wanted to be of her own free will, since I intended to make her a present of the amount I should be paid by the person who acquired her. This did not please Rinaldi, for he did not venture to suppose that he pleased her, yet he hoped.

He came to me on the morning which I had decided should see the end of the business, and, speaking Russian very well, he explained to the girl all that he felt for her. She replied in Italian that, since she could belong only to the person to whom I should leave her passport, it was to me that he should address himself, and that in any case she had no inclination in the matter, neither disliking nor feeling a fondness for anyone. Unable to get a more affirmative answer from her, the worthy man left after dining with us, hoping little, but still asking for my good offices.

After he was gone I asked her to tell me sincerely if she would hold it against me if I left her to that worthy man, who would certainly treat her as if she were his own daughter.

Just as she was about to answer, I was handed a note from La Valville, in which she asked me to come to her at once, to hear some news which would please me. I immediately ordered horses put to my carriage.

"Very well," said Zaïre in a perfectly calm voice, "go about your business, and when you come back I will give you a definite answer."

I found La Valville very happy. She had waited for the Empress on her way from the chapel to her apartment, and, asked by her what she was doing there, she had given her the petition. She had read it as she walked on, and with a sweet smile had told her to wait. Three or four minutes later, having written on it, she had had the petition returned to her, addressed to the Secretary of the Cabinet Yelagin.[25] Inside it she had written four lines in Russian, which Monsieur Yelagin had himself translated for her, she having at once gone to him with the petition. The Empress ordered him to deliver to the actress Valville a passport, her salary for a year, and a hundred Dutch ducats for her journey. She was certain to receive it all in two weeks, because she could not receive the passport from the police until two weeks after an announcement of her departure was published.

The grateful Valville showed me how much my friend she was, and we settled the time of our departure. I had mine announced in the city *Gazette* three or four days later. Having promised Zaïre that I would come home, and being curious what her answer would be, I left her, assuring her that I would live with her as soon as I had put the girl I had to leave in Petersburg in good hands.

After supping with me in a very good humor, Zaïre asked me if, when he took her, Signor Rinaldi would pay me back the hundred rubles I had given her father; I answered that he would.

"But now," she said, "it seems to me I am worth much more, since you are leaving me all that you have given me and since I can make myself understood in Italian."

"I see that, my little dear; but I don't want it said that I made a profit on you, and the more so because I have already decided to make you a present of the hundred rubles I shall receive upon giving him your passport."

"Since you want to make me such a fine present, why do you not rather put me back in my father's hands with my passport? Don't you see that that would be still more generous? If Signor Rinaldi loves me, you have only to tell him to come to see me at my father's house. He speaks Russian too, they will agree on a price, and I will not object. Shall you be sorry if he does not get me so cheaply?"

"Certainly not, my dear child; on the contrary, I shall be very glad to have been of use to your family, for after all Signor Rinaldi is rich."

"That will do, and you will always be dear to my memory. Let us go to bed. You shall take me to Ekaterinhof no later than tomorrow morning. Let us go to bed."

That is the whole story of my parting from the girl who was the cause of my leading a more or less regular life in Petersburg. Zinoviov told me that, if I had furnished security, I could have left with her, and that he would himself have done me the favor. I declined, thinking of the consequences. I loved her, and it would have been I who became her slave; but it may be that I should not have reflected so sagely if at the same time I had not fallen in love with La Valville.

Zaïre spent the morning getting her things together, now laughing, now crying, and she saw my tears each time she left her trunk to come and kiss me.

When I left her at her father's, giving him her passport, I saw her whole family on their knees before me, addressing me in terms which are due only to the divinity. But Zaïre looked very much out of place in the hovel, for what they called a bed was only a big straw mattress on which the whole family slept together.

When I told Signor Rinaldi what had happened he took it in good part. He said that he hoped to have her, and that, if he had the girl's consent, he would easily agree on the price with her father; and he began going to see her the next day; but he did not get her until after I left; he was generous to her, and she stayed with him until he died.

After this sad parting La Valville became my only mistress, and in three or four weeks I was ready to leave with her. I took into my service an Armenian merchant who lent me a hundred ducats and who cooked well in the oriental fashion. I got a letter of recommendation from the Polish Resident[26] to Prince Augustus Sulkowski,[27] and another from an Anglican clergyman[28] to Prince Adam Czartoryski;[29] and having put a good mattress and bed covers in my sleeping carriage, I lay down in it with La Valville, who found this way of traveling as agreeable as it was comical, for we were actually in bed.

We stopped at Caporya[30] the next day to dine, having a plentiful supply of food and good wines in my carriage. Two days later we met the famous chapelmaster Galuppi, surnamed Buranello, who was going to Petersburg with two friends and a *virtuosa*. He did not know me, and he was greatly surprised to find at the inn where he stopped a good Venetian dinner and a man like myself who received him with a compliment in our mother tongue. He embraced me again and again when I told him my name.

The rain having spoiled the roads, it took us a week to get to Riga, where I did not find Prince Charles of Kurland. We took four more days to get to Königsberg, where La Valville, who was expected in Berlin, had to leave me. I let her have my Armenian, to whom she gladly paid the hundred ducats I owed him. Two years later I found her in Paris, and I will speak of her in the proper place. We parted very gaily, and none of the sad reflections which usually accompany partings such as ours came to trouble our good humor. We had been lovers only because we had attached no importance to love; but we felt the most sincere friendship for each other. It was at Klein-Roop, a place not far from Riga, where we stopped and spent the night, that she offered me her diamonds and all the money she had. We lodged at Countess Löwenwolde's,[31] to whom I had brought a letter from a Princess Dolgoruki.[32] The Countess had in her service, as governess of her children, the pretty Englishwoman, Campioni's wife, whom I had met in Riga the year before.[33] She told me that her husband was in Warsaw and lodging at Villiers'.[34] She gave me a letter in which she begged him to think of her. I promised her I would have money sent to her, and I kept my word. I found little Betty as charming as ever, but still ill-treated by her cruel mother, who seemed to be jealous of her.

At Königsberg I sold my sleeping carriage, and, being now alone, I engaged a place in a four-seated carriage and went to Warsaw. My three companions were Poles who spoke only German; so I was thoroughly bored during all the six days it took me to make the unpleasant journey. I went to lodge at Villiers', where I was sure I should find my old friend Campioni

I found him doing well, and well lodged. He kept a dancing school, and a considerable number of pupils, male and female, brought him enough to live on comfortably. He was delighted to have news of Fanny and the children, and he sent her money; but he did not think of having her come to Warsaw, which was what she wanted. He assured me that she was not his wife. He told me that the famous Marquis d'Aragon[35] had left Warsaw after losing all the money he had won in Russia to sharpers sharper than himself; but the person who had made a great fortune was Tomatis,[36] who was the manager of the *opera buffa* and of a Milanese dancer named Catai[37] who, by her charms far more than her talent, was the delight of the city and the Court; but Tomatis controlled her completely. Games of chance being permitted, he named to me the gamesters who had set up shop there. One was a Veronese woman named

Giropoldi, who lived with a Lorrainese officer named Bachelier,[38] who kept the bank at faro. A dancer who had been the mistress of the famous Afflisio in Vienna brought in the customers. La Giropoldi passed her off as a virgin; however, she was the woman by whom Afflisio had had a daughter whom he had educated at the Conservatorio dei Mendicanti[39] in Venice and who was with him in Bologna when he was arrested by order of the Archduke Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who sent him to end his days in the galleys. Another sharper who had set up shop with a Saxon woman was Major Saby,[40] of whom I have spoken during my second stay in Amsterdam. Baron Sainte-Hélène[41] was there too; but his principal talent consisted in getting into debt and persuading his creditors to wait; he was staying in the same inn with his wife, a pretty and honest woman, who would have nothing to do with his business. He told me of several other adventurers, and I was very glad to be informed at once of all these people, whose company I must avoid for my own advantage.

The next day I engaged a hire lackey and a carriage by the month, a necessity in Warsaw, where it was impossible to walk. It was toward the end of the month of October 1765.

My first step was to take the letter from the Anglican clergyman to Prince Adam Czartoryski, General of Podolia. He was sitting at a large table covered with notebooks and surrounded by forty or fifty people, in a huge library which he had made his bedroom. Yet he was married to an extremely pretty Countess Fleming,[42] whom he had not yet got with child, because, she being too thin, he did not love her.

After reading the letter, which was four pages long, he said to me most politely in choice French that he had the highest regard for the person who had sent me to him and that, being very busy, he asked me to come to supper with him, "if I had nothing better to do."

I return to my carriage and am driven to the door of

Prince Sulkowski, who had then been appointed Ambassador to Louis XV. The Prince was the eldest of four brothers, and had a profound intelligence and any number of projects, all admirable, but all in the style of those of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre.[43] Being on the verge of leaving to go to the Cadet Corps, he read the letter, then he told me that he had a great deal to say to me. He added that "if I had nothing better to do" he would take it as a favor if I would come to dine with him alone at four o'clock. I replied that I would do myself that honor.

From there I went to a merchant named Kempinski, who, on Papanelopulo's instructions, was to pay me fifty ducats a month. My lackey having told me that there was a rehearsal of a new opera at the theater, to which anyone might go, I went to it, and I spent three hours there known to no one and knowing no one. I found the actresses and the dancers pretty, but most of all La Catai, who appeared as prima ballerina and did not know how to make a step but was generally applauded, especially by Prince Repnin,[44] the Russian Ambassador, whose word was law.

Prince Sulkowski kept me at table for four mortal hours, pumping me about everything except what I could know. His specialty was policy and commerce, and, finding me at a loss, he shone. He took a liking to me, I believe, precisely because he never saw me in anything but admiration.

About nine o'clock, "having nothing better to do"—the phrase which I found on the lips of all the great Polish noblemen—I called on Prince Adam, who, after announcing my name, made me acquainted with all his guests by theirs. They were Monseigneur Krasicky,[45] Prince-Bishop of Warmia; the Grand Notary to the Crown Rzewuski,[46] whom I had seen in Petersburg as the lover of the unfortunate Langlade, who soon after died of smallpox; the Palatine of Vilna, Oginski,[47] and General Ronikier,[48] and two others whose names I have forgotten; the last person he named to me was his wife, whom I found very charming. A quarter of an hour later I see a fine-looking nobleman enter, and everyone rises. Prince Adam names me, and at once says to me very coldly:

"*It is the King.*"

This way of confronting a stranger with a King is certainly not one to take away his courage or to dazzle him with majesty, but it is still a surprise, and its too great simplicity is unnerving. At once dismissing the idea that it might be a trick, I advanced two paces, and, when I was about to kneel, His Majesty put out his hand for me to kiss with an air of the greatest affability. Just as he was going to ask me the usual questions, Prince Adam gave him the long letter from the Anglican clergyman, who was very well known to him. After reading it the charming sovereign, still standing, began asking me questions, all of them concerning the Empress and the principal personages of her Court, to which I replied with details which he showed interested him greatly. A quarter of an hour later supper was announced, and the King, still listening to me, led me to the table and made me sit at his right. The table was round. Everyone ate except the King, who presumably had no appetite, and I, who would have had none even if I had not dined at Prince Sulkowski's, so gratified was I by the honor of keeping the whole company listening to me alone.

After rising from table the King commented on everything I had said, with a grace and in a style than which nothing could have been more winning. When he withdrew he said to me that he would always see me at his Court with very great pleasure. When I was about to leave, Prince Adam said that if I wanted him to present me to his father I had only to come to his house about eleven o'clock the next day.

The King of Poland was of medium stature, but very well built. His face was not handsome, but intelligent and interesting. His eyesight was poor, and when he was not speaking one might have thought him melancholy; but when he spoke his eloquence shone, and when the subject on which he was speaking allowed it he inspired gaiety in all those who heard him by the keenness of his wit.

Well enough satisfied with this beginning, I returned to my inn, where I found Campioni with an agreeable company of girls and gamesters, who had not yet finished supper. After staying there an hour, more from curiosity than from enjoyment, I retired.

The next morning at the appointed hour I made the acquaintance of that rare man, the magnificent Palatine of Russia.[49] He had on a dressing gown and was surrounded by gentlemen all in the national costume, all booted, all with mustaches, their heads bare and shaven. He stood among them, talking now to one, now to another, affably but seriously. As soon as his son, who had mentioned me to him beforehand, spoke my name the Palatine unbent, giving me a reception in which I saw neither pride nor familiarity. Though not what is called a fine figure of a man, he had a handsome countenance and great dignity, and was well spoken. He neither intimidated nor encouraged; this enabled him to know as he was the man with whom he wished to become acquainted. After hearing that in Russia I had done nothing but amuse myself and become acquainted with the Court, he concluded that I had come to Poland only for the same purpose, and he said that he would make it possible for me to meet everyone. He said that, being a bachelor and alone, he would be pleased if I would eat at his table morning and night every day when I did not have some other engagement.

Withdrawing behind a screen, he had himself dressed, then, after showing himself in the uniform of his regiment, which was in the French style, and wearing a blond wig with a pigtail and long side whiskers in the manner of the late lamented King Augustus III,[50] he made a bow which included everyone, and he retired to the inner apartments, which were the lodging of the

Palatiness his wife, who had not yet wholly recovered from an illness to which she would have succumbed but for the ministrations of the physician Reumann, who was a pupil of the great Boerhaave. The lady was a Dönhoff,[51] an extinct family, as the last heir of which she had brought the Palatine an immense dowry. It was when he married her that he resigned the Cross of Malta. He had won his wife by a duel with pistols on horseback, in which, after receiving the lady's promise that she would grant him her heart, he had the good fortune to kill his rival. From this marriage he had only Prince Adam and a Princess, today a widow, named Lubomirska,[52] and at that time Straznikowa from the name of the office her husband held in the royal army.

It was the Prince Palatine of Russia and his brother,[53] who was Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, who were the first fomenters of the troubles in Poland, which was then only just born. Discontented with the little esteem in which they were held at Court, where the King had no will but the pleasure of his favorite, Count Brühl,[54] the Prime Minister, the two brothers assumed the leadership of the conspiracy, which sought nothing less than to dethrone the King and put on the throne, under the protection of Russia, a young man, their nephew, who, having gone to Petersburg in the suite of an Ambassador,[55] had succeeded in gaining the good graces of the Grand Duchess, who soon afterward became Empress and who died in this year 1797.[56] The young man was Stanislaus Poniatowski, the son of Constance Czartoryska, their sister, and of the famous Poniatowski,[57] the friend of Charles XII.[58] Fortune decreed that he did not need a conspiracy to mount a throne[59] of which *dignus fuisset si non regnasset* ("he would have been worthy if he had not reigned").[60]

The King who was to be dethroned died, and then the conspirators acted openly; and I will not repeat to my reader the events which put Stanislaus on the throne, which on my arrival in Warsaw he had occupied for nearly two years. I found Warsaw brilliant. Preparations were then being made to hold the Diet,[61] and everyone was eager to see what it would reveal in regard to Catherine II's pretensions in recompense for all that she had done to make it possible for Poland to give herself a Piast King.[62]

At dinnertime I found at the Russian Palatine's three tables laid for thirty or forty each. I was told that this was a daily occurrence. The luxury of the Court was nothing compared to that which shone at the Prince Palatine's. Prince Adam told me that I was to take a place every day at the table at which his father sat. On that day he presented me to the pretty Princess his sister,[63] and to a number of Palatines and Starosts,[64] having later gone to make my bow to whom, in less than two weeks I became known in all the great houses and hence was invited to all the great banquets and balls which were given almost every day in one house or another.

Not having money enough to frequent the gamesters, or to obtain a tender acquaintance with some girl of the French or the Italian theater, I took a fancy to the library of Monseigneur Zaluski,[65] the Bishop of Kiowia, and especially to himself. I spent almost every morning there, and it was from him that I received authentic documents concerning all the intrigues and secret plots whose purpose was to overthrow the entire old system of Poland, of which that prelate was one of the principal supporters. But his constancy was unavailing. The prelate was one of those whom agents of the Russian despotism carried off under the eyes of the King, too weak to dare to resist, and sent to Siberia.[66] This happened some months after my departure.

Thus the life I led was very regular. I spent the afternoons at the Russian Prince Palatine's to make up his table at *tressetti*,[67] an Italian game for which he had a great liking and which I played well enough for the

Prince never to be so well pleased as when he could have me as his partner

But despite my good behavior and my economy, three months after I arrived I was in debt, and I had no resources. Fifty sequins[68] a month which I received from Venice did not suffice me. Carriages, lodging, two servants, and the necessity of being always well dressed kept me in straits, and I did not want to confide in anyone. I was right. A man in need who asks help from a rich man loses his esteem if he obtains it, and wins his scorn if he refuses it.

But here is how Fortune sent me two hundred ducats. Madame Schmidt,[69] whom the King had his reasons for lodging in the palace, sent me word to sup with her, adding that the King would be there. At the supper I saw with pleasure the charming Bishop Krasicky, the Abate Ghigiotti,[70] and two or three others, who were amateurs of Italian literature. The King, whom I never saw in a bad humor in company, and who, besides, was very well read and knew all the classics as no King ever knew them, brought up some anecdotes of ancient Roman writers, citing manuscript scholiasts who left me with nothing to say and whom His Majesty was perhaps inventing. Everyone talked; I was the only one who, being in a bad humor and not having dined, ate like an ogre, replying only in monosyllables when politeness demanded it. The conversation having turned to Horace, and each of the company quoting one or two of his maxims and giving his opinion on the profound philosophy of the great poet of reason, it was the Abate Ghigiotti who forced me to speak, saying that unless I was of his opinion I ought not to remain silent.

"If you take my silence," I said, "as confirmation of the preference you accord to that thought of Horace's over several others, I will take the liberty of saying that I know others which give nobler expression to a courtier's policy, for *nec cum venari volet poemata panges* ("if he wants to go hunting, do not compose verses''),[71] which pleases you so much, is after all only a satire, and not at all a delicate one.''

''It is difficult to combine delicacy with satire.''

''Not for Horace, who even pleased Augustus by doing it, which is to the credit of the monarch who, by the protection he accorded to the learned, made his name immortal and inspired crowned sovereigns to emulate him by taking his name and even disguising it.''

The King of Poland, who on his accession to the throne had taken the name Augustus, became serious and could not refrain from interrupting me.

''Who, pray,'' he asked me, ''are the crowned sovereigns who took the name of Augustus in disguise?''

''The first King of Sweden,[72] who called himself Gustavus; it is a perfect anagram of Augustus.''

''Most amusing. It is an anecdote worth relating. Where did you find it?''

''In a manuscript of a professor at Uppsala which I saw at Wolfenbüttel.''

The King, who at the beginning of supper had also cited a manuscript, thereupon began laughing heartily. But after laughing his fill he returned to the subject, asking me in what well-known maxims of Horace's—leaving manuscripts aside—I found marked evidence of a delicacy which made his satire agreeable.

''I could quote several, Sire, but here is one, by way of example, which seems to me very beautiful and, above all, modest. *Coram rege,* he says, *sua de paupertate tacentes plus quam poscentes ferent.*[73]

''That is true,'' said the King, and Madame Schmidt asked the Bishop to translate the passage.

'' 'In the King's presence,' '' he replied, '' 'those who do not speak of their need will obtain more than those who speak of it.' ''

The lady said that the maxim did not seem to her satirical. After having spoken so much, it was for me to be silent. And the King himself turned the conversation to Ariosto, saying that he wished we might read him together. I replied, making him a bow, with Horace: *Tempora queram* ("I hope the time may come").[74]

It was on the next day, as he came away from mass, that the generous and too unfortunate Stanislaus Augustus, giving me his hand to kiss, put into mine a carelessly made packet, telling me to thank Horace and to say nothing about it to anyone. In it I found two hundred gold ducats, and I paid my debts. From that day on I went almost every morning to the so-called "wardrobe,"[75] where the King, while his hair was being dressed, spoke freely to those who went there only to amuse him. But he never thought of reading Ariosto. He understood Italian, but not enough to speak it, still less to appreciate the great poet. When I think of this prince and of the great qualities I found him to possess, it seems to me impossible that he committed so many errors as a king. Outliving his country[76] is perhaps the least of them. Not finding a friend who would kill him, I venture to say that he should have killed himself; but he did not need to seek his executioner in a friend, for, had he imitated Kosciuszko,[77] a single Russian would have sufficed to send him to immortality.

Warsaw became very brilliant during the Carnival. Foreigners came there from every corner of Europe for no other reason than to see the fortunate mortal who had become a king despite the fact that no one could have guessed that he would become one when he was in the cradle. After seeing him and speaking with him everyone admitted that he gave the lie to those who called Fortune blind and foolish. But his eagerness to show himself was extreme. I saw him become uneasy when he knew there were some strangers in Warsaw whom he had not yet seen. No one needed to be presented to him, for the Court was open to all, and when he saw people he did not know he was the first to speak to them.

Here is something which happened to me toward the end of January, and which it seems to me I should record, however the reader may judge of my way of thinking. It was a dream, and I have already confessed somewhere that I have never been able to keep from being a trifle superstitious.

I dreamed that, dining in good company, one of the guests threw a bottle in my face which covered it with blood, and that having instantly run my sword through the body of the aggressor I got into a carriage to leave. That is all; but here is what reminded me of the dream that same day.

Prince Charles of Kurland, who had arrived in Warsaw during this time, invited me to go to dinner with him at Count Poninski's,[78] then Major-Domo to the Crown, the man who later occasioned much talk, was created a Prince, and then was proscribed and cruelly slandered. He kept a good house in Warsaw, and he had a very agreeable family. I had never called on him, because he was in favor neither with the King nor with his relatives.

Halfway through the dinner a bottle of champagne burst without anyone touching it, and a splinter, striking my forehead, cut a vein, from which the blood, spurting rapidly, quickly flowed over my face, my coat, and the table. I get up with all the others; quick, a bandage; the cloth is changed, and everyone sits down to finish dinner. That is all.

I am dumfounded, not by the incident, but because I recollect the dream, which, but for the little mishap, I should never have remembered. Someone else would perhaps have told the company the whole dream, but I have always been too afraid of being taken for a visionary or a fool. I did not even pay much attention to it myself, for my dream differed from what had happened in its most important circumstances. Two more of them were verified a few months later.

La Binetti, whom I had left in London, arrived in Warsaw with her husband and the dancer Pic.[79] They had come from Vienna, and they were on their way to

Petersburg. She brought a letter of recommendation to the King's brother,[80] the Prince and General in the Austrian service, who was then in Warsaw. I learned all this at supper at the Prince Palatine's on the day she arrived, from the mouth of the King himself, who said that he wanted to persuade them to stay in Warsaw so that he could see them dance, for which he would pay them a thousand ducats

Impatient to see her and to be the first to give her this good news, I went to see her at Villiers' inn[81] very early the next morning. Very much surprised to find me in Warsaw, and still more so by the news I gave her that Fortune was sending her a thousand ducats, she called Pic, who seemed to doubt it; but a half hour later Prince Poniatowski himself came to inform her of His Majesty's wish, and she granted it. In three days Pic arranged a ballet, and the costumes, the scenery, the orchestra, the supporting dancers were all supplied by the diligent Tomatis, who had unlimited powers and who spared nothing to please his generous master. The couple were so well liked that they were engaged for a year and given carte blanche; but this was taken in very bad part by La Catai, for not only did La Binetti eclipse her but she took away her admirers. For this reason Tomatis saw to it that La Binetti was subjected to several annoying occurrences on the stage, which made the two leading dancers relentless enemies. Within ten or twelve days La Binetti had a house furnished with the utmost elegance, plain plate, silver-gilt dishes, a cellar with exquisite wines, an excellent cook, and a crowd of admirers, among others the Stolnik Moczynski[82] and the Podstoli to the Crown Branicki,[83] the King's friend, who lodged in an apartment next to his

The audience at the theater was divided into two parties, for La Catai, though her talent was nothing in comparison with that of the new arrival, felt under no obligation to yield the precedence to her. She danced in the first ballet, and La Binetti in the second, and those who applauded the former were mute upon the appearance of the latter, and the party of the latter made not a sound when the former danced. My obligations to La Binetti were very strong and of very long standing; but my duty was even stronger toward La Catai, who had on her side the whole Czartoryski family, all their relatives by marriage, and all who were dependent on them; among others, Prince Lubomirski,[84] Straznik to the Crown, who honored me with his approbation on every occasion, and who was her principal admirer. Now it is obvious that I could not desert to La Binetti without earning the scorn of all those to whom it was incumbent on me to show the greatest deference.

La Binetti reproached me bitterly, and it was in vain that I explained my reasons to her. She insisted that I stop going to the theater, telling me, without condescending to explain herself further, that she was preparing to be revenged on Tomatis in a way which would make him repent of all the rudeness he continued to show her. She called me the oldest of all her acquaintances, besides which I still loved her and I cared nothing for La Catai, who, though prettier than La Binetti, was subject to epileptic fits.

Here is the cruel way in which she made poor Tomatis feel the first effect of her hatred.

Xavier[85] Branicki, Podstoli to the Crown, Chevalier of the White Eagle,[86] Colonel of a regiment of Uhlans, still young, with a handsome face, who had served six years in France, and the King's friend, who had just come from Berlin, where he had treated with the great Frederick as envoy from the new King of Poland, was La Binetti's principal lover. It is to him that she must have confided her grievances, and it is he whom she must have charged to avenge her on a man who, as director of the theater, let slip no opportunity to make things unpleasant for her. Branicki, on his side, must have promised her he would avenge her, and, if the opportunity were long in coming, to create it. This is the course of events in all affairs of the kind, and no other conjectures are more probable. But the way the Pole went about it is unique and most extraordinary.

On February 20th Monsieur Branicki went to the opera and, contrary to his custom, after the second ballet he went to the stage box in which La Catai was undressing to make his bow to her. Tomatis was the only person with her, and he remained there. He thought, as she did, that, having broken with La Binetti, he had come to assure her of a conquest to which she was indifferent; nevertheless, she was very polite to a nobleman whose homage was not to be scorned except at great risk.

When La Catai was ready to go home, the opera being already over, the gallant Podstoli offered her his arm to escort her to her carriage, which was at the door, and Tomatis followed her. As it happened, I was at the door too, waiting for my carriage; snow was falling in great flakes. La Catai arrives, the door of the vis-à-vis[87] is opened, she gets in, and Monsieur Branicki gets in too, and Tomatis is left there motionless and astounded. The nobleman tells him to get into his carriage and follow him; Tomatis replies that he will ride in no carriage but his own, and he asks him to be good enough to get out. The Podstoli shouts to the coachman to drive on, Tomatis orders him to stay where he is, and the coachman obeys his master. Thereupon the Podstoli, obliged to get out, orders his hussar to slap the offender's face, an order which was carried out to the letter and so rapidly that poor Tomatis was not given time to remember that he had a sword which he could at least have plunged into the body of the brute who had thus insulted him. He got into his vis-à-vis and he went home, where, apparently with no choice but to stomach the slap, he could not eat supper. I had been invited there; but after witnessing this more than scandalous incident I did not have the heart to go. I went home, sad and thoughtful, afraid that I had myself received at least some small part of the infamous slap. I wondered whether the insult could have been planned with La Binetti, and, examining the succession of events, it seemed to me impossible, for neither La Binetti nor Branicki could have foreseen Tomatis' display of bad manners.

CHAPTER VIII

My duel with Branicki. Journey to Leopol and return to Warsaw. I receive the King's order to leave. My departure with the unknown young woman.

REFLECTING AT home on this sorry event, I decided that, in entering Tomatis' vis-à-vis, Branicki had not gone beyond what the laws of gallantry permitted. He had acted without ceremony; he would have done the same thing if Tomatis had been his intimate friend; he could foresee an Italian jealousy, but he could not foresee that Tomatis would oppose him in any such way as he did; had he foreseen it, he would not have laid himself open to the insult unless he was determined to kill the man who dared to put it upon him. As soon as he received it, nature urged him to seek vengeance, and he chose the vengeance which came into his mind: a slap! It was too much, but it was less than if he had killed him. People would have said that he had murdered him, even though Tomatis had a sword too, for Branicki's servants would not have given him time to unsheathe it.

Nevertheless, I concluded that Tomatis should have killed the servant, even at the risk of losing his own life on the spot. It demanded less courage of him than the courage which enabled him to force the Podstoli to the Crown to get out of his carriage. It seemed to me that Tomatis had made a great mistake in not foreseeing that Branicki would resent the insult violently, and hence in not immediately putting himself on guard when Branicki received it. The whole blame, in my opinion, fell upon La Catai, who should never have let the Podstoli hand her into the carriage.

The next morning the thing was the news of the day in good society everywhere. Tomatis remained indoors for a week, vainly begging the King and all his patrons for vengeance, and obtaining it nowhere. The King himself did not know what kind of satisfaction he could procure for the foreigner, for Branicki maintained that he had returned insult for insult. Tomatis told me in confidence that he would surely have found a way to avenge himself, if it would not have cost him too dear. He had spent forty thousand sequins on the two spectacles,[1] which he would infallibly have lost if, by taking vengeance, he had made it necessary for him to leave the Kingdom. The only thing which consoled him was that the regard shown him by the great families whose favor he enjoyed was redoubled, and that the King himself, at the theater, at the tables at which they were together, on the promenades, and everywhere, spoke to him and was extremely gracious to him.

La Binetti alone relished the occurrence and triumphed. When I went to see her she rallied me by condoling with me on the misfortune which had befallen my friend, as she called him; she bored me, but I could neither be certain that Branicki had acted only at her instigation, nor guess that she bore a grudge against me too; but even if I had known it I should not have taken her seriously, for the Podstoli could do me neither good nor harm. I never saw him, I had never spoken to him, he could have no hold on me. I did not even see him at the palace, for he was never there at the hours when I went there; and he never came to the Prince Palatine's, not even in the suite of the King when he came there for supper. Monsieur Branicki was a nobleman whom the whole nation detested, for he was completely Russian,[2] a great supporter of the dissidents,[3] and the enemy of all those who would not bow under the yoke which Russia wanted to lay on the ancient constitution. The King loved him because of their old friendship, for he was under personal obligations to him, and for political reasons.[4] The monarch had to straddle the ditch, for he had as much to fear from Russia, if he declared himself opposed to the settlement which had been agreed upon, as he had to fear from his country, if he had acted openly in accordance with it

The life I was leading was exemplary, no love affairs, no gaming; I worked for the King, hoping to become his secretary, I paid my court to the Princess Palatine, who liked my company, and I played *tressetti* with the Palatine against any two others whom chance brought. On the fourth of March, on the eve of the feast of St. Casimir,[5] which was the name of the King's elder brother,[6] the Prince and Grand Chamberlain, there was a great dinner at Court, and I went to it. After dinner the King asked me if I was going to the theater that day. A comedy in Polish was to be given for the first time. This novelty interested everyone, but it was a matter of indifference to me, for I did not understand a word of Polish; I told the King so.

"Never mind that; come to it. Come in my box."

At these words I bowed, and I obeyed. I was standing behind his chair. After the second act there was a ballet in which the Piedmontese dancer La Casacci[7] so pleased the King with her dancing that he clapped his hands—an extraordinary favor. I knew her only by sight; I had never spoken to her; she was not without talent; her great admirer was Count Poninski, who, every time I went to dine with him, reproached me for going to call on other dancers and never going to La Casacci's, where one was very well received. After the ballet it came into my head to leave the King's box and go by way of the stage to La Casacci's little box and congratulate her on the justice the King had done to her talents. I pass La Binetti's box, which was open, and I stop for a moment; Count Branicki, who was said to be her lover, enters, and, making a bow, I leave, and I enter La Casacci's box; surprised to see me in her presence for the first time, she reproaches me pleasantly; I pay her compliments, I promise I will call on her, and I embrace her. During the embrace Count Branicki enters; it had been only a minute since I had left him in La Binetti's box; it was clear that he had followed me; but why? To pick a quarrel; he had a grudge against me. He was with Bisinski,[8] Lieutenant-Colonel of his regiment. Upon his appearing, I rise, both out of politeness and to leave; but he stops me by addressing me in these words:

"I entered here, Monsieur, at a bad moment for you; it seems that you love this lady"

"Certainly, Monseigneur, does not Your Excellency consider her worthy of love?"

"Perfectly so; and what is more I will tell you that I love her, and that I am not of a humor to put up with rivals."

"Very well! Now that I know it, I will no longer love her."

"Then you yield to me?"

"On the instant. Everyone must yield to such a nobleman as you."

"Very well; but a man who yields takes to his legs."[9]

"That is a trifle strong."

As I utter the words I go out, looking at him and showing him the hilt of my sword, three or four officers who were there being witnesses to the whole incident. I had not yet taken four steps outside the box when I hear myself honored with the title of "Venetian coward"; I turn, saying to him that, outside the theater, a Venetian coward could kill a Polish bravo, and I go down the great stairs which gave on to the street. I wait there a quarter of an hour, hoping to see him come out and to make him unsheathe his sword, not being, like Tomatis, restrained by the fear of losing forty thousand sequins; but not seeing him, and perishing from the cold, I call my servants, I have my carriage brought up, and I am driven to the Prince Palatine's, where the King himself had told me he was to sup.

Alone in my carriage, my first impulse having subsided a little, I congratulate myself on having resisted his violence, not having drawn my sword in La Casacci's box, and I even feel very glad that the bully had not come down, for he had Bisinski with him armed with a saber, who would have murdered me. The Poles, though generally polite enough nowadays, still keep a good deal of their old nature; they are still Sarmatians or Dacians[10] at table, in war, in the fury of what they call friendship. They refuse to understand that, a man alone being a match for another man, it is not permissible to go in a gang to cut the throat of someone who is alone and whose quarrel is with only one man. I clearly saw that Branicki had followed me, urged on by La Binetti and resolved to treat me as he had treated Tomatis. I had not received a slap, but it was almost the same thing; three officers had been witnesses that he had sent me about my business, and I recognized that I was dishonored. The power to bear that stigma not being in my nature, I felt certain that I should decide on a course, but I did not know which one. I needed full satisfaction, and I considered how best to obtain it, but by some moderate means which would leave me with a foot in both camps. I got out at the house of the King's uncle, Prince Czartoryski, Palatine of Russia, determined to tell the King the whole story and leave it to His Majesty to force Branicki to beg my pardon.

As soon as the Palatine sees me he gently reproaches me for having kept him waiting a little too long, and we sit down to play our usual game of *tressetti*. I was his partner.[11] At the second game which we lose, he reproaches me with my mistakes, he asks me where my mind is.

"Four leagues from here, Monseigneur."

"When one plays *tressetti*," he replied, "with a gentleman who plays for the pleasure of playing, one is not allowed to have one's mind four leagues away."

So saying, the Prince throws his cards on the table, rises, and goes walking about the room. I remain at the table, nonplused, then I go to the fireplace. It could not be long before the King would be there. A half hour later the Chamberlain Pernigotti[12] arrives and tells the Prince that the King could not come. This announcement rends my soul; but I conceal my feelings. Supper is ordered; it is served, I take my usual place at the Palatine's left; we were eighteen or twenty at the table. The Palatine showed that he was displeased with me. I did not eat. Halfway through supper in comes Prince Kaspar Lubomirski,[13] Lieutenant-General in the Russian service, and sits down at the other end of the table, facing me. As soon as he sees me he condoles with me in a loud voice on what had happened to me.

"I am sorry for you," he says. "Branicki was drunk; and from a drunken man a gentleman cannot receive an insult."

"What happened, what happened?"

Such was the reply of the whole table. I say nothing. Lubomirski is questioned, he answers that since I am saying nothing it is for him to say nothing too. The Palatine then stops scowling and asks me amicably what had happened between me and Branicki.

"I will tell you everything in detail after supper, Monseigneur, in a corner of this room."

The conversation turned upon indifferent matters until the end of the meal, and when the company rose, the Palatine, whom I followed, went to the small door by which he was accustomed to retire. In five or six minutes I tell him the whole story. He sighs. He condoles with me, and he says I was justified in having my mind four leagues away when I was playing.

"I ask Your Highness to advise me."

"I never give advice in affairs of this kind, for they demand that one do a great deal or do nothing."

After this dictum, which proceeded from wisdom itself, he enters his apartment. I thereupon go for my fur, I get into my carriage, I go home, I go to bed, and my naturally good constitution makes me enjoy a sleep of six hours. Sitting up at five o'clock in the morning, I consider what course I am to take. "A great deal or nothing." I immediately reject the "nothing." So I must make a choice among the "great deal." I find only one: to kill Branicki or force him to kill me, if he will honor me with a duel, and in case, not wanting to fight, he cheats me out of a duel, to murder him, taking my measures carefully and even risking losing my head on the scaffold afterward. In this determination, and having to begin by proposing a duel four leagues from Warsaw, since the Starosty[14] extended four leagues in every direction and duels were forbidden within it on pain of death, I write him the following note, which I now copy from the original, which I still have.

"March 5, 1776, at 5 o'clock in the morning.

"Monseigneur, yesterday evening at the theater Your Excellency wantonly insulted me, having neither a right nor a reason to behave to me in that fashion. That being so, I conclude that you hate me, Monseigneur, and that hence you would be glad to remove me from the number of the living. I can and I will satisfy Your Excellency. Be so good, then, Monseigneur, as to call for me in your carriage, and to take me where my defeat cannot make you guilty under the laws of Poland, and where I may enjoy the same advantage if God so far helps me that I kill Your Excellency. I should not, Monseigneur, make this proposal to you were it not for the idea I have formed of your generosity. I have the honor to be, "Monseigneur, Your Excellency's very humble and very obedient servant Casanova"[15]

I send my lackey to take this letter to him an hour before dawn at his apartment in the palace, next to the King's. I tell my servant to deliver it into no hand but his, and, if he was asleep, to wait until he woke to obtain a reply. I waited for it only half an hour. Here is a copy of it:

"Monsieur,

"I accept your proposal; but you will have the goodness to tell me at what hour I shall see you. I am, Monsieur, entirely your very humble and very obedient servant, Branicki, Podstoli C. P."[16]

Delighted with my good fortune, I instantly reply that I will be at his apartment the next day at six o'clock in the morning, to go with him to settle our quarrel in a safe place. He replies, asking me to name the arms and the place, adding that the whole affair must be ended in the course of the day. I thereupon send him the length of my sword, which was thirty-two inches, saying that the place depended upon him, provided it was outside the Starosty. He replies at once by this note, which was the last:

"Pray come to see me at once, Monsieur, and you will do me a favor. In consequence I send you my carriage. I have the honor to be, etc."

I reply by only four lines to tell him that, having a great deal to do, I had to spend the whole day at home, and that, having decided that I would not go to him unless I was sure that we should go to fight at once, he must excuse me if I sent him back his carriage.

An hour later the nobleman himself arrives at my lodging, he enters my room, leaving his suite outside and sending away two or three people who were there to speak with me. After shutting and bolting the door, he sat down on my bed, in which I was finding it more convenient to write. Not understanding what this meant, I take up two pocket pistols which I had on my night table.

"I have not come here to kill you, but to tell you that when I accept a proposal to fight I never put it off until the next day. So we shall fight today or never."

"I cannot do it today. It is Wednesday, the day of the post; I must finish something which I must send to the King."

"You shall send it after we have fought. You will not be left dead, believe me, and in any case, if you succumb, the King will forgive you. A man who is dead is beyond the reach of any reproach."

"I have a will to make, too."

"Now it's a will! So you fear you will die. Fear it no longer. You will make your will fifty years from now."

"But what objection can Your Excellency have to putting off our duel until tomorrow?"

"I do not want to be cheated. We shall both of us be put under arrest today by order of the King."

"It is impossible, unless you inform him."

"I? You make me laugh. I know that trick. You shall not have challenged me in vain. I want to give you satisfaction; but today or never."

"Very well. This duel is too dear to my heart for me to give you an excuse for not fighting it. Come to fetch me after dinner; for I need all my strength."

"With pleasure. For my part, I prefer to sup well afterward. But by the way, what is this about the length of your sword? I want to fight with pistols. I do not draw swords with unknown people."

"What do you mean, 'unknown'? I can give you twenty witnesses in Warsaw that I am no fencing master. I will not fight with pistols, and you cannot oblige me to do so, for you gave me the choice of weapons, and I have read your letter."

"Well, strictly speaking you are right, for I know that

I gave you the choice; but you are too much of a gentleman not to fight with pistols if I assure you that you will be greatly obliging me. It is the least favor you can do me. I will tell you further that one risks less with pistols, for one usually misses one's shot, and I assure you that if I miss you we shall fight with swords as much as you please. Will you grant me this pleasure?"

"I like your way of putting it, for I find it witty. I feel inclined to grant you this barbarous pleasure, and, at the cost of some effort, I am even able to share in it. So," I went on, "I accept the new arrangement for our duel, upon these precise conditions. You will come with two pistols, which you will have loaded in my presence, and I shall be allowed to choose mine. But if we miss each other, we shall fight with swords until the first blood, and no longer, if that is what you want, for I feel ready to go on until death. You will come to fetch me at three o'clock, and we shall go where we are safe from the laws."

"Excellent. You are a man one can like. Permit me to embrace you. Give me your word of honor that you will say nothing to anyone, for we should be arrested."

"How can you think I would take that risk, when I would travel leagues on foot to deserve the honor you are kind enough to do me?"

"So much the better. Then it is all settled. Good-by until three o'clock."

This dialogue is authentic, and has been known to everyone for the past thirty-two[17] years. As soon as the insolent bravo left me I put into a sealed envelope all the papers which belonged to the King, and I sent a servant to fetch the dancer Campioni, in whom I had perfect confidence.

"Here is a packet," I said to him, "which you will return to me this evening if I am alive, and which you will take to the King if I am dead. You can guess what is afoot, but remember that if you speak I am dishonored, and that I further declare to you that you will not have a more bitter enemy in the world."

"I understand perfectly. If I were to disclose the affair to those who would certainly put a stop to it, it would be said that it was at your instigation. I want you to come out of it with honor. The only advice I make bold to give you is not to spare your opponent, even if he were the emperor of the world. Your respect could cost you your life."

"I know that from experience."

I ordered a tasty dinner, and I sent to the Court for some excellent Burgundy wine; Campioni dined with me. The two young Counts Mniszek,[18] with their Swiss tutor Bertrand,[19] came to pay me a visit while I was at table, and were witnesses to my good appetite and my unusual gaiety. At a quarter before three o'clock I asked everyone to leave me alone, and I went to the window to be ready to go down as soon as the Podstoli arrived at my door

I saw him at a distance in a berlin[20] with six horses, preceded by two grooms on horseback who were leading two saddle horses, by two hussars, and by two aides-de-camp. Four menservants were up behind his carriage. He stops at my door, I quickly go down from my fourth floor, and I see that he is accompanied by a Lieutenant-General and by a chasseur, and, with one foot on the step of the carriage, I turn to my servants and I order them not to follow me and to stay in the house and wait for my orders. The Podstoli says to me that I may need them; I reply that if I had as many as he has I would bring them, but that, having only this wretched pair, I prefer to put myself in his hands unattended, sure that he will provide me with attendance if I need it. He replies by giving me his hand as a pledge that he will take care of me before himself. I sit down, and the carriage drives on. He had given the order in advance, for no one said a word. It would have been absurd if I had asked where we were going. These are moments when a man must watch over himself. The Podstoli saying nothing, I thought it my part to ask him some inconsequential questions.

"Do you expect, Monseigneur, to spend the spring and summer in Warsaw?"

"I expected so yesterday; but you may keep me from doing it."

"I hope that I shall not interfere with any of your plans."

"Have you ever served as a soldier?"

"Yes; but may I inquire why Your Excellency asks me the question, because——"

"For no reason, no reason at all. I asked it simply to say something."

At the end of a half-hour's drive the carriage stops at the entrance to a beautiful garden.[21] We get out, and, followed by all the Podstoli's suite, we go to a green arbor which was not green on the fifth of March, at one end of which there was a small stone table. The chasseur puts on the table two pistols a foot and a half long, takes from his pocket a bag of powder, then a pair of scales. He unscrews the pistols, weighs the powder and the balls, then loads them, screws them to the mark, and crosses them. Branicki, unperturbed, invites me to choose. The Lieutenant-General asks him in a loud voice if it is a duel.

"Yes."

"You cannot fight here; you are within the Starosty."

"That does not matter."

"It matters a great deal, I cannot be a witness; I am on guard at the castle, you have taken me by surprise."

"Enough. I will be responsible for everything; I owe this gentleman a satisfaction."

"Monsieur Casanova, you cannot fight here."

"Then why have I been brought here? I defend myself anywhere, even in a church."

"Lay your account of the matter before the King, and I assure you he will take your side.'

"I will do so gladly, General, if His Excellency will only say to me in your presence that he is sorry for what happened between us yesterday."

At my proposal Branicki gives me a black look and says in an angry voice that he has come there with me to fight, not to parley. I then say to the General that he can bear witness that, so far as it lay in my power, I wanted to avoid the duel. He withdraws, with his head in his hands. Branicki urges me to choose. I throw off my fur, and I take up the first pistol which comes to hand. Branicki, taking the other, says that he guarantees on his honor that the pistol I am holding is perfect. I reply that I shall test it on his head. At this terrible reply he turns pale, he throws his sword to one of his pages and shows me his bared chest. However unwillingly, I see that I must do the same, for my sword was my only weapon after the pistol. I show him my chest too, and I fall back five or six paces, the Podstoli does likewise. We could not fall back farther. Seeing him determined, as I was, with the mouth of his pistol toward the ground, I take off my hat with my left hand, asking him to do me the honor of firing at me first, and I put my hat on. Instead of firing at once, the Podstoli lost two or three seconds drawing himself up and hiding his head behind the butt of his pistol; but the situation did not demand that I wait upon his every convenience. I fired at him at the same instant that he fired at me, and there was no doubt of it, for all the people in the nearby houses said that they heard only one report. When I saw him fall, I quickly put in my pocket my left hand, which I felt was wounded, and, throwing down my pistol, I ran to him; but what was not my surprise when I saw three naked sabers raised against me in the hands of three noble assassins, who would instantly have made mincemeat of me where I had dropped to my knees beside him, if the Podstoli had not turned them to stone by shouting in a voice of thunder:

"Villains, respect this gentleman."

At that they withdrew, and I went to help him get up, putting my right hand under his arm while the General helped him on the other side. In this fashion we took him to an inn which was a hundred paces from the garden. The Podstoli walked very much bent over, and stealing curious glances at me, for he could not understand where the blood came from which he saw streaming over my breeches and my white stockings.

No sooner have we entered the inn than the Podstoli throws himself into a big armchair, he stretches out, his clothes are unbuttoned, his shirt is raised as far as his stomach, and he sees that he is wounded to the death. My ball had entered his abdomen at the seventh true rib on the right and had gone out under the last false rib on the left. The two holes were ten inches apart. The sight was alarming: it seemed that the intestines had been pierced and that he was a dead man. The Podstoli looks at me and says:

"You have killed me, and now get away, for you will lose your head on the scaffold: you are in the Starosty, I am a high officer of the Crown, and here is the ribbon of the White Eagle. Get away at once, and if you have no money take my purse. Here it is"

The full purse drops, I put it back in his pocket, thanking him and saying that I have no need of it, for if I was guilty of killing I would instantly lay my head on the steps of the throne. I said that I hoped his wound would not be mortal, and that I was in despair over what he had forced me to do. I kiss his forehead, I leave the inn, and I see neither carriage nor horses nor servants. They had all gone to fetch a doctor, a surgeon, priests, relatives, friends. I find myself alone and without a sword in a countryside covered with snow, wounded, and not knowing the way back to Warsaw. In the distance I see a sleigh with two horses, I shout, the peasant stops, I show him a ducat, and I say:

"Varsaw"[22]

He understands me, he raises a mat, I lie down in the sleigh, and to keep me from being splashed he covers me with the mat. He drives at a fast canter. Half of a quarter of an hour later I meet Bisinski, Branicki's faithful friend, on horseback, riding at full gallop, with his bare saber in his hand. If he had paid any attention to the sleigh he would have seen my head, and he would certainly have cut me in two like a reed. I arrive in Warsaw, I have the peasant drive me to Prince Adam's palace to ask him for sanctuary, and I find no one. I decide to take refuge in the Recollect[23] monastery, which was a hundred paces away. I dismiss my sleigh.

I go to the door of the monastery, I ring, the porter, a pitiless monk, opens the door, sees me covered with blood, supposes that I have come to save myself from the law, tries to shut his door, but I do not give him time. A kick in the belly knocks him down, legs in the air, and I go in. He shouts for help, some monks arrive, I tell them that I want sanctuary, and I threaten them if they refuse to grant it. One of them speaks, and I am led to a room which looks like a dungeon. I submit, sure that they will change their minds in a quarter of an hour. I ask for a man to go to summon my servants, who come at once, I send for a surgeon and Campioni. But before they arrive, in comes the Palatine of Podlasie,[24] who had never spoken to me but who, having fought a duel in his youth, seized the opportunity to tell me the details of it as soon as he heard the honorable details of mine. A moment later I saw the Palatine of Kalisz[25] come in, with Prince Jablonowski,[26] Prince Sanguszko,[27] the Palatine of Vilna, Oginski, all of whom at once began reviling the monks who had lodged me like a galley slave. They excused themselves by saying that I had got in by maltreating the porter; which made the princes laugh, but not me, for I was suffering a great deal from my wound. They at once gave me two fine rooms.

Branicki's ball had entered my hand through the metacarpus under the index finger, and, after breaking my first phalanx, had lodged there; its force had been weakened by the metal button on my waistcoat and by my abdomen, which it had slightly wounded near the navel. The ball had to be extracted from my hand, which was causing me great discomfort. A surgeon and adventurer named Gendron, who was the first to be found, came to extract it by making a cut on the opposite side, which made my wound twice as long. While he performed this painful operation on me, I told the princes the whole story, having no difficulty in concealing the agony which the unskillful surgeon caused me when he put in the pincers to take hold of the ball. Such is the power of vanity over the human mind.

After the surgeon Gendron left, the Prince Palatine's arrived and took charge of me, undertaking to get rid of the other, whom he called a vagabond. At the same moment in came Prince Lubomirski, the husband of the daughter of the Prince Palatine of Russia, who astonished us all by telling us everything that had happened immediately after my duel. As soon as Bisinski, having arrived at Wola, saw his friend's dreadful wound, and did not see me, he set off like a madman, swearing that he would kill me wherever he found me. He went to Tomatis' house, finding him in company with his mistress, Prince Lubomirski, and Count Moczynski. He asked Tomatis where I was, and as soon as he heard Tomatis reply that he knew nothing about it, he fired a pistol at his head. Upon this murderous act, Moczynski took him around the waist to throw him out the window, but Bisinski got free of him by three strokes of his saber, one of which slashed his face and knocked out three of his teeth.

"After that," Prince Lubomirski went on, "he took me by the collar, holding a pistol to my throat and threatening to kill me if I did not take him out to his horse in the courtyard so that he could leave without fear of Tomatis' servants. Which I instantly did. Moczynski went home, where he will have to remain for a long time under the care of a surgeon, and I went home to observe all the confusion into which the city has been thrown because of your duel. It is rumored that Branicki is dead, and his Uhlans are looking for you on horseback, galloping everywhere to avenge their Colonel by butchering you. A good thing for you that you are here! The Grand Marshal [28] has surrounded the monastery with two hundred dragoons, on the pretext of making sure you do not escape; but really to prevent that frenzied mob from forcing their way into the monastery to butcher you here. Branicki is in great danger, the surgeons say, if the ball pierced his intestines, and they are sure of his life if they were not touched. They will know which is the case tomorrow. He is lodging at the Grand Chamberlain's,[29] not having dared to go to his apartment at Court. However, the King went to see him at once. The General who was present at the duel says that what saved your life was your threat to Branicki that you would wound him in the head. Having tried to protect his head, he put himself in an awkward position, and he missed you. But for that, he would have pierced your heart, for he fires at the sharp edge of a knife and cuts the bullet in two. The other piece of good fortune you had was your not being seen by Bisinski, who could not suppose that you were under the mat in the sleigh."

"The great good fortune I had, Monseigneur, was that I did not kill Branicki, for I should have been butchered on the spot if he had not said three words which stopped his friends, who already had their sabers raised over me. I am sorry for what has happened to Your Highness and to the kind Count Moczynski. If Tomatis was not killed by Bisinski's shot, it shows that his pistol was empty."

"I think so too."

Just then an officer of his household brings me a note from the Palatine of Russia. "See," he writes me, "what the King has just sent me, and sleep in peace." Here is what I read in the note the King wrote to him, which I have kept. "Branicki, my dear Uncle, is in a very bad way, and my surgeons are with him to give him all the help of their art; but I have not forgotten Casanova. You can assure him of his pardon, even if Branicki should die.'

I printed a respectful kiss on the note, and I showed it to the noble company, who expressed their admiration for a man truly worthy of his crown. I needed to be left alone, and they left me. After they went, my friend Campioni gave me back my packet and shed tender tears over the event which did me immortal honor. He had stayed in a corner, where he had heard everything.

The next day visitors came in crowds, together with purses filled with gold from all the magnates who were opposed to Branicki's faction. The household officer who presented me with the purse on behalf of the nobleman or the lady who sent it to me said that, being a foreigner, I might be in need of money, and that on that assumption his master or mistress took the liberty of sending me some. I expressed my thanks and refused the purse. I sent back at least four thousand ducats, and I prided myself on it. Campioni declared my heroism absurd, and he was right. I repented of it afterward. The only present I accepted was the dinner for four persons which Prince Adam Czartoryski sent me every day; but I did not eat. *Vulnerati fame crucientur* ("The wounded must be made to suffer the pangs of hunger")[30] was the favorite maxim of my surgeon, who was no genius. The wound in my abdomen was already suppurating, but on the fourth day my badly swollen arm and the blackening of my wound, which threatened gangrene, made the surgeons decide, after conferring together, that my hand must be amputated. I learned this strange news early in the morning when I read the *Court Gazette*, which was printed at night after the King had signed the manuscript. I laughed heartily at it. I laughed in the faces of all those who came that morning to condole with me, and just as I was making fun of Count Clary,[31] who was trying to persuade me to let them perform the operation, in came not the surgeon but the surgeons.

"Why three of you, gentlemen?"

"Because," said the one who regularly attended me, "before proceeding to amputation I wanted to have the consent of these learned men. We shall now see what state you are in."

He removes the bandage, he draws out the drain, he examines the wound, its color, then the livid swelling, they speak together in Polish, then the three of them together tell me in Latin that they will cut off my hand at nightfall. They are all in high spirits, they tell me I have nothing to fear, and that it will make me sure of recovering. I reply that I am the lord and master of my hand, and that I will never allow them to perform this absurd amputation.

"There is gangrene present, and tomorrow it will rise into the arm, and then we shall have to cut off the arm."

"Very well then, you will cut off my arm; but in the meanwhile, to judge by what I know about gangrene, I saw none in me."

"You do not know more about it than we do."

"Go away."

Two hours later begin the tiresome visits of all those whom the surgeons had told about my obstinacy. The Prince Palatine himself writes me that the King was astonished at my want of courage. It was then that I[32] wrote the King that I did not know what to do with my arm without my hand and, that being the case, I would let my arm be cut off when the gangrene became visible.[33]

My letter was read by everyone at Court. Prince Lubomirski came to tell me that I had been wrong to make so light of those who were concerned for me, for after all it was impossible that the three best surgeons in Warsaw should be deceived in so simple a matter.

"Monseigneur, they are not deceived, but they think they can deceive me."

"To what purpose?"

"To flatter Count Branicki, who is very ill, and who perhaps needs this comfort in order to recover."

"You will permit me not to believe anything so unlikely."

"But what will you say when I am proved to be right?"

"If that happens I will admire you, and you will be praised for your firmness; but it must happen first."

"We shall see this evening if the gangrene has attacked my arm, and tomorrow morning I will have my arm cut off. I give Your Highness my word for it."

In the evening the surgeons who come are not three but four; they unwrap my arm, which was twice its natural size, I see that it is livid to the elbow; but when the drain is taken out of the wound I see that the edges of it are red and I see pus; I say nothing. Prince Sulkowski and the Abbé Gourel,[34] of the Prince Palatine's household, were present. The four surgeons decide that, the arm being infected, they are no longer in time to amputate the hand, and so the arm will have to be cut off at the latest the next morning. Tired of arguing, I tell them to come with the necessary instruments, and that I will submit to the operation. They go off very well pleased, to take the news to Court, to Branicki's, to the Prince Palatine's; but the next morning I ordered my servant not to let them enter my room; and the thing was over. I kept my hand.[35]

On Easter Sunday I went to mass with my arm in a sling, though I did not wholly recover the use of it until eighteen months later. My cure took only twenty-five days. Those who condemned me found themselves obliged to praise me. My firmness did me immortal honor, and the surgeons had to admit that they were all either completely ignorant or extremely imprudent.

But another little incident also amused me on the third day after the duel. A Jesuit came to speak to me privately in the name of the Bishop of Poznan,[36] of which diocese Warsaw was a part. I send everyone out of the room, and I ask him what he wants.

"I come at the behest of Monseigneur" (he was a Czartoryski, and brother to the Palatine of Russia), "to absolve you from the ecclesiastical censures you have incurred by fighting a duel."

"I have no need of that, for I do not admit it. I was attacked, and I defended myself. Convey my thanks to Monseigneur; yet if you wish to absolve me of the sin without my confessing it. you are free to do so."

"If you do not confess the crime, I cannot absolve you of it. But do this: Ask me for absolution in case you fought a duel."

"With pleasure. If it is a duel, I ask you to absolve me, and I ask you for nothing if it is not one."

He gave me absolution with the same ambiguity. The Jesuits were admirable at finding subterfuges for everything.

Three days before I go out the Grand Marshal to the Crown withdrew the troops which were at the doors of the monastery. On going out (it was Easter Sunday) I went to mass, then to Court, where the King, giving me his hand to kiss, let me go down on one knee; he asked me (it was prearranged) why I had my arm in a sling, and I replied that it was because of an attack of rheumatism; he replied that I should beware of catching it again. After seeing the King, I told my coachman to take me to the door of the mansion in which Count Branicki was staying. I thought I owed him a visit. He had sent a lackey every day to inquire how I was doing; he had sent me back my sword, which I had left on the field of battle; he was to stay in bed for at least six more weeks because it had been necessary to enlarge the two wounds, in which the packing had become embedded, preventing his recovery. I owed him a visit. Then too, people were calling to congratulate him on the King's having appointed him Lowczy (which means Master of the Royal Hunt) on the previous day. The post ranked below that of Podstoli, but it was lucrative. It was jestingly said that the King had not given it to him until after seeing that he was an excellent shot; but that day I was a better shot than he.

I enter his anteroom; the officers, the lackeys, the chasseurs are surprised to see me. I ask the Adjutant to announce me to Monseigneur if he is receiving. He does not answer, he sighs, and he goes in. A minute later he comes out, he orders both leaves of the door opened, and he tells me to go in.

Wearing a dressing gown of some gold-glazed stuff, Branicki was lying in bed with his back supported by pillows with rose-colored ribbons. Pale as a corpse, he took off his nightcap.

"I have come, Monseigneur, to ask you to pardon me for not having been able to overlook a trifle to which, were I wiser, I should have paid no attention. I have come to tell you that you have honored me far more than you offended me, and I ask your protection in the future against your friends, who, not knowing your character, believe they must be my enemies."

"I admit," he replied, "that I insulted you, but you will likewise admit that I have certainly paid for it in my own person. As for my friends, I will declare myself the enemy of all those who will not respect you. Bisinski has been banished and stricken from the roster of the nobility, and it was rightly done. As for my protection, you do not need it, the King esteems you as I do and as do all those who know the laws of honor. Be seated, and in the future let us be good friends. A cup of chocolate for Monsieur. So you are cured?"

"Completely, except for the joint, the use of which I shall not recover for a year."

"You put up a good fight against the surgeons, and you were right to tell someone that the fools thought they would be pleasing me by leaving you with only one hand. They measure another's heart by their own. I congratulate you on having routed them and kept your hand; but I have never been able to understand how my ball could have gone into your hand after wounding you in the abdomen.’

Just then I was served chocolate, and the Grand Chamberlain came in, looking at me with a smile. In five or six minutes the room was filled with ladies and gentlemen who, having learned that I was with the Lowczy, and curious to hear what we would say to each other, had come to be present at our dialogue. I saw that they did not expect to find us on such good terms, and that they were delighted by it. Branicki took me back to the subject which had been interrupted.

“How could my ball have entered your hand?”

“You will permit me to assume the same position?”

“Whatever you like.”

So I rise, and displaying myself as I had been, he understands.

“You should,” a lady[37] said to me, “have held your hand behind your body.”

“I was more concerned, Madame, with keeping my body behind my hand.”

“You meant to kill my brother, for you aimed at his head.”

“God forbid, Madame; it was to my interest to leave him alive, so that he could defend me, as he did, against those who were with him.”

“But you told him you would aim at his head.”

“That is what one always says; but the wise man aims at the center of the target; the head is at the edge. Accordingly, when I raised the muzzle of my pistol I stopped it just before it would have gone beyond the middle line.”

“That is so,” said Branicki; “your tactics are better than mine, you taught me a lesson.”

“The lesson Your Excellency gave me in heroism and coolness is one far more worth learning and applying.”

“It is obvious,” his sister Sapieha resumed, “that you must have practiced a great deal with the pistol.”

“Never. It was my first unlucky shot; but I have always had a clear idea of the straight line, the accurate eye, and the hand which does not shake."

"That is all that is needed," said Branicki; "I have all that, and I am delighted that I did not shoot as well as I usually do."

"Your ball, Monseigneur, broke my first phalanx. Here it is, flattened by my bone. Permit me to return it to you."

"I regret that I cannot give you back yours."

"Your wound is getting better, I am told."

"My wound is healing with great difficulty. If I had done what you did that day, the duel would have cost me my life. From what I hear, you dined very well."

"The cause of it was my fear that the dinner would be my last."

"If I had dined, your ball would have pierced my intestines, whereas, they being empty, it only grazed them."

What I learned for certain was that, as soon as he knew he was to fight at three o'clock, Branicki went to mass, confessed, and communicated. The confessor had to absolve him when he told him that his honor obliged him to fight. All this was still in accordance with the ancient code of chivalry. As for me, perhaps more, perhaps less a Christian than Branicki, I addressed God in only these few words: *"Lord, if my enemy kills me, I am damned; so save me from death."* After a number of cheerful and interesting remarks, I took leave of the hero to call on the nonagenarian Grand Marshal to the Crown, Bielinski[38] (Countess Salmour[39] was his sister), who, by virtue of his office, is the only administrator of justice in Poland. I had never spoken to him, he had defended me from Branicki's Uhlans, he had spared my life, it was my duty to kiss his hand.

I send in my name, I enter, he asks me what I want of him.

"I come to kiss the hand which signed my pardon, Monseigneur, and to promise Your Excellency that I will be wiser in future."

"I advise you to be so. But as for your pardon, go thank the King, for if he had not asked me to grant it I should have had you beheaded."

"Despite the circumstances, Monseigneur?"

"What circumstances? Is it true or not true that you fought a duel?"

"It is not true; for I fought only because I was forced to defend myself. What I did could be called a duel if Count Branicki had taken me out of the Starosty, as my first challenge instructed him to do, and as we had agreed to do. So I believe that Your Excellency, properly informed, would not have had my head cut off."

"I do not know what I should have done. The King directed me to pardon you; it shows that he thought you deserve it, and I congratulate you. If you will come to dine with me tomorrow, I shall be pleased to see you."

"You shall be obeyed, Monseigneur."

The old man was renowned and very intelligent. He had been the great friend of the famous Poniatowski, the King's father. The next day at table he talked to me at length about him.

"What a comfort it would have been for Your Excellency's worthy friend if he had lived long enough to see the crown on his son's head!"

"He would not have wanted it."

The energy with which he made this reply showed me his soul. He was of the Saxon faction.[40] The same day I went to dine[41] with the Prince Palatine, who said that reasons of policy had prevented him from going to see me at the monastery; but that it should not make me doubt his friendship, for he had thought of me.

"I am having an apartment made ready for you here," he said. "My wife enjoys your company; but the apartment will not be ready for six weeks."

"Then I will use the time, Monseigneur, to pay a visit to the Palatine of Kiowia,[42] who did me the honor to send me an invitation."

"Through whom did he transmit the invitation?"

"The Starost Count Brühl,[43] who is in Dresden and whose wife is the Palatine's daughter."

"You will do well to make this little journey now, for your duel has made you many enemies, who will seize every occasion to get you into a quarrel, and Heaven preserve you from fighting again. Heed my warning. Be on your guard, and never go about on foot, especially at night."

I spent two weeks going to dinners and suppers to which I was invited, and at all of which I was summoned to tell the story of the duel in the greatest detail. The King was often present, always pretending not to listen to me; but once he could not refrain from asking me if, being in my native country Venice, and receiving an insult there, I would have challenged the insulter to a duel, supposing that he was a Venetian patrician.

"No, Sire, for I should have guessed that he would not come to fight"

"What would you have done then?"

"I should have champed the bit. But if the same Venetian patrician dared to insult me in a foreign country, he would account to me for it"

Having gone to call on Count Moczynski, I found La Binetti there; she vanished as soon as she saw me.

"What has she against me?" I asked Moczynski.

"She is the cause of the duel, and you are the cause of her losing her lover, for Branicki will have nothing more to do with her. She hoped he would treat you as he did Tomatis, and you nearly killed her bravo. She openly criticizes him for having accepted your challenge; but he will not see her again."

This Count Moczynski was as agreeable as possible, he was more than intelligent; but, generous to the point of prodigality, he was ruining himself at Court by making presents. His wounds were beginning to heal. The person who should have been the most attached to me was Tomatis; but, quite the contrary, he was no longer as pleased to see me as he had been before the duel. He saw in me a man who tacitly reproached him for cowardice and for preferring money to honor. He would perhaps have liked it better if Branicki had killed me, for then the author of his dishonor would have become the most odious person in all Poland, and people would perhaps have more easily forgiven him for the freedom with which he continued to show himself in the great houses with a stain on his honor which rendered him contemptible, despite the good society which made much of him and which he frequented; for it was obvious that all the favor he enjoyed came from the fanatical admiration which La Catai owed rather to her beauty and her sweet and modest manner than to her talent.

Determined to pay a visit to the malcontents who had recognized the new King only under compulsion, and several of whom had even refused to recognize him, I set out with Campioni, in order to have the companionship of a man who loved me and who had courage, and with one manservant. I had two hundred sequins in my purse, one hundred of which the Palatine of Russia had given me privately and in such an obliging way that I should have done very wrong to refuse them. I had won the other hundred backing Count Clary in a game of quinze which he played against a Starost Sniatinski,[44] who was lightheartedly ruining himself in Warsaw. Count Clary, who never lost when playing a two-handed game, that day won two thousand ducats from him, which the young man paid the next morning. Prince Charles of Kurland had left for Venice, where I had recommended him to my powerful friends, with whose treatment of him he had reason to be very well satisfied. The Anglican clergyman who had recommended me to Prince Adam had then arrived in Warsaw from Petersburg. I dined with him at the Prince's; the King, who knew him, was present by his own wish. There was also talk at that time of Madame Geoffrin,[45] an old friend of the King's, who was about to arrive in Warsaw at the invitation and the expense of the King himself, who, despite the difficulties which his enemies made for him, was always the soul of all the social occasions which he honored with his presence. He said to me one day when I chanced to find him sad and thoughtful that the crown of Poland was the crown of martyrdom. Yet this King, to whom I give all the praise which is his due, was weak enough to let calumny prevent him from making my fortune. I had the pleasure of convincing him that he was mistaken. I shall speak of it in the proper place, an hour or two hence.

I arrived at Leopol[46] six days after leaving Warsaw, because I stopped for two days at the young Count Zamojski's, the Ordynat of Zamosc,[47] who had an income of forty thousand ducats and was subject to epileptic fits. He told me that he was ready to give all that he possessed to the doctor who could cure him. I pitied his young wife. She loved him, and she did not dare to go to bed with him, for his affliction descended on him precisely when he tried to give her tokens of his fondness; she was in despair because she had to refuse his urgings and even to run away when he insisted. This magnate, who died not long afterward, lodged me in a very handsome apartment in which there was nothing. It is the Polish way; a gentleman is supposed to travel with everything he needs.

I put up at the inn in Leopol, which they call Lemberg; but I had to leave it to lodge in the house of the famous Castellane Kaminska,[48] a great enemy of Branicki, of the King, and of his whole faction. She was extremely rich, but the confederations ruined her.[49] She put me up for a week, but without pleasure on either side, for she spoke only Polish and German. From Leopol I went to a small city, whose name I have forgotten, in which lived the lesser General Joseph Rzewuski,[50] to whom I brought a letter from the Straznik Prince Lubomirski; he was a robust old man, who had a long beard which he wore to show his friends his sorrow at the novelties which were troubling his country. He was rich, learned, a superstitious Christian, extremely polished. He kept me for three days. He commanded, as might be expected, the small fortified place in which he lived and in which he kept a garrison of five hundred men. The first day on which he lodged me, I was in his room an hour before noon with three or four officers. Just as I was speaking with him about something interesting, an officer enters, goes to him, whispers something into his ear, and the same officer also whispers to me:

"*Venice and St. Mark.*"

I reply aloud that St. Mark was the patron saint of Venice; everyone laughs, and I realize that it is the password for the day which His Excellency had given and of which I was informed as an honor. I begged pardon, and the word was immediately changed. The magnate talked politics to me at length; he had never gone to Court; but he had decided to go to the Diet to oppose the Russian laws in favor of the dissidents with all his might. He was one of the four whom Prince Repnin ordered seized and sent to Siberia.[51]

After taking leave of this great republican I went to Christianpol,[52] the place of residence of the famous Palatine of Kiowia, Potocki, who had been one of the lovers of the Russian Empress Anna Ivanovna. He had himself built the city in which he lived, and he had named it Christianpol after his own name. This nobleman, who was still handsome, kept a splendid Court; he honored Count Brühl's letter by keeping me with him for two weeks and sending me traveling every day with his physician, who was the celebrated Hyrneus, sworn enemy of the still more celebrated Van Swieten.[53] Hyrneus, though very learned, was something of a madman; he was an empiric, he followed the system of Asclepiades,[54] which has become untenable since the great Boerhaave; nevertheless he made astonishing cures. Back in Christianpol every evening, I paid my court to the Palatiness, who never came down to supper because the devotions she performed in her room did not permit it. I never saw her except with her three daughters and two Franciscan friars, who were her directors of conscience turn and turn about.[55]

I amused myself for a week in Leopol with a very beautiful girl who soon afterward made Count Potocki, Starost of Sniatyn, fall so much in love with her that he married her.[56] From Leopol I went to stay for a week in Pulawy,[57] a magnificent palace on the Vistula eighteen leagues from Warsaw, which belonged to the Prince Palatine of Russia. He had had it built. Campioni left me there, to go to Warsaw. A place can be as delightful as you please and yet be certain to bore a man who is condemned to live there alone, unless he has some work of literature in hand. At Pulawy a peasant girl who came into my room pleased me, and she ran away crying out one morning when I tried to do something with her; the caretaker came running, asking me coldly why I did not go about it in the straightforward way if the girl pleased me.

"What is the straightforward way?"

"Talk to her father, who is here, and ask him amicably if he will sell you her maidenhead."

"I do not speak Polish, make the bargain yourself."

"Gladly. Will you give him fifty florins?"

"You are jesting. If she is a maiden, and gentle as a lamb, I will give him a hundred."

The thing was done the same day after supper. Afterward she ran away like a thief. I learned that her father had had to beat her to make her obey him. The next day I was offered several girls without even being shown them.

"But where is the girl?" I asked the caretaker.

"What use is it to see her face when you are assured that she is a maiden?"

"Understand that what interests me is the face, and that the maidenhead of an ugly girl is taskwork for my odd taste."

After that I was shown them, and on the evening before I left I came to terms for another. In general the sex is ugly in that country. I left for Warsaw. It was in this fashion that I saw Podolia, Pokucie, and Volhynia,[58] which a few years later were renamed Galicia and Lodomeria,[59] for they could not become possessions of the House of Austria except by having their names changed. It is said, however, that these fertile provinces became happier after they ceased to be Polish. Today there is no Poland any more.[60]

At Warsaw I found Madame Geoffrin, who was being entertained everywhere and who was looked at with astonishment because of the simplicity of her dress. Not only did I find myself received very coldly by everyone, I was even badly received.

"We did not think," I was bluntly told, "that we should see you appear here again. What have you come here to do?"

"I have come to pay my debts."

I found it disgusting. Even the Palatine of Russia seemed to me a different man. I was received at the tables which I had frequented, but no one spoke to me. However, the Princess, Prince Adam's sister, pleasantly invited me to sup with her. I go there, and at a perfectly round table I find myself opposite to the King, who never spoke a word to me. He talked to no one but the Swiss Bertrand. It had never happened to me before that day.

The next day I go to dine at the house of Countess Oginska, daughter of Prince Czartoryski, Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, and a Countess Waldstein,[61] a greatly respected lady who lived to be ninety years old. At table this lady asks where the King had supped the evening before, nobody knew, and I remain silent. General Ronikier arrives as we are getting up from table. The Palatiness asks him where the King had supped, he replies that he had supped at the Princess Straznikowa's, and that I was there. So she asks me why I had said nothing at table when she had expressed her curiosity; I reply that it was because I was sorry to have been there, for the King had never said a word to me or looked at me.

"I am in disgrace, and I cannot guess the reason."

Leaving the house of the Palatine of Vilna, Oginski, I go to make my bow to the sagacious Prince Augustus Sulkowski, who, after receiving me very cordially, as he always did, told me that I had made a mistake in returning to Warsaw, for everyone had changed his mind about me.

"What have I done?"

"Nothing; but such is our character in general: inconstant, inconsistent, false. *Sarmatarum virtus veluti extra ipsos* ['The virtues of the Sarmatians are as it were outside them'].[62] Your fortune was made; you missed the moment. I advise you to leave."

"And I shall do so."

I go home, and at ten o'clock my servant gives me a letter which had been left at my door. I open it, I see no signature, and I find that a person who loves and esteems me, and who does not sign because he had learned the thing from the King himself, informs me that the King no longer wishes to see me at his Court because he had learned that I had been hanged in effigy in Paris for having left there taking with me a large sum which belonged to the funds of the Military School Lottery,[63] and that in addition I had practiced the base trade of actor in Italy, wandering from province to province with troupes of strolling players.

These are calumnies which it is very easy to put forth, and which it is very difficult to confute. Such are Courts, where hatred is ever at work, urged on by envy. I should have liked to be able to treat the thing with contempt and leave immediately; but I had debts, and not money enough to go to Portugal, where I was sure of a great resource.[64]

I stopped going anywhere, I saw only Campioni; I was writing to Venice and wherever I had friends, to try to replenish my purse, when the same Lieutenant-General who had been present at my duel comes with a gloomy countenance to tell me in the King's name to leave the Starosty of Warsaw within eight days. At this announcement I draw myself up, and I tell him to answer the King that I did not feel inclined to obey such an order.

"If I leave," I said, "I want everyone to know that I am leaving under compulsion."

"I will not convey such an answer. I will tell the King that I have carried out his order, and that is all. You shall do what you consider best."

In a towering rage, I write the King a long letter. I show him that my honor demanded that I disobey his order. "My creditors, Sire, will forgive me when they learn that I have left Poland without paying them only because Your Majesty compels me to leave it."

When I was thinking by whom I might send my strong letter to the monarch, I saw Count Moczynski in my room. I told him all that had just happened to me, and, after reading him my letter, I asked him by whom I could send it, and he replied, with great feeling, that he would deliver it himself. After that I went for a walk to get a breath of air, and I came upon Prince Sulkowski, who was not surprised when I told him that I had received an order to leave.

The Prince thereupon told me the whole story of what had happened to him in Vienna, where the Empress Maria Theresa had sent him an order to leave within the short space of twenty-four hours for no other reason than that he had conveyed compliments to the Archduchess Christine from Prince Louis of Württemberg.[65]

The next morning the Stolnik to the Crown, Count Moczynski, came, bringing me a thousand ducats. He said that the King did not know that I was in need of money, for I was in much greater need of saving my life, and that it was for this reason that His Majesty had sent me an order to leave, since, staying in Warsaw and going about by night, I was always exposed to obvious dangers. The dangers came from five or six people who had sent me challenges and whom I had not even answered. These people, to avenge themselves for my disregard, might attack me, and the King no longer wished to be uneasy on my account. In addition he told me that the order His Majesty had given me was in no way dishonorable to me in view of the person who had brought it to me, the circumstances, and the time I had been given so that I could easily make my arrangements to leave. The result of this harangue was that I not only gave Monsieur Moczynski my word that I would leave, but I begged him to thank His Majesty on my behalf for the favor he was doing me and the proof he gave me that he was concerned for my life.

The generous Moczynski embraced me and begged me to accept the small present he was going to make me of a carriage, since I had none, and he asked me to write to him. He told me that La Binetti's husband had left with his wife's chambermaid, with whom he had fallen in love, taking with him all that she possessed in the way of diamonds, watches, gold snuffboxes, and even thirty-six silver table services she had. He had left her to the dancer Pic, with whom she slept every night. La Binetti's protectors, the chief of whom was the King's brother, the Prince General, had united to console her and had given her enough so that she need not regret all that her scoundrel of a husband had taken from her. He said that the wife of the Grand General to the Crown, the King's sister,[66] had arrived from Bialystok[67] and that she was lodged at the Court, where the greatest honors were shown her. He said it was hoped that her husband would finally make up his mind to come to Warsaw. He was Count Branicki, who died declaring himself the last member of his family and consequently ordering that his arms, as was the custom, should be buried with him. The Branicki who had honored me with the duel was neither related to him nor bore his name except unrightfully. His name was Bragnecki.[68]

The next day I paid my debts, which came to two hundred ducats, and I prepared to leave on the next day but one for Breslau with Count Clary, he in his carriage and I in mine, which Count Moczynski at once sent me.

Count Clary was leaving without ever having been at Court, but he did not mind, he liked neither good company nor well-bred women; he wanted only gamesters and trollops. He had arrived in Warsaw with La Durant,[69] a dancer whom he had carried off from Stuttgart where she was in the service of the Duke,[70] which had deeply offended the sovereign, whose great virtue was not that of tolerance. At Warsaw Clary, tired of La Durant, had got rid of her by sending her to Strassburg; so he was leaving alone, as I was, with a manservant. He told me that he would part from me at Breslau because he wanted to go to Olmütz to see his brother, who was a canon.[71] He made me laugh when he told me his story without my asking him, for there was not a word of truth in anything he said to me. I knew three men of birth who had this ugly vice. Those who have it are to be pitied; they are in the unhappy situation of no longer being able to tell the truth to anyone, even when it is to their interest to make their listeners believe them. This Count Clary, who did not belong to the family of Clary of Teplitz, could go neither to his country nor to Vienna because he had deserted on the eve of a battle. He was lame, but no one knew it, for when he walked it did not show. It was the only truth he could hide without wronging anyone. He died in poverty in Venice; I will speak of him ten or twelve years hence. He was a handsome man, with a pleasant, attractive face

We arrived in Breslau, traveling day and night, without anything untoward befalling us. Campioni traveled sixty leagues with me, he accompanied me as far as Wartenberg,[72] and he left me there to go back to Warsaw, where he had an affair of the heart. He came to join me in Vienna seven months later; I will speak of it in the proper place. Not having found Baron Treyden in Wartenberg, I stopped there only two hours. Count Clary having left Breslau the next day at dawn, I thought, as soon as I found myself alone, that I would give myself the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the Abate

Bastiani,[73] the celebrated Venetian whose fortune the King of Prussia had made. He was a canon of the cathedral.[74]

He received me as well as I could wish, cordially and unceremoniously; we were equally curious to know each other. He was blond, handsome, well built, and six feet tall; he had great intelligence, was very well read, had a persuasive eloquence, a natural gaiety, a good library, a good cook, and a good cellar. Very well lodged in an apartment on the ground floor, on the floor above he gave lodging to a lady of whose children he was very fond, perhaps because he was their father. Though a worshiper of the fair sex, he was not exclusive; from time to time he fell in love with some youth, and he sighed to conquer him in the Greek fashion when he encountered the obstacles which arise from education, prejudice, and what are called "manners." During the three days which I spent in Breslau, dining and supping at his house every day, his passion was evident. He sighed for the young Abate the Count of Cavalcabo.[75] He never stopped looking at him with eyes which burned with love; he swore to me that he had not yet come to a declaration, and that perhaps he would never come to one, in order not to risk compromising his dignity. He showed me all the fond notes he had received from the King of Prussia before he was made a canon; the monarch had been positively in love with Bastiani, he wanted to become his mistress, and he recompensed him royally by the gift of an ecclesiastical laurel. The Abate was the son of a Venetian tailor, had become a Franciscan friar, and had fled from the persecution of his tyrannical superiors. Having fled to The Hague, he found the Venetian Ambassador, Tron,[76] who lent him a hundred ducats, and he went to Berlin, where the great Frederick found him worthy of his affection. It is often by such roads that men come to fortune. *Sequere Deum* ("Follow the god").[77]

At eleven o'clock in the morning on the day before my departure I went to the house of a Baroness to give her a letter from her son, who was in the King's service in Warsaw. I send in my name, and I am asked to wait for half an hour to give the lady time to dress. I sit down on a sofa beside a pretty, well-dressed girl with a cloak and a workbag; she interests me; I ask her if she is there to speak to the Baroness too.

"Yes, Monsieur; I have come to offer myself as French governess to her three young daughters."

"A governess at your age?"

"Alas, age makes no difference when one is in need. I have lost my father and my mother, my brother is a poor lieutenant who can give me no help; what do you expect me to do? I cannot live decently except by profiting from the small share of good education which I received."

"And what will you earn by the year as a governess?"

"Alas! Fifty miserable crowns to buy my clothing."

"That is very little."

"It is all one gets."

"And where are you living now?"

"With a poor aunt, where I earn my living by sewing shirts all day long."

"If instead of a children's governess you would like to become governess to a man of honor, come to live with me, and I will give you the fifty crowns, not per year but per month."

"I your governess? To your family, of course."

"I have no family, I am alone, and I am traveling. I leave for Dresden tomorrow at five o'clock in the morning, alone in my carriage, where there is a place for you if you want it. I am staying in such-and-such an inn; come with your trunk before I leave, and we will leave together."

"It's a joke, and besides I do not know you."

"I am not joking, and as for knowing me, I ask you which of the two of us has better reasons for knowing the other. We shall know each other perfectly well in twenty-four hours, it takes no longer."

My serious tone, my frank manner, convinced the girl that I was not joking; but she was utterly astonished. On my side, I felt surprised to have given a serious turn to something which I had begun only for the sake of saying something amusing. Trying to persuade the girl, I had persuaded myself; what had happened seemed to me to be within all the wise rules of folly, I was pleased to see that she was thinking about it, turning her eyes to my face from time to time to see if I was making game of her. I thought I knew what thoughts were occupying her, and I interpreted everything in her favor. She was a girl whom I was going to bring into the light of day, whom I should educate in the ways of the great world. I had no doubt either of her decency or of her feelings, and I congratulated myself on being the fortunate man who would enlighten her by destroying the false ideas she entertained on the subject of virtue. Infatuated, I take two ducats from my pocket, and I give them to her as an advance on the first month. She takes them, shy and uncertain, and finally convinced that I was not imposing on her.

The Baroness receives me, she has already read the letter through twice, she asks me countless questions about her dear son, she invites me to dine with her the next day, and she is very sorry when I tell her that I am leaving at dawn. So I thank her, I take my leave, and I go to Bastiani's, not even noticing that when I came out of the Baroness's room the young woman was no longer where I had left her.

I dined with the Abate, and after spending the whole day playing ombre,[78] we sup well, then we embrace each other, and good-by. Early the next morning everything is ready, the horses are harnessed, I set off, and a hundred paces outside the city gate my postilion stops. The window at my right being down, I see a package come in, I look, and I see the young woman, whom to tell the truth I had forgotten; my manservant opens the door for her, she sits down beside me, I find the thing done to perfection, I praise her, swearing that I had not expected such shrewdness, and we are off. She told me that she instructed the postilion a quarter of an hour earlier to stop when he saw her, and had given him the order in my name.

"You took your measures very well, for God knows what they would have said at the inn. You might even have been prevented from leaving."

"No fear of that. It won't even be known in Breslau that I left with you, unless the postilion blabs. Yet I should not have made up my mind to come if I had not taken the two ducats. I did not want to give you reason to think me an adventuress."

CHAPTER IX

My arrival in Dresden with Maton. Her present to me. Leipzig. La Castel-Bajac. Schwerin. Return to Dresden and my departure. Prague. La Calori. My arrival in Vienna. Pocchini's ambuscade.

SEEING MYSELF with this girl who had dropped from the clouds, it seemed to me that I was the venerable agent of her destiny. It was her beneficent Genius who bestowed me on her, for I was sure that I was incapable of harming her. But was it my good or my evil Genius which bestowed her on me? I could not know. So thinking, I went on my way, not wanting to reflect that I was beginning to be young no longer, and that the power to please at first sight, which I had so long possessed in such measure, was beginning to fail me.

I was certain that, if the girl had any intelligence at all, she could not have decided to come with me unless she was ready to submit to my will with no reservations; but that did not satisfy me; my fancy was to be loved, and after Zaïre I had not again found myself in the arms of love, for the actress Valville had been only a passing inclination, and the adventuress Potocka[1] in Leopol had been only a bit of hawking, the due recompense for my money. No affairs of the heart in Warsaw. I was to remember that capital only because it was there that I had had the good fortune to convince all who knew me that I valued honor above life.

The girl I had with me was named Maton;[2] it was her family name, I did not trouble to find out her Christian name. Since she spoke French very well, I asked her if she wrote it as well, and she showed me a letter she had written which proved to me that she had had a good education. She told me that she had left Breslau not only without asking anyone's advice but without even telling her aunt and her cousin that they might not see her again.

"And your clothes?"

"My clothes weren't worth gathering together. In this package I have a shift, a pair of stockings, handkerchiefs, and some rags."

"What will your lover say? For it is impossible that you do not have one."

"Alas, I have no lover. I have had two; the first was a scoundrel who seduced me and abandoned me; the second, who was honest but a poor lieutenant, left a year ago because he was sent to join the regiment which is in garrison in Stettin."

Nothing was simpler than her story, and nothing had more the appearance of truth. I supposed that the girl had left with me only to seek a fortune, or at least a competence. At the age of twenty, having never left Breslau, she must be curious to see what the rest of the world was like, and she must be delighted to begin with Dresden. I saw very well that I had done a very foolish thing in taking on this burden, for Maton was bound to cost me a great deal of money, but I thought I could be excused, for when I proposed to her that she come with me, the odds were a hundred to one against her accepting my proposal. Despite these reflections, I congratulated myself on the pleasure I should take in being alone in the company of a pretty girl, all of whose merit I should discover in a few days; and in order for the discovery to be complete, I decide to attempt nothing with her on the journey; I wanted to see if her qualities would make me fall in love with her, for as yet I was only curious. So at nightfall I stopped at a post station where I saw that I should find a good supper and a good bed. Maton, who was dying of hunger, and who had not dared to tell me so, ate with ravenous appetite, and, not accustomed to wine, she would have fallen asleep at the table if I had not asked her to retire to her bed, which she did, repeatedly begging me to excuse her and assuring me that it should not happen again. She had not slept at all on the previous night, and she had eaten only bread for supper. Laughing at it all, I remained at the table, not even turning around to see if she got into bed dressed or undressed. I went to bed two or three minutes later, and I rose at five o'clock to order horses and coffee. Maton was dressed and asleep, sweating in great drops. It was the end of June. She woke slowly, finding it difficult to recover her senses.

"Get up, get up; you are very pretty, but another time undress, for you must be soaked to the skin."

She quickly put her feet in her slippers and hurried out of the room, coming back later much more at ease, dropping me a curtsy, wishing me good morning, and asking me if I would kiss her.

"Yes, and with great pleasure; sit down, we must eat breakfast quickly, for I want to be in Dresden this evening."

But something wrong with the carriage having made me lose five hours, we did not arrive there until the next day. Maton got into bed undressed, and I had the firmness not even to look at her.

Arrived in Dresden, I took the whole apartment on the second floor of the inn[3] on the square. I at once went to see my mother, who was in the country, and who was overjoyed to see me with my arm in a sling, which made a dramatic picture; then I saw my brother Giovanni and his Roman wife Teresa Roland,[4] whom I had known before he did and who made much of me; then I saw my sister, the wife of Peter August;[5] and after that I went with my brother to make my bow to the Starost Count Brühl, and his wife, the daughter of the Palatine of Kiowia, who was delighted to hear news of her family. Everyone made much of me, and I had to tell the story of my duel everywhere; I was glad to tell it, for I was proud of it.

The Estates[6] were assembled in Dresden at the time. The Elector who now reigns being then in his minority, Prince Xaver, the eldest of his uncles, was Regent.[7] He is the Count von der Lausitz who is still alive and who has children by a Spinucci[8] whom he married and whom he was courting at that time; she was a lady in waiting to the Dowager Electress.[9] Toward nightfall that evening I went to the Italian *opera buffa,* where there was a bank at faro,[10] and where I began playing, but with restraint, for my entire wealth consisted in eight hundred ducats. It was at the faro bank that I made the acquaintance of the unfortunate Agdollo,[11] who then did not look unfortunate. Young, with intelligence and courage, he was already a major, and the valor he had shown in war had won him general esteem. In addition, he was secretly the husband of the widowed Countess Rutowska.[12] This amiable man, who would be a Lieutenant-General today, had the misfortune to become involved in a very dangerous intrigue, together with the widowed Electress, mother of the Elector, whom she hated. Agdollo was imprisoned in Königstein,[13] where he still is after nearly thirty years, for the reigning Elector, so it is said, showed clemency in sparing him from the death penalty which was his due in punishment for his crime

The evening of the first day I was in Dresden Maton greatly pleased me at supper. I asked her gently and fondly if she would sleep in my bed, and she replied that it was what she wanted, so the nuptials were celebrated, and we rose the next morning the best friends in the world. I spent the whole morning furnishing her with everything she needed: dress, shifts, stockings, petticoats, bonnets, shoes—everything, in short, for she had nothing. I had many visitors; but I shut her up in her room, replying to those who asked to see her that I would do her that honor if she were my wife but, since she was only my housekeeper, I did not want to introduce her to society. For this reason she never let anyone who came to see me enter my apartment when I was not there. I had forbidden her to do so, and she made no objection to it. She worked in her room on the linen I had had made for her, with a young girl who helped her, and whom I paid so that she should not be bored by being left alone all day long. Sometimes, however, I took her with me for a walk outside Dresden, and then she could speak to any friends of mine who met me and joined us in our walks.

This secretiveness on my part, which continued for all of the two weeks the girl remained with me, began to nettle all the young officers in Dresden, and especially Count Bellegarde,[14] who was not accustomed to finding a girl to his taste and being denied her when he took steps to obtain her. Young, handsome, daring, generous, he came into my room one day just as I was sitting down at table with her and asked me for dinner, so I could neither refuse him nor send Maton to her room. Throughout dinner he teased her good-naturedly with military jokes, which I accompanied by others, but always keeping within the bounds which it was his duty to observe. Maton behaved very well, neither playing the prude nor departing from the respect which she owed to me and to herself.

It being my habit to take a siesta, I bluntly asked the Count to leave half an hour after we rose from table. He asked me with a laugh if Mademoiselle took one too, and I answered that she did. At that, going for his sword, he invited me to dinner the next day with Maton; I told him that I did not take her to dinner anywhere, but that he was free to come and take potluck with me at dinner every day, where he would certainly find me with her. At this refusal, to which he did not know what to answer, he took his leave, if not angrily at least very coldly. In this way I spent a week, very well pleased with Maton.

My mother having come back from the country, I went to see her the next day. She lived on the fourth floor of a house[15] from which, since it was not very far from my inn, I saw the *Erker*[16] (that is, the projecting bay) of the apartment I occupied. I chance to look there, and at one of the windows of the *Erker* I see Maton, standing sewing and at the same time talking to Monsieur de Bellegarde, who was at the window of a room near to the one with the *Erker,* which formed the corner and which did not belong to me though it belonged to the same inn. This discovery makes me laugh; I was sure I had not been seen, and I had decided, as on other occasions, that I would not let myself be cuckolded. My jealousy was more of the mind than of the heart.

Two hours later I go to dine in high spirits, Maton being equally gay. Turning the conversation to Bellegarde, I tell her that he is certainly in love with her; she replies that flirting was the habit of all officers and that she did not believe he was more in love with her than with any other girl.

"What? Did he not come here this morning to call on me?"

"Certainly not. And if he had come, the little girl would have gone to the door to tell him you were not at home."

"But when the guard was changed did you not see him walking about the square under our windows?"

"Certainly not."

It was all I needed. Maton was keeping her secret; I should be a cuckold in twenty-four hours if I did not at once do something to prevent it. I dissimulate perfectly, I do not change my humor. I give Maton some caresses after coffee, I leave, I go to the theater, I play with some success; I return to my inn at the second act; it was still light. At the door of the inn I find one of the inn servants, I ask him if there are other rooms on the second floor besides the four I was occupying, and he replies that there are two more, with windows giving on the street.

"Excellent. Tell your master that I want those too."

"They have been taken since last evening."

"Who took them?"

"A Swiss officer who is in the service and who will sup there tonight with some other officers."

I say no more, to keep him from becoming suspicious; but it was a fact that nothing was easier than to pass from the window of the room in question to the bay by way of the window which was close to the other. In addition, there was a door in the room itself, in which I often had Maton sleep with the little girl when I did not want to have her sleep with me. The door was fastened with a bolt on our side; but she was there, and with keys it could be opened from the farther side.

I go up, I go to see Maton, who was sitting precisely in the bay, where a pleasantly cool breeze was blowing. After speaking of other things, I told her that I wanted to change rooms.

"You shall occupy mine, and I will come here, where in the morning I shall enjoy the delightful coolness."

She praises my idea, adding that it will not prevent her from coming to sew in the *Erker* in the afternoon.

From this reply I see that Maton is as clever as I am. I no longer loved her. I have her bed taken to the next room and mine put where hers had been, together with my table and all my papers. We sup gaily, and though I have not invited Maton to come to bed with me she has not the shadow of an idea of my change of humor. I go to sleep in my new room, I hear the voices of Bellegarde and of those who are drinking with him, I go to the window in the *Erker*, and I see the curtains in the windows of the other room drawn, which was supposed to show me that there was no plot afoot; but I learned afterward that Mercury had informed Jupiter that Amphitryon had changed his room.[17]

The next morning a bad headache, to which I was not usually subject, made me spend the day in the house; I had myself bled, and my kind mother came to keep me company and to dine with Maton. She was fond of her, she had several times asked me to send her to keep her company, and I would never do it. The day after the bleeding, my head being very heavy, I took a dose of medicine. That night when I went to bed I found myself attacked by a love token whose symptoms were very ugly. I knew enough about it not to be mistaken. Extremely chagrined, I am convinced that it can only be a present from Maton, for after the time at Leopol I had had to do with no other woman. I spend the night very angry with the trollop, I rise at daybreak, I go into her room, I draw the curtains, she wakes, I sit down on her bed, I throw off the sheet, and I pull from under her a towel folded double, the sight of which disgusts me. After that, she not daring to hinder me, I examine all that I had not taken the trouble to examine before, and I see a hideous pesthouse. She confesses with tears that she has had the malady for six months; but that she had believed she had not infected me with it because she had always taken great care to keep clean and to wash herself each time she foresaw that I would make love to her.

"Wash yourself, you wretch! Look at what you have done to me. You have robbed me of my one treasure, my health. But no one must know it, for it is my own fault and I am ashamed of it. Meanwhile get up, and you will see how kind I am."

She gets up; I have a trunk packed for her with all the things I had had made for her, and I send my servant to another inn to see if there is a small room to be rented for her. He goes, and he comes back to tell me that at the inn on the great square[18] there is a small room on the fifth floor at four groschen a day. I tell him to wait outside, and I tell Maton that she must go there at once, for she could no longer live with me. I let her weep, and I give her fifty crowns, telling her that she is free to spend them where and as she wishes, for I want to hear no more of her, and I make her give me a receipt truthfully setting forth the circumstances, humiliating as they were for her. She had to submit when she saw that I was ready to send her away without giving her a copper. She copied everything I wanted her to sign.

"What am I to do here where I know nobody?"

"If you want to go to Breslau I will send you there without its costing you a copper."

She made no answer. I sent her to her new room with her possessions, turning my back on her when I saw her go down on her knees, thinking it would move me. I performed this act of justice without being troubled by the slightest feeling of pity, for what she had done, and what she was engaged in doing, showed me that she was a little monster who would perhaps in one way or another have cost me my life.

I left the inn on the next day but one, renting for six months at thirty-five crowns the whole second floor of the house in which my mother was living, putting into it the furniture I needed to take the great cure, for the glands in my groins were swollen and hard. Maton's ablutions had the effect that she did not infect me with gonorrhea but sent all the poison into my blood, which finally had to show itself. If it had delayed another week or two I should have been as ill as I had been at Augsburg and at Wesel. The answer I made to all those who asked me for news of my housekeeper was perfectly simple. She was a servant whom I had dismissed and in whom I took no more interest.

It was a week later that my brother Giovanni came to tell me that Bellegarde and four or five other young men, whom he named to me, were in the care of a physician, reduced to a very bad state by my housekeeper.

"I am sorry for them; but it is their fault. Why did they expose themselves to it?"

"She is a girl who came to Dresden with you."

"And whom I have dismissed. It is enough for me that they had nothing to do with her during the time she was living with me. Tell these young men that if they complain of me they are in the wrong; and that they are wrong to make their shame known. Let them learn to be wise, and let them go about being cured in silence. Otherwise, sensible people will laugh at them, and they will look like fools. Do you agree with me?"

"The thing does not do you honor."

"That I know; and so I do not boast of it, for I am not fool enough to make it public. They must be very stupid. If they had any intelligence they should have supposed that I could not but have had very good reasons for dismissing her so suddenly, and hence have suspected everything and kept away from the monster. They deserve the disease she has given them."

"They are all amazed that you are in good health."

"Go console them; tell them you have seen me in the state in which you see me, but that no one has heard a word of it, for I am not a fool."

Seeing that he was proved a fool himself, he left, and I submitted to remedies which, by the middle of August, made me as healthy as I had been when I left Warsaw. About this time the Princess Straznikowa,[19] Prince Adam Czartoryski's sister, came to Dresden; Count Brühl gave her lodging. I made my bow to her, and I learned from her own lips that her royal cousin had been weak enough to let himself be imposed on by calumny. I told her that I was of Ariosto's opinion, who wrote that the virtues were estimable only under the veil of constancy.

"Did you notice, Princess, that the last time I ate with the King at your table, His Majesty was pleased to pretend that he did not see me?"

"Certainly I noticed it."

"I feel sorry for the monarch who at that moment became unworthy of the esteem of a philosopher. You are going to Vienna now, and to Paris next year. You will see me there, Princess, and you shall write the King your cousin that you would not have seen me there if I had been hanged in effigy."

The September fair[20] at Leipzig being a brilliant occasion, I wanted to be there in order to regain my weight by eating larks.[21] Playing with careful economy at Dresden, though always punting, I won three or four hundred ducats, so that I went to Leipzig with a letter of credit for three thousand crowns on the banker Hohmann,[22] who introduced me to an intelligent octogenarian who was High Commissioner[23] of the Saxon mines. It was from this worthy man that I learned something which is only a trifle but which is remarkable because no Russian knows it. The Empress Catherine II, whom all Russia and all those who saw her believed to be a brunette and even to have very black hair, was a blonde. The Commissioner, who had seen her at Stettin every day for three years from the year she was seven to the year she was ten, told me that at that time her hair began to be combed with lead combs, which have the property of coloring the hair black. This was done because from then on she was destined to be the wife of the Duke of Holstein, who was the unfortunate Peter III. It was the settled policy at the Russian Court to do everything possible to make the reigning family brunette rather than blonde, a color which is too common in Russia and therefore is not liked there. For this reason steps were taken to darken the hair of the august and immortal Catherine, who did so many fine things without caring that the cost of them impoverished her vast Empire. She would have had to live another ten years in peace in order to make up for her extravagance.

An adventure which I had in Leipzig, and which I still remember with pleasure, was that Princess Auersperg,[24] having arrived from Vienna and put up at the same hostelry in which I was staying,[25] took a notion to go to the fair incognito. Having a large suite with her, she made one of her chambermaids act the part of Princess, and she followed her, acting that of chambermaid. I suppose the reader knows that she was extremely pretty, that she had a very pleasant wit, and that she had been the favorite of the Emperor Francis I. Having been informed of this masquerade, I leave the inn at the same time she does, and when the false Princess stops at a shop to look at the fine jewels which were there I approach the real Princess, who did not know me, and speaking to her as unceremoniously as one speaks to a chambermaid, I ask her if it is true that that lady there is the celebrated Princess Auersperg.

"Certainly she is."

"I find it hard to believe, for she is not pretty, and besides she has not the look of a Princess."

"Apparently you do not know very much about Princesses."

"I know so much about them that I will tell you it is you who have the look of one, for the devil take me if I would not give you a hundred ducats to spend the night with you."

"A hundred ducats? It would serve you right if I took you at your word; but then you would break it."

"No. Try me. I am staying in the same inn as you are. Think of a way, and I will make you the present in advance, as soon as I am sure that I shall have you, for you might play me one of the tricks of your trade."

"Very well; say nothing, and try to speak to me at the inn before or after supper, and if you are brave enough to take some risks we will spend the night together."

"What is your name?"

"Carline."

Sure that nothing would come of it, but delighted to have amused the Princess and to have let her know that she pleased me, I think of going on with the role of dupe which I had begun so well. After eating a bite in the public room downstairs, I go up, and I hover about the Princess's apartment, stopping three or four times as I pass the door of the room in which her real chambermaids were. One of them asks me if I want something.

"No, Mademoiselle; excuse me; I was looking to see if I saw one of you with whom I talked at the fair, but I imagine she is busy."

"It must be Carline. She is waiting on the Princess at table. She will come out in half an hour."

I go up to my room; a half hour later I go down again, and the same chambermaid tells me to hide in a closet which she shows me, to which Carline will come in a moment. I go there, the closet was dark, I wait, and Carline arrives. I was sure that it was the real Carline; but I continue to play my role. No sooner has she come in than she takes me by my free hand [26] and says in a very low voice that I have only to stay there and she will come without fail as soon as her mistress has been put to bed.

"Without a light?"

"No light. People going up and down in the house would see that there was someone."

"Without a light I have no weapon, my charming Carline. Then too, this is not a place to spend at least five or six hours in. Do this. The first room at the top of that staircase is mine. I will be alone, and I assure you that no one will come in; go up there, and you will make me happy. I have the hundred ducats here."

"It is impossible. I shouldn't dare go up for a million."

"Too bad. Nor will I stay here all night, where there is nothing but a chair, for a million. Good-by, beautiful Carline."

"Wait. Let me go out first."

She hurries out; but I take care to catch hold of her dress; so when she tried to shut the door she could not. I went out with her, she going to the left to her room and I to the right to the stairs up to mine. Delighted with the adventure, in which I had carried off the victory, I went to bed the most contented of men. It is clear that their intention was either to cheat me out of a hundred ducats or to lock me in the closet and leave me there all night.

At noon on the next day but one, as I was bargaining for a pair of lace cuffs, Princess Auersperg entered the same shop, escorted by Count Zinzendorf,[27] whose acquaintance I had made in Paris at La Cavamacchie's[28] twelve years earlier. Just as I was withdrawing to make room for the Princess, the Count recognized me, spoke to me of those days in Paris, and asked me who was the Casanova who had fought a duel six months before in Warsaw.

"Alas, it is I. Here is my arm still in a sling."

"Aha! I congratulate you. The story of your duel must be interesting."

He then presents me to the Princess, asking her if she had heard of the duel.

"Oh, I have read of it in the gazettes. So this is the gentleman. I am delighted," she said to me, "to have made your acquaintance."

She showed no sign of recognizing me; and, as was only proper, I was as discreet as she. In the afternoon I paid a call on the Count, who asked me to go with him to the Princess, who would be delighted to hear the story of my strange adventure from my own lips, and I did so with great pleasure. The Princess, listening to my story most attentively, continued to play the role she had assumed, and even her chambermaids did not look at me. She left the next day.

At the end of the fair I saw in my room the beautiful Castel-Bajac.[29] I was about to sit down at table alone to revel in eating a dozen larks and then go to bed.

"You here, Madame?"

"Alas yes, unfortunately for me. I have been here three weeks; I have seen you a score of times, and we have always avoided you."

"'We'?"

"Schwerin."[30]

"He is here?"

"Here, and in prison because of a forged bill of exchange which could not be falser and which he discounted, and I don't know what they will do to him. The poor wretch should at least have run away; but he would not. The man is absolutely determined to get himself hanged."

"And you have been with him ever since you left England? That was three years ago."

"Exactly. Stealing everywhere, cheating, deceiving, escaping, and I don't know what else. There is not an unhappier woman in the world than I. The forged bill of exchange is only for three hundred crowns. Forget everything, Casanova, do a noble act, save a man of illustrious birth from the gallows or the galleys, and my unhappy self from death, for I will kill myself in despair."

"Madame, I will let him be hanged, for he tried to get me hanged too with the forged bank notes; but I admit that you arouse my pity. In proof of which I invite you to come to Dresden with me day after tomorrow and I promise you three hundred crowns as soon as the scoundrel has been made to suffer what his destiny decrees for him. I do not understand how such a woman as you can have fallen in love with a man who has neither looks nor intelligence nor talent. His only asset consists in the name Schwerin."

"Then let me tell you that I have never been in love with him. Since that other scoundrel Castel-Bajac—who, by the way, was never my husband—introduced him to me, I never lived with him except under compulsion, and often touched by his tears and moved by his despair. I will tell you further that, despite my face and my character, which does not declare me vicious, I have never found a decent man who has seriously offered me a settled income to live with him. I assure you I would have accepted it, and that I would have left the wretch who will one day or another be the cause of my death."

"Where are you lodging?"

"Nowhere at the moment. Everything I had was taken, and I was put out into the street. Have pity on me."

So saying, she threw herself on her knees before me, and she broke into such a flood of tears that her grief went to my soul. The inn servant stood there in amazement, watching the scene and waiting for me to order him to serve me supper. My own manservant had gone to Dresden at my order. She was one of the prettiest women in all France, she was perhaps twenty-six years of age, she was the wife of an apothecary in Montpellier when Castel-Bajac had seduced her. She had made no impression on me in London because I was then too much in love with another;[31] but the woman had everything a woman could have to please me

I force her to rise, I tell her she has touched me, I promise to help her; but I insist that she calm herself and even eat a bite with me. The waiter, admiring my noble action, goes to fetch another table service, and has a bed put in my own bedroom, which made me want to laugh.

The unfortunate woman, eating with wonderful appetite, though very melancholy, reminded me of the Matron of Ephesus.[32] It was after supper that I gave her her choice: either I would do nothing for her and leave her to her fate in Leipzig, or I would try to recover all her possessions, take her to Dresden with me, provide her with everything she needed, and pay her a hundred gold ducats when I was sure that she would not give them to the wretch who had reduced her to the state she was in. She did not think long before accepting the second choice; she gave me a sound and sensible reason, which was that if she stayed in Leipzig, she did not see how she could be of any use to the unfortunate man or how she herself could survive even for twenty-four hours, for she had not a copper or anything to sell. She was reduced to beggary or to turn prostitute. She made a still more sensible reflection. She said that if I gave her the hundred ducats then and there, and if she used them to get the poor prisoner released, she would still be in a wretched situation, not knowing how to leave, or, if she left, where to go. She said that all her possessions were in the hands of the proprietor of the inn in which she had stayed for three weeks, and that he might give them back if he were paid what was owed him, disregarding the order of sequestration which the banker who had discounted the bill of exchange had obtained upon all her effects. I promised that on the next day I would find a clever man who would try to do all that, and after embracing her I told her to go to bed. But here is what surprised me.

"I foresee," she said, "that either from inclination or from politeness you may approach me to demand a recompense which is certainly your due, and which I would grant you from both inclination and gratitude; but I must not wait for that moment to tell you something as repulsive for you as it is humiliating for me. Look at this shift, and divine what condition I am in."

Striking my head with my hand, I answered her only with:

"Go to bed, Madame, you deserve a better fate."

I still do not know to this day if I should have taken the risk of losing my health again, recently as I had been cured of the same disease, without first making investigations which would reassure me, but it is certain that it would have been in her power to deceive me, and that this fresh misfortune would have greatly degraded me in my own eyes and perhaps have disgusted me with life once and for all. This Frenchwoman had delicacy and an excellent heart, an unkind gift which nature had made her, which was the cause of all her misfortune.

The next morning I found an honest broker, who as soon as I explained the matter to him undertook to persuade the innkeeper to return everything which might belong to the lady upon payment of what was due him, leaving him all the sequestered articles which belonged to the imprisoned Count. He came back to the coffeehouse an hour later to tell me that the thing was done if I would give him sixty crowns. He assured me that he would see to it that he was given everything of hers, together with her trunk, which he would at once have carried to my inn. It was this broker whom I instructed to inform me in Dresden of all that happened to the Count. A half-hour after I returned to my inn the trunk arrived, in which the poor woman found all her clothes which she had never hoped to see again; she could not find words enough to express her gratitude to me, and she deplored her condition, which prevented her from showing me all that she felt for me.

This is natural: a woman of feeling thinks she cannot do anything more for a man who has done her a kindness than give herself to him body and soul. I believe that a man thinks differently; the reason is that man is made to give, woman to receive.

The next morning, an hour before we left, the broker came to tell us that the banker whom Schwerin had cheated had sent an express to Berlin to ask the Minister if the King would object to his proceeding according to all the rigor of the law against the Count, whose family had so many titles to respect.

"It is," said La Castel-Bajac, "the death blow which Schwerin has always feared. He is done for. The King will pay, but he will send him to end his days in Spandau.[33] Would that he had been imprisoned there four years ago!"

She left with me, very happy and full of gratitude when I told her I had a house, that she would live with me, and that I would at once put her in the care of a surgeon whose skill I knew from experience. She assured me that it was Schwerin himself who had made her the present only a month before at Frankfurt, and that he was even more ill than she, lying in prison as he was, where he must be worse off than in hell, since he had not a copper or a shirt to change into. Such was the state to which a man could find himself reduced. The reflection made me tremble

At Dresden my appearance with the lady caused great surprise. She did not look like a girl of Maton's sort, she was presentable, she had distinction, her manner was modest and inspired respect; I gave her the name of Countess Blasin,[34] I introduced her to my mother and all my relatives, I gave her my room, removing to the one on the back, and I made the surgeon to whose care I confided her swear silence; he had to say that he was still coming for me, since I was not completely cured of my severe illness. I took her with me to the theater, I enjoyed making her play the part of a person of consideration. What consoled her was that she did not have to undergo the great cure. Two pints a day of a cooling infusion of herbs restored her to perfect health. Toward the end of November she found herself so well that she thought she could invite me to sleep with her. I could believe her, and I desired it. Our nuptials were a secret of which no one knew. At this time I received a letter from the broker giving us the news that the cheated banker had been paid by order of the King, and that the Count had been taken to Berlin under guard. Six weeks later[35] I learned in Vienna, when I was no longer with La Castel-Bajac, that the King had had him imprisoned in Spandau, where, if he has not died there, he must still be.

The time having come when I must pay a hundred ducats to the beauty, with whom I had fallen really in love, for she was as sensible and sweet as she was beautiful, I told her so. I told her too, sincerely and frankly, that both my heart and my mind commanded me to go to Portugal, and that I could not go there in the company of a beautiful woman except at the risk of my good fortune, besides which the very long and costly journey would be beyond my resources. La Castel-Bajac had so many proofs of my fondness that she could not believe I had tired of her or wanted to get rid of her in order to live with another woman. She told me that she owed me everything, and that I owed her nothing; but that if I wanted to do her one last kindness I should give her the means to return to Montpellier. She had relatives there, she was sure they would not abandon her, and she hoped to go back to her husband. I gave her my word of honor that I would send her back to her native city.

I left Dresden with her in the middle of December, having only four hundred ducats at my disposal, because luck had been against me at the faro bank and because my journey to Leipzig with all that followed on it had cost me three hundred ducats. I told my beauty nothing of these difficulties, I thought only of seeing that she wanted for nothing and of giving her continual proofs of my affection. We stopped for four days in Prague,[36] and we arrived in Vienna on Christmas Day. We went to lodge at the "Red Ox,"[37] Mademoiselle Blasin, Modiste, in one room, I in another next to it, which, however, did not prevent me from going in to sleep with her. No later than eight o'clock the next morning two men enter La Blasin's room just as I was taking coffee with her.

"Who are you, Madame?"

"My name is Blasin."

"Who is this gentleman?"

"Ask him."

"What are you doing in Vienna?"

"I am taking coffee, as you see."

"If the gentleman is not your husband, you shall leave within twenty-four hours."

"The gentleman is only a friend of mine, and I will not leave until I see fit, unless I am driven out by force."

"Very well. We know, Monsieur, that you have another room, but it makes no difference."

One of the two police then enters my room, and I follow him.

"What do you want?"

"I am looking at your bed, which shows no sign of having been unmade; you slept with your friend."

"Damnation! I did not go to bed, either alone or with anyone. What is this accursed spying?"

He returns to La Blasin's room, and they both go, repeating the order to her to leave within twenty-four hours. I tell La Blasin to dress quickly and to go to tell the French Ambassador[38] the whole story, continuing to say that her name is Blasin, that she is unmarried, that she is a modiste, and that she is only waiting for the first opportunity to go on to Strassburg, from there to Lyons, and from Lyons to Montpellier. While waiting for her to get dressed, I engage a carriage and I hire a lackey. La Blasin goes to the Ambassador, tells him everything in accordance with my instructions, and comes back an hour later to tell me that his answer to her had been not to worry and not to think of leaving until she saw fit. I dress, I take her to mass, then I dine with her, and not wanting to go out, for the weather was bad, I spend the whole day by the fire with her, she having decided to take a place in the coach which left for Strassburg.

At eight o'clock the innkeeper comes up and tells her that he has been ordered to give her a room which does not adjoin mine, and that he must obey. She laughs, and she tells him that she is quite ready. I ask him if she had to sup alone too, and he replies that he has received no order as to that. I then tell him that I will go to her room to sup with her. The coach for Strassburg was to leave on the 30th, and the innkeeper himself undertook to reserve a place for her. But despite this infamous tyranny, I ate and slept with her on all the four nights she spent in Vienna. I wanted to force her to accept fifty louis, but she would take only thirty, convincing me that she would still arrive in Montpellier with some louis in her pocket. She wrote to me from Strassburg, and after that I had no news of her until I saw her again in Montpellier, as I shall relate in the proper place.

On the first day of the year 1767 I engaged an apartment in the house of Monsieur Schrötter,[39] and I took my letters to Madame de Salmour,[40] Mistress of the Household to the Archduchess Marianne,[41] and to Madame Starhemberg.[42] Then I went to see the elder Calzabigi,[43] who was working for the Ministry under the orders of Prince Kaunitz.[44] I often went to see Metastasio,[45] and to the theater every day when Vestris[46] danced; the young Emperor[47] had sent to Paris for him in order to see what his beautiful dancing was. On the 7th or 8th of January I saw the Empress, his mother, come to the theater dressed all in black. Everyone clapped. It was the first time she had appeared in public since the Emperor's death. In Vienna I found the Count de la Pérouse,[48] who was petitioning the Empress for the repayment of a half million florins which his father had lent to Charles VI. With the Count I made the acquaintance of the Spaniard Las Casas,[49] a nobleman of great intelligence, and, a rare thing, without prejudices. At the Count's I also found the Venetian Uccelli,[50] with whom I had attended the Seminary of San Cipriano in Murano, who was then in Vienna as Secretary of Embassy with the Ambassador Polo Renier,[51] who died the Doge. The Ambassador, a man of intelligence, esteemed me; but my situation with the State Inquisitors kept him from receiving me. During this time my good friend Campioni arrived from Warsaw by way of Cracow. I was very glad to put him up. He was to go to London to mount ballets; but he had time to spend a couple of months with me.

Prince Charles of Kurland, who had spent a month in Venice during the summer, and whom Signor Bragadin and the two other friends[52] to whom I had recommended him had treated with the greatest esteem and friendship, had spent two months in Vienna and had left it two weeks before my arrival to return to Venice, where the Duke of Württemberg,[53] who died two years ago, was making a great stir. He was there openly, and he was spending immense sums. Prince Charles wrote me letters in which he tried to make me feel all his gratitude. He assured me that in all Europe he had never known persons more estimable than the three friends of mine to whom I had sent him. It was as much as to tell me that he and all his possessions were at my disposal until the day of his death.

So I was living in Vienna perfectly at ease, amusing myself and in good health, and still planning to go to Portugal in the spring. I saw no company, either good or bad, I went to the theaters, and often to dinner at Calzabigi's, who made a show of his atheism and who was forever shamelessly belittling Metastasio, who despised him; but Calzabigi did not care. A great political calculator, he was Prince Kaunitz's familiar spirit.

One day after dinner when I was still at table amusing myself with my dear Campioni, a pretty girl[54] twelve or thirteen years of age steals into my apartment, bold and timid, dropping me a curtsy, and sure that she will not be ill received, for on her face was the fatal letter of recommendation which calms every man, even the most savage. I ask her what she wants, and she replies in Latin heroic verse. She asks me for charity, and she says that her mother is in my anteroom and will come in if I wish it. I reply in Latin prose that I do not care to see her mother, and I tell her the reason plainly; she replies by four verses which, being inappropriate, show me that she had committed everything she had said to me to memory, not even knowing what she was saying. She goes on to tell me in verse that her mother must come in, because she would be put in prison if the Commissioners of Chastity had reason to suspect that, being alone with her, I was f . . . ing her.

This broad term, uttered in good Latin, makes me burst out laughing and rouses in me a desire to explain to her in her mother tongue what she has said to me. She tells me that she is Venetian, which, making me even more curious, leads me to say in our beautiful dialect that the spies could not suspect her of having come to my room to do what she had said, for she was still too young. To this objection, after thinking a little, she recited ten or twelve lines from the *Priapeia*[55] to the effect that fruit slightly green excites the palate more than fruit which is ripe. It took no more to make me ardent; Campioni, seeing that he is in the way, goes to his room.

I ask her if her father is in Vienna, and she says that he is, and she does not take fright at what my hand is doing to her even as I ask her questions. I come to something which is everything, though not yet fully formed, and, all smiles, she recites some verses in honor of the instrument of propagation and the act of love. I find it admirable, I make an end, and I dismiss her with two ducats. There are more verses to thank me, and an address in German, which was that of her house, accompanied by four Latin verses in which she told me that if I came there to go to bed with her I should find her Hebe or Ganymede[56] as I chose.

I admire the ingenious contrivance of the Venetian who was the girl's father to make his living by her. She was very pretty; but there are so many pretty girls in Vienna that they are almost all of them poor. He had made his surprising by this hocus-pocus; but in Vienna it could not go on very long. Toward dusk the next day I take a notion to go on foot to see the girl, who perhaps did not know what she had promised in the address she had left me. At the age of forty-two years, despite all my experience, I am so rash as to walk alone along the boulevard to which the address told me to go. She sees me from the window, and, guessing that I am looking for her house, she calls to me, she shows me the door, I enter, I go upstairs, and I see the vile thief, the infamous Pocchini.[57] It was too late for me to retreat; turning round and leaving would have made me seem to be running away, and I never even thought of it. I saw there his supposed wife Catina,[58] two Slavonians[59] armed with sabers, and the decoy duck. All desire to amuse myself having gone, I choose the wise course of dissimulating, intending to leave five or six minutes later.

Pocchini, swearing and blaspheming, begins reproaching me for the harshness with which I had treated him in England, he says that the time for his revenge has come, and that my life is in his hands. The horrible Slavonian who seemed to be the master, for the other looked like a servant, says to me that we must make peace, hands me a chair, opens a bottle, and insists that we drink. I decline; Pocchini, walking up and down the room like a madman, says that I refuse to drink so that I shall not have to pay for the bottle, I say he is mistaken, that I am ready to pay, and I put my right hand in my pocket to take a ducat from my purse without taking my purse from my pocket. The Slavonian says that I can take out my purse without fear of being robbed of it, for I am among honest people. At that I take out my purse, and, since I have difficulty untying it because I have my other hand in a sling, the Slavonian takes it from me, Pocchini tears it from his hands and says that it belongs to him to repay him in part for all that I had made him lose. I laugh, I say that it is at his disposal, and I rise to leave. The Slavonian wants me to embrace him; I reply that there is no need of that, and he draws his saber and the other does the same. I thought my last moment had come. I embraced them all, and I was astonished when they let me leave. I returned to my lodging more dead than alive, not knowing what to do. I went to bed.

CHAPTER X

I receive an order to leave Vienna. The Empress modifies it but does not revoke it. Zawoiski in Munich. My stay in Augsburg. Piece of bravado in Ludwigsburg. The gazetteer at Cologne. My arrival in Aix-la-Chapelle.

THE GREATEST mistake one can make in punishing a scoundrel is to let him outlive the punishment, for it is little short of certain that, once punished, he will think of nothing but taking a scoundrel's revenge. If I had had any kind of weapon I would have defended myself, but the cutthroats would have hacked me to pieces and taken my watches, my snuffbox, and everything I had, and the courts would have done nothing to them, for they would have put my body out of the house. At eight o'clock Campioni came to my bedside and was greatly astonished at the story. Without indulging himself in blaming the victim, as all fools do when they hear someone complain of some flagrant wrong to which he has been subjected, he seconds me in thinking of ways to obtain justice for me and to get back my purse; but we foresee that they will all prove useless, for the scoundrels can take refuge in denying everything. There were no witnesses except the cutthroats themselves, and the woman and the girl could only have agreed with them.

Nevertheless, the next day I write the whole veracious story of the affair, beginning with the girl who recited Latin verses; then I make a fair copy of them, intending to present the whole to the Chief of Police or to the criminal magistrate, according to what an advocate to whom I should go would tell me.

I dine, and just as I was about to go out in my carriage, a policeman comes and orders me to go to speak with Count Schrattenbach,[1] who was called the Statthalter. I reply by telling him to inform my coachman of the place to which he is to take me, adding that I will go there immediately.

I enter a room in which I see a fat man standing, and a number of others, at some distance from him, who seem to be there only to carry out his orders. As soon as he sees me he holds a watch before my eyes and tells me to take note of the hour.

"I see it."

"Very well. If tomorrow at this same time you are here, I will have you shown out of Vienna by force."

"Why do you give me this order, than which nothing could be more unjust?"

"In the first place, I am not accountable to you; and I can tell you in the second place that you would not receive the order if you had not broken Her Majesty's laws which forbid gambling and which condemn sharpers to hard labor. Do you recognize this purse, do you recognize these cards?"

I had no idea what the cards were; but I recognize my purse, which must contain no more than a quarter of the gold which was in it when it was taken from me. Furious at the calumny, I reply only by handing him the statement I had written in four pages. The hangman reads it, then he laughs, saying that I had a reputation for being intelligent, that it was known who I was, why I had been expelled from Warsaw, and finally that the whole story I had given him to read was nothing but a pack of lies, which common sense rejected because they had no probability.

"In short, you shall leave," he repeats, "within the time I have prescribed, and I want to know now where you will go."

"I will not tell you until I have made up my mind to leave."

"What! You dare to tell me that you will not obey me?"

"It is yourself who have given me the choice by saying that if I do not leave willingly you will make me leave by force."

"Very well. I have already been told that you have a brain; but it will be of no use to you here. I advise you to avoid harsh treatment and to leave."

"Be so good as to give me back my written statement."

"I will give you back nothing. Go."

That, my dear reader, was one of the terrible moments which I have had in my life and which make me tremble every time I remember them. It was only a cowardly love of life which stopped me from quickly unsheathing my sword and running it through the body of that fat pig of a Statthalter of Vienna, who was disposing of me in this fashion.

Returning to my inn, I think of going to inform Prince Kaunitz[2] of the matter, though he did not know me. I proceed there, I go upstairs, and a footman tells me to wait where I am. He was to pass there on his way to dinner, followed by all his guests. It was five o'clock.

I see the Prince appear, and I notice following him Signor Polo Renier, Ambassador of my country. The Prince asks me what I want, and speaking in a loud voice *coram omnibus* ("in the presence of all") I tell him the whole story.

"I am ordered to leave, Monseigneur, but I shall not obey; I implore Your Highness's help so that my justified complaint can be laid at the foot of the throne."

"Write a petition; I will send it to the Empress; but I advise you only to beg her to suspend the order, for you would irritate her by telling her that you will not obey."

"But if the royal grace is delayed, violence will oppress me in the meanwhile."

"Take refuge with the Minister of your country."

"Alas, Prince, I no longer have a country. A legal though unconstitutional violence deprives me of the rights of a citizen and a man. I am a Venetian, and my name is Casanova."

The Prince thereupon looks in surprise at the Ambassador, who, smiling as he always did, spends ten minutes speaking to him in a low voice.

The Prince says to me that it is unfortunate for me that I cannot claim the protection of some Minister. At these words a nobleman six feet tall says to me that I can claim his, since my whole family is in the service of the King his master, and since I had served him myself.[3] And it was literally true.

"He is Count Vitzthum,"[4] the Prince said to me; "so go at once and write to the Empress, and I will send her your petition immediately, and if the answer is delayed, take refuge with him. You will be safe from violence until you are ready to leave at your good pleasure."

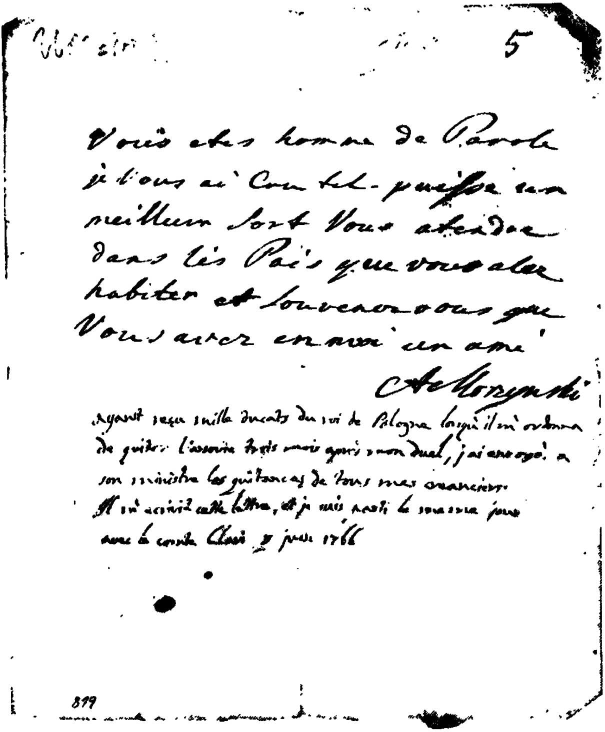
After ordering writing materials brought to me, the Prince goes to dine.

Here is my petition, which I wrote and copied in ten minutes, and with a copy of which the Venetian Ambassador saw fit to favor the Senate of Venice.[5]

"Madame,

"I am sure that if, when Your Imperial and Royal Austrian Majesty is walking, an insect should say to you in a plaintive voice that you are about to crush it, you would turn your foot, if only a little, in order not to deprive the poor creature of life.

"I am the insect, Madame, who dares implore you to order Monsieur the Statthalter Schrattenbach to put off



Vous etes homme de Parole
je vous ai Connu tel - puisse un
meilleur Sort Vous atendre
dans les Pais que vous alez
habiter et souvenez vous que
Vous avez en moi un ami

AMoczynski

Ayant reçu mille ducats du roi de Pologne lorsqu'il m'ordonna
de quitter Varsovie trois mois après mon duel, j'ai envoyé a
son ministre les quittances de tous mes creanciers.
Il m'écrivit cette lettre, et je suis parti le même jour
avec le comte Clari 7 juin 1766

Count Moczynski to Casanova

crushing me with Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's slipper for one week. It is possible that after that short time he will not crush me, but that you will remove from his hands the august slipper which you entrusted to him only to crush malefactors and not a man who remains a Venetian despite his flight from the Leads, and who is profoundly obedient to your Imperial and Royal Majesty's decrees.

"January 21, 1767 Casanova."

After writing out this petition in a very round hand, I ask the footman who is there to deliver it to the Prince. Five or six minutes later he returns calmly, with my petition in his hands, telling me on the Prince's behalf that he will send it to the Empress at once but that he asks me to leave him a copy of it.

"Instantly."

I copy it, I hand both copies to the footman, and I leave. I was shaking like a paralytic, I feared that if I stayed there until the dinner was over I should be driven into doing a piece of work which would perhaps have cost me my life, for I was hot with anger from head to foot. I go home, and I sit down to write in the form of a manifesto the statement which I had put in the hands of the hangman Schrattenbach and which he had refused to return to me. About seven o'clock Count Vitzthum enters my room. He asks me to tell him the whole story of the girl whom I had gone to see, drawn by the four verses in which she promised that I should find her either Hebe or Ganymede. I give him the written address itself, he copies the verses, and he says it is enough to prove to an enlightened judge that I had been attacked and calumniated by scoundrels, but that even so he doubted if I would obtain justice.

"What! I shall have to leave tomorrow?"

"Oh, not that, for it is impossible that the Empress will not grant you the week for which you petitioned her."

"Why impossible?"

"Heavens! Have you forgotten what you wrote her? I have never seen a petition in that style. The Prince read it in his cold way, he smiled afterward, and he sent it to me; after me, he had it read by the Venetian Ambassador, who looked grave and asked him if he would send it to the Empress as it was. He replied that your petition was fit to be sent to God, if anyone knew the way there; and he immediately sent it to one of his secretaries with orders to put it in an envelope and send it to the Empress at once. After that we talked of you until the end of dinner, and what pleased me was that the Venetian Ambassador said that no one in Venice could guess what you could have done to deserve to be put under the Leads. Afterward there was talk of your duel, but no one could say any more about it than what had been read in the gazettes. Do me the favor to give me a copy of your petition to the Empress, for Schrattenbach holding her slipper delighted me."

I at once made him a copy from the original, which I have before me and which has only one correction, and I also gave him a copy of the manifesto. Before he left he repeated the order to go to lodge with him if I was not informed before the designated hour that the Empress had granted me the grace which I had asked of her.

At ten o'clock I saw in my apartment the Count de la Pérouse, the Marquis de Las Casas, and the Venetian Secretary of Embassy, Uccelli, who came to ask me for a copy of my petition on behalf of the Ambassador. I also sent him one of my manifestoes. The only thing which rather spoiled my manifesto, giving it a touch of the comic, was the four verses on the address, which in a way made it seem that I had gone to see Pocchini's daughter only in the hope of finding her Ganymede; it was not true; but the Empress, who knew Latin and knew the myth, might believe it, and that would have ruined me.

I went to bed two hours after midnight after making six copies. The next day at noon Hasse,[6] son of the famous chapelmaster and the celebrated Faustina, and Secretary of Count Vitzthum's legation, came to tell me on his behalf that I had nothing to fear, either at home or if I went out in a carriage, but not on foot, and that he would come to see me at seven o'clock. On my asking him to write it all down for me he did me the favor, then he left.

So the order is suspended, the grace granted, it can only be at the Empress's behest! I have no time to lose; I shall have justice, the infamous cutthroats will be sentenced, I will get back my purse with two hundred ducats in it, and not as I saw it in the hands of the unworthy Statthalter, who would at least be dismissed from his office. Such were my castles in Spain, what I imagined was certain; *quod nimis miseri volunt hoc facile credunt* ("what those in misery ardently desire, they easily believe"),[7] says Seneca, in his knowledge of the human heart, somewhere in his tragedies. Before sending my manifesto to the Empress, to the Emperor, to Prince Kaunitz, to all the Ministers, I think of going to see Countess Salmour, who spoke to the Empress morning and evening. The reader knows that I had taken a letter to her.

The lady first receives me by saying that I ought to stop wearing my arm in a sling

"It is an imposture, for after these ten months you cannot need it any longer."

I answer her with the voice and the expression of a man astonished that if I did not need the sling I would not wear it and that I was not an impostor.

"I have come, Madame, to trouble Your Excellency in regard to another matter."

"I am aware of that; but I will have nothing to do with it. You are all scapegraces like Tomatis."

I left instantly without making her a bow. I went home, unable to comprehend how I could be in such a pass. Assaulted, insulted by scoundrels and people of breeding alike, powerless to crush the latter or to exterminate the former, cast out by justice, where am I? What have I done? I am ridiculed for my sling? No one but Madame Salmour had said as much to me. If a man had said it to me I would have taken off my glove and given him a slap with my right hand. I could neither recover freedom of motion in it nor keep it from swelling as soon as I let it hang down for an hour. I was not completely cured until twenty months after I received the wound. But when I thought of the word "scapegrace" with which the Polish Countess had honored me I was sorry I had done all too little by merely turning my back on her. Old harridan unworthy of life, who yet lived ninety years.[8] Before that day I did not know the meaning of the word "scapegrace." Every time I hear someone utter it I remember that the honor of it was bestowed on me by a woman worthy of my utmost contempt.

Count Vitzthum came at seven o'clock to tell me that the Empress had said to Prince Kaunitz that Schrattenbach called the whole story I had written to exculpate myself pure romance. He was certain that I had kept a bank at faro with the sharpers' cards which were in his possession, that I had dealt with both hands, my sling being nothing but a deceit. One of the punters catching me in the act, they had rightly seized my bank and taken back the money I had won by cheating. The same punter, a police spy, had brought him my purse, containing forty ducats, which were duly confiscated. The Empress was obliged to believe everything Schrattenbach had told her about the matter, for even if I had been in the right she could make me reparation only by dismissing Schrattenbach, which would put her in a very difficult situation, for she could find no one willing to fill the onerous office which he filled, at a great cost in effort but always keeping Vienna clear of a verminous crew who dishonored the human race.

"That is the sum total of what Prince Kaunitz ordered me to tell you. In any case, you have nothing more to fear. You shall leave when you please."

"I shall have been robbed of two hundred ducats with impunity. But if the Empress, for reasons of policy, does not want me to bring a criminal suit, let her at least reimburse me. I beg you to ask Prince Kaunitz if I may prove to the sovereign in appropriate terms that she owes me that satisfaction as the least I can demand."

"I will ask him."

"Otherwise, I will leave, for what am I to do in a city where I cannot go about on foot, and where the government has cutthroats in its pay!"

"You are right. We are all persuaded that this Pocchini has slandered you. The girl who recites Latin verses is well known, but her address was not. I will tell you too that, as long as you remain in Vienna, you will do well not to publish this story, for it blackens Schrattenbach, whom the Empress unfortunately has to coddle."

"I see all that, and I must champ the bit. I will leave as soon as the laundress brings me my linen. But I will print this story in all its atrocious details."

"The Empress is prejudiced against you, I do not know by whom."

"I know. It is by an old woman accursed in the eyes of God, by Madame Salmour, who told me to my face that I am a scapegrace."

After hearing the whole of the incident, he left. The next morning he wrote me a note in which he told me that the Prince advised me to forget my two hundred ducats. He also told me that the little girl and her self-styled mother were apparently no longer in Vienna, for someone who had read the address and become curious about her had had her searched for in vain.

Thereupon, seeing that I should never obtain my rights in this accursed business, I decided to calm myself and to leave, nevertheless resolved to do two things, which I did not do. One was to print the story, the other was to hang Pocchini with my own hands wherever I might find him. At this same time a young lady of the Salis family,[9] of Coire, arrived in Vienna by post coach, alone and with no servant. The imperial hangman Schrattenbach sent her an order to leave two days after her arrival, and she sent him the answer that she intended to stay in Vienna as long as she chose. The hangman had her shut up in a convent. She was still there when I left. The Emperor, who, though he despised his mother, never dared to question her orders, went to see the young lady in the convent, and his mother, having learned of it, asked him what impression she had made on him; he replied that she had impressed him as being far more intelligent than Schrattenbach. It is a fact beyond question that a noble soul will never believe that it cannot be free. Yet who is free in this hell which we call the world? No one. Only the philosopher can be so, but at the cost of sacrifices which are perhaps not worth the phantom freedom.

I left Campioni my apartment, which was mine until the end of the month, and my wood, of which I had laid in a good supply, promising him that I would wait for him in Augsburg, a city in which law alone reigned and in which I had enjoyed life. I left all alone, without a servant, in the carriage Count Moczynski had given me, six days after receiving the order from the man who cheated me in the end by dying[10] before I found a good opportunity to kill him. I arrived in Linz on the next day but one after my departure, stopping there all night only to write him a letter, the most ferocious of all those which I can have written in my life to people whose despotism has crushed me, worse than the one I wrote in 1760 to the late Duke of Württemberg.[11] I went to the post myself to get a receipt for it, so that he could not say he had not received it. The letter was necessary to my health. Anger kills if one does not succeed in purging oneself of it in one way or another. From Linz I reached Munich in three days, paying a visit there to Count

Gaetan Zawoiski, who died in Dresden seven years ago.[12] I had known him in Venice when he was in need, and I had been useful to him. As soon as I told him what had happened to me in Vienna he surmised that I might need money, and he gave me twenty-five louis. To tell the truth, it was perhaps less than he owed me if he intended it as repayment for all the money I had given him in Venice; but since I had never intended to lend it to him, I was grateful to him. He gave me a letter for Count Maximilian of Lamberg,[13] who was Marshal at the Court of the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg, who already knew me.

I went to lodge at Mayr's at the "Golden Grapes."[14] There were no plays or operas, but there were masked balls, where one found the nobility, the citizenry, and the girls of easy virtue; there were also small gatherings at which faro was played and at which one could amuse oneself at little expense. Sick and tired of all the pleasures, the misfortunes, the disappointments, the intrigues, the griefs which had been my lot in three capitals, I prepared to spend four months in a free city like Augsburg, where the foreigner enjoyed the same privileges as the canons. My purse had become very slender; but since my course of life cost me very little I had nothing to fear. Known, and not far from Venice, I was sure to have a hundred ducats at my disposal if I happened to need them. So I indulged in play for small stakes, making war on the sharpers, who, in my time, have become more numerous than the dupes, as doctors are more numerous than patients. I thought of ways to find a mistress, sorry that I had looked in vain for Gertrude.[15] The engraver had died, and no one could tell me what had become of his daughter.

Two or three days before the Carnival ended, having to attend a ball outside the city, I go to a stable to hire a carriage, and while waiting for the horse to be harnessed I go in to the stove; a girl asks me if I want wine, and I say no. She repeats the question, and I brusquely tell her no for the second time. I see her laugh, and, seeing that she is ugly, I tell her to be off.

"Yes, yes, I'm going. I know you cannot recognize me."

At these words I look at her more closely, and I see the pretty Annemirl,[16] the little maidservant of Gertrude's father the engraver, become ugly.

"You are," I said, "Annemirl."

"Alas, I once was. I know I am no longer fit to be loved, but you are the cause of it."

"I?"

"Yes, you. The four hundred florins you gave me led Count Fugger's[17] coachman to marry me. Not only did he spend everything I had and leave me, he gave me a disease which brought me to death's door; I recovered, but such as you see me."

"You distress me. Tell me what has become of Gertrude?"

"Don't you know that the ball you are going to is at her house?"

"At her house?"

"Yes. After her father's death she married a man of property and good conduct. His house is a short league from here; he provides lodging and meals, and you will be pleased."

"Is she still pretty?"

"She is as she was, except that she is six years older and has children."

"Does she indulge in gallantry?"

"I don't think so."

Annemirl had told me the truth. I went to the ball; Gertrude was glad to see me; she told her husband that I had lodged in her house; but when in the course of the night I spoke to her privately I found her behaving as her duty prescribed that she should.

Campioni arrived in Augsburg at the beginning of Lent with Binetti,[18] who was on the way to Paris to buy a post.[19] He had left his wife for ever, after taking everything she had. Campioni told me that no one in Vienna doubted the truth of my story in the terms in which I had made it public. He said that Pocchini and the Slavonian had disappeared a few days after I left, and that everyone called the Statthalter a plague.[20] Campioni left for London after spending a month with me.

As soon as I took my letter to Count Lamberg his reproaches flattered me, as did those of the Countess, who, though not a beauty, had everything to make anyone who approached her love her; she was a Countess Dachsberg,[21] who was his second wife, she was then six months pregnant. Three months later, not thinking that her time had come, she accepted an invitation from Count Fugger, Dean of the Chapter, to go with him in his carriage to eat at an inn at three-quarters of an hour's distance from Augsburg; I was one of the party. As she was eating an omelet the pains take her with such violence that she fears she will give birth instantly; she does not dare tell the Canon so; it is to me that she confides it. Quick, quick, out I go, I tell the coachman to bridle the horses quickly, I give her my arm, I put her in the carriage, the astonished Canon follows us, asking what is the matter, I reply that I will tell him all in the carriage, he gets in, he is uneasy, I ask him to tell the coachman to drive fast even if he kills the horses, and he does it all; but he insists on knowing the reason.

"Madame will give birth here if we do not go faster."

I saw her pains in her face. But I thought I should die laughing when I saw the Canon turn every color, terrified at the thought that she might really give birth in his carriage. He was in despair, for what would people say? The laughter such news would arouse horrified him. The Bishop was at Plombières,[22] he would be written to, the thing would appear in the newspapers.

"Quick, coachman! Quick, I say!"

We arrive at the castle, I fly to her room with her, she shuts herself in, a midwife is sent for; but it was too late; two minutes afterward Count Lamberg comes to tell us that Madame has given birth, and Monseigneur goes home to be bled.

I spent four months in Augsburg as pleasantly as possible, supping at Count Lamberg's two or three times a week, where I made the acquaintance of a man adorned to a rare degree with the qualities of the amiable gentleman; he is the Count of Thurn and Valsassina,[23] now Dean of the Chapter of Ratisbon, then page to the Prince-Bishop, a Prince of Darmstadt[24] who was a legless cripple. The page was always present at supper, as was Dr. Algardi,[25] physician to the Prince, who was charming too. He died fifteen or sixteen years later in the service of the Elector of the Palatinate, who now resides in Munich as the Elector of Bavaria.[26]

In Augsburg, most frequently at Count Lamberg's, I became well acquainted with a Baron Sellentin,[27] an officer in the Prussian service, who always lived in Augsburg to enlist recruits for his master. He was amiable, a wit in the Gascon manner, fond of gaming and well able to play his hand. He left the service ten or twelve years later and went to marry in Saxony near the Bohemian border. He wrote me from Dresden six years ago that, though he was now an old man, he greatly repented of having married.

During my stay in Augsburg several Poles who were leaving their country because of the troubles which were breaking out came to see me. Among others the Grand Notary to the Crown Rzewuski, whom I had known in Petersburg in love with the unfortunate Langlade, passed through Augsburg, and I at once went to see him at the "Three Moors,"[28] where he was staying. What a Diet![29] What intrigues! Fortunate were those who could keep away from it. He was going to Spa, where, he assured me, if I went there I should find the Princess, Prince Adam's sister, Tomatis, and La Catai, who had become his wife. It was he who decided me to go there too, and, being short of money, I took steps to go there with three or four hundred ducats in my purse. To that end I wrote to Prince Charles of Kurland, who was in Venice, to send me a hundred ducats. To persuade him to send them to me immediately, I sent him an infallible recipe for making the philosopher's stone. Since my letter, which contained so great a secret, was not in cipher, I advised him to burn it, assuring him that I had a copy of it with me; but he did not do so, he kept my letter, and it was taken from him in Paris with his other papers when he was sent to the Bastille[30]

My letter in the archives of the Bastille would never have seen the light; but here is what happened to make my secret public. Twenty years later the populace of Paris, incited to riot by the Duke of Orléans, tore down the Bastille;[31] the archives were seized, my letter was found, and it was printed, together with several other curious documents which were later translated into German and English.[32] The ignoramuses who exist in the country in which I now live, and who, naturally, are all my enemies, for the donkey could never be the friend of the horse, triumphed when they read this chief article of accusation against me. They were stupid enough to reproach me with being the author of the letter, and they thought they could confound me by telling me that it had been translated into German to my eternal confusion. The Bohemian beasts who thus reproached me were astonished when I replied that my letter did me immortal honor and that, if they were not donkeys, they ought to admire it

I do not know, my dear reader, if my letter was changed for the worse, but, since it has been published, permit me to record it in these memoirs to the honor of truth, the only God I adore. I copy it from my original, which I wrote at Augsburg in May of the year 1767; today is January 1, 1798.[33] Here is my letter:

"Monseigneur:

"Your Highness will burn this letter after reading it, or will preserve it in your portfolio with all possible care, but it will be better to burn it, keeping a copy of it under the disguise of a cipher, so that, if it is stolen or lost, the reader will not understand a word of it. The attachment which you have inspired in me is not the only spring of my action; I confess to you that my interest has played an equal part in it. Permit me to tell you that it does not suffice me to be loved by you because of the qualities which you may have found in me, though that reason is infinitely flattering to me, for I must fear the inconstancy so natural to all princes; I wish you, Monseigneur, to have a much sounder reason for loving me; I want you to be obliged to me for an inestimable gift which I am about to make you. I give you the secret of augmenting the one material in the world of which Your Highness is in need. Gold. You would be rich if you had been born avaricious; having been born generous, you will always be poor without the secret which I shall communicate to you, and of which I am the sole possessor. Your Highness told me at Mitau that you wished me, before my departure, to give you the secret by which I transmuted iron into copper for you; I did not do so. I now give you the means to perform a much more important transmutation; but the place where you are is not the one suitable for the operation, though you can easily procure the materials. The operation requires my presence in respect to the construction of the furnace and to extreme care in the execution, for the slightest error would make it fail. The transmutation of Mars[34] is easy and mechanical, but the one which I give you is entirely philosophical. When your gold is assayed, which is very easy, it will be equal to that of which you see Venetian zecchini to be made. Consider, Monseigneur, that I may be putting you in a position to do without me, and, what is more, consider that I am putting my life in your hands as well as my freedom.

"The step I am taking must gain me your good will for ever, and must make you leave behind the prejudice which is entertained concerning the usual procedures and language of chemists. My self-esteem is wounded if Your Highness does not distinguish me from the crowd. The only favor I ask of you is to wait until we are together again to perform the operation. Since you cannot work alone, you cannot trust anyone; for even if the operation succeeded, the person who helped you would betray your secret. I will tell you that it was with these same ingredients, with the addition of niter and mercury, that I made the tree of projection[35] in the house of the Marquise de Pontcarré d'Urfé, the vegetation of which, calculated by the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst,[36] gave an augmentation of fifty in the hundred. My fortune would now be at the highest pitch in regard to wealth if I had been able to trust a prince who controlled a mint. This good fortune has not fallen to me until today, and my utmost hopes are fulfilled, for your divine character frees me from all fear Let us come to the point.

"One must take four ounces of good silver and dissolve it in aqua fortis, then precipitate it *secundum artem* with a sheet of copper; washing it afterward with warm water to separate all the acids from it; then it must be well dried and mixed with a half ounce of sal ammoniac, and so be put in a tortoise[37] of a kind which can be used as a recipient. After this preparation one must take a pound of alum feather and a pound of Hungarian crystal, four ounces of verdigris, four ounces of natural cinnabar, and two ounces of virgin sulfur. All these ingredients must be pulverized and mixed well together, and be put in a cucurbit of such a size that, when they are in it, they fill it only halfway. This cucurbit must be set on a furnace with four drafts, for the fire must be raised to the fourth degree. It is necessary to begin with a slow fire, which must only extract the phlegms, or hydropic parts, and when the spirits begin to appear the recipient in which is the Moon with the sal ammoniac must be subjected to it. All the joints will be sealed with the luting of Sapience, and, as the spirits pass, the fire must be regulated to the third degree. When the sublimation is seen to begin, the fourth draft must be boldly opened without any fear; but care must be taken to keep the sublimate from passing into the recipient, or tortoise, in which the Moon is. After this the whole must be allowed to cool. When the whole has been cooled, one must take the recipient in which the Moon is, close its spout with a bladder knotted three times, and put it in a circulating furnace with its spout directed upward; it must be given this slow circulating heat for twenty-four hours, and then the bladder must be removed, turning the tortoise toward the center so that it can distill. The fire must be increased to bring about the passage of the spirits which may be in the mass until complete desiccation. After this operation is performed three times, gold will be seen in the tortoise. The gold must then be taken out and melted with the addition of perfect body. Melting it with two ounces of gold and afterward putting it in water to work, one will find four ounces of gold which will meet every test, perfect in weight and malleable, but pale.

"There, Monseigneur, is the gold mine for your mint in Mitau, by means of which a director with four journeymen can give you a revenue of a thousand ducats a week, and twice that and four times that if Your Highness will multiply the workmen and the furnaces. I ask you for the directorship for myself, stipulating for my share only such material as it will please Your Highness to assign to me, having it struck with a die which I will describe to you. Remember, Monseigneur, that this must be the State's secret. You, a Prince, must understand the force of that expression. Give this letter to the flames, and if Your Highness wishes to give me a recompense in advance, I ask you only for a fond attachment to myself, who adores you. I am happy if I can flatter myself that my master will be my friend. My life, Monseigneur, which I put in your power with this letter, I shall be ready to give for your service, and I shall kill myself if it ever happens that I must repent of having confided in Your Highness, of whom I have the honor to be the inviolably attached servant, and to the end of my days."

If this letter, in whatever language it is printed, speaks differently, it is not mine, and I give the lie to all the Mirabeaus[38] in France. I am called an exile from France, and it is untrue, for a man who leaves the kingdom by virtue of a *lettre de cachet* is neither exiled nor deported, he is obliged to obey an order from the monarch, who, by an act of his despotism, puts out of his house someone who inconveniences him, without thinking himself bound to tell him the reason. He regards his whole kingdom as his house. Every private citizen is entitled to act thus in his own domicile.

As soon as I saw my purse well filled I left Augsburg, all alone in my carriage, with a sufficient outfit. I left on June 14th. I was at Ulm when a courier from the Duke of Württemberg, who was in Venice, passed through it to go to Ludwigsburg to announce that His Most Serene Highness would arrive in five or six days. The courier had a letter for me, which had been given him by Prince Charles of Kurland, assuring him that he would find me at Augsburg lodged at the "Grapes." Not having found me there, for I had left the day before, and knowing the road I had taken, he was sure to overtake me, and he overtook me at Ulm. Delivering the letter and drinking a glass, he asked me if I was the Casanova who had escaped from arrest at Stuttgart[39] because of a quarrel over gaming with three officers, and since I have never learned the art of denying any truth when someone asked me to testify to it, I replied that I was he. An officer of the Duke's who was present when I replied to the question said to me in a friendly manner that he was in Stuttgart at that time and that everyone blamed the three officers. Instead of answering him, I read the letter, which spoke only of our private business. After reading it, I took a whim to tell him a little lie, which could harm no one.

"In fact, Monsieur," I said, "after seven years I have succeeded in making the Duke your sovereign listen to reason, and here is a letter which informs me that His Most Serene Highness gives me a satisfaction which is very dear to me. I am engaged in his service as his secretary, at a salary of twelve hundred crowns; but in these seven years God knows what has become of the officers."

"They are all three of them at Ludwigsburg, Monsieur, and xxx is a Colonel. This is a piece of news which will surprise them, and which they will learn tomorrow, for I leave in an hour."

"If they are there," I replied, "my highest hopes are fulfilled. I am sorry that I cannot keep you company, for I mean to sleep here, and to sleep tomorrow wherever I stop; but we shall see each other day after tomorrow."

The courier left at once, and the officer in a post coach, after supping with me. Going to bed, I laugh at the effect this news will produce in Ludwigsburg, which was then the Duke's favorite residence.[40] I wake in the morning, and I adopt the charming idea which comes to me of going to Ludwigsburg in person, not to fight the officers but to flout them, to avenge myself for the old insult by scorning them. I also entertain the most agreeable idea of the demonstrations of pleasure with which I shall be greeted by all the acquaintances I must have in that city, where, besides La Toscani, the Duke's mistress, I should also find Balletti and Vestris, who had married a mistress of the Duke's[41] who later became a celebrated actress. Knowing the human heart, I had nothing to fear. The sovereign's return being imminent, no one could suppose the thing false. The Duke on his arrival would not find me, for I should make my escape as soon as the courier who preceded him came to announce his arrival. I would tell everyone that I was going to meet my new master.

Never did an idea strike me as so happy; proud of having conceived it, I should have found myself unworthy to have a mind if I had not adopted it: I was avenging myself to the full on the Duke, whose claws I must fear, for my reader may remember the excruciating letter[42] I had written him. I sleep badly the next night because of the impatience which gnawed at me, and I arrive at Ludwigsburg, giving my name without adding my pretended office, for the joke must not be carried too far. I go to lodge at the posthouse inn, I have my trunk taken upstairs, and just as I am asking where La Toscani lives, in she comes with her husband.[43] They both fall on my neck, they devour me with kisses and overwhelm me with congratulations on my arm, still in a sling, and on my second victory.

"What second victory?"

"Your appearance here, the circumstances of which have rejoiced the hearts of all your friends."

"I am in the Duke's service, but how can you know it?"

"It is all over the city. His Highness's courier, who brought you his letter, himself announced it, and so did the officer who was present and who arrived yesterday morning. But you cannot imagine the consternation of your enemies the three officers. Nevertheless, we are afraid that you will be obliged to come to a duel, for they still have the letter in which you challenged them at Fürstenberg "[44]

"Why didn't they come?"

"Two could not, and one arrived too late, and that is the truth."

"Very good. If the Duke permits it, they will do me honor by granting me a duel each in turn. With pistols, of course, for no one fences with one arm in a sling."

"We will discuss that. My daughter[45] wants to make peace between you before the Duke arrives, and you will be well advised to let her do so; for they are three, and it is safe to wager that you will not kill all three of them."

"Your daughter must have become a beauty."

"You shall sup with her tonight at my house, for she is no longer the Duke's mistress. She is going to marry Messieri."[46]

"If your daughter makes it up between us I shall prefer peace to war, provided that my honor is not compromised."

"But why the sling after sixteen months?"

"I am in good health, but my hand swells as soon as I let it hang down for an hour. You shall see it after dinner, for you shall dine with me if you want me to sup with you."

In comes Vestris, whom I did not know, with Balletti, whom I loved dearly, a woman of their circle whom I did not know, and an officer who was in love with another of La Toscani's daughters. They all came to congratulate me on having entered the Duke's service so honorably. But Balletti was mad with joy. He had played the greatest part in my flight from Stuttgart; the reader knows that I was to marry his sister. The young man had a soul above that of a dancer, and great intelligence, besides the talent by which he distinguished himself; the Duke esteemed him. He had a small house adjoining the open countryside, in which there was an excellent room for me, he begs me to accept it, he admits that he is proud that the Duke should know that I am his best friend, and that I am staying with him until his arrival, for then of course I should be given a lodging at the Court. I yield to his insistence, and I accept. It was early, we all go to call on Toscani's daughter.

I had loved her in Paris,[47] when she was still not fully formed; and, displaying herself to me as she was then, she was not wrong to be ambitious. She showed me all of her fine house and her jewels, she told me the story of her liaison with the Duke, of her breaking with him because of his constant infidelities, and of her marriage to a man whom she scorned but whom her situation forced her to marry. At dinnertime we all went to the inn, and we came upon the Colonel who was the prime mover in trying to make me a soldier.[48] He put his hand to his hat first, and he left.

With this company of friends I ate dinner very gaily. After dinner I went to stay at Balletti's, putting my post chaise under cover, and toward nightfall we went to La Toscani's, where I found two beauties whose charms intoxicated me: her daughter, and Vestris's wife, whom the Duke had given to him after having two children by her, whom he recognized. La Vestris, though extremely pretty, enchanted me only by her turn of mind and by the graces which declared her born to be an actress. She had one fault: she slurred her *r*'s. Since La Toscani's daughter still maintained a reserved manner, at table I permitted myself to pay my particular court to La Vestris, of whom her husband was not jealous, because, in perfect accord with her, he did not love her. That day the parts of a short comedy had been given out, to be performed on the Duke's arrival; a young author[49] who was in Ludwigsburg had composed it, in the hope that it would convince the sovereign that he deserved to enter his service as a poet.

After supper, the conversation turning to this little comedy, in which La Vestris played the leading role, which was that of an affected young woman, she was asked to read it, and she did so with the greatest readiness.

"Your acting is from the soul," I say to her, "you express feeling in such a way that one would wager that all you say is yours and not someone else's. What a pity, Madame, that the point of your tongue cannot pronounce the canine letter."[50]

At that, the whole table boos me. I am told that it is not a fault but a charm, the expression became soft, more interesting, attracting more attention, an actress who did not speak thus was jealous of one who had the prerogative. I do not reply, but I look at La Vestris.

"Do you think," she asks me, "that I am the dupe of all that?"

"No, I do not think so, for I do you justice."

"A man who loves me, and who sincerely says 'What a pity!' pleases me far more than those who think they flatter me by telling me it is a beauty; but there is no remedy for it."

"What, Madame? No remedy for it? I have one in my infallible pharmacopoeia. Slap me in the face if by tomorrow I do not have you reading the role so that your fault does not appear; but if I have you reading it as your husband, for example, would read it, permit me to embrace you fondly."

"I accept. But what must I do?"

"Nothing except to let me cast a spell on your part book, and I am not joking. Give it to me. You don't need to read it tonight. Tomorrow I will bring it to you at nine o'clock in the morning to receive the slap or the kiss, if your husband has no objection."

"None at all, but we do not believe in spells."

"If my spell fails I shall get the slap."

She lets me have the part book. We talk of other things. I am pitied, for my hand is seen to be somewhat swollen; I tell the company the story of my duel, everyone loves me, I go back to the house in love with everyone, but especially with La Vestris and La Toscani. Balletti had a little daughter[51] three years old, who was miraculously beautiful.

"How do you happen to have that angel?"

"There is her mother, who, by the law of hospitality, will sleep with you."

It was his maid, of extreme beauty.

"I accept your offer, my dear friend, for tomorrow evening."

"Why not for tonight?"

"Because the spell will keep me busy all night."

"What? It is not a joke?"

"No. It is perfectly serious."

"Have you gone mad?"

"No. You'll see. Go to bed and just leave me a light and writing materials."

He goes to bed, and I spend six hours copying La Vestris's part, changing nothing in it except the phraseology, substituting words without *r*'s.[52] It was an arduous task, but I wanted to kiss La Vestris's beautiful lips in her husband's presence. "This man's procedures outrage me and make me desperate; I must think how to get rid of him." I change this sentence; I put: "This man has ways which offend me and desolate me. I must send him away." "He credits me with being crazy about him." I put: "He thinks that I love him." And so I go on to the end, then I sleep for three hours, I dress, and Balletti, who sees my work, predicts that the young writer will lay every imaginable curse on me, for La Vestris will certainly tell the Duke that he must command him to write for her without *r*'s. And that is what happened.

I go to La Vestris's, she was getting up. I give her her part, written out in my hand, she reads, she exclaims, she calls her husband; she swears she will never play another part in which there are *r*'s; I calm her, and I promise her I will copy all her parts as I had spent the whole night copying that one.

"All night? Come and take your payment. You are more than a wizard. It is charming. We shall laugh. We must have the author of the play come to dinner with us. Either he will undertake to write all my parts without *r*'s, or the Duke will not take him into his service. He will laugh, he will say I am right. It is a discovery. Oh, how well he has done to take you as his secretary! I should have thought it could not be done; but it must be very difficult."

"Not at all. If I were a pretty woman with that small fault, I would speak without ever using words which have *r*'s."

"Oh, that is too much."

"It is not too much. Let us wager again, a slap or a kiss, that I will talk to you all day without an *r*. Come, let's begin."

"If you like," said Vestris; "but without a wager, for I think you are too greedy."

The author came to dinner, and it was at table that La Vestris plagued him unmercifully, for she began by telling him that the authors of plays should be gallant to actresses and that the least gallantry an author could show one of them who slurred her *r*'s would be to write parts for her without them. The author laughed at the proposal, saying that the thing was impossible or that it could never be done except by impoverishing the language; and thereupon La Vestris handed him the part, commanding him to tell her if the language was impoverished. On the contrary, the poor man was forced to agree with La Vestris that it could not be done except by virtue of the richness of the language; and she was right.

This trifle made us very gay; but it was in perfect seriousness that La Vestris determined to insist that authors should submit to this law. At Paris, however, she met with opposition. All the authors there made common cause and swore they would make her lose her case. I heard her acting and slurring her *r*'s in Paris.[53] On that same day she asked me if I would undertake to transcribe the part of Zaïre[54] without *r*'s; but I begged her to excuse me, for, since it was a matter of writing verse, it became too difficult for me.

"How," the young author asked me, "to pay court to her, would you go about telling her that she is 'charming,' a 'rare' woman, 'worthy of adoration'?"

"I should tell her that she 'enchants me,' that she is 'unique,' that she should be 'hailed like a goddess.'"

She wrote me a letter without *r*'s, which I still keep; if I could have remained in Stuttgart the little game would have led to my conquering her; but after a week of festivities, triumphs, and complete satisfaction, the courier who preceded the Duke arrived at ten o'clock in the morning to announce the arrival of His Most Serene Highness at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. No sooner did I hear the news than I said to Balletti with perfect coolness that I wished to show my master the politeness of going to meet him and so enlarging his suite on his entrance into Ludwigsburg, and that, wanting to join him at least two stages away, I must leave at once. He praised my idea, and he sent his beautiful maid to engage horses at the post. But when he saw me hurriedly packing my trunk, and saw that I refused to listen to his perfectly sound objection that I had only to leave it in his house, he guessed everything, and he found it all most amusing. I confessed it to him. He became sad upon reflecting that he was losing me; but he prepared to laugh at the effect my piece of bravado would produce in the minds of the three officers and on the Duke. He promised to write me everything at Mannheim, where I had already decided I would spend a week to see my dear Algardi,[55] who had entered the service of the Elector of the Palatinate, and Monsieur de Sickingen,[56] to whom I had to give a letter from Count Lamberg, as well as another to Baron Beckers,[57] Minister to the Elector of the Palatinate

When the horses were harnessed I kissed my dear friend, his little girl, and his maid, and I told the postilion to take the road to Mannheim.

Arrived in Mannheim, I found that the Court was at Schwetzingen,[58] and I went there to sleep. There I found all the people I wanted. Algardi had married; Monsieur de Sickingen was paying his court in order to go to Paris as the Elector's Minister, and Baron Beckers presented me to the Elector. On the fifth or sixth day I was there, Prince Frederick of Zweibrücken died;[59] but here is an anecdote which I heard on the eve of his death. Dr. Algardi was the physician who had attended him in his illness. On the eve of the day on which that handsome and brave Prince died, I was supping at Verazi's,[60] poet to the Elector, when Algardi arrived.

"How is the Prince?" I asked him.

"The poor Prince has at most twenty-four hours still to live."

"Does he know it?"

"No, for he hopes. He has just torn my heart. A moment ago he adjured me to tell him the undisguised truth, and he made me give him my word of honor that I would tell it to him. He asked me if he was in absolute danger of death."

"And you told him the truth."

"Certainly not. I was not such a fool. I replied that it was true that his disease was mortal, but that nature and art could perform what are vulgarly called miracles."

"So you deceived him? You lied."

"I did not deceive him, for his recovery is among possible things. I did not want to make him desperate. The duty of a wise physician is never to drive his patient to despair, for despair can only hasten his death."

"But admit that you lied, despite the word of honor by which he adjured you to tell him the truth."

"No, I did not lie, for I know that he may recover."

"Then you are lying now?"

"No again, for he will die tomorrow."

"By God, nothing is more Jesuitical than that."

"It is not Jesuitical. My first duty being to prolong the patient's life, I had to spare him news which could but shorten it, if only by a few hours, and that by a physical necessity; and I truthfully told him what after all is not among impossibilities. So I did not lie, and I am not lying now, for on the basis of my experience I prognosticate to you what I presume must happen. Thus I do not lie, for the fact is that I would wager a million to one that he will not recover, but I would not wager my life."

"You are right; but you nevertheless deceived the Prince, for his intention was to learn from you not what he knew himself but what you must know from experience. Nevertheless, I grant you that, being his physician, you could not shorten his life by telling him the dreadful news. I conclude by deciding that you practice a wicked profession."

After two weeks I ended my delightful stay in Schwetzingen, leaving the poet Verazi a few of the things I had with me, which I promised him I would go to reclaim one day or another; but I never had time again. Verazi still has everything[61] I left with him thirty-one years ago. As a poet, he is the greatest oddity I have ever known. To distinguish himself from the others, he cultivated eccentricity. He tried to bring into fashion a style completely opposite to that of the great master Metastasio, making harsh verses and claiming that, so fashioned, they gave more scope to the science of the master who was to set them to music. Jommelli[62] had persuaded him to accept this extravagant notion.

I went to Mainz, where I hired a large boat on which I loaded my carriage. I arrived in Cologne about the end of July, looking forward with real pleasure to renewing my acquaintance with the Burgomaster's beautiful and charming wife, who detested General Kettler and who had made me happy during all the time I spent in that city seven years earlier; but it was not the only reason which obliged me to stop in the ugly, pretentious town. At Dresden I had read in a gazette published in Cologne: "The Sieur de Casanova having reappeared in Warsaw after an absence of two months received an order to leave, the King having heard several stories which obliged him to defend his Court from that adventurer."[63] This article, which I could not stomach, had decided me to pay a call on Jacquet,[64] the writer of the gazette. The time had come.

I dine in haste, I go to pay a call on Burgomaster *xe*;[65] I find him at table with his family, sitting beside his beautiful Mimi. My story kept them occupied for two good hours. Some ladies arrived, Mimi *xe* had to go out, I was invited to dinner on the next day.

The woman seemed to me more beautiful than she had been seven years earlier; I imagine a renewal of our old pleasures, and, after spending a night made wakeful by illusions, I dress in Court attire and I go to the Burgomaster's early to seize the opportunity to speak to his wife. I find her there, she was alone, I begin by a transport, she wards me off gently, but her expression freezes me. She tells me in a few words that time, the excellent physician, has cured her heart of a malady which mingled too much bitterness with sweetness, and so she did not want to run the risk of succumbing to it again.

"What! The confessional—"

"The confessional must now serve us only to go to it to repent of our past sins."

"God preserve me from repentance and from the remorse whose source is only in prejudice. I will leave tomorrow."

"I do not tell you to leave."

"If I cannot hope, I must not stay. Can I hope?"

"No, absolutely not."

At table, however, she was charming; but I was so disheartened that I was found gloomy. Women always had the power to sharpen and to dull my wits. The next morning at seven o'clock I get into my chaise, and as soon as I am away from the posthouse[66] which sets me on the road to Aix-la-Chapelle I get out, telling the postilion to wait for me. I go to Jacquet's, armed with a pistol and my cane, with no other intention than to give him a caning.

I arrive there, the maidservant shows me the room in which the gazetteer Jacquet was working alone on his gazette, it was on the ground floor, and the door, the day being hot, was open. I enter, and he asks who is there, neither looking at me nor ceasing to write. I take my stand in front of him, and he asks me what my orders are, looking at me. He was a man with whom I could have dueled, I should therefore have no scruples about giving him a caning.

"I am, infamous gazetteer, the adventurer Casanova whose name you defamed in your gazette fourteen months ago."

So saying, I take out a pistol with the hand which I freed from the sling, and I raise my cane, but the wretch had instantly dropped to the floor at my left, and, down on his knees, was begging for mercy, offering to show me the original letter from Warsaw in which I could read the name of the person who wrote him the thing in the same terms.

"Where is the letter?"

"In [illegible]."

I move away to let him pass, and I bolt the door. He begins, shaking like a leaf, to look for the letter in question among the letters from Warsaw, which, instead of being in order by their dates, were every which way. I show him the date in his infamous gazette; but it is no use. At the end of an hour, shaking, blubbering, he falls to his knees again and tells me to do as I will with him. I give him a kick in the stomach, I put the pistol back in my pocket, and I tell him to come with me. He follows without protest and even without a hat, which I did not let him go to fetch, and he accompanies me to my post chaise, into which he sees me get, thanking God that he has escaped the storm.

I arrived that evening at Aix-la-Chapelle, where I found the Princess Lubomirska Straznikowa, the Grand Notary[67] Rzewuski, General Ronikier, Tomatis and his wife, and some Englishmen whom I knew.

CHAPTER XI

My stay in Spa. The blow. A sword thrust. Crosin. Charlotte, her lying-in and her death. A lettre de cachet *makes me leave Paris within twenty-four hours.*

THEY ALL showed that they were charmed to see me again, and I was no less delighted than they to see that I was sure of moving in the best circles. They were about to leave for Spa,[1] where there were a great many people; the season at Aix being ended, everyone was going to Spa, and those who were not going there were remaining in Aix because there was simply no more room for anyone in Spa. Everyone assured me of it; several people had come back because they had found nowhere to put up. I pay no attention to them, telling the Princess that I will leave when she does, sure of finding a room somewhere. We leave the next morning, we arrive in Spa early; the Princess, the Grand Notary, Ronikier, and Tomatis all had houses which they had taken beforehand, I alone am left in my carriage not knowing where to go, for the postilion had been everywhere. I decide to get out and go to look for a room myself on foot; but before running about Spa I enter a hatter's shop[2] to buy a hat, having lost mine on the journey. I tell the shopwoman my plight, she understands it, she looks at her husband; they talk together in Walloon, and she tells me that if it is for only a few days she will let me have her room, sleeping with her husband in the shop; but she says that she has absolutely no place for my manservant.

"I have no servant."

"So much the better, have your things unloaded."

"Where shall I put my carriage?"

"I will see that it is put in a safe place and under cover."

"How much shall I pay you?"

"Nothing; and nothing if you want to eat with us without expecting fine fare."

I accept everything in a manner which assures them that they have not been so polite to a scoundrel. I go up a short flight of stairs, I see a room and a closet, a good bed, a chest of drawers, a large table and two small ones; and I see that I am well off. The shopwoman takes down what she needed and what would inconvenience me, leaving me two drawers empty. I ask her why they would not rather sleep in the closet than in the shop, where they cannot but be very cramped, and they reply together that they would be in my way, whereas their niece would certainly not trouble me in the least.

At the word "niece" I am plunged in thought. The closet had no door, it was scarcely bigger than the bed it contained; it was an alcove without a window, and for this reason no door had been made for it, since it had to be lighted by the light from the room itself. I must inform my reader that the shopwoman, who was from Liège like her husband, was revoltingly ugly. "It is impossible," I said to myself, "that their niece can be uglier; but if they abandon her in this way to the first comer she must certainly be above temptation." However that may be, I agree to everything, I do not ask to see the niece, for the request might have been considered offensive, and I go out without even having opened my trunk. In a night bag I had the few things I needed. I tell them that I shall not come in until after supper, and I give them money to buy candles for me; I also tell them that I must have a night lamp.

I go to see the Princess, at whose house I was to sup, and all the others; they are all delighted with my good luck in finding a lodging. I go to the concert, to the faro bank simply to see of what sort it was, I enter the rooms where the gaming is going on, and I see the Marquis d'Aragon,[3] who was playing piquet with an old Count of the Empire. I am at once told the story of a duel he had fought with a Frenchman who had picked a quarrel with him. It had happened three weeks earlier. The Marquis d'Aragon had given the Frenchman a wound in the chest from which he was still suffering, and he was waiting for him to be cured in order to give him the revenge for which he had asked him when he withdrew. Such is the style of the French: as soon as they see their own blood they are calmed; our style in Italy is entirely different: we are not phlegmatic enough to amuse ourselves asking for a revenge at some indefinite time when we are in the presence of the enemy who has already opened our veins. But each nation has its particular character. This custom in France makes dueling very common.

The person whom I was delighted to see in Spa was the Marchese Caraccioli,[4] whom I had left in London.[5] He had obtained a leave of absence from his Court, and he was amusing himself in Spa. He was a man of sound intelligence, kind, humane, compassionate, a friend to youth—male or female, he did not care—but not in excess. He did not gamble, but he liked gamesters who knew how to play, and he despised dupes. Being of this happy character, he made the Marquis d'Aragon's fortune. He vouched for his name and his nobility to a fifty-year-old English widow who was then in Spa and who fell in love with him. On the word of the Ambassador Caraccioli, she married him and brought him sixty thousand pounds sterling as her dowry. She can only have fallen in love with his six feet of stature and with the proud name of D'Aragon, for he had neither wit nor manners and his legs were covered with venereal sores; but since he always wore boots the Englishwoman cannot have seen them until after their wedding. I saw him some time afterward in Marseilles, and some years later he went to Modena, where he bought two fiefs. His wife died and left him rich. I believe he is still alive. The excellent Caraccioli congratulated himself on having thus made the fortune of the adventurer, whose name was Dragon. By borrowing an *A*, he had made himself d'Aragon.

After supper I returned to my lodging, and I went to bed without having seen the niece, who was already asleep. I was waited on by her aunt, the very ugly shopwoman, who begged me not to take a servant as long as I was in her house, for, according to her, they were all thieves.

When I woke in the morning the niece had already gone down to the shop; I dressed to go to the fountain,[6] telling my kind hosts that I would come to eat dinner with them that day. They could eat only in my room, and I was amazed when they asked my permission to do so. I did not see the niece, she had gone to take hats to a number of houses. I was beginning to feel no more curiosity about her. At the morning promenade I fell in with someone who informed me concerning all the feminine beauties we saw there. The number of adventuresses who frequent Spa during the watering season is incredible, they all go there expecting to make their fortunes, and they are all disappointed. The circulation of money there is astonishing, but it is all among gamesters and merchants. The restaurant keepers, the innkeepers, the vintners, and the moneylenders absorb a great part of it, and the adventuresses find themselves reduced to momentary liaisons. The passion for play is stronger than the passion for gallantry; the gamester at Spa has neither time to stop to consider the merits of a woman nor the courage to make sacrifices for her. As for gaming, the money which comes from it is divided into three shares. One, which is the smallest, goes into the pocket of the Prince-Bishop of Liège, another share, somewhat larger, is divided among the small fry of cheats, who are very numerous and who do very poorly, for people avoid them and they have no established and authorized place to serve as their thieves' alley. So the largest share, which, take one year with another, is reckoned at half a million, goes to an association of twelve professional sharpers authorized by the sovereign. All this money comes from the pockets of the dupes who hasten from four hundred leagues around to ruin themselves in the hole called Spa. Going there to take the waters is usually only a pretext. People go there only for business, for intrigues, to gamble, to make love, and also to spy. A very small number of decent people go there to amuse themselves or to rest from the fatigues which their duties impose on them all year in the places in which they reside.

In such a place, where all one does is eat, drink, walk, gamble, dance, and look at courtesans, living is not expensive. At a table d'hôte where thirty made dishes are served, one pays only a French petit écu, and for the same amount one is well lodged. Those who live there the year round make in three months what they need to spend during the other nine months while they wait for the season to return.

I went back to my lodging at noon, after winning some twenty louis. I had four hundred sequins at my disposal, and I was determined to lead what is called a "virtuous life."

I enter the shop to go up to my room, and I see a girl nineteen or twenty years of age, tall, dark-haired, with big black eyes, very well built, serious-looking, measuring ribbon. She must be the niece who slept in the closet six paces from my bed. I am surprised, but do not show it. I sit down for a moment; but she scarcely greets me; she has not time enough. Her aunt comes down to tell me that dinner is about to be served, I go upstairs, I see four places set, and a moment later the maid who brings in the soup asks me outright for money to buy wine with if I want any, for her master and mistress drink only beer. This pleases me, and I give her enough to buy two bottles of Burgundy.

The hatter comes up and shows me a repeating gold watch, with a gold chain, both from Paris, modern, and by a well-known maker. He asks me what it may be worth.

"Forty louis at least."

"A gentleman wants to sell it to me for twenty, but on condition that I will return it to him if he gives me twenty-two tomorrow."

"Do it."

"I haven't the money."

"I shall be glad to lend it to you."

I give him twenty louis, he hurries downstairs, he comes back and gives me the watch, which I put in my jewel case, and we sit down at table. A hole in the floor with a grill over it showed anyone who might enter the shop while we were dining. I had the wife at my right, the husband at my left, and, facing me, the niece, at whom I took care not to look and who did not speak twenty words during the whole dinner. I find the soup excellent, the boiled beef, the entrée, and the roast exquisite; the shopwoman tells me that the roast is at my expense, for they are not rich. I consider this sincerity admirable, and the procedure very polite. I ask her to drink some of my wine, and she accepts, saying that she would like to be a little better off only so that she could drink a measure of wine a day; her husband says the same.

"But it seems to me that your business——"

"The merchandise we have does not belong to us, we have debts in Liège, and our expenses are enormous. So far we have sold very little."

"I am most sorry for that. I hope things will go better. You have nothing but hats?"

"I beg your pardon—we have handkerchiefs from

China, stockings from Paris, and cuffs. People find everything too expensive, and they go away."

"I will buy some of each, and I will bring my friends here. Leave it to me. I want to be of use to you."

"Merci,[7] go get one or two packets of those handkerchiefs, and some socks in a large size, for Monsieur has a big leg."

Merci goes for it all. I find the handkerchiefs superb, and the stockings very fine. I buy a dozen handkerchiefs and six pairs of stockings, and I promise her that I will see to it that she sells all the handkerchiefs and all the stockings in the shop in less than twenty-four hours. They thank me, and they beg me to continue my good offices. After the coffee, which was at my expense too, the aunt tells her niece to be very careful not to wake me in the morning when she gets up; she replies that she will always go to the shop to put on her shoes. I told her not to be concerned, for I slept soundly.

After dinner I go into a gunsmith's shop to buy pistols, which I wanted to present to my brother, for I had already decided to go to Paris immediately after Spa. Weapons from Liège are not expensive. They are handsome, but they are not as good. I ask him if he knows the merchant So-and-so, in whose house I am lodging.

"We are first cousins."

"Is he rich?"

"In debt."

"Why?"

"Because he is unlucky, like all honest people."

"And his wife?"

"It is she who keeps him afloat by her careful economy."

"Do you know her niece?"

"Certainly. She is a fool who is a bigot, and who because of her scruples drives customers from the shop."

"What do you think she should do to attract the customers?"

"She should be more polite and stop playing the prude when some man wants to kiss her."

"Is she really like that?"

"Is she? Try, and you will see. It is not a week since she slapped an officer. My cousin scolded her, and she wanted to go back to Liège; but his wife soothed her. She is certainly pretty. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, but if she is what you say, the thing to do is to let her alone"

Armed with this information I decided to leave the house, for Merci had so pleased me at table that I foresaw that it could not be long before she saw me sitting on her bed, and I loathed Pamelas[8] and Charpillons. In the course of the afternoon I went into the shop with Rzewuski and Ronikier, who, to please me, bought more than fifty ducats' worth of merchandise, and the next day the Princess and La Tomatis bought all the handkerchiefs. Back at the house at ten o'clock, I found that Merci had gone to bed, as on the night before. The next morning the merchant came up to get the watch from me, giving me twenty-two louis, but I would take only my twenty. I told him that, if I was insured by a pledge, I would always open my purse to him, but that I absolutely refused to take any profit. He went downstairs overcome by gratitude, and his wife came up to express hers to me.

Being invited to dinner by Tomatis, I could not dine with them; but, curious about the beautiful bigot, I told them that I would sup there and that I would pay the extra outlay; and they gave me a good supper, at my expense as was only right, with good Burgundy, which Merci would never consent to taste. Toward the end of supper, she having gone out somewhere, I told her aunt that her niece was charming and that it was a pity she was so gloomy. She replied that her character would surely change, or she would not remain long in her shop.

"Is she like that with all men?"

"All."

"She has never loved?"

"So she says, but I do not believe it."

"I am astonished that she sleeps peacefully, knowing that there is a man six paces away from her."

"She is not afraid."

She comes back, and she wishes us good night, I offer to kiss her, she declines, and, in order to undress freely, she puts a chair in front of the entrance to the closet, meaning to keep me from seeing her in her shift. They leave, I go to bed too, finding her procedure intolerable, and even not natural, for Merci knew and must know that she had the right to please. Nevertheless, I go calmly to bed, and when I wake in the morning I do not see her. I wanted to get her to talk with me privately, and afterward to decide on my course in accordance with what she said; but I did not know how to go about it. In the meanwhile the merchant availed himself of my offer by bringing me pledges and taking the interest himself. I procured this advantage for him at no risk to myself; I was delighted to do it; and both he and his wife said they were happy to have persuaded me to go on living in their house. So I decided to turn their self-interest to my profit.

On the fifth or sixth day I wake before Merci, I get up. I put on only my dressing gown, she instantly wakes, and, seeing me approaching her, she asks me what I want. Sitting down on her bed, I reply with a very gentle expression and the most humane manner that I want only to wish her good morning and to talk with her a little. She had wrapped herself in her sheet, for the weather was very hot; but, her bed being very narrow, that could not prevent me from putting my arms around her. Clasping her, I ask her to let me kiss her, and she curtly refuses. Her tone irritates me, I slip my hand under the sheet from the bottom, and I move rapidly from her legs to the most important place. Merci quickly pulls out one arm, and with her clenched fist she gives me a blow on the nose of a vigor to destroy all tenderness in me. I at once bleed very copiously, and, possessing myself to perfection, I withdraw and I wash with cold water until the blood is stanched, and meanwhile Merci dresses and goes downstairs.

After the bleeding stops I am left with a contusion which makes my face hideous. From the window I call the wigmaker who lives upstairs, he gives me a hasty combing, he puts my hair in a cadogan,[9] and he leaves. The shopwoman comes up to show me some trout, and she is astonished to see me disfigured. I tell her the reason, mildly and not only without complaining but putting the blame on myself. I pay for the trout and I go out, not listening to her useless excuses. Covering my bruise with a handkerchief, I enter a house across the street,[10] which I had the day before seen the Duchess of Richmond [11] leaving. Half of the apartment, the landlord told me, was let to an Italian Marchese who was to arrive from Liège; he offers me the other half, and I take it. I also engage a manservant, and I instantly go to have all my things conveyed from the house of the woman from Liège, paying no attention not only to her supplications but to her tears. Besides, what she said could have not the slightest power to persuade me, for by promising that Merci should not again appear before my eyes, she was satisfying Merci and punishing me, supposing, as she must, that I wanted a taste of her or, more reasonably, that I wanted to give the creature a whipping.

So I go to my new lodging, where I had two rooms and a closet. An Englishman promises that he will rid me of the swelling in an hour and of the bruise in twenty-four, and, I letting him do as he would, he kept his word. He rubbed me with spirits of wine. Feeling ashamed to show myself in such a state, I spend the day at home. The shopwoman comes at noon to bring me my trout, and, assuring me that Merci has repented with tears of having treated me so, she promises me that if I will return to her house the girl will make it up to me in any way I may wish.

"You must understand that, if I did that, what has happened to me would become known, which would make me ridiculous, and also put a stain on the honor of your house, and on your niece herself, who could no longer pass as pious.”

I remind her of the incident of the slap,[12] the story of which she is astonished that I know, and I reproach her with the thoughtlessness of her conduct in exposing me to the wretched girl’s fury. I end by saying that, without being very clever, I could suspect her of complicity. At these last words the woman shows that she is in despair and bursts into tears. Since they might spring from decent feeling, I soothe her, asking her to excuse me, and she goes. A half hour later her husband comes, bringing me twenty-five louis which I had lent on a gold snuffbox with diamonds, and he proposes that I give two hundred louis for a ring which was worth four hundred. It would belong to me, he said, if the owner of it did not give me two hundred and twenty louis in a week. Not being short of money, I look at the stone, which appeared to be of the six carats it was said to weigh, the water was excellent, I tell him that I will do it if the owner will give me a bill of sale.

“I will draw it up myself in the presence of witnesses.”

“Very good; in an hour I will give you the money, for I want to have the stone unset. It should make no difference to the owner, for I will have it reset as it is at my expense. If he redeems it, the twenty louis shall be for you”

“I must ask him if he is willing to have it unset.”

“Very well, but tell him that if he does not consent I will not pursue the business.”

He goes, and he comes back with a jeweler who tells me that he is willing to guarantee me that the stone weighs at least two grains more.

“Have you weighed it?”

“No, but that makes no difference.”

“Then do the business yourself.”

“I haven’t the money.”

"Why does the owner object to having it unset? It will cost him nothing."

"He refuses absolutely."

"That is his privilege, as it is mine not to give him a sou."

They went away; and I congratulate myself on having held out. It was obvious that, if the owner would not consent to its being unset, supposing he needed the money for which he asked, either the stone was false, which would have been shown by its weight, or it had an artificial base

I spend the day writing, having sent away all visitors; I sup, I go to bed, and at daybreak I get up to see who is knocking at my door. I see Merci. I let her come in, and, getting back into bed, I ask her what she has come to me at that hour for. She sits down on my bed, and she begins pouring out vain excuses. Arguing to prove someone wrong being a passion with me, I ask her why, since her principle was to resist like a tigress the caresses of a man who was seduced by her charms, she could have put me in the position of having to do what I had done.

"Sleeping in the closet, I obeyed my aunt. Giving you the blow, which I greatly regret, I obeyed the involuntary impulse of my soul, which felt itself outraged; and it is not true that I am sure that every man who sees me is bound to lose his reason. I count on duty, and you will admit that your duty was to respect me, as mine was to defend myself."

"If that is the way you think, I confess that you were right, and indeed I conceded it; I did not protest when you drew my blood, and, since I left you, you are certain that I will respect you in future. Did you come here to hear this? You have done so. You can want nothing else. Only permit me to laugh at you for having asked me to excuse you, for what you have just said makes it laughable."

"What did I say?"

"That in breaking my nose you were doing your duty.

Do you think one must ask to be excused for having done what one ought to do?"

"I should have defended myself by gentleness. Alas, forget it all and forgive me. I will no longer defend myself in any way, I am yours, I love you, and I am ready to convince you of it."

She could not say more. As she utters the words, she falls on me, she weeps, and she rubs her face against mine. Ashamed of the victory which she is about to win, I do not repulse her, but I withdraw. I tell her to come back when my face has recovered its original shape. She left, very much mortified.

The Italian whom my landlord was expecting from Liège had arrived during the night, I had heard a great commotion; curious to know his name, I ask what it is, and I see the visiting card which had already been written to be distributed to all the self-styled sick people who were at Spa to recover their health. I am surprised to read: "The Marchese Don Antonio dalla Croce." Could it be Crosin? [13] It was perfectly possible. He was asleep. I am told that he has a wife, a secretary, also with a wife, a chambermaid, and two menservants. I cannot wait to see his face.

I did not have to wait long. As soon as he was up and informed that I was his neighbor, he presented himself. Two hours which we spent in telling each other our adventures since we had parted at Milan passed very quickly. He had learned how I had made the happiness of the girl he had left me; [14] in the last six months he had traveled over half of Europe, always at strife with Fortune; he had made much money in Paris, as he had done again in Brussels, where, having fallen in love with a young lady of birth whom her father had shut up in a convent, he had carried her off, and he had her with him, six months gone with child. He presented her as his wife, for he intended to make her so. He told me that he had fifty thousand francs, and as much again in jewels and other possessions, and that he intended to deal at his lodging, giving suppers, for he was sure to lose all that he had if he trusted himself to the run of the cards and did not tamper with luck. I encouraged him to adhere to his resolution. He expected to go to Warsaw, where he was sure that I would send him to all my acquaintances, but he was mistaken. I did not even let him hope that I would present him to the Poles who were in Spa. I told him that he could easily manage to make their acquaintance, and I assured him that I would do him no harm. I promised to dine with him that day. The man he passed off as his secretary was a Veronese named Conti,[15] a clever scoundrel whose wife played a leading part.

But about noon in comes the merchant from Liège again with the ring and its owner, who looked like a bravo. They were accompanied by the jeweler and another man. The owner repeats his request that I give him two hundred louis. If I had been more sensible and less talkative I would have asked him to excuse me, and it would have been all over. But not a bit of it, I wanted to convince him that his objection to allowing the stone to be unset was enough to prevent me from doing him the favor he asked of me. Once the stone was unset, I said to him, what it really was would appear.

"If, when it is unset," I said, "it weighs twenty-six grains, I will give you not two hundred but three hundred louis; set as it is, I will give you nothing."

"You are making a mistake to doubt what I tell you, for your obstinacy wounds my honor."

"My argument attacks no one's honor. My reason is free. I propose a wager to you. Let the stone be unset, and if it weighs twenty-six grains I lose two hundred louis, if it weighs much less you shall lose the ring."

"Your proposal is insulting, for it implies that I am lying."

At these words I go to the chest of drawers on which I had a pair of pistols and I ask the brawler to leave me in peace. Just then General Ronikier arrives, and the man with the ring tells him the story. Ronikier looks at the ring and says that if he were made a present of it he would not have the stone unset, but that if he had to buy it he would have it unset even if the seller were the greatest monarch on earth, and that he was astonished that he would not consent to it. The scoundrel then left, without bowing to anyone, and the ring remained in the hands of the merchant from Liège.

"Why," I asked him, "did you not give him back his ring?"

"Because I advanced him fifty louis yesterday; but if he does not give them to me tomorrow I will have the stone unset before the magistrate and put up at auction."

"I do not like the man. I ask you to not bring anyone to me henceforth."

The thing ended as follows: The impostor did not redeem the ring, and the merchant had it unset on the next day but one before witnesses. The stone was found to be flat and lying on the flat side of a crystal which made up two thirds of the entire bulk. However, the covering stone was worth the fifty louis, and the merchant from Liège obtained them from an Englishman whose curiosity the thing aroused. The knave vanished from sight. A week later, having found me walking alone to a fountain which is a quarter of a league from Spa,[16] he asked me to be so good as to follow him to a place where we should not be seen, for he had a word to say to me, sword in hand. Strangely enough, I had my sword with me. That same morning I had been to a meeting between two hotheads who were also to duel and who had made it up. When one goes to see such a meeting at Spa one never goes unarmed.

I replied that I would not follow him, and that he need only speak to me where we were.

"We are seen."

"So much the better. Make haste and draw your sword first, I promise you I will not call for help."

"It is an advantage."

"So I know, and it is mine by right, and if you do not unsheathe I will publicly proclaim you the coward I know you to be."

At these words he quickly draws his sword; but, I jumping back, he finds me ready to receive him. He approaches me *à la Donadieu*,[17] and when he makes to cross swords I lunge straight at his chest, and I give him a pink which the surgeon found to be three inches deep. I should have finished him off if he had not lowered his sword, saying that he would find an opportunity to have his revenge. He leaves.

Twenty people who had seen us were already about me, no one troubling to overtake the other, for they were all witnesses that he had been the aggressor. I put the hilt of my sword on the ground to clean it, for I had my left hand in a sling, and we all go back to Spa. The affair had no consequences. When I left Spa he was still in the surgeon's care. He was an adventurer, with whom all the Frenchmen who were in Spa would have nothing to do. But let us come to Crosin and the dinner he gave me.

The Marquise, his pretended wife, was a girl sixteen or seventeen years of age, beautiful, blonde, very tall, and with all the manners and bearing of the nobility of the country in which she was born. The story of her elopement is known to her brothers and sisters; there is no need for me to tell the reader her name.[18] I have already said too much. When her husband, who had mentioned me to her beforehand, presented me to her she received me as one receives a well-tried friend. She showed neither the dejection which arises from repentance nor the embarrassment which follows a bold step contrary to the precepts which she must have received from her education and to the duties upon which the world makes honor depend. Six or seven months gone with child, she seemed already to have reached her term because of the extreme inward curvature of her back. She had all the appearance of the most perfect health, a candid physiognomy, prominent blue eyes, natural coloring, a mouth made for smiles, and two magnificent rows of teeth which were even whiter than her skin. Priding myself on being a physiognomist, I at once concluded that the young woman not only should be happy herself but should bring perfect happiness to the man she loved; I was soon forced to admit the vanity of that pretended science. She had beautiful earrings and two beautiful rings, which gave me an excuse to admire the beauty of her hands. Monsieur Conti's wife cut no figure at all. I had eyes only for Charlotte; such was her baptismal name. She surprised me so greatly that, in constant distraction, I almost never made appropriate answers to all the remarks she addressed to me at this dinner on the first day of her arrival.

I reflected on Crosin, with whom girls of superior merit fell in love, and for some reason which I could not comprehend. He had neither looks nor a cultivated mind nor the manners of good society nor a winning tongue nor the art of making a sufficient impression to reduce well-bred girls to forsaking their homes. Despite that, I had before me the second such,[19] whose merits were far superior to those of the first. I was far from foreseeing what nevertheless happened in five or six weeks.

After dinner I took Crosin aside and treated him to a wise and moving discourse. I pointed out his extreme need to behave with the utmost circumspection, for he would become the most execrable of villains if ever the excellent creature whom he had seduced should be brought to unhappiness on his account. He replied that he was determined no longer to trust in Fortune, whose capriciousness he had too often experienced. He intended to count only on his skill, and he was sure to live thenceforth a rich man.

"Does she know that your only income is the money of dupes?"

"She knows nothing, she knows that I am a gamester, and, loving me more than herself, she has no will but mine. I shall marry her in Warsaw before she bears her child. This one I shall not have to leave to your care. If you need money, avail yourself freely of my purse."

I was not in need of money. Playing prudently, I was three or four hundred louis ahead. When luck was against me I had the strength to stop. Though the bruise from Merci's fist was still very visible, I took the Marquise to the gaming room alone, where she drew all eyes. She liked *piquet à écrire,*[20] and I kept her amused for a couple of hours. She had wanted to play for money, and, having lost twenty counters, she insisted on giving me twenty écus. Back at the house, we found Crosin and Conti, who had both won too—Conti a score of louis at faro, and Crosin a hundred-odd guineas at *passe-dix*[21] at an English club[22] to which I do not remember how he obtained an introduction. At supper I had more presence of mind than at dinner. Charlotte laughed a great deal at the amusing stories I told her

After that I made only a few short calls on the Poles[23] and the Tomatises. At the end of a week they even stopped reproaching me. I was in love with the beautiful Italian,[24] and no one could find anything to say against it. But at the end of the same week Crosin, tired of seeing that he found no dupes and that those whom he brought home to supper did not punt when he put down a thousand louis and opened a pack of cards, began playing at the big bank in the gaming room and losing constantly. Accustomed to suffering losses, he was no less gay, he ate with no less appetite, he bestowed no fewer caresses on his excellent spouse, who knew nothing about it. I knew it, but I should have been worse than a fool to inform her of it. I loved her fondly, but I did not dare to tell her so; I thought I could aspire to no more than her friendship, and I feared that it would diminish if she came to know that I loved her and that I was even jealous of the happiness of the scoundrel who had seduced her. In short, I was afraid of losing the confidence she was beginning to have in me

At the end of three weeks Conti, who, playing prudently, was ahead by two hundred louis, left Crosin and went to Verona with his wife and his manservant; and a few days later Charlotte sent her chambermaid, with whom she was not satisfied, back to her native Liège.

At the middle of September all the Poles and Tomatis left Spa to return to Paris, where I promised to rejoin them. I remained in Spa only perforce of the attachment Charlotte had inspired in me. I foresaw misfortunes, and I could not abandon the excellent creature. Crosin, losing every night and every day, emptied his purse of its last copper. He sold (for he never pawned) all his jewels, his watches, his rings. He asked his wife for her earrings, her rings, her watches, and everything she had, and he lost them all without her ever letting me see the slightest change in her angelic humor on account of it. Finally, on the last day, he took all her laces and her finest dresses, and adding them to all his coats, he sold the whole and went to assault Fortune for the last time with two hundred louis, which he lost in my presence in the most lamentable fashion, always trying to force the cards. He rises, he sees me, he beckons to me, I follow him, and we go outside of Spa.

"My dear friend," he says, "one of two things: I must either kill myself here and now, or leave as I am without going back to the house even for a moment. I shall go to Warsaw on foot, I know that you will take care of my wife, for you adore her and you do justice to her merits. It is for you to tell her the dreadful news that my destiny forces me to leave her. Assure her that if I live I will replenish my purse and will rejoin her. Take her to Paris, look after her, and I will write to you, addressing my letter in care of your brother. I know that you have money, but I would die before I would ask you for or accept a single louis. Here are three or four which I have in small coins, and I assure you that I am richer now than I was two months ago. Good-by. I commend Charlotte to your care; she would be happy if I had never known her."

After these words he embraces me, still shedding tears, and he goes off without another shirt in his pocket, in silk stockings, walking stick in hand; and he leaves me there motionless, petrified, and in despair that I must go to tell this terrible news to a young woman with child who adored the wretch who, despite everything, loved her. The only consolation which my soul found was that, knowing that I was in love with her, I was certain that she would not be left without support. I thank God and Fortune that I am rich enough to provide her with a comfortable life.

I go to her lodging, and to spare her I say that we can dine, for the Marquis was engaged in a game which would go on all evening. She sighs, she wishes him good luck, and we dine. I disguise my emotion so well that she cannot imagine that anything is wrong. After dinner I urge her to go to walk with me in the garden of the Capuchin monastery,[25] which was a hundred paces from our lodging, and she is glad to come. To prepare her to receive the news with equanimity, I ask her if she would praise her lover if, having had an affair of honor, he risked being murdered by his enemies in order to bid her good-by, rather than thinking of escaping.

"I should blame him," she said. "He should think of escaping, if only to preserve himself for me. Did my husband make that choice? Speak clearly. My soul is strong enough to bear such a blow, especially since I have such a friend as I believe you to be. Speak."

"Very well. I will tell you all. But be certain, as you hear me, that you must consider me a fond father who loves you, who will never let you want for anything, and who will remain so until death."

"Then I am not unfortunate. Speak."

I thereupon told her the whole brief story, and, word for word, the speech he made to me when he parted from me, which ended with the words: "I commend Charlotte to your care; she would be happy if I had never known her."

For half a quarter of an hour she remained motionless and thoughtful, with her beautiful eyes cast down, then she wiped away two tears, and, looking at me sadly and tenderly, she said that if she could count on me she was far from considering herself unfortunate.

"I swear to you," I said, "that I will never leave you except to restore you to your husband, unless I die before then."

"That is enough. I vow you eternal gratitude and all the obedience of a good daughter."

She then made some brief reflections on the unfortunate man's precipitate departure, and she saw despair in the alternative of killing himself. She commented on his conduct only to pity him. Attributing everything to a mad passion for play, she never condemned him. As he had several times told her the story of the girl from Marseilles whom he had left behind at an inn in Milan, leaving her nothing but the advice to entrust herself to me, she declared it a unique combination of circumstances which for the second time made me the guardian of a girl whom the unfortunate gamester abandoned when she was eight months with child.

"The difference is," I said, "that I made the fortune of the first by finding her a husband, whereas I should never have the courage to make the fortune of the second in the same way."

"As long as Croce[26] lives, I will never be any man's wife; and though I am very firm in that resolve, I am nevertheless very glad to be free."

Back at our lodging, I advised her to dismiss her manservant, paying for his journey as far as his native Besançon, where she had engaged him; this was to avoid the harmful things he might say. I made her sell all her poor lover's shirts and old coats, and his carriage too, since mine was better. She showed me everything she had left, which was only some linen and three or four plain dresses. We remained in Spa for four days after the poor wretch left, never going out. She saw that I loved her more than paternally, she told me so, and she was grateful to me for forbidding myself to act toward her as a lover. I held her in my arms for hours, kissing her beautiful eyes and demanding no other recompense for my affection; I enjoyed seeing that my restraint filled her with gratitude. When I felt tempted to believe that I was deceiving myself, I rejected the idea with indignation. Such is the man of feeling who has the misfortune to fall in love.

Since I needed a traveling hat, the inn servant went to look for one at the hatter's from Liège, and Merci brought several. She blushed when she saw me, and I said nothing; but my new friend laughed heartily when I told her, after Merci had gone, that it was from her that I had received the blow which had given me the bruise she had seen on my face when she arrived in Spa. She admired my courage in not having surrendered to her demonstrations of repentance. She thought the whole thing had been hatched up between the girl and her mistress.

We left Spa without a servant, and at Liège we took horses for Luxembourg, going by way of the Ardennes. It was necessary to do this to avoid Brussels, where she was afraid she might be set upon. At Luxembourg we engaged a manservant, who, by way of Metz and Verdun, waited on us until we came to Paris. On the journey my dear daughter always insisted on going to bed with her new father and putting him to sleep in her arms. My love grew calm, and this toying made her laugh. She said that, setting ourselves these limits, we did nothing with which we could reproach ourselves, and we assured ourselves that we would love each other most fondly all our lives. I foresaw that things would be different after her confinement, and I indulged myself in sweet imaginings of that time; but the event was to be otherwise. We went to stay at the Hôtel de Montmorency,[27] on the Rue de Montmorency.

Paris seemed to me a new world. Madame d'Urfé was dead,[28] my old acquaintances had different houses and different fortunes, I found the rich become poor, the poor rich, brand-new courtesans, the ones I had known having gone to cut a figure in the provinces, where everything which comes from Paris is welcomed and acclaimed. I found not only new buildings which kept me from recognizing the streets, but whole new streets and so strange in their architecture that I lost my way in them. Paris seemed to me to have become a labyrinth. Being on foot, and wanting to walk from the Church of Saint-Eustache[29] to the Rue Saint-Honoré to go to the Louvre, and not finding the old site of the Hôtel de Soissons,[30] I got completely lost. Vast round buildings with unsymmetrical exits, and little streets wider than long—it was the height of French architectural folly, which, to the innovating genius of the nation, seemed a masterpiece. Taste in spectacles was governed by new principles: new rules, new actors, and new actresses; everything had become more expensive, the poor, to alleviate their sorrows, crowded to enjoy themselves on the new promenades which policy and avarice had built for them on the false ramparts[31] of the great city. The luxury of those who appeared there only in carriages seemed to be displayed only for the sake of contrast. The two extremes were, in turn and reciprocally, spectacle and spectators. No city except Paris needs only four or five years to present the observant eye with so great a change.

The first person whom I went to see was Madame du Rumain,[32] who saw me with the greatest joy. I at once returned to her the money which she had conveyed to me by the draft she had sent me at Wesel.[33] She was in good health, but a great many family concerns by which she was troubled made her think I had arrived in Paris most opportunely to rid her of them by my cabala. She found me ready to meet her at all the times she set; it was the least I could do for a woman of her character.

My brother had gone to live beyond the Pont-aux-

Choux[34] on the Rue des Amandiers in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Delighted to see me, as was his wife, who loved him alone and whom he made unhappy because of his inability to perform the act of love, he joined her in urging me to come to lodge with them; and I promised that I would do so after a lady who was with me had been confined. I saw no reason to tell them the story, and they did not urge me to tell it. On that same day I paid my only calls on Princess Lubomirska and on Tomatis, warning them that I should see them very seldom because of the lady they had seen at Spa, who was nearing her term and whom I must not leave alone.

After fulfilling these duties, I no longer left Charlotte, who, having a prodigiously big belly, expected to be confined from day to day.

It was on the 7th or 8th of October that I thought I would send Charlotte to stay in the house of the midwife Lamarre, who lived on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis. Charlotte wanted to go there. We went together, she saw her room, she learned what attendance she would receive, how she would eat, and what I would pay for her board and her confinement, and we went there at nightfall of the same day in a hackney carriage into which I put a trunk containing all her possessions.

As we came out of the Rue de Montmorency our carriage had to wait for a quarter of an hour to let the funeral procession of some rich person pass. Charlotte held a handkerchief to her eyes, and, resting her beautiful head on my shoulder, said that it was stupid but that, even so, meeting the funeral procession in the state she was in seemed to her a very bad omen

"Do not becloud your intelligence, my charming Charlotte, with the least apprehension; omens are nothing but vanities which can become real only with the help of superstition; a woman who is about to lie in is not ill, and no woman has ever died in childbirth except from some other disease. We will set out, my dear friend, for

Madrid as soon as you have recovered, leaving your child here at nurse, and I shall not be happy until I see you content."

As soon as I saw that she was comfortably lodged and assured myself that she would want for nothing, I went home; and the next day I took all my things to my brother's; but as long as Charlotte lived I returned there only to sleep. I went to her room at nine o'clock in the morning and did not leave it until an hour after midnight. On October 13th Charlotte was attacked by a high fever which never left her. On the 17th in my presence she gave birth to a boy with no difficulty, and the next morning the midwife, at Charlotte's express order, took him to the church to be baptized,[35] she herself giving her the name she wanted him to bear written in her own hand: Jacques (which was my name) Charles (which was hers), son of Antonio La Croce and Charlotte xxx (she gave her real name). When they came back from the church she insisted that Madame Lamarre herself take him to the Foundling Hospital, with his baptismal certificate and the place where he was born and the address in his linen. I tried in vain to persuade her to leave the child in my care. She said that if he lived nothing would be easier than for his father to take him from the orphanage in which she was putting him. On the same day, October 18th, the midwife brought me the following certificate, which I have kept:

"We, J. Baptiste Dorival, Councilor to the King, Commissary of the Châtelet[36] in Paris, formerly superintendent of police in the quarter of La Cité,[37] certify that by our order there was taken to the Foundling Hospital a male child apparently one day old, brought from the Faubourg Saint-Denis by the midwife Lamarre, dressed in swaddling clothes in which was found a certificate stating that he was baptized on this same day at Saint-Laurent under the name of Jacques Charles, son of Antoine La Crosse and of Charlotte xxx. In testimony whereof we have delivered the present certificate at our residence on the Rue des Marmousets[38] in La Cité, this 18th October 1767 at seven o'clock in the evening. Dorival."

If there is a reader who is curious to know the mother's name, I have enabled him to satisfy himself. After this matter was attended to, I did not leave Charlotte's bedside again day or night. The fever which remained with her despite the efforts of the physician Petit ended her life in my presence on the 26th of the same month at five o'clock in the morning. Before closing her beautiful eyes, an hour before she died, she gave me her last farewell, saying that it was the last, and before letting go of my hand she raised it to her lips in the presence of the priest who had confessed her at midnight. The tears which I now shed as I write this account will apparently be the last[39] with which I shall honor the memory of that charming creature, victim of love and of a man who still lives and who seems bound to make people unhappy only in obedience to his cruel destiny.

Breaking into tears again and again, I sat beside the bed on which lay what had been Charlotte, now a corpse, refusing to listen to the midwife, who tried to persuade me to come down to her quarters. At noon I saw my brother and his wife, who had not seen me for a week. Seeing the spectacle and my tears, they could not hold back theirs. They had to leave me there. I slept there, and I did not leave the room until after Charlotte had been carried away to be buried, and until I received the following certificate two hours later. Here is a copy of it:

"Extract from the registry of burials of the Church of Saint-Laurent, Paris, 27th October 1767. Charlotte xxx, spinster, aged seventeen years, deceased yesterday on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine in this parish, was buried in the cemetery of this church with the offices of three priests in the presence of Claude Louis Ambezar, who has signed. Collated with the original and delivered by me, the undersigned, priest. Besombet."

On the evening before that fatal day my brother had given me several letters which the post had brought to his house. Before leaving the ill-omened house of the good midwife, I open them to read them, and in the first, which came from Venice, written by Signor Dandolo,[40] I find the dreadful news of the death of Signor Bragadin.[41] The spring of my tears was dried up. It was the news of the death of a man who for twenty-two years had been as a father to me, living himself with the greatest economy and going into debt to support me. His estate being entailed, he could leave me nothing. His furniture, his library were to be sold to satisfy his creditors in part. His two friends, who were also mine, were poor. I could count only upon their hearts. This terrible news was accompanied by a bill of exchange for a thousand écus, which the deceased, foreseeing his imminent death, had sent me twenty-four hours before he rendered up his soul.

Overwhelmed as I was, I defied Fortune to give me a blow which I could feel. I spent three days without leaving my brother's house. On the fourth I began paying assiduous court to Princess Lubomirska, who had written the King, her cousin,[42] a letter which must have mortified him, for it showed the monarch that he had listened to calumny; but Kings are not mortified by such trifles; and the King of Poland had at that time received the most outrageous insult from Russia. The abduction of the three Senators[43] by the violence of Prince Repnin because they had spoken like free men in the Diet was a blow which must have pierced the heart of Stanislaus Augustus. Princess Lubomirska remained away from Warsaw more from hate than from love; and people were deceived. Since I had already decided to go to Madrid and to see and know that Court before going to Portugal, the Princess gave me a letter for the Count of Aranda,[44] who was then very powerful, and the Marchese Caraccioli, who was still in Paris, gave me three, one for Prince della Cattolica,[45] the Neapolitan Minister at that Court, another for the Duke of Losada,[46] Grand Steward to the

King[47] and his favorite, and the third for the Marquis of Mora Pignatelli.[48]

On the 4th of November I went to a concert opposite the Cul-de-sac de l'Orangerie[49] with a ticket which Princess Lubomirska had given me. Halfway through the concert I hear my name spoken behind me and a laugh; I turn, and I see that the person who was speaking scornfully of me was a tall young man[50] between two elderly people. I stare at him, and, turning his eyes from me, he continues his insolent remarks, and among other things I hear him say that I had cost him at least a million which I had stolen from his late aunt the Marquise d'Urfé.

"You can be nothing but an upstart," I said to him. "If you were out of this place I would teach you to talk by kicking you in the behind."

So saying, I rise and I go out, seeing the two sensible people holding back the blockhead. I get into my carriage, and I wait at the entrance to the Cul-de-sac for a quarter of an hour to see if he will come, and, not seeing him, I go to the play at the Théâtre de la Foire,[51] where I find myself in a box with the actress Valville.[52] She tells me that she is no longer on the stage and that she is being kept by the Marquis de Brumoy.[53] She urges me to sup with her. I excuse myself, assuring her that it was impossible for me to enjoy the pleasure, but that I would go to see her if she would be so good as to give me her address. So saying, I hand her a roll of fifty louis which I owed her.

"What is this?"

"The money you lent me in Königsberg."

"This is neither the time nor the place to return it to me. I will accept it only in my house, and do not insist."

I put the roll back in my pocket, she takes out her pencil, writes her address, and gives it to me. I was too sad to accept a supper alone with the charming and giddy Valville.

On the next day but one I was at table with my brother, my sister-in-law, and some Russians who were boarding with him to learn to paint battle pictures, when I was told that a Chevalier of St. Louis[54] was in the anteroom wanting to speak to me. I go to hear what he has to say, and, without any preamble, he hands me a paper. I read it, I see that it is signed Louis. That monarch, in the letter he wrote me, ordered me to leave Paris within twenty-four hours and his kingdom within three weeks, and the reason he gave me was that such was his good pleasure.[55]

CHAPTER XII

My departure from Paris. My journey to Madrid. The Count of Aranda. Prince della Cattolica. The Duke of Losada. Mengs. A ball. La Pichona. Doña Ignacia.

"VERY WELL, Chevalier" (he was Buhot),[1] "I have read, and I will try to gratify the monarch as soon as possible. However, if in twenty-four hours I have not been able to make ready to leave, His Majesty will enjoy the other gratification of doing as he will with me."

"Monsieur, the twenty-four hours are allotted you only by way of form; sign an acknowledgment of the order, give me a receipt for the *lettre de cachet,* and you shall leave at your convenience. I ask only for your word of honor that you will go neither to the theater nor to public promenades on foot."

"Very well, Monsieur, I give you my word for that, and I thank you for relying on it."

I take him into my room, and I write everything he tells me to write, and, he having said that he would be glad to see my brother, whom he already knew, I take him to the dining room, where he was still at table, and I tell him bluntly, but cheerfully and without recrimination, the purport of the visit. My brother laughs, telling the Chevalier Buhot that I do not need the order, for I was planning to leave within the week.

"So much the better. If the Minister[2] had known that, he would not have gone to the trouble of having the letter signed this morning."

"Is the reason for the letter known?"

"I heard something about a proposal to 'kick the behind' of someone who, though young, cannot be treated in that fashion."

"You no doubt understand," I said, "that those words are a formality, like the phrase 'within twenty-four hours,' for if he had come out he had a sword with which he could easily have defended his behind."

I told him the whole story, and Buhot admitted that I was entirely in the right, but he said that the police also had the right, so far as it was in their power, to prevent encounters of the sort. He advised me to present myself the next morning to Monsieur de Sartine, who knew me and who would be delighted to hear the whole story from my own lips; and I made no answer.[3]

It was November 6th. I did not leave until the 20th. I exchanged my carriage, which had four wheels, for one with two and room for only one person; and I informed all my acquaintances of the honor done me by the royal order, having absolutely refused the kind offices of Madame du Rumain, who wanted to go to Versailles expressly for the purpose, saying she was sure that she could get the letter withdrawn. My passport from the Duke of Choiseul authorizing me to order post horses is dated the 19th,[4] and I still keep it. I left on the 20th, all alone, without a servant, sad because of Charlotte's death, but calm, with a hundred louis in my purse and a bill of exchange for eight thousand francs on Bordeaux. I enjoyed perfect health, and I thought I was armed with new principles. I was going to a country in which I should need them, in respect both to my conduct and to the circumspection with which I must speak. Aside from that, I had lost all my resources, death had isolated me; I was beginning to see myself arrived at the "certain age" which Fortune commonly scorns, and for which women care little. I did not see La Valville until the day before I left. I found her splendidly lodged and well supplied with diamonds. When I wanted to return the fifty louis to her she asked me if I had at least a thousand, and when she learned that I had only five hundred she refused to take them. After that time I heard no more of her.

I embraced my brother and my sister-in-law at six o'clock by moonlight, and, determined to travel all night to dine at Orléans, where I wanted to see an old acquaintance, I found myself at Bourg-la-Reine in half an hour. I began to sleep, annoyed that I was constantly being waked to pay the post; I was in Orléans at seven o'clock in the morning. Oh, my dear France! where in those days everything went well, despite the *lettres de cachet*, the forced labor and the misery of the peasants, and the good pleasure of the King and the Ministers—what have you become today? Your king is the people. The most savage, the most insane, the most uncontrollable, the most rascally, the most fickle, the most ignorant of all peoples. But everything will perhaps return to its place before I finish writing these memoirs; in the meanwhile, may God keep me far from that country under his curse.

I had myself driven to the house of Bodin,[5] once a respectable dancer, who had married La Geoffroi, of Marseilles, whom I had loved twenty-two years before[6] and whom I had afterward seen at Turin, Vienna, and Paris; but I had still to see her at home. These renewed acquaintances, these surprises, these recognitions, which summoned up old memories, which recalled old joys, were my theater; I seemed to become again what I once was, and my soul rejoiced equally in narrating its vicissitudes and in hearing those of the object it saw before it. Such was my inclination, for cruel repentance did not gnaw my conscience; but often the object which interested me was in a frame of mind entirely different from mine.

Bodin's wife,[7] who had become even uglier than older, had turned pious to please the taste of her husband, who, living on a small property he had bought, attributed all the little misfortunes which befell his fields in the course of the year, and which damaged him to the extent of fifty écus, to the justice of an avenging God. I ate a fast-day dinner with them, for it was a Friday, and the rule was inviolable. I gave them a brief account of my vicissitudes, and at the end of my story I heard nothing but reflections on the irregularity of man's conduct when his guide in all that he does is not religion. They told me that there was a God, and that I had a soul, as if I had not known it, and that it was time that I thought, as they did, of renouncing all the vanities of this world. What La Bodin bitterly reproached me with was my having stayed with Charlotte until her last breath, and she was astonished at the priest who had allowed me to do so, for he must at least have known that I was not her father.

Despite all this stupidity, I was not sorry to have spent six hours with the two good creatures; I embraced them, and I traveled all night. I stopped at Chanteloup[8] to see the monument to the magnificence and the taste of the Duke of Choiseul. I spent twenty-four hours there; a man who had the air of a courtier and who seemed to have full powers, who did not know me and to whom I brought no letter, lodged me in a very fine room, gave me supper, and did not sit down at table with me until I had insisted on it; the next day at dinner he did the same, he took me everywhere, and, without ever asking me who I was, he showed me the honors due to a prince. He had the courtesy to see to it that not one servant should be present when I got into my chaise to leave. It was a deliberate arrangement to save the traveler from giving a louis. The beautiful castle, which cost the Duke immense sums, had not burdened him in the least, for he owed everything it cost,[9] but that made no difference to him. He was the declared enemy of "mine" and "thine"; he paid no one, and he pressed no one who owed him to pay him. He liked to give. A lover of the arts, a friend to people of talent and taste, he enjoyed the pleasure of being useful to them and of seeing them in his presence paying court to him from gratitude. He had, furthermore, a great deal of intelligence, though always from an embracing and summarizing point of view, disregarding every kind of detail, for he was lazy and a worshiper of pleasure. "There is time for everything," was his favorite saying. It was he who covered with ineffaceable ridicule those Ministers who shut their doors to everyone on post days; and so he succeeded in making them live the same life every day.

At Poitiers two young ladies protested when they saw me at seven o'clock determined to go on to sleep at Vivonne.[10]

"It is very cold; the road is not of the best. You are not a courier, sup here, you will find that we will give you an excellent bed, and you shall leave in the morning."

"I must leave, but if you will sup with me I will stay."

"Oh, that would cost you too much."

"There's no such thing. Quick, make up your minds."

"Very well, we will sup with you."

"Then have three places set. I will leave in an hour."

"In three, if you please, for our dear father cannot serve you for two hours."

"In that case I will not leave; but you shall keep me company all night."

"If Papa consents we are willing, and we will have your chaise brought in."

The two young mischiefs, having arranged things with their father, gave me a supper which could not have been more exquisite, with wines than which better were not to be had. They held me at table until midnight, keeping up with me in both eating and drinking, gay, playful, always ready with a charming remark, and in general such that I thought my moderation most extraordinary. I could attribute it only to a certain sadness which Charlotte's death had left in my soul, for I was gay, and I was thoroughly aware of all their charms; but I never felt that kindling sensibility to which I have all my life been so susceptible. I did not recognize myself.

Their father came into the room at midnight, smiling and asking me if I had been pleased with the supper.

"Very well pleased, but far more by the company. Your daughters are both enchanting."

"I am delighted to hear it. When you come this way again they will always eat with you; but at this hour everyone must go to bed "

I do not know if he would have left them with me, but I know that I did not propose it to him, for fear of being taken at my word. I had neither the inclination nor the ability to imagine a pleasure worthy of succeeding to the noble Charlotte. I wished them a good night's rest, and I believe I would not even have kissed them if their father had not urged me to do him that honor. My self-esteem inspired me to carry it off with ardor. They thought they left me a prey to desires, and I was glad to leave them deluded. When I was alone I saw that if I did not forget Charlotte I was lost. I slept until nine o'clock, and I told the maid who made my fire to order coffee for three and horses.

The pretty girls then came to breakfast with me, and I thanked them for having persuaded me to stay. I asked for the bill, and the elder said it came to a round sum. It was a louis a head for everything. I then gave three louis, saying that I had three heads. I left very well satisfied, not finding the entertainment too expensive. I wanted to pass that way again, but the opportunity never arose.

I made my journey two short leagues longer in order to go to Angoulême. I hoped to find Noël there, the King of Prussia's cook, with whom I had supped three or four times in Berlin at La Rufin's;[11] but I found only his father, who treated me very well and whose skill in pâtés I found to be immense. A man of persuasive tongue, he told me that he would undertake to send any pâtés I might order to any place in Europe, directly to the houses of the persons to whom I ordered him to send them.

"What? Even to Venice, to London, to Warsaw, to Petersburg?"

"Anywhere; you have only to write down the addresses, and, to assure yourself that I do not mean to cheat you, you shall not pay me until you hear that the pâtés are in the hands of the person to whom you want them sent."

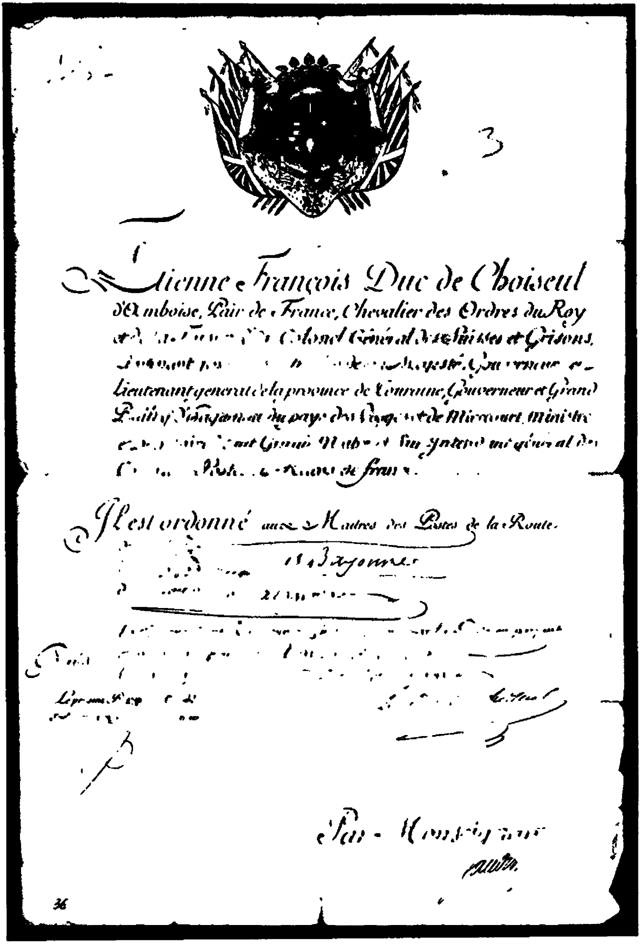
I sent some, paying him for them, to Venice, Warsaw, and Turin, and I received thanks for them. The man had grown rich by this trade. He told me that he sent some to America. They were pâtés of partridge, of turkey, stuffed with truffles. They kept without spoiling until summer. On the next day but one I arrived in Bordeaux, where I spent a week. After Paris it is the first city of all France. I left after transferring my eight thousand francs to Madrid by a bill of exchange on a Genoese; and, by way of Les Landes,[12] I went to Saint-Jean-d'Angély,[13] where I sold my post chaise. I went to Pamplona after crossing the Pyrenees riding a mule and with another carrying my trunks. I thought those mountains much more imposing than the Alps.

At Pamplona the carter Andrea Capello took charge of me and my baggage, and we set out for Madrid. The first twenty leagues did not tire me, for the road was as good as in France. It was a monument which honored the memory of Monsieur de Gages,[14] who, after the Italian war, was made Governor of Navarre. He had, I was told, had the fine road built at his expense. This famous general, who twenty-four years earlier had had me arrested,[15] thus found the true way to gain immortality and to deserve it. As a great soldier he had won laurels only to declare himself a famous destroyer of the human race;

but this fine road declared him its benefactor. His fame was permanent and secure.

But after such a fine road I cannot say that I found a bad one, for I found none at all. Uneven stony climbs and descents, where one nowhere saw the least sign to indicate that carriages passed there. Such was the whole of Old Castile.[16] No one supposes that travelers who are fond of comfort think of going to Madrid by that route, so I was not surprised to find only wretched inns[17] fit to lodge muleteers who lodge with their mules. Señor Andrea was careful to choose the most habitable places for me, and after procuring everything his mules needed he would go through the village finding me something to eat. The master of the miserable establishment at which we stopped did not stir; he showed me a room and told me that I was at liberty to sleep in it, and a fireplace in which I was free to make a fire if I went to fetch the wood myself and to cook what I wanted to eat, not even troubling to tell me where I could go to buy it for my money. On leaving in the morning I paid him the small sum he asked for my lodging and a *peseta por el ruido,* "a small coin for the noise."[18] He smoked the *cigarro*[19] and his poverty stood him in the stead of riches, provided that the departing stranger could not say that he had bestirred himself in the slightest to wait on him. What causes this is an indolence mingled with pride; one is a Castilian, one must not lower oneself to wait on a *gabacho*;[20] this is the title which the whole Spanish nation confers on a foreigner. This word *gabacho* is much more insulting than the "dog" which the Turks apply to us and the "French dog"[21] which the English apply to all foreigners. It goes without saying that the nobility and people polished by travel or education do not think in this way. The foreigner who has good introductions and who behaves himself properly finds reasonable people in England as well as in Spain and in Turkey.

I slept the second night in Agreda. It is called a city. It is a prodigy of ugliness and gloom. It is a place where



Etienne François Duc de Choiseul

d'Amboise, Pair de France, Chevalier des Ordres du Roy
[illegible] Colonel Général des Suisses et Grisons,
[illegible] Majesté, Gouverneur et
Lieutenant general de la province de Touraine, Gouverneur et Grand
Bailly d'Haguenau et du pays des Vosges et de Mirecourt, Ministre
[illegible] Grand Maître et Surintendant général des
[illegible] de France.

Il est ordonné aux Maîtres des Postes de la Route
[illegible] Bayonne
[illegible]

Par Monseigneur

36

Casanova's Passport
for His Journey to Spain

a man whom some employment does not keep busy cannot but go mad, suffer from black bile, and become a visionary. It is there that Sister María de Agreda went mad to the point of writing the life of the Blessed Virgin dictated by herself. I had been given her work to read under the Leads, and my reader may remember that the visionary's dreams very nearly made me lose my mind.[22] We traveled twenty leagues a day. One morning I thought I was preceded by ten or twelve Capuchins who were moving more slowly than the mules harnessed to my carriage. We pass them, I look at them, and I see that they are not Capuchins but women of all ages.

"What is this?" I asked Señor Andrea. "Are these women mad?"

"Not at all; they wear the Capuchin habit from devotion, and I am sure that not one of them has on a shift."

It was the more likely because shifts in Spain are very rare, but the notion of wearing the Capuchin habit to be more pleasing to the Creator struck me as very strange indeed.

Here is an adventure which amused me.

At the posthouse of a city not far from Madrid I am asked for my passport, I hand it over, and I get out of my carriage to amuse myself. I see the chief official angry with a foreign priest who wants to go on to Madrid and who has no passport for the capital. He showed one with which he had been to Bilbao,[23] and the official was not satisfied. The priest was a Sicilian, he was being badgered; I take an interest in him, I ask him why he has put himself in this predicament, and he replies that he had not thought that he needed a passport to travel in Spain once he was there.

"I want to go to Madrid," he said, "where I hope to enter the household of a grandee[24] as his confessor. I have a letter to him."

"Show the letter, and you will certainly be allowed to pass."

"You are right."

From his portfolio he takes the letter, which was not sealed, he shows it to the official, who unfolds it, looks at the signature, and exclaims when he reads the name Squillace.[25]

"What, Abate! you are going to Madrid recommended by Squillace, and you dare to show his letter?"

The clerks, the police who were there, as soon as they understand that the Abate had no recommendation but one from the Minister who was the object of the entire nation's hatred, and who would have been stoned to death if the King had not arranged his escape, raise their sticks and begin to bestow a sound beating on the wretched Abate, who would never have expected such a lamentable effect from a letter of recommendation from a man upon whose favor he hoped to construct the edifice of his fortune.

This Squillace was sent by the King, who loved him, as Ambassador to Venice, where he died at a great age. He was a man to be hated by all the subjects of the monarch, whose Minister of Finance he would have liked to be, for to increase receipts he was pitiless in regard to taxes.

The door of the room which the innkeeper gave me had a bolt outside, and nothing inside which I could use to fasten my door when I went to bed; the door opened and shut only by means of the latch. I said nothing for the first night and the second; but on the third I told my carter that I would not put up with it. He replied that I should have to put up with it in Spain; since the Holy Inquisition[26] must always be able to send to see what foreigners might be doing at night in their rooms, foreigners must not have the means to lock themselves in.

"What can your accursed Holy Inquisition be curious to know?"

"Everything. To see if you eat meat on a fast day. To see if there are several people of both sexes in the room, if the women sleep alone or with men, and to learn if the women who sleep with men are their legitimate wives, and to be able to take them to prison if their marriage certificates do not speak in their favor. The Holy Inquisition, Señor Don Jaime,[27] is ever on the watch in our country for our eternal salvation."

When we met a priest who was carrying the blessed sacrament to a dying person Señor Andrea stopped and imperatively told me to get out of the carriage and kneel, even in the mud if there was any; I had to obey. The great uproar in matters of religion at that time in the two Castiles[28] was over breeches without a codpiece. Those who wore them were taken to prison, and the tailors were punished; nevertheless both wearers and tailors persisted, and the priests and monks vainly wore out their throats in their pulpits inveighing against such indecency. A revolution was expected which would have set all Europe laughing; but fortunately the thing was settled without bloodshed. An edict was promulgated, and printed copies of it were displayed on every church door. It said that no one would be allowed to wear breeches so made except the executioner. The fashion then went out, for no one wanted either to be thought an executioner or to avail himself of such a privilege.

Thus learning, little by little, to know the country among whose people I was to live, I arrived at Guadalajara, Alcalá, and Madrid. Guadalajara and Alcalá! What are these words, these names, in which I hear only the vowel *a*? It is because the language of the Moors, whose country Spain had been for several centuries, had left a quantity of words there.[29] Everyone knows that the Arabic language abounds in *a*'s. The learned are even not unjustified in deducing thence that Arabic must be the oldest of all languages, since *a* is the easiest of all the vowels, because it is the most natural. Hence it is not just to regard as barbarisms the words in the beautiful Spanish language in which there are no other vowels: ala, achala, Aranda, Almada, Acara, bacala, Agapa, Agrada, Agracaramba, Álava, Alamata, Albadara, Alcántara, Alcaraz, Alcavala,[30] and a thousand more, which have the effect of making the Castilian language richer than all languages, a richness which, as the reader easily understands, can consist only in synonyms, since it is as easy to imagine words as it is difficult to find new qualities and as it is impossible to create things. However that may be, the Spanish language is beyond contradiction one of the most beautiful in the world, sonorous, energetic, majestic, to be pronounced *ore rotundo* ("with rounded mouth"),[31] capable of the harmony of the most sublime poetry, and which would be equal to Italian for music if it had not the three guttural letters[32] which mar its sweetness, despite all that is said by the Spaniards, who, naturally, are of a different opinion. They must be allowed to go on saying so; *quisquis amat ranam ranam putat esse Dianam* ("he who loves frogs thinks that Diana is one").[33] Nevertheless, to unprejudiced ears its tone makes it seem more imperative than any other language.

As I entered by the Puerta de Alcalá,[34] I was searched, and the greatest attention of the officials was directed to books; they were disappointed when I was found to have only the *Iliad* in Greek. It was taken from me, and it was brought to me three days later in the Street of the Cross,[35] at the coffeehouse where I went to lodge,[36] despite Señor Andrea, who wanted to take me elsewhere. A reliable man had given me this address in Bordeaux. A ceremony to which I was subjected at the Alcalá gate annoyed me greatly. A clerk asked me for a pinch of snuff I give it to him; it was rappee.

"Señor, this snuff is accursed in Spain."

So saying, he throws all my snuff into the mud and gives me back my snuffbox empty.

Nowhere is there such strictness in the matter of snuff as there is in Spain, where, nevertheless, the contraband trade flourishes more than elsewhere. The spies of the tobacco monopoly, which is especially protected by the

King, are everywhere on the watch to discover people who have foreign snuff in their boxes, and when they find them they make them pay very dearly for their daring. This indulgence is forgiven only to foreign envoys; the King knew it and had to put up with it; but he did not allow them to use it in his presence. For his part, he put into his big nose only a big pinch of his Spanish snuff in the morning when he got out of bed, and he took no more of it all day. Spanish snuff is excellent when it is pure, but it is rare. On my arrival no good Spanish snuff was to be had. What had been found among the effects of the late Queen[37] had all been sold, and I had to go three or four weeks without taking snuff, except when I went to visit the fat Prince della Cattolica,[38] who, to give me an especial mark of his affection, received me, after the first time, seated on his commode, where he remained all morning and where he began the business of the day as soon as, left alone, he fell to writing his dispatches. In any case, Spaniards prefer rappee to their snuff, just as many of us prefer the Spanish. What pleases mankind is everywhere what is forbidden. A way of making men of a certain cast of mind do their duty would be to forbid them to do it; but lawmaking is nowhere philosophical.

Fairly well lodged, all I lacked was a fire; the cold was dry and more penetrating than in Paris, despite the forty degrees of latitude. The reason is that Madrid is the highest city[39] in all Europe. Those who go there from some city on the seacoast insensibly ascend, I believe, to an altitude of a thousand toises.[40] In addition, the city is surrounded by distant mountains and by hills close by, as a result of which when the wind blows it is bitterly cold. The air of Madrid is bad for all foreigners because it is pure and rarefied; it is good only for Spaniards, all of whom are thin, undersized, and susceptible to cold to the point that when there is the slightest wind even in August they do not expose themselves to it without being wrapped up to the eyes in great woolen cloaks. The minds of the men in that country are limited by an infinity of prejudices, those of the women are in general comparatively unprejudiced; and both men and women are subject to passions and desires as keen as the air they breathe. All the men dislike foreigners, and they are unable to allege one good reason for it, for their dislike springs from nothing but an innate hatred; add to this hatred a scorn which can certainly arise only from the fact that the foreigner is not a Spaniard. The women, who recognize the injustice of this hatred and scorn, avenge us by loving us, but taking great precautions, for the Spaniard, jealous by nature, is determined to have a reason for his jealousy as well. He has bound his honor to the slightest slip on the part of the woman who belongs to him; in this way he conceals the cowardice of a timorous soul under the respectable veil which envelops the sanctuary of honor and even of religion. Superstitious to excess, he cannot be cured of it, for he does not know that he is so. Gallantry in that country can only be a mystery, for its goal is an enjoyment which is above everything else and which is also forbidden. Hence secrecy, intrigue, and the trouble of a soul which hesitates between the duties imposed by religion and the force of the passion which struggles against them. The men of that country are generally more ugly than handsome; but the women are very pretty, burning with desires, and all ready to lend a hand in schemes intended to deceive all those who surround them to spy on their doings. The lover who most boldly faces and defies dangers is the one they prefer to all those who are timid, respectful, guarded. Their coquetry makes them want to keep them, but at bottom they despise them. In the public walks, in churches, at the theaters, they speak with their eyes to those to whom they wish to speak, possessing that seductive language to perfection; if the man, who must understand it, can seize the occasion and take advantage of it, he is sure to be successful; he need not expect the slightest resistance; if he neglects the opportunity or does not profit by it, it is not offered him again.

Needing to live in a comfortably warm room, since the brazier made me ill and there was no fireplace, I asked for a stove; and with great difficulty I found someone intelligent enough to make me one, following my instructions, of heavy tin with a long pipe which went out one of my windows to join another very long one which ascended to the gutter on the roof. The workman, proud of having succeeded, made me pay a great deal for his trial piece. During the first days until my stove was built I was told where I should go to warm myself an hour before noon and stay there until dinnertime; it was a place called the Gate of the Sun;[41] it was not a gate, but it was so named because it was there that the beneficent luminary, prodigal of his wealth, distributed the heat of his rays to all who went to walk there to warm themselves and thus enjoy their influence. I saw a large number of men of fashion walking about, either alone and rapidly, or slowly and talking to their friends; but I did not care for this sort of hearth. Needing a servant who spoke French, it was an endless task to find one; I did find him at last, but at a very high price, for he was what is called in Madrid a page; I could make him neither get up behind my carriage, nor carry packages anywhere for me, nor light me at night with a torch or a lantern. He was a man thirty years of age, with a face which could not be uglier. As a page, he was better fitted for the duties of his office being ugly than if he had been handsome, for he was not one to make the husbands of the ladies whom he went to serve jealous for fear they would fall in love with him. A woman of a certain station in Madrid does not dare to go out in a carriage unless she is accompanied by a so-called page, who sits up in front and who is with her only to spy on her. Such a rascal is more of a hindrance to a seduction than a duenna,[42] who is by nature a tyrant over the girls she guards. So, since I could find no one else, it was a fellow of this stamp whom I had to take into my service.

I delivered all my letters, beginning with the one by which Princess Lubomirska presented me to the Count of Aranda. The Count was then more powerful in Madrid than the King himself. It was he who in a single day had banished all the Jesuits in all Spain,[43] he had been able to proscribe hats with turned-down brims and cloaks coming down to the heel;[44] he was President of the Council of Castile,[45] he was all-powerful, he never went out except followed by one of the King's bodyguard, whom he always had eat at his table. As was to be expected, he was hated by the whole country, but he did not care. A man of profound intelligence, a great politician, bold, determined, reasoning correctly, a great epicurean, maintaining appearances, doing in his house everything that he forbade in other houses, and not caring if people said so. This rather ugly nobleman, who squinted to the point of deformity, received me rather coolly.

"What have you come to do in Spain?"

"To learn by observing the manners and customs of an estimable nation which I do not know, and at the same time to profit by my feeble talents if I can make myself useful to the government."

"To live here decently and quietly you do not need me, for if you behave in accordance with the laws which maintain order in the city no one will trouble you. As for your wish to use your talents to make your fortune, address yourself to the Ambassador of your Republic;[46] he will present you, and you can make yourself known."

"The Venetian Ambassador will do me no harm, but he will do me no good either, for I am in disfavor with the State Inquisitors. I am sure he will not receive me."

"In that case you can hope for nothing at Court, for the King will first ask the Ambassador about you. If the Ambassador will not present you, I advise you to think of nothing but amusing yourself."

I call on the Neapolitan Ambassador,[47] and he tells me the same thing; the Marquis of Mora,[48] the most amiable of all Spaniards, is of the same opinion. The Duke of Losada, Grand Steward to His Catholic Majesty and his favorite, sorry that he could do nothing despite his good will, advises me to try to obtain admission to the residence of the Venetian Ambassador and to do what I could to gain his support, despite a disgrace of which he could pretend to be unaware since he did not know the reasons for it. I prepare to follow the wise old man's advice, so I write a strong letter to Signor Dandolo[49] in Venice, in which I asked him for a letter of recommendation to the Ambassador himself, which would oblige him to lend me his countenance at Court despite the State Inquisitors. My letter was so composed that it could be shown to the State Inquisitors themselves, and should have a good effect.

After writing this letter I go to the residence of the Venetian Ambassador, and I present myself to Signor Gasparo Soderini,[50] the Secretary of Embassy, a man of intelligence, prudent and honest, but who nevertheless took it upon himself to say that he was astonished that I had had the audacity to present myself at the Ambassador's residence.

"I present myself, Signore, in order not to have to reproach myself with the fault of not presenting myself, for I have done nothing which can make me suppose myself unworthy of it. I should think myself far more audacious if I stayed in Madrid without presenting myself here at least once than if I had never presented myself. In the meanwhile I am glad to have taken this step, which I regard as a duty, and I leave unhappy and disappointed to have learned that if the Ambassador thinks as you do he will consider temerity what is only an act of respect on my part. If, furthermore, the Ambassador is of the opinion that he may not do me the honor to receive me because of a private quarrel which exists between the State Inquisitors and myself, and the nature of which he cannot know, permit me to be surprised, for he is not here as Ambassador of the State Inquisitors but of the Republic, of which I am still a subject, for I defy him to tell me what crime I can have committed to make me unworthy of being so. I believe that if my duty is to respect in the Ambassador the image and the representative of my sovereign,[51] his duty is to extend his protection to me."

Soderini had blushed at this discourse, which too clearly set forth palpable truths. He asked me why I did not write the Ambassador everything I had just said to him.

"I could not write him that before I knew if he would receive me or not; now that I have reason to believe that he thinks as you do, I will write to him."

"I do not know if His Excellency thinks as I do, and despite what I have said to you it is possible that you still do not know what I think; but meanwhile write to him, and you may be given a hearing."

Back at my lodging, I the same day wrote His Excellency everything that I had said to the Secretary of Embassy; and the next day Count Manuzzi[52] was announced to me. I see a handsome, rather well-built youth who makes a very good impression. He said that he lodged at the Ambassador's, who, having read my letter, had sent him to tell me that, having reasons for not receiving me publicly, he would nevertheless be delighted to talk with me in private, for he knew me and esteemed me. The young man told me that he was a Venetian, that he knew me by reputation from having heard his father and mother talk of me many times, lamenting my misfortune. I finally understand that the young Manuzzi whom I had before me was the son of the Giovanni Battista Manuzzi who had served the State Inquisitors as a spy in order to get me imprisoned under the Leads, the same man who had cleverly obtained from me the books of magic I had [53] and which were apparently the incriminating evidence which, without any other legal proceedings, had brought on me the terrible punishment to which I had been subjected. I tell him none of this, but I see that it is he; I knew his mother, who was the daughter of a valet in the service of the Loredan[54] family, and his father, who, as I said in my account of my imprisonment under the Leads, was a poor jeweler. I ask him if he is called Count in the Ambassador's household, and he says that he is, because he was in fact one by virtue of a patent he had received from the Elector of the Palatinate. He frankly tells me the truth about everything, and since he was aware that I knew of Ambassador Mocenigo's inclination, he does not hesitate to tell me with a laugh that he is his antinatural mistress. He assures me that he will do everything in his power for me; and it was all that I could ask, for such an Alexis was bound to obtain whatever he wanted from his Corydon.[55] We embrace, and he leaves, saying that he expects me after dinner at the palace in the Calle Ancha[56] to take coffee with him in his room, to which the Ambassador would certainly come as soon as he sent him word that I was there.

I went there, and the Ambassador gave me a very gracious reception, speaking with feeling of his regret that he dared not receive me publicly, for it was true that he could have done everything, and even taken me to Court without compromising himself, for he was under no obligation to know anything of the summary treatment I had received from the State Inquisitors, but he feared to make enemies. I replied that I hoped soon to receive a letter from someone which would tell him, on behalf of the Inquisitors themselves, that he could countenance me without fear, and he replied that in that case he would present me to all the Ministers.

The Ambassador was the Mocenigo who afterward got himself so much talked about in Paris because of his unfortunate inclination for pederasty, and who was later sentenced by the Council of Ten to spend seven years in the fortress of Brescia[57] for having tried to leave Venice for Vienna, where he had been appointed Ambassador, without first having been given permission to leave by the Cabinet. The Empress Maria Theresa had intimated that she did not want such a man in her capital, and in Venice it had been proving difficult to make the appointee understand the situation, when, by committing the error of trying to leave without permission, he made it possible for the Senate to appoint another Ambassador[58] to Vienna, who had the same taste as Mocenigo but who confined himself to women.

At Madrid he was liked, despite its being common knowledge that he was of the wristband clique,[59] and his often being seen driving through the streets of Madrid with his paramour. I laughed when a Spanish grandee told me at a ball that everyone knew that Manuzzi played the part of wife to His Excellency the Ambassador; he did not know that the wife was the Ambassador, to whom Manuzzi played husband. The same inclination was shared by Frederick I, King of Prussia, and by nearly all the men of Antiquity, who were called "hermaphrodites" to designate their two passions. However, Mocenigo kept Manuzzi at a distance and did not have him dine with him when he gave formal dinners.

I had already called two or three times on the painter Mengs,[60] who for six years had been in the service of His Catholic Majesty at an excellent salary, and he had given me fine dinners with his friends. His wife was in Rome with his whole family, he was alone with his servants, lodged in a house which belonged to the King, and respected by everyone, for he talked with His Majesty whenever he pleased. At his house I made the acquaintance of the architect Sabatini,[61] a very talented man, whom the King had summoned from Naples to make Madrid clean, whereas before he arrived it was the dirtiest and most stinking city in the universe. Sabatini had constructed drains and subterranean conduits, and had had latrines built in fourteen thousand houses. He had become rich. He had married by proxy the daughter of Vanvitelli,[62] another architect, who was in Naples and who had never seen him. She had arrived in Madrid at the same time that I did. She was a beauty eighteen years of age, who had no sooner seen her husband than she had said she would never consent to become his wife. He was neither young nor handsome. However, the charming girl decided to swallow the pill when he told her that she would have to choose between him and a convent. Afterward she had no cause to repent, for she found in him a rich husband, tender and considerate, who granted her all the decent freedom she could want. I went to their house a great deal. *Brûlant pour elle, et soupirant tout bas* ("Burning for her and sighing inaudibly"),[63] for aside from the fact that the wound Charlotte had made in my heart had not yet healed over, I was beginning to feel discouraged to see that women no longer welcomed me as they had done in the past.

I began going to the theater which was a hundred paces from the house in which I lived, and to the masked balls, which the Count of Aranda had established in Madrid in a hall built for the purpose called "Los Caños del Peral."[64] The Spanish theater was full of absurdities, but it did not displease me. I saw some *autos sacramentales,*[65] which soon afterward were forbidden in Madrid, and I observed the shamelessness of a base police administration in the way in which the *aposentos,* as they call the boxes, were constructed. Instead of having boards in front, which prevents people in the parterre from seeing the man's legs and the ladies' skirts, all the boxes were open, having, instead of boards, only two pillars which supported the rail. A precisian who was sitting next to me said devoutly that it was a very wise regulation and declared it surprising that the same policy was not in force in Italy.

"Why do you think it surprising?"

"It is surprising because a lady and gentleman, being sure that people in the parterre do not see their hands, might put them to evil use."

"What use?"

"*Valgame Dios* ['God help me']! The lady could do the *puñete* to the gentleman."

After laughing heartily, and finding out what the *puñete* was, I told him that the Italians and the French did not dirty their minds with such suspicions. In a large box with a grating opposite the stage sat *los padres* of the Inquisition, to make sure that the audience and the actors indulged in nothing contrary to morality. All of a sudden I heard the voice of the sentinel who was at the entrance to the parterre shout: "Dios!" At the sound the whole audience, men and women, and the actors who were on the stage, broke off, fell to their knees, and remained there until a bell which was being rung in the street was no longer heard. The bell indicated that a priest was going past carrying the viaticum to a sick person. The people of Spain are edified by everything which proves that in all that they do they never lose sight of religion. There is not a courtesan who, being with her lover and yielding to amorous desire, decides to perform the act without first having put a handkerchief over the crucifix and turned the pictures of saints to face the wall. Anyone who laughed at it, a man who called the ceremony absurd and superstitious, would be considered an atheist, and the courtesan would perhaps denounce him to the authorities.

Any man in Madrid who goes to an inn with a woman and orders dinner in a private room is accommodated at once; but the headwaiter of the inn always remains present throughout the dinner so that he can swear afterward that the two people did nothing in the room but eat and drink. Despite these prohibitions, and even because of these prohibitions, profligacy runs riot in Madrid. Both men and women think of nothing but making all surveillance fruitless. All the women have a disease which they call "the whites," but men incautious enough to expose themselves to it find at the end of twenty-four hours that it is nothing less than white. This malady is general among the women, and I was assured that even nuns are afflicted with it without ever having wronged their divine spouse in any way.

The masked ball became my favorite pleasure. The first time I went to it, alone and wearing a domino, merely to see what it was, it cost me only a doubloon; but all the other times it cost me four. This was in consequence of a discourse to which I was treated by a masker in a domino, a man of perhaps sixty years, who happened to sit beside me in the room in which one supped. Seeing that I was a foreigner from the difficulty I had in making myself understood by the waiter, he asked me where my female masker was.

"I have no women with me, I came alone to see this charming establishment, where a pleasure and an orderliness reign which I had not expected to find in Madrid."

"Very well; but to enjoy this fine spectacle you must come with a companion, for you seem to be a man to enjoy dancing, and, alone, you cannot dance, for every woman you see here has her *parejo* ['partner'] who will not let her dance with anyone else."

"In that case I will come and never dance, since I do not know a woman in this city whom I can invite to come to the ball with me."

"As a foreigner you can obtain the company of a woman or a girl much more easily than a Spaniard from Madrid. Under the new regime of gaiety and freedom introduced by the Count of Aranda, the ball which you see has become the passion of all the women and girls in Madrid. You see here some two hundred of them dancing, for I do not count those who remain in the boxes, and it is certain that four thousand girls who have no lover who will or can bring them here are at home crying, for as you know all women are forbidden to come here alone. Now, I am certain that, if you give merely your name and your address, there is not a mother or a father who will have the heart to refuse you their daughter if you present yourself to ask for the honor of offering her the pleasure of the ball, sending her domino, mask, and gloves, and going to fetch her in a carriage, in which you will undertake, of course, to bring her back home."

"And if I am refused?"

"You bow and leave, and afterward the girl's father and mother are very sorry they have refused you, for she cries, falls ill, and goes to bed, cursing and swearing at their tyranny and calling God to witness that she has never seen you in her life and that nothing was more innocent than your request."

This novel discourse, which had the stamp of truth, and which already raised my spirits by the prospect that it would introduce me to some rare adventure, for which I still had an appetite, both interested me and authorized me to ask the masker who thus addressed me in very good Italian some questions. I thank him, and I promise him I will apply the fine lesson he has given me and will inform him of the outcome and of the acquaintance he will have led me to make, for I would consider the next morning to which of all the beauties in Madrid I would throw my handkerchief. He replies that he will be delighted to hear everything, and that I should find him every evening in a box to which he would take me to introduce me to the lady who was in it then and who would also be there on the following nights. More than obliged by such politeness, I tell him my name, I pay for my supper at the posted price, I follow him, and we enter a box in which are two women and an elderly man; he introduces me as a foreigner of his acquaintance; all goes smoothly, they speak French, they discuss the fine ball, I offer my comments, I make some remarks bright enough to please the company; one of the two ladies, who still showed signs of a great, faded beauty, asks me which *tertulias* ("receptions, circles") I frequent, and when she hears me say that I usually go nowhere she invites me to go to her house, saying that her name is Pichona[67] and that everyone knows where she lives. I promise her I will go there.

The great spectacle which enchanted me came toward the end of the ball, when to the music of the orchestra, after general applause, a dance for couples began than which I had never seen anything wilder or more interesting. It was the fandango,[68] of which I thought I had an accurate notion, but I was very much mistaken. I had seen it danced only in Italy and France on the stage, where the dancers did not perform one of the national gestures which make the dance truly seductive. I cannot describe it. Each couple danced face to face, never taking more than three steps, striking the castanets, which are held in the fingers, and accompanying the music with attitudes than which nothing more lascivious could possibly be seen. Those of the man visibly indicated love crowned with success, those of the woman consent, ravishment, the ecstasy of pleasure. It seemed to me that no woman could refuse anything to a man with whom she had danced the fandango. The pleasure I took in watching it made me exclaim aloud; the masker who had brought me there told me that to have a true idea of the dance one had to see it performed by *gitanas* (''gypsy girls'') with a man who also danced it to perfection. I asked if the Inquisition had no objection to make to a dance which set the soul on fire, and I was told that it was absolutely forbidden, and that no one would have dared to dance it if the Count of Aranda had not given his permission for it. I was told that when he took it into his head not to give the permission everyone left the ball dissatisfied; but that on the other hand everyone left praising him when he permitted it.

The next morning I ordered my infamous page to find me a Spaniard whom I would pay to teach me to dance the fandango, and he brought me an actor, whom I engaged to give me lessons in the Spanish language; but in three days the young man taught me the motions of the dance so well that, by the testimony even of Spaniards, there was no one in Madrid who could boast that he danced it better than I.

Three days later there was a ball, and I wanted to do justice to the lesson the masker had taught me. I wanted neither a public courtesan nor a married woman. Nor could I think of some rich or well-born lady, who would have refused me and have found me ridiculous into the bargain. It was St. Anthony's[69] day—the one who is called "St. Anthony the Great" and who is depicted with a pig; I pass by the Church of La Soledad,[70] and I enter it to hear a mass, still thinking of finding a *pareja* for the next day, which was a Wednesday. I see a tall girl coming out of a confessional, beautiful, with an air of contrition and keeping her eyes cast down. She kneels in the middle of the church, directly on the floor, of course, for that is the fashion in Spain. Imagining that she must dance the fandango like an angel, I set my heart on having her as my partner at my début at Los Caños del Peral. To find out where she lives, I think of following her, she seemed neither rich, nor noble, nor a prostitute. At the end of the mass the priest distributes the eucharist, I see her rise, go to the altar, receive it devoutly, then take a place apart to finish her prayers. I had the patience to wait until the end of the second mass. She goes out with another girl, and I follow them at some distance; at the end of a street the one on whom I had no designs leaves her and goes upstairs to her home, mine retraces her steps some twenty paces, enters another street, and then a house which had only two stories. I cannot be mistaken, I see the name of the street, del Desengaño,[71] I walk for half an hour so that she shall not think I followed her. Thoroughly prepared to be refused and to leave with a bow afterward, as the masker had told me to do, I go upstairs, I ring at the only door I see, I am asked who is there, I reply "peaceable people," which in Madrid is the password which the henchmen of the Inquisition, who inspire terror, never use. The door is opened, and I see a man, a woman, the girl in question, and an ugly one.

Speaking Spanish very badly but well enough to be understood, with my hat in my hand, and a serious and respectful manner, I say to the father, without even looking at the devout beauty, that, being a foreigner and having no *pareja*, I had come to his house by chance to ask him for permission to take his daughter, if he had one, to the ball, assuring him that I was a man of honor and that I would bring her back to him as he had entrusted her to me at the end of the evening.

"Señor, there is my daughter, but I do not know you, and I do not know if she wants to go to the ball."

"If you will permit me to go, my Father and my Mother, I should think myself fortunate."

"Then you know this gentleman?"

"I have never seen him, and I think it almost impossible that he should have seen me anywhere."

"I swear to you that I have never seen you."

The man asks me my name and my address, and he promises to give me his answer at dinnertime, if I dine at home. I ask him to excuse the liberty I had taken, I leave begging him not to fail to give me his answer, for if he will not let me have his daughter I shall have to look for another *pareja* at random, knowing none but rich girls who were all engaged.

I go home, and exactly an hour later, just as I was about to dine, I see my man. I ask him to sit down, I send away my page, and as soon as he sees we are alone he says that his daughter will accept the honor I am so good as to offer her, but that her mother will come too and will sleep in the carriage and wait for her. I reply that she would be free to do so, and that I was only sorry that she would be cold in the carriage. He says that she will have a good cloak, and he tells me that he is a shoemaker by trade.

"Then please measure me for a pair of shoes at once."

"I do not dare, for I am a hidalgo.[72] Taking someone's measure would debase me, I am a *zapatero de viejo* (cobbler),[73] and so, not being obliged to touch anyone's feet, I neither derogate from my nobility nor wrong my birth."

"Then will you mend these boots for me?"

"I will return them to you so that you will think them brand-new; but I see that they need much work, it will cost you a peso duro."[74]

It was a hundred French sous. I tell him that I am perfectly satisfied with the price, he takes the boots, and he leaves, absolutely refusing to dine with me.

Here was a cobbler who despised shoemakers who in their turn must have looked down on him. The lackeys in livery in France despise valets, because they are obliged to help their masters at moments when they must lower themselves to perform menial services.

The next day I sent a man with dominoes, masks, and gloves to my devout beauty, neither going there myself nor using my page, whom I could not bear, and at nightfall I got out at her door from a closed carriage which seated four. I found her all ready, her face prettily flushed with animation. We got into the carriage with her mother, who had on a great cloak, and we got out at the entrance to the ballroom, leaving her mother in the carriage. On the way the daughter told me that her name was Doña Ignacia.[75] The dancing had already begun, and there was a great crowd.

CHAPTER I

1768. My amour with Doña Ignacia, the gentleman-cobbler's daughter. My imprisonment in Buen Retiro and my triumph. I am recommended to the Venetian Ambassador by a State Inquisitor of the Republic.

I ENTER the ballroom with the beautiful Doña Ignacia, we take several turns around it, everywhere meeting the guard of soldiers with fixed bayonets who were walking slowly about, ready to apprehend any who should break the peace by quarreling. We dance minuets and contradances until ten o'clock, then we go to supper, both remaining silent, she, perhaps, in order not to encourage me to take liberties, I because, speaking very little Spanish, I did not know what to say. After supper I go to the box where I was to see La Pichona,[1] and I see only maskers whom I did not know. We go back to dancing, until permission to dance the fandango[2] is at last given, and I fall to with my *pareja,*[3] who danced it very well and who is surprised to find herself so well accompanied in it by a foreigner. At the end of the seductive dance, which had set us both on fire, I escort her to the place where refreshments were served, I ask her if she has been pleased with me, and I tell her that she has made me so much in love with her that I should die if she did not find a way to make me happy and confide it to me, assuring her that I was a man to run all risks. She replies that she could not think of making me happy except by becoming happy herself, and that she would write me how I could accomplish that in a letter which she would sew between the cloth and the lining of the hood of her domino, and so I must put off sending for it until the next day. Telling her that she will find me ready for anything, I escort her outside, I go to find the carriage with her beyond the *plazuela*,[4] where I had left it. We get into it, her mother wakes, the coachman drives off, I take both her hands, intending nothing but to kiss them; but, supposing that I was going to subject her to something which she considered too much, she holds them in so strong a grip that I should have sought in vain to free them if I had attempted it. Still grasping my hands, she gives her mother an account of all the pleasures she had enjoyed at the ball; she did not release them until, as we entered the Calle del Desengaño,[5] her mother told the coachman to stop, for she did not want to give the neighbors occasion to gossip by getting out at her own door. She asked me not to get out, and, after thanking me, they walked to their house. I at once went home and to bed.

The next day I sent for the domino, in which I found Doña Ignacia's letter where she had said it would be. In her letter, which was very short, she told me that Don Francisco de Ramos[6] would call on me at my lodging, that he was her lover, and that it would be from him that I should learn the way to make her happy, for my happiness could be only the consequence of hers.

Don Francisco lost no time. My page announced him to me the next morning at eight o'clock. He told me that Doña Ignacia, with whom he talked every night from the street, she being at her window, had confided to him that she had gone to the ball with me and her mother, and that, being certain that I could have conceived only a fatherly fondness for her, she had persuaded him to present himself to me, assuring him that I would treat him as if he were my son. So it was she who gave him the courage to unbosom himself to me and to ask me to lend him a hundred doblones,[7] which could put him in a position to marry her before the end of the Carnival. He told me that he was employed in the office of the Mint,[8] and that his salary, which was then very small, would be increased later, that his father and mother were in Toledo, that he would be alone in Madrid with his dear wife, and that he would have no other friend than I, never even imagining that I could have any inclination toward Doña Ignacia except that which a father could have toward a daughter.

I replied that he had divined my feelings, but that for the moment I did not have the hundred doblones, and that I did not even know how long it might be before I could have that amount. I assured him of my discretion, and, telling him that I should be pleased whenever he honored me with a call, I saw him leave extremely disappointed. He was a young man perhaps twenty-two years of age, ugly and ill built. Making light of what had happened, for I felt only a passing fancy for Doña Ignacia, I went to pay my homage to La Pichona, who had so cordially invited me to call on her the first time I had attended the ball. I had made inquiries about her. I had learned that she had been an actress, and that she owed her wealth to the Duke of Medina Celi,[9] who, having gone to see her one day when it was very cold, found that she had no brazier because she had no money to buy charcoal. The Duke, who was extremely rich, feeling ashamed to have called on a woman so poor, the next day sent her a silver brazier containing a hundred thousand pesos duros[10] in gold, which came to fifty thousand zecchini. So since that time she had lived very comfortably and received good company.

I go to call on her, she receives me cordially, but I see that she is very sad. I tell her that I had not failed to go to her box, and that I had not found her. She replies that the Duke of Medina Celi had died [11] on that day after three days' illness, and, since he was her only friend, she had not had the strength to go out.

"Was he very old?"

"No, sixty. You saw him yourself. He didn't look his age."

"Where did I see him?"

"Wasn't it he who brought you to my box?"

"That man? He didn't tell me his name. That was the first time I saw him."

His death shocked me. All his possessions went to a son,[12] who, as might be expected, was a great miser. But his miserly son in his turn had a son who was a spendthrift.

This is what I have observed always and everywhere. The miser's son is a spendthrift, and the spendthrift's son is a miser. It seems to me natural that the characters of the father and the son are in perpetual contradiction. An intelligent author[13] tries to ascertain the reason why a father usually loves his grandson far more than his son: he thinks he has found it in nature. It is natural, he says, that a man should love the enemy of his enemy. It seems to me that, advanced as a generalization, this is a barbarous reason, for, beginning with myself, I have found that the son loves his father. I grant, however, that the father's love of his son is infinitely greater than the son's of his father. I was told that the House of Medina Celi had thirty hats,[14] which means thirty grandeeships of Spain.

A young man who frequented the coffeehouse, to which I never went, came upstairs to my room without much ceremony to offer me his services in a country which was new to me and with which he was very well acquainted.

"I am," he said, "Count Marazzani,[15] of Piacenza, I am not rich, I have come to Madrid to seek my fortune; I hope to be made one of His Majesty's[16] Bodyguard. I have been waiting for a year, and, while waiting, I amuse myself. I saw you at the ball with a beauty whom no one knows. I do not want to know who she is; but if you like variety, I can introduce you to all the choicest women in Madrid."

In reply to this discourse, I ought, if I had been wise, to have treated the impertinent Count very coldly; but I was tired of pretending to be wise; there was an intolerable void in my heart; I needed, as I had needed several times before, a charming passion. I gave the Mercury[17] a good reception, I urged him to show me beauties worthy of my attention, excluding both those whom it was too easy to approach and those who were too difficult of access, for I did not want to get myself into trouble in Spain. *Nolo nimis facilem, difficilemque nimis* ("I want a woman neither to give in too easily nor to resist too much").[18] He tells me to go to the ball with him, and he promises he will arrange for me to have all the beauties who interest me, despite any current lovers they might have. Since the ball was to be on that day, I promise to go with him; he asks me for dinner, I invite him. After dinner, on his telling me that he has no money, I give him two pesos duros, and I agree to meet him in the ballroom. It was this very forward man, who was ugly and had lost one eye, who spent the whole night with me and who pointed out to me fifteen or twenty beauties, telling me their stories. He showed me one who pleased me, and whom he promised me I should enjoy in the house of a bawd he knew, to which he would have her go; and he kept his word; but he made me spend a great deal, and in comparison I found the pleasure too small. I needed to love, and I did not find a woman to capture my heart.

Toward the end of the Carnival Don Diego, *zapatero de viejo*,[19] Doña Ignacia's father, brought me my boots and compliments from his wife and daughter, who still talked of the pleasure she had enjoyed at the ball, congratulating herself on the respect I had shown her. I told him that she was a girl as worthy of respect as she was beautiful, who deserved a great fortune, and that, if I did not call on her, it was because I was afraid I might injure her reputation. He replied that her reputation was above the reach of slander, and that he would take it as an honor whenever I would come to his house. It was as much as to urge me to do so; I said that the Carnival was about to end, and that if Doña Ignacia would like it I would take her to the ball again; he told me to go to his house for my answer.

Curious to see with what countenance I should be met by the pious girl who wanted to make me hope for everything after her marriage, making me pay an exorbitant amount beforehand, I go there the same day, and I see her, rosary in hand, with her mother, while her father mended old shoes. I laughed to myself at having to accord the ''Don'' to a cobbler, who refused to be a shoemaker because he was a hidalgo.[20] Doña Ignacia politely gets up from the floor, where she was sitting with her legs crossed, as African women sit. This custom was a vestige of the Moorish manners of Old Spain. In Madrid I have seen noble ladies, even at Court, sitting in this posture on the floor of the Princess of Asturias's[21] antechamber. They sit so in church, too, and it is with surprising nimbleness that they pass from sitting to kneeling and thence to standing, all in an instant

Doña Ignacia, thanking me for the honor I was doing her, said that but for me she would never have seen the ball, and that she did not hope to see it again, for she was sure that in four weeks I must have found an object worthy of my attention. I reply that I had found no one worthy to be preferred to her, and that if she wanted to go to another ball I should escort her again with very great pleasure. Her father and her mother consent, we speak of the domino, she says that her mother will go to get her one, I give her a doblón, she leaves at once to go for it, for the ball is to be that day; and, Don Diego having gone somewhere, I am left alone with the daughter, to whom I say that she had but to say the word and I would be hers, for I adored her, but that she would never see me if she was thinking of making me languish.

"What can you want from me, what can I give you, since it is my duty to preserve my innocence for the man who is to be my husband?"

"You must yield to my ardor without resisting me in the slightest, and be sure that I will respect your innocence."

I then launch an attack on her, gently and politely, but she defends herself vigorously and with a seriousness which is not to be denied. I leave her, assuring her that she will find me submissive and respectful throughout the night, but not tender and loving, which would be far better. Blushing scarlet, she replies that her duty obliged her to resist me despite herself. This metaphysical flight on the lips of a pious Spanish woman pleased me excessively; it was a matter of conquering duty, of destroying the notion of it, and then she would herself declare her readiness. I must make her argue, and carry her by storm the moment I saw her at a loss to answer me.

"If your duty," I said, "forces you to repulse me despite yourself, it follows that your duty is a burden to you, it is your mortal enemy. If it is your enemy, why do you cherish it, why do you yield it the victory? For your own sake, begin by trampling this insolent duty underfoot."

"That is impossible."

"It is perfectly possible. Think of yourself; be calm and shut your eyes."

"Like this?"

I thereupon quickly attack her in the weak place; but no sooner am I there than she repulses me, yet not roughly, and with less seriousness. She says that it is in my power to seduce her, but that if I love her I ought to spare her that shame. I then make her understand that an intelligent girl could feel ashamed only if she yielded to a man whom she did not love; but that if she loved, love, being alone responsible, justified her for everything.

"If you do not love me," I say, "I scorn you."

"But what am I to do to convince you that if I let you have your way it is from love, and not from a shameful compliance?"

"Let me do whatever I want to, and my self-esteem will help you to make me believe that you love me, without your troubling yourself to tell me so."

"Admit that, since I cannot be certain of it, I must refuse you everything."

"I admit it, but you will see me sad and cold."

"That will grieve me."

At that, my bold hands gained the advantage, hers let me guide them where I would, and my pleasure came to a fruition which she did nothing to disavow. Perfectly satisfied, for by way of a beginning I could expect nothing more, I gave myself up to a gaiety in which she had never seen me and which aroused hers. Her mother arrived with a domino and gloves, I declined to take the change from the doblón, and I left to come back for her later, as I had done the first time. The first step having been taken, Doña Ignacia saw that she would be making herself ridiculous if she opposed my advances and refused to respond when I talked to her at the ball about ways to procure us the pleasure of spending some nights together. Nature and reason, together with self-esteem, showed her that her one thought must be to keep me by making me constant. She found me entirely different from what I had been at the ball the first time, solicitous, tender, attentive, and at supper concerned to see that she was served whatever she liked best: I forced her inwardly to applaud herself for having decided to yield. I filled her pockets with sweetmeats, I put two bottles of ratafia[22] in mine to give to her mother, who was asleep in the carriage; I begged her to accept a doblón de a ocho,[23] which she refused without haughtiness, only asking me confidently to give it to her lover when he came to call on me.

"How shall I make sure not to offend him?"

"Tell him that it is the first of the hundred he asked you for. He is poor, and I am certain that at this moment he must be in despair because he has not seen me at my window; he may spend the whole night in the street. I will tell him tomorrow night that I came to the ball with you only to please my father."

Convinced that she had resolved to give herself to me, I found the girl dancing the fandango with me so voluptuously that she could not have promised me everything more eloquently in words. What a dance! It burns, it inflames, it carries away. Nevertheless, people tried to assure me that the majority of Spanish men and women who dance it mean no harm by it. I pretended to believe them. Before getting out of the carriage at her house, she asked me to go to mass at La Soledad [24] on the next day but one at eight o'clock. I did not tell her that it was there that I had seen her the first time, receiving the sacrament. She also asked me to come that evening to her house, where she would give me a letter if she could not manage to be alone with me.

Having slept until noon, when I woke I saw Marazzani, come to dine with me. He had watched me all evening at the ball, and, always in disguise, he had seen me sup with Doña Ignacia. He said that, trying to find out who she was, he had questioned all the connoisseurs in Madrid, and I patiently put up with his extremely indiscreet curiosity; but when he told me that if he had had money he would have had me followed, I talked to him in a way which made him turn pale. He at once begged my pardon, promising that he would permit himself no more curiosity about her. He proposed a party with a well-favored and celebrated courtesan named Spiletta, who did not sell her favors cheaply, and I refused. Doña Ignacia occupied me entirely. I thought her very worthy to succeed to Charlotte.[25]

I arrived at La Soledad before her; she saw me in the corner of a confessional as soon as she entered with the girl who had been her companion the first time. She came and knelt down two paces from me; she never looked at me; the one who constantly examined me was her friend, who was extremely ugly but of the same age. I saw Don Francisco in the church, so I left it before Doña Ignacia did. He joined me, and he congratulated me somewhat bitterly on the good fortune I had had to go to the ball a second time with the sovereign of his soul. He confessed that he had followed us all night, and that he could have left the ball well enough pleased if he had not seen us dance the fandango, for he had thought we looked too much like a pair of happy lovers. I told him with a laugh that love was subject to delusions, and that as an intelligent man he should not allow his soul to harbor any suspicions. At the same moment, begging his pardon, I gave him a doblón de a ocho as a payment on account. He accepts it, utterly astonished, he calls me his father, his good angel, and he promises me eternal gratitude. He leaves, assuring me he was certain that, as soon as I could, I would give him the entire sum he needed in order to marry Doña Ignacia after Easter, for the Carnival was about to end, and weddings were forbidden in Lent.

Toward nightfall I called on the shoemaker, who at once treated me to some of the excellent ratafia which I had given to Doña Antonia, his wife, who, together with her daughter, did nothing but talk of the obligation under which the Count of Aranda had laid the nation by what he had done.[26]

"Nothing," said Doña Antonia, "is more innocent than a ball, nothing is better for the health, and it was forbidden before that great man occupied the exalted post in which he can do whatever he pleases, and yet he is hated because he banished *los padres de la Compañía,*[27] and he forbade heel-length cloaks and *sombreros gachos*.[28] But the poor bless him, for all the money which the ball at los Caños del Peral [29] brings in goes to the poor."

"And so," said Don Diego the cobbler, "those who go to the ball do a work of charity."

"I have two cousins," Doña Ignacia said to me, "girls who, so far as their conduct goes, are angels. I told them I had been to the ball with you, and, since they are poor, they had no hope of going; you could easily make them happy by inviting them to go with me on the last day of the Carnival. Their mother would let them come, and the more willingly because the ball ends at midnight in order not to infringe on Ash Wednesday."

"I am ready, my good Doña Ignacia, to give you so innocent a pleasure. In that case the Señora would not have to spend the night in the carriage waiting for you."

"You are very kind; but you must be introduced to my aunt, who is a woman who carries religion to the point of scrupulosity. When she has made your acquaintance I am sure that she will not object when I propose the party to her, for one sees in you a man of good conduct who cannot have the slightest evil designs on her daughters. Go there today; they live in the first house in the next street, where you will see a small sign on the door saying that laces are mended there. Take some laces with you in your pocket, and say that it was my mother who gave you their address. Tomorrow morning on my way home from mass I will do the rest, and you shall come here at noon to learn how we can all meet on the last day of the Carnival."

I did all this in accordance with Doña Ignacia's instructions. I took some laces to her cousins, and the next day my beauty told me that everything was arranged. I told her that I should have all the dominoes at my inn, that the three of them had only to come there together, going in by the back door, that we would dine in my room, that we would mask afterward to go to the ball, and that after the ball I would see them all home. I said that I would dress the elder of her cousins as a man, for she would look just like one, and that she should tell her so beforehand; she said with a laugh that she would not tell her, but that she was sure she would do whatever I told her to do.

The younger of the two cousins was ugly, but she had the look of her sex. The ugliness of the elder was surprising. Extraordinarily tall, she looked like an ill-favored man dressed as a woman. The contrast amused me, for Doña Ignacia was a perfect beauty and seduction itself when she sent her pious airs to the devil.

I saw to having dominoes and everything necessary in a closet adjoining my room, without my page knowing anything about it; and on Tuesday morning I gave him a peso duro with which to go and spend the last day of the Carnival wherever he pleased, telling him that he need not be back to serve me until the next day at noon. I bought myself a pair of shoes, I ordered a good dinner for four at an inn nearby, and I arranged for the waiter in the coffeehouse to wait on me. I also got rid of Marazzani by giving him enough to go to dine wherever he pleased, and I prepared to laugh myself and to inspire laughter in Doña Ignacia, whom love was certain to make my mistress that day. The party was a complete novelty, consisting of three pious girls, two of them revoltingly ugly, and the third, as pretty as possible, whom I had already initiated and who had become softened and tamed.

They came at noon, and until one o'clock, when we sat down at table, I treated them to nothing but sage and moral discourses with much unction. I had wine from La Mancha,[30] which was exquisite but which is as strong as Hungarian wine. The poor girls were not used to spending two hours at table and not rising until their appetites were satisfied. Unaccustomed to unmixed wine, they did not get drunk, but they became heated and succumbed to a gaiety such as they had never felt before. I told the elder cousin, who might be twenty-five years of age, that I was going to dress her as a man, and I saw that she was terrified. Doña Ignacia told her that she was very lucky to have the pleasure, and the younger cousin reflected that it could not be a sin.

"If it were a sin," I said to them, "do you think I would propose it to you?"

Doña Ignacia, who knew the Legendary by heart, said that the glorious St. Marina[31] had spent her whole life dressed as a man, and to this erudition the tall cousin surrendered. I thereupon pronounced the most fulsome eulogy on her intelligence, thus challenging her to convince me that I was not mistaken in attributing a great deal of it to her.

"Come with me," I said to her, "and you others wait here, for I want to enjoy your surprise when you see her appear before you transformed into a man."

She came, though it cost her an effort, and, after laying out all her male attire before her, I made her begin by taking off her slippers and stockings, putting on white stockings and the shoes which fitted her best. I sat down before her, telling her that she would sin mortally if she suspected that my intentions were less than decent, for, since I could be her father, it was impossible that I should have any of that kind. She replied that she was a good Christian, but not a fool. I pulled on her stockings myself, then put on the garters, saying that I should never have believed that she had either such a well-shaped leg or such white skin, and she laughed. Flattered by my praise, she did not dare to object to the reason I insisted on having for praising her thighs, which, however, I would not touch, a restraint which edified her. The fact is that they were beautiful and magnificent. I saw, as so many times before, that *sublata lucerna nullum discrimen inter feminas* ("when the lamp is taken away, all women are alike").[32] A true proverb so far as physical enjoyment goes, but false and very false in regard to love. The soul's loadstone lies in the face; this may be a strong proof that man has a soul entirely different from that of animals.

After praising the sanctimonious girl's beautiful thighs, which, however, I did not display to my view except to a certain point, I handed her my breeches, rising and turning my back to give her perfect freedom to put them on and button them to the waist. I was not surprised that they fitted her well, despite the fact that I was five inches taller than she.[33] Women differ very greatly in form from men in that region.

I handed her a shirt, and I again turned away, which perhaps displeased her, for by so doing I deprived her of a compliment; I saw afterward that she deserved one. She told me that she was finished when she had not yet buttoned her collar; she had a beautiful, firm bosom, she saw that I was looking at it, and she was grateful to me because I did not commit the indiscretion of letting her know I had seen it by praising it. I put a waistcoat on her, and, looking her over from head to foot, I said that anyone who looked at her between the thighs could see that she was belying her sex.

"Will you permit me," I asked her, "to arrange your shirt better at that point?"

"Please do," she said, "for I've never dressed in men's clothes."

At that I sat down before her where she stood, and I unbuttoned her breeches to gather together the shirt and put the bunch of material where she had nothing and where, as a man, she ought to have something. My eyes already had permission to see; but touch also had to enter in somewhat. I did it so quickly, so gravely, and so much as if by accident that the tall cousin would have been very much in the wrong to object and even to let me know that she had been aware of it. I put on her domino, her hood, and her mask, and I exhibited her. Her sister and Doña Ignacia complimented her; she could not but be taken for a man by the most knowing.

"It is your turn," I said to the younger cousin.

"Go," the elder said to her, "for Don Jaime is *el más honesto de todos los hombres de España* ['the most well behaved of all the men in Spain']."

I did not have much to do to the younger cousin, for it was only a matter of putting on her domino; nevertheless, I advised her to change her stockings, she agreed, and, when she turned her back to me to put them on at her ease, I let her do as she would. I could not hope to see anything unusual. The white handkerchief with which she covered her bosom was a little soiled, I offered her a clean one; she accepted it, but she insisted on taking off the soiled one and putting on mine herself, again turning round; I did not care. After putting on her mask, I opened the door and exhibited her. Doña Ignacia, at once noticing the stockings and the handkerchief, asked her if I was skillful at dressing and undressing. She replied that she had not needed me. It was now Doña Ignacia's turn, for I had saved her to crown the feast.

As soon as she was in the closet I did to her what she already expected. She surrendered with an air which seemed to tell me that she surrendered only because she could not resist. Being in exactly the same situation, I stopped a minute later to spare her honor; but at the second round I saw that she was born for love; I kept her for a good hour. She told her cousins that she had had to resew the whole front of her domino.

At sunset we went to the ball, where on this privileged day the Count of Aranda had given general permission for the fandango; but the crowd was so big that it was impossible to find room to dance it. At ten o'clock we supped, and we walked about until the two orchestras stopped playing. Midnight struck, and, the holy season of Lent beginning, orgies had to give place to it.

After I had escorted the girls to my room to have them leave their dominoes, we went to take the cousins home. Doña Ignacia having told me that she needed to drink coffee, I took her back to my room again, sure of keeping her for a couple of hours in perfect freedom. It was obvious that she had the same desire. I leave her in my room to go downstairs and tell the waiter to make me coffee at once, and I see Don Francisco, who asks me point-blank to do him the favor of letting him join me and Doña Ignacia, whom he has seen go upstairs to my apartment with me. I had the strength to conceal my fury. I told him that I was his to command, and that I was sure his unexpected visit would give Doña Ignacia the greatest pleasure. I enter before him, and I announce him to the beauty, congratulating her on the pleasure she must feel at seeing him at such an hour. I would have wagered that her power of dissimulation would have been at least equal to mine, but not a bit of it: in her resentment she told him that she would not have asked me for coffee if she had thought she would find him there, and she called him an indiscreet boor for having dared to inconvenience me at such an hour. I thought I must go to the defense of the poor devil, who was so dumfounded that he looked as if he were about to breathe his last. I tried to calm Doña Ignacia by telling her that it was quite natural that Don Francisco should be at the coffeehouse at that hour on the last night of the Carnival, that he had seen us only by chance, and that it was I who had invited him to come upstairs, thinking it would please her. She pretended to yield to my arguments, and it was she who told him to sit down; but she said not another word to him, talking only to me about the ball and thanking me for the pleasure which, as a courtesy to her, I had afforded her dear cousins.

After drinking coffee Don Francisco thought it his part to take his leave. I told him that I hoped to see him sometimes during Lent; but Doña Ignacia would only grant him a slight bow. After he left she told me sadly that the unlucky meeting would prevent her from having the pleasure of spending an hour with me, for she was sure that Don Francisco was either in the coffeehouse or playing the sentinel somewhere, and that by making light of his curiosity she would risk incurring his vengeance.

"So take me home, and if you love me come to see me during Lent. The trick that madman has played on me will cost him tears, and I may even send him packing, for I encourage his love from my window only in order to get married. Are you persuaded that I am not in love with him?"

"Very much persuaded, my beautiful angel, and even convinced. I esteem you too greatly not to be so. You have made me happy; I must believe that I am loved as much as I love you."

Doña Ignacia hastily gave me a fresh proof of it, and I took her home, assuring her that as long as I remained in Madrid she should be the only object of my attentions. I dined the next day at Mengs's; and on the next day but one at four o'clock a scoundrelly-looking man approaches me in the street and tells me to go with him to a cloister, where he had something to tell me which should be of great interest to me. I go there, and when he sees that no one can hear us, he tells me that the Alcalde Messa[34] will pay me a visit that same night with all his constables, "of whom," he says, "I am one.

"He knows that you have forbidden weapons under the mat which covers the floor of your room in the corner behind the stove, he knows or he thinks he knows several other things about you which authorize him to arrest you and, after confiscating your forbidden weapons, to take you to the prison for those who are sentenced to go away to work in the *presidios*.[35] I warn you of all this because I believe you are a man of honor, and not of a sort to be subjected to such misfortunes. Do not make light of my warning. Take your measures at once, put yourself in a place of safety, and avoid this insult."

I believed the man because it was true that I had weapons under the mat; I gave him a doblón; and instead of going to Doña Ignacia's I returned to my apartment, where I took the pistols and the spring carbine which I had under the mat, and, so armed, wrapped in a long cloak, I went to the house of the painter Mengs after leaving word in the coffeehouse that my page should be sent to me there as soon as he arrived. In Mengs's house I was safe, for it belonged to the King.

The painter, an honest, ambitious, proud man, but suspicious and on his guard in respect to anything which could compromise him, did not refuse me asylum for the night; but he told me that I must think the next day about finding another lodging, for he was certain that there must be stronger reasons for what was to happen to me than my having forbidden weapons in my room, and that, having no information, he could take no responsibility. He gives me a room, we sup together alone, talking of nothing but the situation, I constantly repeating that I was guilty of nothing, he never answering me except to say that, if I was guilty of nothing but having in my room the weapons I had brought to him, I ought to have disdained the man who had come to give me the alarm, and not have rewarded him with a doblón, I ought not to have stirred from my room, I ought not to have taken my weapons elsewhere, for, with my intelligence, I should know that every man in his own room was free by natural right to keep firearms if he chose. I replied that by going to his house I had only wanted to avoid the unpleasantness of going to spend a night in prison, for I was sure that the spy to whom I had given the doblón had told me the truth.

"Tomorrow," I said, "I will go to lodge elsewhere; however, I grant that you are right on one point: I agree with you that I ought to have left my pistols and my carbine in my room."

Candle Snuffer

"And you ought to have stayed there yourself. I didn't know you took fright so easily."

While we were arguing in this fashion, in comes my landlord to tell me that the Alcalde Messa with twenty constables had come to search my apartment, had had the door opened by a locksmith, had had his men look everywhere, he did not know for what, and, after finding nothing, had had it locked again, had sealed it, and had left, sending my page to prison, for, said the Alcalde, he must have warned me that he was coming to visit me, for otherwise I would not have taken refuge in the house of the Cavaliere Mengs, where he could not go to take me into custody.

On hearing this narrative Mengs admits that I had not been wrong to believe the man who had warned me; and he says that I ought to go the next day to speak with the Count of Aranda, and above all to insist on the injustice of sending my page to prison, for he was innocent.[36]

Mengs continues to sympathize with my innocent page.

"My page," I reply impatiently, "must be a rascal, for, if the Alcalde suspects that he is guilty of having warned me of his visit, it shows that the Alcalde knew that he must have had knowledge of it. Now, I ask you if my page can be anything but a scoundrel when he knows such a thing and does not warn me of it; and I ask you if he can know it unless he has himself been the informer and the spy, for after all he was the only person who knew where my weapons were hidden."

Mengs, angry to find himself proved wrong, left me and went off to bed.

The next morning early the great Mengs sent his valet to me with shirts, stockings, underdrawers, collars, handkerchiefs, scents, and powder *à la maréchale*.[37] His housekeeper brought me chocolate, and his cook came to ask me if I had permission to eat meat. A prince by his ceremoniousness invites a guest not to leave his house, but a private person who is equally ceremonious drives him away. I expressed thanks for everything, I accepted only a cup of chocolate and a handkerchief. I had had my hair dressed, my carriage was at the door; I was in Mengs's room to wish him good morning and thank him, assuring him that I would not return to his house until I believed I was free. Just then an officer arrives and asks Mengs if the Cavaliere di Casanova[38] is in his house. I answer him:

"Here I am."

"Then, Monsieur, I advise you to come with me of your own free will to the guardhouse at Buen Retiro,[39] where you will be held a prisoner, for at the moment I cannot use force, this being a royal house. But I warn you that in less than an hour the Cavaliere Mengs who is here present will have an order to turn you out, and you will be taken to prison with a publicity which will greatly displease you. So I advise you to come with me, quietly and without protest. You must also deliver to me the firearms which you have in your room."

"Monsieur Mengs can give you my weapons, which have traveled with me for eleven years and which I carry to defend myself from murderers. And I will come with you after I have written four notes, which will take me only half an hour."

"I can neither wait nor allow you to write; but you will be allowed to write when you are in prison."

"That will do. I shall obey with a submissiveness which I would not show if I could oppose force with force. I shall remember Spain when I am back in Europe and come upon decent people, my equals, who may feel tempted to journey there."

I embraced the Cavaliere Mengs, who looked mortified, his valet put my weapons in my carriage, into which I got with the officer, who was a captain and who had the bearing and manners of a perfect gentleman.

He took me to the Palace of Buen Retiro. It was a castle which the royal family had abandoned. It served only as a prison for those who were said to be guilty, and its apartments had become barracks. It was there that Philip V had been accustomed to retire with the Queen[40] during Lent to prepare to take the sacrament at Easter.

As soon as the officer left me at the guardhouse, where he consigned me to a barbarous captain who was on duty, a corporal took me inside the castle to a huge room on the ground floor, which was a prison only for those who were in it who were not soldiers. I found there a very trying stench, twenty-five or thirty prisoners, ten or twelve soldiers. I saw ten or twelve very wide beds, some benches, no table, no chairs. I asked a soldier for paper, pen, and ink, giving him an écu to buy it all for me and bring it to me at once. He took the écu with a laugh, he went away, and he did not come back. The soldiers whom I asked what had become of him laughed in my face. But what struck me was to see that among my companions were my page and Count Marazzani, who told me in Italian that he had been there for three days and that he had not written to me because he had a strong presentiment that he would see me with him. He said that in less than two weeks we should be taken from there and sent, well guarded, to work in some fortress, where, however, we could write our justifications and hope to be released in three or four years and obtain a passport to leave Spain.

"I hope," I replied, "that I shall not be condemned before I have been heard."

"The Alcalde will come tomorrow, and will question you and write down your answers. That is all. After that you will perhaps be sent to Africa."

"Have you been accused yet?"

"They dealt with me for three hours yesterday. I was asked who the banker was who gave me money to live on. I replied that I knew no banker, that I had lived by borrowing money from my friends, waiting all the while for a definite reply as to whether I was accepted or rejected as a bodyguard. I was asked why the Parmesan Ambassador[41] did not know me, and I replied that it was because I had never presented myself at the embassy. I was told that unless the Parmesan Ambassador vouched for me, I could never be a bodyguard, and that I ought to know it, whereupon the Alcalde said that His Majesty would give me an employment which I could pursue without needing to be vouched for by anyone, and they left me. I foresee everything. If the Venetian Ambassador[42] does not claim you, you will be treated as they treat all the others."

Concealing everything, swallowing my bitter saliva, and not believing that the treatment with which Marazzani threatened me was in the realm of possibility, I sat down on a bed, which I left three hours later, seeing myself covered with lice, the mere sight of which is enough to turn the stomach of an Italian and a Frenchman, but not of a Spaniard, who laughs at these little annoyances. Fleas, bedbugs, and lice are three insects so common in Spain that they have reached the point of not troubling anyone. They are considered, I believe, to be a sort of neighbor. I remained motionless, in the deepest silence, devouring all the bilious humor which was circulating and poisoning my fluids. There was no sense in talking, what made sense was to write, and the means to do so were not given me. I had perforce resigned myself to waiting for what would certainly happen to me in twenty-four or thirty hours.

At noon Marazzani told me that I could order dinner by giving money to a soldier he knew and for whose honesty he vouched, adding that he would be glad to eat a good meal with me, since for three days he had been living on bread, water, garlic, and a wretched soup. I replied that I did not want to eat and that I would not give so much as a copper to anyone again until the soldier to whom I had given an écu returned it to me. He then protested loudly over the deception, which was manifest robbery, but everyone laughed in his face. My page then spoke to him, begging him to ask me to give him money, for he was hungry and had not a copper; I told him to tell him that I would give him nothing, for in prison he was no longer in my service. So I saw all my fellow prisoners eat the wretched soup and bread and drink water, except two priests and a man who was addressed as *corregidor* ("magistrate"), the three of whom ate well.

It was at three o'clock that one of the Cavaliere Mengs's servants brought me a dinner which would have fed four amply. He wanted to leave the dinner and come back in the evening to take away the dishes and bring me supper; but in the evil humor in which I was I did not want to have to bestow my leavings either on the rabble whose companion I had become or on the soldiers. I made the servant wait, and I ate and drank, setting everything out on a bench; then I told him to take everything that was left back to the house and not to return until the next day, for I did not want supper. The servant obeyed, and the rabble treated him to catcalls. Marazzani said to me harshly that I might at least have kept the bottle of wine. I did not answer him.

At five o'clock Manuzzi[43] entered gloomily with the officer of the guard. After he had condoled with me and I had thanked him, I asked the officer if I was permitted to write to those who could not leave me in this plight except because they knew nothing of it, and, he having answered me that it would be tyranny not to let me do so, I asked him if it was within the rights of a soldier, to whom I had given an écu to buy me some paper at eight o'clock that morning, to steal my money and disappear.

"What soldier?"

I ask his name of everyone, and so does he, but in vain; no one has the least idea, the guard had been changed. The officer promises me that he will have my écu returned to me and the soldier punished. The officer at once has writing materials, a table, and a candle brought me, and Manuzzi promises me that at eight o'clock he will send a servant in the Ambassador's livery to take my letters and deliver them to their addresses, assuring me that the Ambassador will act for me privately, for he did not think he could do so openly. Before they leave I take from my pocket three écus, and I tell the rabble that I will give them to those who will tell the name of the soldier who had stolen the écu from me. At that, Marazzani was the first to name him, two others bore him out, and the officer, who knew him, wrote down his name, laughing a little, and learning to know me. I was spending three écus to recover one. They left, and I fell to writing. The patience I had to show is unbelievable. Some came to read what I was writing and, when they did not understand it, demanded that I explain it. One came to snuff my candle, and put it out. I imagined I was in the galleys, and I bore it without complaining. A soldier had the impertinence to tell me that if I would give him an écu he would make everyone keep quiet, and I did not answer him. But despite all these damned souls I finished my letters and sealed them. There was no art in my letters. They breathed the venom which was circulating in my soul.

I wrote the Ambassador Mocenigo that he was obliged by his position to defend a subject of his prince whom the ministers of a foreign power were murdering in order to seize everything he possessed. I told him to reflect that he could not refuse me his protection unless he knew how I could have broken the laws of the Republic, for my difference with the State Inquisitors arose from nothing but the fact that Signora Zorzi preferred me to Signor Condulmer,[44] who, jealous of my good fortune, had had me imprisoned under the Leads.

I wrote to Señor Manuel de Roda,[45] a learned man, the Minister of Grace and Justice, that I did not want his grace but only his justice.

"Serve God, Monseigneur, and your master the King, by preventing the Alcalde Messa from murdering a Venetian who has done nothing contrary to the laws and who came to Spain only in the belief that he was coming to a country inhabited by honest men and not by murderers whom the posts they are given authorize to murder with impunity. The man who writes to you has in his pocket a purse filled with doblones, and is imprisoned in a room in which he has already been robbed. He fears that he will be murdered tonight for the sake of his purse and everything he possesses.''

I wrote the Duke of Losada to inform the King his master that certain servants of his, without his knowledge but in his name, were murdering a Venetian who had broken no law; whose only crime was to be rich enough not to need anyone so long as he remained in Spain. I put it to him that he ought to ask the King to send an order at once which would prevent such a murder.

The strongest of my four letters was the one I wrote to the Count of Aranda. I told him that if the murderers ended by killing me I should believe before I died that it was by his order, because I had vainly told the officer who arrested me that I had come to Madrid with a letter from a Princess recommending me to him.

''I have done nothing,'' I told him. ''What compensation am I to receive, when you have me released from this inferno, for the ill treatment I have already undergone? Either have me released at once, or order your executioners to dispatch me quickly, for if they take it into their heads to send me to a *presidio,* I will kill myself first with my own hand.''

Keeping copies of my letters, I dispatched them by the Ambassador's lackey, whom the all-powerful Manuzzi did not fail to send me. But I spent the cruelest of nights. The beds were full, but even had they not been, I should not have wanted to get into one. I asked in vain for straw, but even if it had been brought me I should not have known where to put it. The floor was soaked with urine, for, with two or three exceptions, no one had a chamber pot. Burning with anger, I would not spend a copper for some small comfort, and my giving three écus to have the officer told the name of the thieving soldier had only irritated the rabble all the more. I spent the whole night sitting on a bench without a back.

At seven o'clock in the morning Manuzzi came in. I at once asked him to arrange for me to go to the guardroom with himself and the officer to eat something, for I felt that I was dying; and it was done at once. I drank some chocolate, and I made their hair stand on end with my account of my sufferings. Manuzzi told me that my letters could not be taken to their addresses except in the course of the day; and he said with a laugh that I had written the Ambassador a harsh letter. I then showed him copies of the others, and the inexperienced young man said that the proper tone for obtaining what one asked for was mildness. He did not know that there are situations in which it is absolutely impossible for a man to use a mild tone. Manuzzi whispered to me that the Ambassador would dine that day at the Count of Aranda's, and that he had promised him he would speak to him privately in my favor; but that he was afraid that my ferocious letter would have irritated the Spaniard. I warned him not to say anything to the Ambassador about my letter.

An hour after he left, just when, sitting among the rabble, I was pretending not to notice the impertinences addressed to me on the score of my haughtiness, which offended them all, I see Doña Ignacia, accompanied by her father the noble cobbler, come in with the kind captain who had done me so many favors. Their visit wounded me to the soul, but I had to make the best of it, and gratefully, for it proceeded from merit, magnanimity, virtue, and humanity in the worthy man and in the pious and amorous Doña Ignacia who were paying it to me.

Though sadly, and in very bad Spanish, I managed to make them understand how deeply I felt the honor they were doing me. Doña Ignacia never said a word; it was the only way she had to keep the tears from welling from her beautiful eyes; but Don Diego summoned all his eloquence to tell me that he would never have come to see me if he was not absolutely certain that a mistake had been made, or that it was some horrible calumny, of the kind which deceives judges for a few days. From this he drew the conclusion that in a few days I would be released from this foul place and that I would receive a satisfaction proportionate to the insult which had been put upon me. I replied that I hoped so; but what surprised me, and touched me to the soul, was what this very poor man did when he left, embracing me. He put into my hands a roll, whispering to me that there were twelve doblones de a ocho in it, which I should return to him when I could. My hair stood on end. I whispered to him that I had fifty in my pocket which I did not dare show him because I feared the thieves by whom I was surrounded. At that, he put his roll back in his pocket, and he wept. I promised to visit him as soon as I should be set free. He went; he had not sent in his name. He was well dressed, he was taken to be a man of substance. Such characters are not uncommon in Spain. The noble, heroic act is the craze of the Castilian.

Mengs's servant came at noon with a dinner which was more choice and less abundant; which was what I wanted. I ate in his presence in half an hour, and he went away, carrying my compliments to his master. At one o'clock a man entered and told me to come with him. He took me to a small room, in which I saw my carbine and pistols. The Alcalde Messa, seated at a table covered with notebooks, with two clerks, told me to sit down; then he ordered me to reply truthfully to all his questions, for my answers would be written down. I told him that I understood very little Spanish, and that I would never answer anything except in writing to a person who would question me in Italian, French, or Latin. This reply, uttered in a firm voice, astonished him. He talked to me for a whole hour, I understood everything he said, but all that he ever got by way of reply was:

"I do not understand what you are saying. Find a judge who knows one of my languages, and then I will answer; but I will not dictate; I will write my answer myself."

He grew angry, I paid no attention to his outbursts. Finally he gave me a pen, and he told me to write in Italian my name, my rank, and what I had come to Spain to do. I could not refuse him that satisfaction, but I wrote only a score of lines:

"I am So-and-so, a subject of the Republic of Venice, a man of letters, moderately rich; I am traveling for my pleasure; I am known to the Ambassador of my country, to the Count of Aranda, to Prince della Cattolica, to the Marqués de Mora, to the Duke of Losada; I have not broken the least of His Catholic Majesty's[46] *laws, and nevertheless I find myself being murdered, and confined with criminals and thieves by ministers who would deserve to be treated far more harshly than I. If I have done nothing against the laws, His Catholic Majesty must know that he has no right over me except to order me to leave his domains, and I will obey the instant I receive that order. My weapons which I see here have traveled with me for eleven years, I carry them only to defend myself against highway robbers, and at the Puerta de Alcalá they were seen in my carriage and they were not confiscated; which shows that their confiscation now is only a pretext to murder me."*

After writing this document I give it to the Alcalde, who sends for a man who faithfully translates the whole of it into Spanish for him. The Alcalde rises, looks at me with eyes venomous with anger, and says:

"Valgame Dios ['*So help me God*'], *you will repent of having written this document."*

So saying, he has me escorted back to the room in which I had been, and he leaves.

At eight o'clock Manuzzi came to tell me that the Count of Aranda had been the first to ask the Ambassador if he knew me, and that the Ambassador had told him nothing but good about me, ending by assuring him that he was sorry he could not be of use to me in the matter of an affront to which I had been subjected, because I was in disfavor with the State Inquisitors. The Count of Aranda replied that a great affront had indeed been put on me, but it was not such as to make an intelligent man lose his head.

"*'I should have known nothing about it,' he said to him, 'if he had not written me a furious letter, and he wrote others in the same style to Don Manuel de Roda and to the Duke of Losada. He is in the right, but one does not write such letters.'* That is all he said to him."

"Then my troubles are over, if it is true that he said I am in the right."

"You may be sure that he said it."

"If he said it he will do what is right, and, as for my letters, everyone has his style. I became angry and maddened because I have been treated like a dog; look at this room, I have no bed, and, running with urine as it is, I cannot lie on the floor; I shall spend a second night sitting on this bench without a back. Do you think it possible that I do not want to eat the hearts of all my executioners? If I do not leave this inferno tomorrow I will kill myself or go mad."

Manuzzi understood that I could not but be in a state of desperation; he promised he would come to see me early the next morning, and he advised me to pay for a bed. I would not take his advice. The lice horrified me, and I feared for my purse, my watch, my snuffbox, and everything I had. I spent a terrible night dozing on the same bench, constantly starting awake when, losing my balance, I was on the verge of falling into the stinking filth on the floor

Manuzzi came at eight o'clock and I saw that he was really terrified at the sight of my face. He had come in a carriage, bringing with him some excellent chocolate, which he ordered heated, which I drank with pleasure, and which gave me a little courage. But the door opens, and in comes an officer, followed by two others. The first officer asks for me; I approach him, saying that it is I.

"His Excellency the Count of Aranda," he says, "is outside, and greatly regrets the misfortune which has befallen you. He learned of it yesterday from the letter you wrote him. If you had written to him at once, nothing would have happened to you."

I told him the story of the soldier who had robbed me of an écu. He asked who he was, and as soon as he was informed of everything he summoned the captain, reprimanded him, ordered him to give me an écu, which I accepted with a laugh, and to send someone to find the soldier so that he could be flogged in my presence. The officer was Count Rojas,[47] Colonel of the regiment which was at Buen Retiro. I then told him in detail the whole story of my arrest and all the sufferings I had endured in the accursed place in which I had been put. I told him that if I were not given back my freedom, my weapons, and my honor in the course of that day, I would kill myself or go mad, for a man had to lie down once a day, and I had not been able to lie either on a bed or on the floor because of the filth he would have seen if he had arrived an hour earlier.

I saw the worthy man surprised by the fury with which I spoke to him. Noticing it, I asked him to excuse me, assuring him that when I was not overcome by rage I was entirely different. Manuzzi told him what my natural temperament was, and the Colonel condoled with me. He sighed, and he gave me his word of honor that I should leave the place in the course of the day, that my weapons would be returned to me, and that I would sleep in my own bed.

"After that," he said, "you shall go to thank the Count of Aranda, who has come here purposely and who has ordered me to tell you that you shall not return to your lodging until afternoon, for His Excellency wants you to have a satisfaction sufficient to restore your peace of mind and make you forget this insult, if it is one, for what is done in the name of the law insults no one, and in your case the Alcalde Messa was deceived by the scoundrel who was in your service."

"There he is," I said. "I ask you as a favor to have him removed from here, since he is known to be a monster."

He went out, and two minutes later two soldiers came to take him, and I did not see him again. I never troubled to learn what had become of the wretch. It was then that he had me go to the guardroom to see the flogging which was given the thieving soldier. I saw the Count of Aranda forty paces from me, walking up and down followed by a number of officers and one of the King's Bodyguard. All this kept us occupied for two hours and a half. Before leaving, the Colonel invited me to dine at his house with Mengs when he next invited him. I had to return to the room, where I found a folding bed set up on planks, which looked clean. A noncommissioned officer told me it was for me, and I instantly lay down on it, but Manuzzi, before leaving me, embraced me again and again. I was convinced that he was my true friend, and it still saddens me when I think that I did him a wrong[48] for which I am not surprised that he never forgave me, for I have never been able to forgive myself for it. The reader will see, however, that the young man carried his vengeance too far.

After this scene the rabble in the room no longer dared to look at me. Marazzani came to my bedside to beg for my good offices, but I did not let him suppose that I had any influence. I said that in Spain a foreigner was doing a great deal if he was able to look after himself. I was brought dinner as usual, and at three o'clock the Alcalde Messa came to tell me to go with him because, having made a mistake, he had received an order to escort me back to my apartment, where he hoped that I should find everything I had left there. At the same time he showed me my carbine and my pistols which he handed to one of his men to carry to my room. The officer of the guard gave me back my sword; the Alcalde, in a black cloak, took his place at my left and, followed by thirty constables, escorted me to the coffeehouse in the Calle de la Cruz, where he removed the seal on the door of my room, which the landlord came to open, and where I was easily able to tell the Alcalde that everything was as I had left it. He said to me as he left that, if I had not had a traitor in my service, I should never have been led to believe that His Catholic Majesty's ministers were murderers.

"Anger, Señor Alcalde, made me write the same thing to four ministers. I believed it, and I no longer believe it. Let us forget everything; but admit that, if I had not known how to write, you would have sent me to the galleys."

"Alas, it is possible."

I washed, and I changed all my clothes; more from duty than from affection, I paid a visit to the truly noble cobbler, who, on seeing me, called himself the most fortunate of men and the most foresighted, for he was certain that a mistake must have been made; but Doña Ignacia was beside herself with joy, for she had felt none of her father's certainty. When he learned what kind of satisfaction I had received, he said that a Grandee of Spain could ask no more. I invited them to come to dine with me somewhere as soon as I sent them word, and they promised to do so. Gratitude having entered in, I found myself much more in love with Doña Ignacia than I had been before.

On leaving the Calle del Desengaño I went to see Mengs, who, knowing Spain, expected anything rather than to see me. But when he heard the story of the whole day, in which I had had so many triumphs, he congratulated me as he should. He was in gala dress, a very unusual thing; and he told me that he had gone to see Don Manuel de Roda, hoping to be useful to me with him, but that he had not been able to speak to him. He gave me a letter from Venice which he had received that day, and which I quickly unsealed, recognizing Signor Dandolo's[49] hand; in it I find a sealed letter, addressed to Signor Mocenigo, Ambassador. Signor Dandolo wrote me that, after reading the enclosed letter, the Ambassador would no longer fear to displease the State Inquisitors by giving me introductions, for the person who had written him the letter recommended me to him in the name of one of the three Inquisitors.[50] At that, Mengs says that it is in my power to make my fortune in Spain, provided that I behave myself, and especially now that the ministers were under an obligation to treat me in a way to make me forget the outrage to which I had been subjected. He advises me to take the letter to the Ambassador that very moment, and to use his carriage, for after sixty hours of continual torture I could not stand. Needing to go to bed, I excuse myself from returning to his house for supper, but I promise to dine there the next day. The Ambassador was not in. I leave the letter with Manuzzi, and I go home, where I go to bed to enjoy ten hours of the deepest sleep.

Manuzzi comes very early in the morning, with his face the picture of joy, to bring me the news that Signor Girolamo Zulian[51] wrote the Ambassador on behalf of Signor da Mula that he could introduce me everywhere, for my quarrel with the tribunal was in no way prejudicial to my honor.

"The Ambassador expects to present you at Court at

Aranjuez[52] next week, and he wants you to dine with him today with a large company "

"I am engaged to dine with Mengs."

"I shall go to invite Mengs at once, and, if he declines, you must disappoint him, for you must be aware of the fine effect your entrance at the Ambassador's is bound to produce on the day after your triumph."

"You are right. Go to Mengs; and I will dine at the Ambassador's."

CHAPTER II

Campomanes. Olavides. Sierra Morena. Aranjuez. Mengs. The Marchese Grimaldi. Toledo. Signora Pelliccia. Return to Madrid and to the house of Doña Ignacia's father.

IN THE principal vicissitudes of my life particular circumstances combined to make my poor mind a trifle superstitious. I feel humiliated when, reflecting upon myself, I recognize this truth. But how can I help it? It is in the nature of things that Fortune should do to a man who surrenders himself to her whims what a child does to an ivory sphere on a billiard table when he pushes it one way and another, only to burst out laughing when he sees it fall into a pocket; but it is not in the nature of things, it seems to me, that Fortune should do to such a man what a skillful player, who calculates the force, the speed, the distance, and the regularity of the reaction, does to the billiard ball; it is not in the nature of things, as I conceive it to be, that I should do Fortune the honor to believe that she is skilled in geometry, or that I should posit in that metaphysical being the physical laws to which I find that all nature is subject. Despite this reasoning, what I observe astonishes me. The very same Fortune

I ought to regard with contempt, as synonymous with chance, becomes an object to be respected, as if she wanted to reveal herself to me as a goddess, in the most decisive events in my life. She has amused herself by constantly showing me that she is not blind, as people say; she has never cast me into the depths except to raise me proportionately high, and she seems never to have made me rise very high except to give herself the pleasure of seeing me fall. It seems that she has exercised absolute dominion over me only in order to convince me that she reasons and that she is the ruler of all things; to convince me of it, she employed striking means to compel me to act, and to make me understand that my will, far from declaring me free, was only an instrument which she used to make what she would of me.

I could not hope to attain to anything in Spain without the help of my country's Ambassador, and he, in his pusillanimity, would never have dared to do anything without the letter which I presented to him; and the letter would have led to nothing if it had not arrived precisely at the moment when my arrest, and the reparation which the Count of Aranda ordered to be given me, had made my adventure the talk of the day.

The letter made the Ambassador blush for not having acted in my favor before it arrived; but he did not despair of making people believe that the Count of Aranda had given me such ample reparation only because he had demanded it. His favorite, Count Manuzzi, had brought me an invitation to dinner from him, and luck would have it that I was engaged to dine with Mengs. Manuzzi had the good sense to go to Mengs with an invitation from the Ambassador, which greatly flattered the vain man with whom I had taken refuge, though in vain. The invitation became in his eyes a token of gratitude, which made up to him for the mortification he had suffered from having to let me be taken from his house. After accepting the invitation, and learning from Manuzzi that I had already been invited, he wrote me a note to tell me that he would come for me in his carriage at one o'clock.

I went to call on the Count of Aranda, who, after making me wait a quarter of an hour, came out with some papers.

"The thing is over," he said to me serenely, "and I believe that you can be satisfied. Here are four letters, which I return to you to read."

I see my three letters to him, to the Duke of Losada, and to the Minister of Grace and Justice.

"Why, my Lord, must I read these letters? This is the statement submitted to the Señor Alcalde."

"I know that. Read them all, and you will see that, despite your having been entirely in the right, it is not allowable to write in such a way."

"I beg your pardon. A man who has resolved to kill himself, as I had done, cannot write otherwise. I thought that everything done to me was by Your Excellency's order."

"You did not know me. However, you will go to thank Don Manuel de Roda, who wants to make your acquaintance without fail, and I will take it as a favor if you will go sometime at your convenience to the Alcalde, not to apologize to him but to say something pleasant which will make him forget the insulting things you say to him in your statement. If you inform Princess Lubomirska[1] of this affair, tell her that as soon as I heard of it I set it to rights."

After having thus done my duty to the Count of Aranda, I called on Colonel Rojas, who told me in so many words that I had made a great mistake to tell the Count of Aranda that I was satisfied.

"What could I demand?"

"Everything. The Alcalde's resignation. A sum of money in compensation for what you were made to suffer in that horrible place. You are in a country where you do not need to hold your tongue unless you have to deal with the Inquisition."

Colonel Rojas, who is now a general, is one of the most amiable men I met in Spain.

I returned to my apartment, and Mengs came to fetch me. The Ambassador paid me countless attentions, and heaped praise on the painter Mengs for having tried, by giving me asylum in his house, to save me from a misfortune which would overwhelm any man. It was at table that I gave a detailed account of all that I had suffered at Buen Retiro, and of the conversation I had just had with the Count of Aranda, who had returned my letters to me. Everyone wanted to read them, and everyone expressed his opinion. The guests were the French Consul, the Abbé Béliardi,[2] Don Rodrigo de Campomanes,[3] who was very celebrated, and the equally celebrated Don Pablo de Olavides.[4] Each of them gave his opinion on my letters, which the Ambassador condemned, calling them ferocious; but Campomanes maintained that my letters, which contained no insults, were just what was needed to make the reader see that I was in the right, even if he were the King. Olavides and Béliardi were of the same opinion. Mengs was of the Ambassador's, and invited me to go to stay in his house and so have done with the calumnies of spies, of which Madrid was full. I did not accept Mengs's invitation until after I had been urged for some time and after having heard the Ambassador himself say that I really must give the Cavaliere Mengs that satisfaction for, in addition to its being a great honor to me, it would be a satisfaction which was due to him.

What really pleased me at the dinner was making the acquaintance of Campomanes and Olavides. They were both men of an intelligence very uncommon in Spain, for, though not learned, they were well aware of all the prejudices and abuses which accompany religion there, and they not only publicly mocked them, they acted openly to destroy them. It was Campomanes who had furnished the Count of Aranda with all the matter of complaint against the Jesuits, whom the Count had driven out of Spain in one day. Campomanes squinted, the Count of Aranda squinted, and the General of the Jesuits squinted; at table I laughed at the dissension among the three strabismics,[5] one of whom, as was only to be expected, had been crushed by the two others. I asked Campomanes why he hated the Jesuits, and he replied that he hated them no more than he did the other religious orders, which, if he could have had his way, he would have destroyed one and all. He was the author of everything that had been published against the mortmains,[6] enjoying, as he did, the friendship of the Venetian Ambassador, who had communicated to him all that the Senate had done against the monks—information which Campomanes would not have needed if he had read and put into practice all that our Fra Paolo Sarpi[7] wrote on the subject in perfect honesty. Far-seeing, courageous, active, Treasurer of the Supreme Council of Castile, of which Aranda was President, Campomanes was recognized to be a man who did not act as he did from private interest, but for the good of the State. So the statesmen respected and valued him; but the monks, the priests, the bigots, and all the rabble infected with the fear of offending God and the saints by acting against the temporal interests of the ecclesiastics and the beneficiaries of mortmain hated Campomanes with a mortal hatred. The Inquisition must have sworn to destroy him, and everyone said that in two or three years Campomanes would either have to become a bishop or be shut up in the prisons of the Inquisition for life. This prediction was fulfilled only in part. Campomanes was imprisoned by the Inquisition four years later,[8] remained in prison for three years, and did not leave it until he made a formal retraction. His friend Olavides was treated more harshly;[9] and even the Count of Aranda would not have escaped the horrible monster's fury if, profoundly intelligent and foresighted, he had not asked to be appointed Ambassador to France,[10] which the King at once granted him, glad thus to find himself rid of the obligation to hand him over to the accursed fury of the monks.

Carlos III, who died mad,[11] as almost all kings must die, had done things which even those who knew him could not believe, for he was weak, gross, stubborn, excessively devoted to religion, and inalterably determined to die a hundred deaths before he would stain his soul with the smallest of mortal sins. Everyone sees that such a man must have been completely the slave of his confessor. The excesses committed by the Jesuits[12] in Portugal, the Indies, and France had already made them hated and openly condemned in all the four quarters of the globe; and the crime of the Jesuit confessor of Don Fernando VI,[13] which had brought about the ruin of Ensenada,[14] had taught his successor Carlos III that he must not have a Jesuit as his confessor, since the interest of the State demanded the destruction of *los Teatinos*.[15]

So they were called in Spain, and the Theatines were called *Cayetanos*.[16]

The same confessor, then, who quieted all the King's scruples against the great operation of destroying a whole religious order, was also obliged to yield to the King and give him the reins when, at the same time, the Count of Aranda showed him that he must set limits to the excessive power of the Inquisition, whose great work was to keep Christians in ignorance and to maintain in force abuses, superstitions, and the *pia mendacia* ("pious falsehoods");[17] the confessor's policy could not but give him the reins. He was certain that he could plunge the King back into the abyss of superstition whenever he pleased; and he succeeded. However, I was never able to learn if, two years after my departure, the King was given a new confessor,[18] for, unhappily for poor mankind, it is decreed that a pious king will never do anything but what his confessor will let him do, and it is obvious that the confessor's chief interest can never be the good of the State, since religion, as it exists, is directly opposed to it. If I am told that a wise king can always keep matters of State out of his confession, I will admit it; but I am not talking of a wise king, for if he is such, as a Christian he need go to confession only once a year and hear the voice of his confessor only in the words he utters to absolve him; if the king needs to talk with him to clear up doubts he is a fool; doubts and scruples are the same thing; he who goes to confession should know his religion before he goes to it. No doubts, no discussions with his confessor. Louis XIV would have been the greatest king on earth, greater than Frederick II, King of Prussia, if he had not had the weakness to chatter with his confessors.

At that time the Spanish Cabinet was engaged in a promising undertaking. A thousand families had been brought from various Swiss cantons and been sent to live in the fine deserted countryside called *las sierras de Morena,*[19] a name famous in Europe, being well known to all who have read Cervantes' masterpiece, the magnificent romance which tells the story of Don Quixote. Nature had endowed the place with all the gifts which should have made it populous, an excellent climate, fertile soil, pure water, advantageous situation, for the *sierras* (which means "mountains") are between the Kingdoms of Andalusia and Granada; nevertheless this beautiful countryside, this vast and delicious abode, was deserted. The King of Spain resolves that for a limited time he will make a present of the products of the soil to colonists, he invites them to come, paying for their journey, they come, they go there, and the Government makes every effort to lodge them and to set up an excellent administration for them, both spiritual and temporal. This enterprise had the support of Señor Olavides, a man of intelligence and education. It was he who conferred with the ministers in Madrid to establish order in the settlement, to provide it with judges who would render prompt justice, with priests of course, for these Swiss were all Catholics, with a governor, with artisans in all the necessary trades to build houses, churches, and above all a theater or circus in which to give bullfights, a favorite spectacle in Spain, and so beautiful, so humane, so natural, and so reasonable that the thinkers of that country cannot understand how there can possibly be nations in the world who can do without it. So in the Sierra Morena the worthy emigrants from Switzerland found a huge circular amphitheater, so that on certain days they could enjoy that delicious spectacle.

Don Pablo de Olavides in the memorials which he had presented for the greater prosperity of the promising colony had said that all establishments of monks should be excluded, and he gave very good reasons for it; but even if he had demonstrated it infallibly, compass in hand, it took no more to make every monk in Spain his enemy, and even the Bishop[20] of whose diocese Morena was a part. The priests of Spain said that he was right, but the monks cried out against such impiety, and persecutions were already beginning; and the subject was raised at the Ambassador's table.

After letting them talk as long as they pleased, I said as modestly as I could that the colony would vanish like a dream within a few years, for several reasons both material and moral. The principal reason which I alleged was that the Swiss was a mortal of a different species from other men.

"He is," I said, "a plant which, transplanted from the soil in which it was born, dies. The Swiss are subject to a disease called *Heimweh*,[21] which means 'return,' what the Greeks called *nostalgia*;[22] when they are away from their country, after a certain period of time the disease overtakes them, the only remedy is returning to their country; if they do not employ it they die."

I said that it might be worth trying to combine them with another colony of Spanish men and women, in order to bind them by marriages; I said that at least in the beginning they must be given Swiss priests and judges, and above all they must be declared free from all inquisition into matters of conscience, for the true Swiss had customs and laws in regard to making love[23] which were inseparable from their nature, and ceremonies of which the Spanish church would never approve, which would make the disease of *Heimweh* attack them in a very short time.

My discourse, which Don Olavides at first took to be only banter, in the end persuaded him that all I had said might be true. He asked me to set down my reflections in writing, and to communicate any thoughts I might have on the subject only to him. I promised to give him all my ideas to read, and Mengs set a day when he could dine at his house. It was on the next day that I had my few belongings carried to Mengs's, and that I began working on the subject of the colonies, treating them from the point of view both of the natural sciences and of philosophy.

The next day I went to call on Don Manuel de Roda, who—a very rare thing in Spain—was a man of letters. He was fond of Latin poetry, he had some appreciation of Italian poetry, but he gave the preference to the Spanish. He received me with great courtesy, he asked me to come to see him, and he expressed his regret for the vexation my imprisonment in Buen Retiro had caused me. The Duke of Losada congratulated me on the Venetian Ambassador's speaking well of me to everyone, and encouraged me to think that I might draw profit from my talents by proposing myself for some employment in which I could be useful to the Government, and he promised me his full support. Prince della Cattolica had me to dinner with the Venetian Ambassador. In three weeks, lodging at Mengs's and often dining at the Ambassador's, I made a quantity of valuable acquaintances. I thought of finding employment in Spain, for, receiving no letters from Lisbon, I did not dare to go there simply on the chance that something would turn up. The Portuguese lady[24] no longer wrote to me, I had no way of knowing what had become of her.

To pass the evenings I had fallen into the habit of calling on Signora Sabatini,[25] on a Spanish lady who had a *tertulia,* that is, whose evening receptions were frequented by men of letters, all of them paltry, and on the Duke of Medina Sidonia,[26] Master of the Horse to the King, man of letters, sound and reliable, to whom I had been presented by Don Domingo Varnier,[27] valet to the King, whose acquaintance Mengs had procured me. I often went to see Doña Ignacia, but since I could never be alone with her I was bored. When I found an opportunity to tell her that she should think of some excursion with her ugly cousins, for in the country I could give her proofs of my constancy, she replied that she wanted it as much as I did, but at that season she must banish all such ideas, for Holy Week was drawing near, God had died for us, we must think not of criminal pleasures but of doing penance. After Easter we could think of our love. Such is the character of almost all the pious beauties in Spain

Two weeks before Easter the King of Spain left Madrid for Aranjuez with the whole Court. The Venetian Ambassador invited me to go there to stay in his house, so that he could have a good opportunity to present me. On the day before we were to leave, I succumbed to a fever as I sat beside Mengs in his carriage on the way to visit the widow of the painter Amigoni.[28] The fever, which came on with chills such as it is impossible to conceive, made me shake so much that my head struck the roof of the carriage. My teeth were chattering, I could not utter a word. Mengs, in terror, ordered the coachman to return home at speed, I was quickly put to bed, where four or five hours later a violent sweat which continued for ten or twelve hours without intermission expelled from my body at least twenty pints of water, for it ran over the floor after passing through two mattresses and a straw pallet. Forty-eight hours later the fever ended, but weakness kept me in bed for a week. On the Saturday before Easter I took a carriage and went to Aranjuez, where I was very well received and very well lodged by the Ambassador; but a small pustule which, on leaving Madrid, I had near the place where I had had the fistula was so much irritated on the road by the jolting of the carriage that when I arrived in Aranjuez in the evening it made me extremely uncomfortable. During the night the pustule swelled to the size of a big pear, so that, the day being Easter, I could not get up to go to mass. In five days the tumor became an abscess as big as a melon; it terrified not only the Ambassador and Manuzzi but an old French surgeon of the King's, who swore that he had never seen the like. As for me, being the only one who was not terrified, for the abscess caused me no pain and was not hard, I told the surgeon to open it. I described to him, in the presence of a physician, the kind of fever I had just had in Madrid, and I convinced him that the abscess could come only from a quantity of lymph which had accumulated in that place and which, as soon as it was discharged, would leave me in perfect health. The physician having declared my reasoning sound, the surgeon exercised his art; he made a six-inch opening, after putting under me a large sheet folded thirty-two times. Though my abscess could have contained only a pint of liquid, it is none the less true that the lymph which left my body through it in the course of four days was as abundant as that which had come out of me as sweat during the fever I had had at Mengs's house. At the end of the four days almost no trace remained of the opening which the surgeon had made. I had to stay in bed because of my weakness; but I was very much surprised when I received in my bed a letter from Mengs which an express messenger brought me. I open it, and here is what I find in bad Italian, which I have before me now:

"Yesterday the priest of my parish posted on the door of his church the names of all those who are lodged in his district and who, not believing in God, did not take the sacrament at Easter. Among the names I saw yours, and I had to swallow a reproof from the priest, who said bitterly that he was surprised to see that I granted hospitality to heretics[29] in my house. I did not know what to answer him, for it is true that you could have stayed in Madrid one day longer and done the duty of a Christian, if only because of the consideration you owed me. What I owe to the King my master, the care I must take to preserve my reputation and my peace in the future oblige me meanwhile to inform you that my house is no longer yours. On your return to Madrid you will go to lodge where you please, and my servants will deliver your belongings to whomever you authorize to come for them. I am, etc . . . Antonio Rafael Mengs"

This letter had such an effect on me that Mengs would certainly not have written it with impunity if he had not been seven long Spanish leagues[30] distant from me. I told the messenger to go. He replied that he was ordered to wait for my answer, whereupon I tore the letter in two, and I told him it was all the answer such a letter deserved. At that he left in great surprise. Without losing time, and in the heat of my anger, I dressed and I went in a sedan chair to the church in Aranjuez, where I confessed to a Franciscan monk, who gave me the sacrament at six o'clock the next morning. The monk had the goodness to write me a certificate that I had been confined to bed from the moment of my arrival *al sitio,*[31] and that despite my weakness I had done my Easter duty at his church, having confessed to him the day before. He then told me the name of the parish priest who had posted me on the door of his church.

Back at the Ambassador's house, I wrote the priest that the certificate I was sending him would make him understand the reason which had obliged me to put off receiving the sacrament at Easter, in consequence of which I asked him to remove my name from the list in which he had unjustly had the kindness to dishonor me. I asked him to take the enclosure to the Cavaliere Mengs.

I wrote Mengs that I deserved the insult he had put on me by turning me out of his house, since I had been stupid enough to do him the honor of going there; but as a Christian who had just done his Easter duty I must not only forgive him but teach him a verse known to all men of honor, but not to him, which said: *Turpius ejicitur quam non admittitur hospes* ("It is more shameful to turn out a guest than not to admit him").[32]

After sending off my letter I told the whole story to the Ambassador, who answered me only that Mengs was esteemed for nothing but his talent, for in other respects all Madrid knew that he was full of absurdities. The man had lodged me in his house only from vanity, at a moment when all Madrid, the Count of Aranda, and the ministers were sure to hear of it and when many would believe that it was partly out of respect for him that I had been escorted back to my lodging. He even told me, in an access of pride, that I should have made the Alcalde Messa escort me not to the coffeehouse where I was staying,[33] but back to his house, since it was from his house that I had been taken away. He was a man ambitious for fame, a great worker, jealous, and the enemy of all the painters of his time who could pretend to a talent equal to his, and he was wrong, for, though a great painter in coloring and drawing, he did not have the very first qualification to make a great painter, namely, invention.

"Just as," I said to him one day, "every great poet must be a painter, so every painter must be a poet."

He took my dictum in bad part, for he wrongly thought that I had uttered it only to reproach him with his deficiency. He was extremely ignorant, and he wanted to pass for learned; he was a drunkard, lascivious, bad-tempered, jealous, and avaricious, and he wanted to pass for virtuous. A great worker, he found it necessary not to dine, for he liked to drink until his reason was totally extinguished. This was why, when he was invited to dine anywhere, he drank only water.

He spoke four languages, all of them badly; but he refused to admit it. He had begun to hate me a few days before I left Madrid because chance had shown me too much of all his failings, and because he had been too often obliged to admit the justice of my criticisms. His ill breeding made him resent being under vital obligations to me. I one day prevented him from sending a memorial to the Court, which was to have been seen by the King and in which he signed himself *el más ínclito* when he wanted to call himself "the most humble"; I told him that he would be laughed at, for *ínclito* did not mean "humble" but "illustrious"; he flew into a rage, he said I must not imagine I knew Spanish better than he did, and he was in despair when someone who arrived told him that he ought to thank me, for so gross an error would have made him eternally ridiculous. Another time I prevented him from sending a critical comment on a diatribe by someone who said that we had not on earth a single antediluvian monument. Mengs had thought he would confound the author by writing in the margin that the ruins of the Tower of Babylon[34] were still to be seen: a twofold blunder, because the pretended ruins are not visible, and, even if they were, the building of that unique tower took place after the Flood. When he found himself convinced, he erased his note, but hating me with all his heart, for he was certain that I must know the full extent of his ignorance. He had a mania for discussing metaphysical problems; his passion was reasoning on beauty in general and defining it, and the things he said on the subject were enormously stupid.

Excessively splenetic, in his fits of rage he beat his children even at the risk of crippling them. I more than once snatched his eldest son[35] from his hands at moments when I thought I should see him tear him to pieces with his teeth. He boasted that his Bohemian father, a bad painter, had brought him up stick in hand, and, having himself become a good painter by this treatment, he was convinced that he must deliberately use the same means to make his children become something. He took offense when someone wrote to him and he saw in the address neither his title of Cavaliere[36] nor his Christian names. I told him one day that I had not felt offended when he failed to add the title of Cavaliere to my name, in the addresses of the letters he had written me at Florence and Madrid, and that I nevertheless had the honor to have been decorated with the same order as he. He made no answer. As for his Christian names, his reason for valuing them was very strange. He said that, since he was named Anton Raphael, and was a painter, people who failed to give him those names refused him, according to his mad idea, the qualities in painting of Antonio da Correggio[37] and Raffaello d'Urbino,[38] which he united in himself.

I one day ventured to tell him that I thought the hand of one of the principal figures which I saw in a painting of his was faulty because the fourth finger was shorter than the index finger. He told me it ought to be so, and he showed me his hand; I laughed and showed him mine, saying that I was sure my hand was formed like that of all the children descended from Adam.

"Then from whom do you suppose I am descended?"

"I have no idea; but it is certain that you are not of my species."

"It is you who are not of mine, nor of that of the rest of mankind, for the hands of men and women are generally constructed like mine."

"I wager a hundred pistoles you are wrong."

With that he rises, throwing his palette and brushes on the floor, he rings, his servants come up, he looks at their hands, and he is furious to see that they all have the fourth finger longer than the index. That time—a most unusual thing—I saw him laugh and end the argument with a jest:

"I am delighted that I can boast I am unique in something."

A sensible thing which Mengs said to me one day, and which I have never forgotten, was the following: he had painted a Magdalen whose beauty was really surprising. For ten or twelve days he had said to me every morning:

"This evening the picture will be finished."

He worked on it until evening, and the next day I found him still working on the same picture. So one day I asked him if he had been wrong the day before when he had told me that the painting was already finished.

"No," he replied, "it might seem to be finished in the eyes of ninety-nine out of a hundred connoisseurs who examined it; but the one who most interests me is the hundredth, and I look at it with his eyes. Understand that there is not a picture in the world which is finished more than relatively. This Magdalen will never be finished until I stop working on it, but it will not really be so, for it is certain that if I worked on it another day it would be more finished. Understand that even in your Petrarch there is not one sonnet which can be called really finished. Nothing of what comes from the hands or the minds of men is perfect in this world except a mathematical calculation."

I embraced my dear Mengs after hearing him talk to me in this fashion; but I did not embrace him on another day when he told me he wished he had been Raffaello d'Urbino. He was his great painter.

"How," I asked him, "can you want to have been? Such a desire is contrary to nature, for having existed, you would exist no longer. You cannot entertain that desire unless you imagine yourself enjoying its fulfillment in the bliss of Paradise, and in that case I congratulate you."

"Not at all: I should like to have been Raffaello, and I should care nothing about existing today, either in body or in soul."

"That is absurd. Think about it. You cannot have that desire and at the same time have the faculty of thought."

He flew into a rage and treated me to insults which made me laugh. Another time he compared the work of a poet composing a tragedy with that of a painter composing a picture in which the whole tragedy was depicted in a single scene. After analyzing a great number of differences, I ended by telling him that the tragic poet had to employ all the attention of his soul even in the smallest details, whereas the painter could employ colors on the surfaces of the objects and at the same time discuss various subjects with friends around him.

"This proves," I said, "that your painting is more the work of your hands than a product of your soul. That fact proves its inferiority. Find me a poet who can tell his cook what he wants for supper while composing epic verse."

Mengs worsted in an argument became brutal; he declared himself insulted. Yet the man, who died before the age of fifty years,[39] will go down to posterity as a philosopher, a great stoic, learned, and endowed with all the virtues—and all because of his biography,[40] which one of his inordinate admirers wrote and had printed in beautiful type in a large quarto volume dedicated to the King of Spain. It is a tissue of falsehoods. Let us leave him for the present, and speak of my own concerns. I shall speak of Mengs when I meet him again in Rome two or three years hence.

I still had to stay in bed because of my weakness. Manuzzi managed to induce me to go with him to Toledo to see all the antiquities which still exist in that ancient city. We were to be back in Aranjuez on the fifth day. He was eager to be away because the Ambassador was to give a great dinner for all the ministers, which, not having been presented, he could not attend.

"My exclusion," he said, "will not be remarked on when it is known that I am not in Aranjuez."

Thoroughly persuaded, and delighted to see Toledo, I set out with him early the next day, and we were there by evening. At the gate of that capital of New Castile, which is on top of a mountain, I saw a naumachia.[41] The Tagus, which carries gold, surrounds it on two sides. We lodged well enough for that country at an inn on a great square, and we went out in the morning with a guide, who took us to the Alcázar:[42] it is the Louvre of Toledo, the great royal palace in which the King of the Moors lived. Its majestic name could have no other vowel than the queen of the alphabet. After that we went to the cathedral,[43] worthy to be seen for the riches it contains. I saw the tabernacle in which the holy sacrament is carried in procession on Corpus Christi, so heavy that thirty men are used to carry it. The Archbishop of the city has an income of three hundred thousand écus, and its clergy has four hundred thousand. A canon, showing me vessels in which there were relics, said that in one of them were the thirty coins which Judas had received for selling Our Lord; I asked him to show them to me, and, looking at me balefully, he replied that the King himself would not dare to admit to such curiosity. The priests in Spain are a rabble which it is necessary to treat with more respect than anywhere else. The next morning we were shown some collections[44] of curiosities of natural history and medicine, where we were at least permitted to laugh. We were shown a dissected dragon, "which proves," the owner of it said to me, "that the dragon is not a fabulous animal"; and after the dragon we were shown a basilisk, whose eyes, instead of terrifying us, made us laugh. This grave nobleman showed us a Freemason's apron, assuring us that the person who had presented it to his father had been a member of a lodge.

"Which proves," he told us, "that those who say that the sect has never existed and does not exist are wrong."

On my return to Aranjuez, finding myself in very good health, I began paying my court to all the ministers, and the Ambassador presented me to the Marchese Grimaldi,[45] with whom I had several conferences on the subject of the Sierra Morena, where the colony was doing badly. The Swiss families could not thrive there. I gave him a plan intended to show him that the colony should be composed of Spanish families.

"Spain," he said, "is scantily populated everywhere; so it would be necessary to impoverish one place in order to enrich another."

"Not at all, for ten male emigrants who die in Asturias without marrying because of their poverty would die in the Sierra Morena after producing fifty children, and those fifty children in the next generation would produce two hundred, who would produce a thousand, and all would be well."

My project was being studied, and the Marchese Grimaldi assured me that if the thing was done I should be appointed governor.

An Italian *opera buffa* was delighting the Court, except the King,* who had no liking for music. He cared for nothing but hunting. An Italian musician, who enjoyed the Venetian Ambassador's patronage, wanted to compose the music for a new drama, flattering himself that he would deserve universal applause and receive substantial presents in recompense for his work. The time was too short to write to Italy; I offered to write one for him then and there, I was taken at my word, and the next day I gave him the first act. The chapelmaster composed the music for it in four days, and the Venetian Ambassador invited all the ministers to the rehearsal of the first act in the great hall of his palace. The music was declared in exquisite taste; the two other acts were already written, he hurried, and in two weeks my opera[46] was performed, and the musician had reason to be well content. As for me, I was considered to be above a poet who worked to be paid; I was paid in applause. And to tell the truth, I should have thought myself insulted if payment had been offered me. It was enough for me to see the Ambassador delighted to have me in his entourage, and to see myself valued by the ministers as a man capable of contributing to the pleasures of the Court.

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* The King of Spain had the face of a sheep, and the sheep is the animal which has no idea of oral harmony. If one listens to the voices of a hundred sheep in a flock, one will hear a hundred different semitones. (C.'s marginal note.)

The composition of the opera had necessitated my making the acquaintance of the actresses. The leading one was a Roman named Pelliccia.[47] Her talent was mediocre, she was neither pretty nor ugly, she squinted a little. Her sister, who was younger than she, was pretty; yet the pretty one attracted and interested nobody; the elder made herself liked by all who spoke to her. She had magic in her face; her squint eyes were touching, her subtle, modest laughter charmed; her easy manner gained her the good will of all.

She had a husband who was a painter, but a bad one, a well-meaning, rather ugly man, whose manner was more that of her servant than of her husband. He was extremely submissive to his wife, and she treated him with consideration. The woman did not inspire love in me, but true friendship. I went to see her every day, I wrote words for her for Roman airs which she sang with much grace, she received me unreservedly and with no artifice, as if I had been her friend from childhood.

One day when there was to be a rehearsal of a short act for which I had written the words, I talked to her on the stage about the great names of the personages who were present, and who had come only to hear the new music which was to be performed. The impresario of the opera, who was named Marescalchi,[48] had contracted with the Governor of Valencia[49] to spend the month of September in that city with his troupe to play comic operas in a small theater which the Governor of that Kingdom had had built expressly for the purpose. The city of Valencia had never seen an Italian *opera buffa,* the impresario Marescalchi hoped to make a great fortune there. La Pelliccia wanted to obtain from some great nobleman of the Court a letter of recommendation for Valencia, and, knowing none of them, she asked me if she could address herself to the Venetian Ambassador in the hope that he would favor her by asking someone for a letter for her. I advised her to go and ask for one from the Duke of Arcos,[5] who was twenty paces from us and who kept his eyes fixed on her.

"There stands a great nobleman, my dear, who is dying to oblige you in some way; go yourself now and ask him to do you the favor; I am sure he will not refuse you; it is no more than asking him for a pinch of snuff."

"I haven't the courage. Present me."

"No, no—that would spoil everything. He mustn't even imagine that it is I who gave you the advice. Do as I say; seize the moment; he is there in the wings, all alone, and he looks at no one but you. After I have left you—one minute after—approach him, and ask him for the favor; you will be granted it."

I go toward the orchestra, and a minute later I see the Duke advance toward the actress and speak to her politely and decently, and, in the course of the conversation, I notice that La Pelliccia blushes as she says something to him; I see the Duke with the air of a man who consents, and I see him draw back his hand, which La Pelliccia wanted to kiss. The thing is done. After the opera she told me that he had promised she should have the letter for which she had asked him on the day the opera was first performed. He kept his word. He gave her a sealed letter addressed to a merchant in the city, whose name was Don Diego Valencia.[51] She was not to go there until September; so there was time enough. We were in the middle of May. We will speak of this strange letter in its proper place.

I amused myself in Aranjuez by frequently seeing Don Domingo Varnier, the King's valet, a valet of the Prince of Asturias, who now reigns,[52] and a chamberwoman to the Princess, who was adored and who had had the strength of mind to get a great deal of cumbersome etiquette done away with and to change the solemn and serious tone at Court for a pleasant affability. I was charmed to see His Catholic Majesty dine every day at eleven o'clock, always eat the same thing, go hunting[53] at the same hour, and return with his brother,[54] too exhausted to do anything. The King was very ugly, but he was handsome in comparison with his brother, whose face was positively frightening. The King's brother never traveled without an image of the Blessed Virgin which Mengs had made for him. It was a painting two feet high by three and a half feet wide. The Blessed Virgin was seated on the grass and had her bare feet crossed in the Moorish fashion; her most holy legs were visible halfway up the calves. It was a painting which excited the soul by way of the senses. The Infante was in love with it, and he took to be devotion what was nothing but the most criminal of voluptuous instincts, for it was impossible that, when he contemplated the image, he did not burn with longing to have in his arms, warm and alive, the goddess whom he saw painted on the canvas. But the Infante never suspected it. He was delighted to be in love with the mother of his God. For him this love was the assurance of his eternal salvation. Such are the Spaniards. Objects intended to interest them must be striking, and they never interpret anything except in a way favorable to their dominant passion.

In Madrid, before going to Aranjuez, I saw a picture of the Blessed Virgin suckling the Infant Jesus. Her bare breast, excellently painted, fired the imagination. The picture was the retable of the high altar of a chapel in the Carrera de San Gerónimo.[55] The chapel was filled all day with pious men who went there to worship the mother of God, whose representation was perhaps interesting only because of her beautiful bosom; the offerings given at the sanctuary were so abundant that, in the century and a half during which the painting had been there, a great number of gold and silver lamps and candelabra had been made and a considerable income set aside for the maintenance of these objects, which fed on oil and wax. At the door of the chapel there were always a quantity of carriages and a soldier with fixed bayonet to keep order and prevent quarrels among the coachmen, who were constantly arriving and leaving, for there was not a nobleman who, passing the sacred place in his carriage, did not order his coachman to stop so that he could get out and go, if only for a moment, to do homage to the goddess and contemplate *beata ubera quae lactaverunt aeterni patris filium* ("the blessed paps which suckled the son of the eternal father").[56] Since I knew men, this devotion did not surprise me; but here is what surprised me on my return to Madrid at the end of May in the same year 1768.

Having to pay a visit to the Abate Pico,[57] I order the coachman to avoid the Carrera because of the carriages which might be in front of the chapel and delay my journey. The coachman replies that for some time there have been few carriages there, so he continues on his way, and, sure enough, I see only two or three. Getting out at the Abate's, I ask the coachman the reason for this suspension of devotion, and he replies that men are getting more wicked every day. I make light of his reason, and, after drinking some of his excellent chocolate with the illustrious and intelligent Abate, I ask him the reason why the chapel was losing its reputation. He bursts out laughing, and he asks me to excuse him if he does not dare tell me the reason; but he asks me to go myself and receive the indulgence, and he assures me that my curiosity will be allayed. I went there the same day, and in an instant I saw it all. The Blessed Virgin's bosom was no longer visible. A handkerchief painted by the most criminal of all painters had spoiled the superb picture. There was nothing to be seen—not even the nipple, not the suckling mouth of the Child God, not the bulge of the breast, so that the Virgin, who, before the alteration, had a reason for gazing at her son's divine lips as they sucked the ambrosia, now seemed to look at nothing but the wretched handkerchief with which, contrary to the laws of costume, a profane brush had made her as ugly as the picture. This disaster had happened at the end of the Carnival. The old chaplain having died, the new one saw fit to call the most beautiful and most holy of all the bosoms God has created scandalous. As a fool, the chaplain may have been right, but as a Spanish Christian, he was wrong, and the falling off in the offerings must already have made him repent. My reflections on this incident, and my insatiable curiosity to know men by making them talk, impelled me to call on the chaplain, who, as I saw it must be old and stupid.

I go there one morning, and I find a priest thirty years of age, extremely lively and prepossessing, who, though he does not know me, at once offers me a cup of chocolate, which I refuse, as a foreigner must do in Spain, for not only is it usually bad, but it is pressed upon one everywhere and at all hours of the day with such urgency that if one accepted I believe one would die of it.

Without making a long exordium, I go to the point, I tell him that I am passionately devoted to painting and that I am distressed at his having had a superb picture ruined.

"That may be so, but its beauty was precisely what made it unfit to represent a woman whose appearance should excite the soul to adore and contemplate her immaculateness, and never to sensual passion. Let all beautiful pictures perish if all of them together can cause the smallest mortal sin."

"Who gave you permission to commit this murder? The State Inquisitors in Venice, even Signor Barbarigo,[58] though very devout and a theologian, would have had you imprisoned under the Leads. Love of the bliss of Paradise must not injure the fine arts, and I am sure that St. Luke the Evangelist, as a painter,[59] is speaking against you to the Blessed Virgin, whose portrait, as you must know, he painted with only three colors."

"Sir, I needed to ask no one's permission. It is I who have to say mass every day at this altar,[60] and I am not ashamed to tell you that I could not consecrate; you will forgive me my weakness. That beautiful breast troubled my imagination."

"Who obliged you to look at it?"

"I did not look at it, and the enemy of God presented it to my mind nevertheless."

"Why did you not rather mutilate yourself, like the wise Origen,[61] *qui se castravit propter regnum coelorum* ['who castrated himself for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven']?[62] Believe me, your genitals, too weak because it seems they are too strong, are not worth the painting you have destroyed."

"Signore, you insult me."

"Not at all, for I have no such intention. Either ask the Cavaliere Mengs to make you a new picture of the Blessed Virgin such as will inspire the devotion of her devotees, whom you have very much offended, or renounce a benefice which you were not born to enjoy."

"I will do neither."

The young priest showed me to the door so unceremoniously that I left certain that he was plotting some Spanish revenge on me through the terrible Inquisition. It occurred to me that he could easily find out my name and make difficulties for me. So I at once resolved to forestall the blow. About this time I had made the acquaintance of a Frenchman named De Ségur,[63] who had just come out of the prisons of the Inquisition, where he had been confined for three years. His crime was that he had on a table in the drawing room of his house a stone basin, to which he went every morning to wash his hands and face. On the edge of the basin there was a statue of a naked child a foot and a half high. The statue was filled with water, which he caused to come out of the child's little virile member as from a faucet, when he wanted to wash. To someone who deifies everything the child might well appear to be the image of our Redeemer, for the sculptor had surrounded its head with the kind of crown which is called a halo and which sculptors and painters affix to the heads of saints. Poor Ségur was accused of impiety before the Inquisition, it was judged a crime that he should dare to wash with water which might seem to be the Saviour's urine. The jest cost him three years of penitence. *Aliena spectans doctus evasi mala* ("Taught by those which befell others, I avoided misfortunes").[64]

I presented myself to the Grand Inquisitor,[65] who was a bishop. I told him all that I had said to the chaplain, repeating every word but suppressing my bantering tone, and I ended by asking his pardon if by any chance the chaplain could have been offended. I assured him of my orthodoxy. I should never have believed that the Grand Inquisitor in Madrid would be an agreeable man, though his face was as ugly as possible. The prelate did nothing but laugh from the beginning to the end of my narrative, for he would not hear me as if in confession. He said that the chaplain was himself guilty and absolutely incapable of fulfilling his function, for, by supposing others to be as weak as himself, he had done grave harm to religion; he said that I had nevertheless done wrong to go there and irritate him. Since I had had to tell him my name, he ended by reading me, still with a smiling countenance, an accusation against me drawn up by someone who had witnessed the occurrence. He gently chided me for having called the Duke of Medina Sidonia's Franciscan confessor an ignoramus because he had refused to grant that a priest should say mass a second time on a feast day even after dining, if his sovereign, who had not heard it, ordered him to say it.

"You were right," the Bishop said, "but even so you should not have called the Duke's confessor an ignoramus in his presence. For the future, avoid all arguments on the subject of religion, in respect to both doctrine and discipline. I can tell you, so that when you leave Spain you will take with you a true idea of the Inquisition, that the parish priest who posted your name among those of the excommunicated was reprimanded, for it was his duty to inform you beforehand and above all to find out if you were ill, and we know that you really were so."

At these words I kissed his hand, going down on one knee, and I left well enough satisfied.

Let us return to Aranjuez, for what I have just written happened on my return to Madrid. As soon as I learned that the Ambassador could not lodge me in Madrid, where I thought of staying, for I was hoping for the governorship of Sierra Morena, I wrote to my good friend the cobbler Don Diego that I needed a well-furnished room with a good bed, closet, also a servant, an honest man who would be willing to ride behind my carriage, and a carriage engaged at so much a month, which, if he would vouch for me, I would pay in advance. I informed him what I wanted to pay for my apartment, and I asked him to write to me as soon as he had found it for me, for I should not leave Aranjuez until I knew where I was to go when I arrived in Madrid. The cobbler answered me at once that he was sure he could do what I wanted, and that he would inform me of the place as soon as he had found it.

The *población* (''colonization'') of Sierra Morena occupied me a good deal, for I was writing on the maintenance of order, which was the chief requisite for making the colony prosper. My writings, which were only demonstrative arguments, were valued by the Minister Grimaldi and flattered the Ambassador Mocenigo, for he thought that if I succeeded in going to govern the colony it could only increase the reputation of his embassy. My labors, however, did not keep me from amusing myself, and above all from frequenting the courtiers who could acquaint me with the characters of the individuals who made up the royal family. Don Varnier, a frank, reliable, intelligent man, gave me all the information I wanted.

I asked him one day if it was true that the King's attachment to Gregorio Squillace[66] was due to his loving, or having loved, his wife, and he assured me that it was a slander imagined by those who stated as true whatever had some semblance of truth.

''If the epithet 'the Chaste,' '' he said, ''is to be added to the name of a king by the mouth of Truth, and not by adulation, it has never become any king better than it does Carlos III. He has never in his life had to do with another woman than the late Queen, and that not so much because it was the duty of a husband but because it was the duty of a Christian. He does not want to commit a sin because he does not want to sully his soul and because he does not want to suffer the shame of admitting his weakness to his confessor. In the best of health, strong, vigorous, having never in his life had the slightest illness, not even a fever, he has a temperament which makes him very much inclined to the act of Venus, for as long as she lived he never for one day failed to pay his marital duty to the Queen. On the days when it was forbidden him for cleanliness' sake, he tired himself more than usual at hunting, to calm the impulses of concupiscence. Imagine his despair when he found himself a widower, and resolved to die rather than to suffer the humiliation of taking a mistress. His resource was to hunt, and to keep himself so occupied every hour of the day, that he has no time left to think of a woman. It was difficult, for he likes neither to write nor to read nor to listen to music or to light conversation. Here is what he did, what he does, and what he will do until he dies. At seven o'clock he dresses, he goes to the wardrobe, his hair is dressed, and he prays until eight. He goes to mass, he drinks his chocolate, then he takes a pinch of Spanish snuff, which he pushes into his big nose; it is the one pinch of snuff he takes each day. At nine o'clock he works with his ministers until eleven, he dines alone until a quarter to twelve, and until twelve he goes to see the Princess of Asturias. At twelve he gets into his carriage, and he goes hunting. At seven he eats a bite wherever he happens to be, and at eight he returns to the castle so tired that he often falls asleep before he gets into bed. In this way he never needs a woman. He thought of remarrying, and he asked for Madame Adélaïde of France,[67] who, having seen his portrait, absolutely refused him. That annoyed him, and he has not thought of marrying since. Woe betide anyone who should propose a mistress to him."

Speaking of whether his character was humane or severe, kindly or harsh, Don Domingo said that his ministers were right to keep him inaccessible, for if someone managed to take him by surprise and beg for some favor, he made it a point of honor never to refuse anything, for it was only then that he felt he was the King.

"Believe me, the most intractable, the most difficult of sovereigns are those who give public audience to all comers. They are the ones who are the most often deceived; nothing can be got from them; their one thought is always to refuse what a petitioner asks for. The inaccessible sovereign, on the other hand, when someone manages to speak to him, listens attentively and considers how best to let him have what he asks for. The place where Carlos III is often found alone is out hunting. There he is in a good humor, and he takes pleasure in satisfying the person who speaks to him. His great fault is his firmness, for in him it is obstinacy; when he wants something done, and has supposed it possible, done it must be; failures do not discourage him. His consideration for his brother the Infante is very great; he can refuse him nothing; but he insists on being always the master. It is thought that he will grant him permission to contract a marriage of conscience,[68] for he fears that he will damn himself and he has no love for bastards. The Infante has already fathered three."

At Aranjuez I observed the immense number of people who were there waiting on the ministers to obtain posts.

"They all return home after the King's journey," said Don Domingo, "without having obtained anything."

"Then they are asking for impossibilities?"

"Not at all. They ask for nothing. 'What do you want?' a minister asks them. 'What Your Excellency thinks will be suitable for me.' 'But what can you do?' 'I don't know. Your Excellency can look into my talents, my capacity, and give me the employment for which Your Excellency may consider me fit.' 'Away with you, I haven't the time.'"

But so it goes everywhere. Carlos III died mad; now the Queen of Portugal has gone mad.[69] The King of England was mad, and has, they say, recovered.[70]

I took leave of the Venetian Ambassador three days before his departure, and I hastily embraced Manuzzi, who never failed to give me proofs of most sincere friendship. I have to admit it, to my confusion. Don Diego, the cobbler, had written me that for the money I wanted to spend I should also have a Biscayan maidservant,[71] who, when I wished, would cook for me well enough. The address he sent me was that of a house in the Calle de Alcalá.[72] I left Aranjuez in the morning, and I arrived at my lodging early in the afternoon. Aranjuez is the same distance from Madrid as Fontainebleau is from Paris.[73]

I arrive, I get out, I go to the second floor, I find the Biscayan maid, who spoke French, I look at my apartment, and I find, besides the closet, a second room with a bed in which to put up a friend if I wished; I praise the cobbler. I have my belongings brought up; my lackey arrives, and he seems to be honest; I praise Don Diego. Curious to see the skill of the cook from Bilbao,[74] I order her to prepare supper for me, without company, and I offer her money, whereupon she tells me that she has some, and that she will give me the bill the next day. I go out with my manservant to fetch my belongings from Mengs's. His valet delivers everything to mine, who goes for two porters, and sets off. I do not ask if Mengs is at home, I try to give his valet a doblón, and he refuses it.

I go at once to the Calle del Desengaño to see both Doña Ignacia and her father, whom I had to thank and to reimburse, and I find no one. A woman next door tells me that he has moved. I am astonished that he did not write to tell me so, and I go back to my lodging in the Calle de Alcalá, which was three hundred paces distant. I arrange everything as I want it in my room, I ask Felipe (such was my valet's name) where Don Diego had gone to lodge, and he answers that it is far away and that he will take me there the next day. I ask him where my landlord lives, and he says it is on the floor above me, but that I can be sure he will not make the slightest noise. He had gone out, and would not come home until ten o'clock.

I have everything I need to write with set out on a small table, telling Felipe to go away and not come back until nine o'clock to serve my supper. I order him to fetch me some wine from where I knew it was good, and I fall to writing. At nine o'clock he comes to tell me that my supper is served in the other room, I go there with a ravenous appetite, for I had eaten nothing, and I am astonished to see a small table ready laid, with a cloth of a cleanliness which I had not yet seen in Spain in the houses of the citizenry. But the supper finally proves to me that Don Diego is a hero. The cook from Bilbao cooked like a Frenchwoman. Five dishes, *criadillas,*[75] which I loved to distraction, everything excellent—it seemed to me impossible that I should have such a good cook into the bargain, though I was paying a good deal for the apartment.

Toward the end of supper Felipe told me that my landlord had come home, and that, if I would permit it, he wanted to see me.

"Let him come in."

I see the cobbler and his daughter. He had rented the house expressly to lodge me.

CHAPTER III

My amour with Doña Ignacia. Signor Mocenigo returns to Madrid.

YOU ILL-FATED Counts and Marquises who are pleased to crush the self-esteem of a man who by his lofty acts tries to convince you that he is as noble as you, beware of him if you succeed in denying his claims, in humbling him; fired by a just disdain, he will tear you limb from limb, and he will be in the right. Respect the man who, calling himself a gentleman though he is not one in your terms, imagines that to play the part he must do lofty deeds. Respect the man who gives nobility a definition which makes you laugh. He does not say that it consists in a series of generations from father to son, of which he himself is the latest heir; he makes light of genealogies. He defines the gentleman by saying that he is a man who demands respect and who believes that there is no way to be respected but to respect others, to live decently, to deceive no one, never to lie when the person who is listening to him believes that he is speaking sincerely, and to put his honor above his life. This last part of his definition of the gentleman should make you fear that he will kill you like an assassin if you succeed in dishonoring him by treachery or by surprise. In the physical world anything which strikes is subjected to the same force in reaction; but in the moral world the reaction is stronger than the action. The reaction from being imposed upon is scorn; the reaction from scorn is hatred; the reaction from hatred is murder, as it is from a stain which covers with dishonor a man who wants to be honored and who does everything to deserve it.

The cobbler Don Diego saw that he might have made himself ridiculous in my eyes when he had told me that he was noble; but, feeling that he was truly so in the meaning which he gave to the word, he wanted to convince me more and more that he had not imposed on me. The noble deed he had done[1] for me at Buen Retiro had already shown me the nature of his soul; but that was not enough for him, he wanted to go on in the same way. He finds one of my letters laying a servile task on him, such as anyone can perform more or less competently, and he is not content to serve me as a banker, for example, would have done. He forms the plan of himself becoming the tenant-in-chief of a house, in order to rent the best part of it to me. He sees that he can do this without exceeding his resources, and even at a profit eventually, assuming that his apartment would not remain unoccupied long; and he does it; and he enjoys my surprise, sure that the esteem I should conceive for him would show that I rated his magnanimous act at its due value.

He was not mistaken; I gave him every proof of it in avowals of friendship. I saw Doña Ignacia proud of what her father had done. We sat for an hour, talking, emptying a bottle, and we made all our business arrangements. The only thing I would not grant him, and on which I made him yield, was that I would not have the Biscayan woman at his expense. I rented his apartment for six months, paying the whole sum in advance; and I asked him to let the cook continue to think that it was not I who paid her but he; I asked him also to pay her what she would spend to provide me with meals every day, at least until the Ambassador arrived. In addition, having assured him that it was a real penance for me to eat alone, I invited him to dine and sup with me every day, and hence to order my Biscayan always to prepare meals for two persons. He tried in vain to think of excuses, he had to accept my conditions, reserving the right to be represented by his daughter when, having much work to do, he had not time to dress to dine with me. It is easy to understand that this last condition was not displeasing to me; and indeed I expected it.

I went upstairs to his lodging the next morning. This third floor was the attic, which was, however, divided into four sections by partitions. In the large room in which he worked at repairing shoes and boots with an apprentice, he had his bed, in which he slept with his wife. In the adjoining room, which was smaller, I saw Doña Ignacia's bed, a stool to kneel on before a great crucifix, a picture four feet high representing St. Ignatius of Loyola,[2] whose young and handsome face inspired fleshly love, and rosaries and prayer books, with a pail full of holy water. Another smaller room was occupied by her very ugly younger sister, whom I believe I have not yet mentioned, and the fourth was the kitchen, in which there was an alcove containing the cook's bed. He told me that he was more comfortably lodged than in the other house, and that the apartment he rented me paid him four times the rent of the whole house.

"But the furniture——"

"In four years it will all be paid for. This house will be my daughter's dowry, and it is to you that I owe this excellent investment."

"I am very glad of it; but it seems to me that you are making brand-new shoes there."

"That is true; but observe that I am working on the last which was given me, so that I am obliged neither to put them on the feet of the person who is to wear them nor to be concerned as to whether they fit him or not.”

“How much are you paid for them?”

“A peso duro[3] and a half.”

“More than the usual price, I think.”

“Certainly; but the difference between the shoes I make and those which are made by ordinary shoemakers *de nuevo* is very great, both in the quality of the leather and the good workmanship.”

“I will have a last made, and you shall make me shoes, if you please; but I warn you that they must be of the finest leather you have and with soles of grain morocco.”

“It costs more and does not last as long.”

“That makes no difference. In summer I have to wear very light shoes.”

I at once had a last made, and it was he who worked for me until I left. He said he would sup with me, but that at dinner I should have his daughter, and I replied that I should value his daughter's company as highly as his own.

I called on the Count of Aranda, who, though coldly, received me well enough. I gave him an account of everything I had done at Aranjuez, and of the trouble which the parish priest and Mengs had made for me together.

“I heard of it. This second scrape was worse than the first, and I should not have known how to get you out of it if you had not quickly done what you did, which obliged the priest to cross out your name at once. Just now people are putting up placards which they think will upset me; but they are wrong. I am perfectly calm.”

“What do they want of Your Excellency?”

“They want me to permit long cloaks and slouch hats. Didn't you know that?”

“I arrived yesterday.”

“That accounts for it. Don't come here at noon on Sunday, for according to yesterday's placard this house will be blown up."

"I am curious to see how high it will go. I shall have the honor to be in your reception room at noon."

"I think you will not find yourself alone."

I went there, and I never saw it so full. The Count talked to everyone. On the last placard, which threatened the Count with death if he did not withdraw his decrees, there were two very forceful verses, which in Spanish have a particular wit and grace. The man who had written the placard, and who was sure to be hanged if he were to be found out, said:

Si me cogen me horqueran
Pero no me cogeran

("If they catch me they
will hang me, but they will
not catch me")

Dining with me, Doña Ignacia constantly let me know how glad she was to have me in her house; but she remained completely unresponsive to the amorous pleas which I made to her when Felipe, after serving a dish, went upstairs to fetch another. She blushed, she sighed, and, forced to speak, she begged me to forget all that had happened between us during the Carnival. I smiled, saying that I was sure she knew it was not in my power to forget that I had loved her while I still loved her. I added, half seriously, half tenderly, that, even if it were in my power, I should not want to forget it all. Since I knew that she was neither inconstant nor a hypocrite, I saw very well that her reserve was due to nothing but the resolves she had made to live in future in the grace of her God, whom she had too greatly offended by loving me; but I knew what to expect, and that her resistance could not last long. However, I had to proceed step by step. I had had to do with other pious women, whose temperaments were not as strong as hers, who did not love me as much, and whom I had nevertheless conquered. I felt sure of Doña Ignacia.

After dinner she remained with me for a quarter of an hour, never seeing me amorous. I dressed after taking a siesta, and I went out without seeing her, and when, after supper, she came downstairs to join her father, who had supped with me, I treated her with the utmost gentleness, showing no sign that I had taken offense at her resolve to love me no more. The next day I acted in the same way. She told me at dinner that she had dismissed Don Francisco during the first days of Lent, and she asked me not to receive him if he came to call on me.

The next day, which was Pentecost, after calling on the Count of Aranda, whose palace was to be blown up, I went home, where Don Diego, very neatly dressed, dined with me; I did not see his daughter. I asked him if she was dining out, and he replied with a laugh which was not Spanish that she had shut herself up in her room, where she was apparently keeping the feast of the Holy Ghost by praying; but that she would certainly come down to sup with me, since he was invited to sup at his brother's house, where he would remain until at least midnight.

"My dear Don Diego, do not stand on ceremony, I beg you, for I am speaking to you sincerely. Before you go out, tell Doña Ignacia that I willingly relinquish my rights in favor of those which God may have over her conscience. Tell her that if she finds it a burden to interrupt her devotions to sup with me, she shall sup with me another day. I shall not mind supping alone. Will you tell her that?"

"Since you wish it, I will tell her so."

After the siesta I saw him in my room, telling me contentedly that Doña Ignacia would be glad to take advantage of the freedom I granted her that day, in which she would see no one.

"That's the way to behave! I'm delighted. Tomorrow I shall thank her."

I had to exercise a great deal of self-control to answer him thus, for such excessive devotion displeased me and even made me fear that I should lose the love which attached me to the charming girl and the esteem I felt for her. However, the worthy Don Diego very nearly made me laugh when, as he left, he told me that an intelligent father must forgive excessive devotion in his young daughter, as he must a strong amorous passion. Could I expect so odd a dictum from the lips of a Spanish cobbler?

It was raining and windy, I decided not to go out. I told Felipe to dismiss my carriage and to go away after telling the cook that I would not sup until ten o'clock. I sat down to write. It was Doña Ignacia's mother who brought me a light. But suddenly I had a promising idea. When the Biscayan came at ten o'clock to say that my supper was on the table, I told her to take it away, for I did not feel like eating.

At eleven o'clock I went to bed, and I slept better. The next morning at nine Doña Ignacia entered my room to tell me how sorry she had been when she learned that morning that I had not supped.

"All alone, sad, and disconsolate, I did well to abstain from eating supper."

"You look downcast."

"I shall look better when you wish it."

The hairdresser came in, she left me. I went to the splendid mass at the Buen Suceso,[4] where I saw the most beautiful courtesans in Madrid. I dined well with Don Diego, who at dessert told his daughter that she had been the cause of my not supping. She replied that it would not happen again. I asked her if she wanted to go to Nuestra Señora de Atocha[5] with me, and she expressed her readiness, looking at her father, who told her that true devotion was inseparable from cheerfulness and from the confidence one should have in God, in oneself, and in the probity of the decent people with whom one had to do, and, that being so, she should believe that I could be an honest man despite my not having had the good fortune to be born a Spaniard.

This conclusion made me burst out laughing, which was not taken in bad part. Doña Ignacia kissed her father's hand and asked me frankly if I would take her cousin with me too.

"What need," her father asked her, "have you of your cousin? I answer for Don Jaime."[6]

"I am obliged to you," I said, "but if her cousin would like to come, and if Doña Ignacia wants her, I shall enjoy it all the more, provided it is her elder cousin, whose character pleases me better than that of the younger."

This arrangement made, her father left, and I sent Felipe to the stable to have four mules harnessed; Doña Ignacia, looking at once content and contrite, asked me to forgive her her weaknesses.

"Everything, my beautiful angel, provided that you too will forgive me for loving you."

"Oh, my dear friend! I am afraid I shall go mad if I continue to fight a battle which rends my soul."

"No battle, dear heart. Either love me as I love you, or ask me to leave your house and never again to appear in your sight. I shall have the strength to obey you; but I warn you that you will not be happy."

"That I know. No, no. Remain where you are, this house is yours; but now allow me to tell you that you are mistaken when you suppose that my elder cousin has a better character than the younger one. I know what made you think so on the last night of the Carnival; but you do not know all. The younger is a goodhearted creature, and, ugly though she is, she succumbed to a man who was able to touch her heart; but the elder is ten times uglier, and her spite because she has never been able to win anyone's love makes her malicious. Let me tell you that she believes you love her, and that she nevertheless speaks ill of you; she says you are a seducer, that I was unable to resist you, but that you will not succeed with her."

"Tell me no more, I beg you; we must punish her. Send for the younger one."

"Very well. Thank you."

"Does she know that we love each other?"

"Alas, yes."

"Why did you tell her so?"

"She guessed it, but she has a kind heart, and she only pities me. She wants us to perform a devotion together to the Blessed Virgin at La Soledad,[7] which will cure us both of a love which damns us."

"Then she is in love too?"

"Yes, but unhappily, poor child, for she alone loves. Imagine what torture!"

"Indeed it is. I pity her, for, such as she is, I do not know a man who would want her. If ever there was one, there's a girl who shouldn't love. But you——"

"But I. Say no more. My soul is exposed to a greater danger than hers, for I do not know if I am pretty, but I am courted; I must either resist or be damned; and there are men whom it is impossible to resist. God is my witness that during Holy Week I went to see a girl who had smallpox, hoping that I should catch it and become ugly. God did not will it, and then my confessor at La Soledad reprimanded me severely, and gave me a penance I should never have expected."

"Tell me what it was, please."

"Yes, I can tell you. After telling me that a beautiful face is the sign of a beautiful soul, and that it is a gift from God, for which the person who is granted it must thank him every day, for beauty is a charm which recommends the possessor of it to everyone; it followed, he went on, that by having tried to become ugly I had made myself unworthy of the gift which God had given me, and had become guilty of ingratitude to the Creator. So he told me that as a penance for my crime I must put a touch of rouge on my cheeks whenever I think I am too pale. I had to promise him I would, and I bought a pot of rouge; but until now I have not felt any need to use it. Add that my father might notice it, and then I should feel extremely embarrassed if I had to tell him that it is at my confessor's bidding."

"Is your confessor young?"

"He is seventy."

"Do you tell him all the particulars of your sins of weakness?"

"Of course! I tell him everything, for every particular, however small, is a mortal sin."

"Does he question you?"

"No, for he knows that I tell him everything. It is a great torment, a great shame; but it must be borne. I have had this confessor for two years; before him I had one who was unbearable. He asked me things which made me indignant, which insulted me. I left him."

"What did he ask you?"

"Oh, please excuse me from telling you."

"What need have you to go to confession so often?"

"What need? Would to God that I did not need it! Yet I go only once a week."

"That is too often."

"It is not too often, for when I am in mortal sin I cannot sleep. I am afraid I shall die while I am sleeping."

"I am sorry for you, my dear, for the fear must make you unhappy. I have a privilege which you have not. I count much more than you do on the mercy of God."

Her cousin arrived and we left. Nothing is more certain than that a devout girl who does the work of the flesh with her lover feels a hundred times more pleasure than a girl who is without prejudices. This truth is too much in the nature of things for me to think it necessary to prove it to my reader.

We found many carriages at the entrance to the small church, which consequently was filled with the devout of both sexes and every rank. I saw the Duchess of Villadarias,[8] famous for her andromania. When the uterine fury seized her nothing could restrain her. She laid hands on the man who aroused her instinct, and he had to satisfy her. It had happened to her several times in public places, and the people who were present had had to flee. I had met her at a ball, she was still pretty and fairly young; she was on her knees when I entered with my two devout companions, and she at once fixed her eyes on me, as if trying to recognize me, for she had seen me only in a domino. My pious charges, delighted to be there, prayed for half an hour, then got up to leave, and the Duchess got up too. Outside of the church, she asked me if I knew her; and when I named her she asked me why I did not go to see her and if I called on the Duchess of Benavente.[9] I said that I did not, but I assured her that I would go to make my bow to her.

On our way to take a walk in Los Balbazes,[10] I explained to the two cousins the nature of the Duchess's malady. Doña Ignacia, in horror, asked me if I would keep my word to her, and I saw her breathe again when I answered no.

I laugh when I think of certain facts which a paltry philosophy insists on putting among problems, whereas they have been solved ever since reason has existed. The question is put which of the two sexes has more reason to be interested in the work of the flesh in respect to the pleasure obtained from performing it. The answer has always been the female sex. Homer made Jupiter and Juno dispute on the subject;[11] Tiresias,[12] who had been a woman, handed down a correct decision, but one which is laughable because it seems that the two pleasures are weighed in a pair of scales. A summary judgment has led practical minds to declare that the woman's pleasure must be greater because the feast is celebrated in her own house, and this reason is very plausible, for she has only to let the thing be done, without exerting herself; but what makes the truth palpable to the mind of a physiologist is that if the woman did not have more pleasure than the man, nature would not have her play a greater part in the thing than he; she would not have more to do than he, and more organs, for, taking into consideration only the sack which women have between the rectal intestine and the bladder, which is called the womb and which is an organ absolutely foreign to her brain and hence independent of her reason, it is certain that one can perfectly well conceive the birth of a human being without a man's having sown the seed of it, but never unless a receptacle has contained it and brought it to the condition of being able to resist the air before it sees the light.

Now it is well to reflect that this creature the womb,[13] which has only one issue, which connects it with the vagina, becomes furious when it finds that it is not occupied by the matter for which nature has made it and placed it in the most crucial of all the regions of the female body. It has an instinct which does not listen to reason; and if the individual in which it is situated opposes its will it raises the devil and inflicts most violent disorders on the tyrant who will not satisfy it; the hunger to which it is subject is far worse than canine;[14] if the woman does not give it the food it demands through the channel which she alone controls, it often becomes furious and so gains an ascendancy over her which no strength can resist. It threatens her with death, it makes her an andromaniac like the Duchess I have named, another Duchess whom I knew in Rome twenty-five years ago, two great Venetian ladies, and twenty more, who all together led me to conclude that the womb is an animal so self-willed, so irrational, so untamable that a wise woman, far from opposing its whims, should defer to them, humbling herself and submitting by an act of virtue to the law to which God had subjected her at her birth. Yet this ferocious organ is susceptible to a degree of management; it is not malicious except when a fanatical woman irritates it: to one such it gives convulsions; another it drives mad; another it turns into a mirror or a monster of piety, St. Theresa,[15] St. Agreda;[16] and it makes a quantity of Messalinas,[17] who, however, are not more unfortunate than the innumerable women who spend their nights half sleeping, half awake, holding in their arms St. Anthony of Padua,[18] St. Aloysius Gonzaga,[19] St. Ignatius,[20] and the Infant Jesus. It is to be noted that these poor unfortunates tell everything in confession to the priest or the monk who governs their consciences; and that very rarely does the sacred tyrant disabuse them. He fears to uproot the plant by cultivating it.

After examining all these evils to which we men are not subject, I ask if it is to be presumed that Nature *semper sibi consona* ("always in conformity with herself"),[21] never in error in her reactions and her compensations, has not given the female sex a pleasure equal in intensity to the vexatious evils which are attached to it. What I can affirm is this: the pleasure which I have felt when the woman I loved made me happy was certainly great, but I know that I should not have wanted it if, to procure it, I had had to run the risk of becoming pregnant. The woman takes that risk even after she has experienced pregnancy several times; so she finds that the pleasure is worth the pain. After all this examination I ask myself if I would consent to be born again as a woman, and, curiosity aside, I answer no. I have enough other pleasures as a man which I could not have as a woman, and which make me prefer my sex to the other. However, I admit that, to have the great privilege of being reborn, I would be satisfied, and I would bind myself in writing, especially today, to be born again not only as a woman but as an animal of any species; provided, of course, that I should be reborn with my memory, for without that it would no longer be I.

At Los Balbazes we ate ices. My two young ladies returned to my lodging very well satisfied with the pleasure I had procured them that day without offending the Lord God, whom they loved with all their hearts, despite his forbidding them to love a man who was not their husband. Doña Ignacia, whom I loved very much, and who was such as to be loved by the most fastidious of men, delighted that she had spent the whole day in my company without my making any attempt on her, but apparently fearing that I would not observe the same restraint at supper, asked me to have her cousin sup with us; I consented, and even with pleasure. The cousin was as stupid as she was ugly, her one quality was that she was kind and sympathetic; she was the same age as Doña Ignacia; after she had confided to me that she had told her all that had happened between us, I did not mind her being present at our meetings; she could be no obstacle to me. Doña Ignacia thought that I would not dare to attempt anything in her presence.

A third place had already been laid at the table, when I heard someone on the stairs. She said it was her father; I went to the door myself to ask him to come down and sup with us; he accepted with pleasure. The man was likable. The moral maxims which he uttered from time to time amused me; he made it a point of honor to parade his confidence; he believed that I loved his daughter, but in all honor, relying on my probity or on her piety; I always thought that he would have considered himself insulted and would never have left her alone with me if he had discovered that during the Carnival we had already done all that love had commanded us to do.

So it was he who kept up the conversation at table, seated beside his niece and opposite his daughter, who was next to me. It was very hot, I asked him to take off his coat so that I should be free to do likewise, and to persuade his daughter to sup as if she were in her own room, and, so far as his daughter was concerned, he managed it without too much difficulty, for she had a very beautiful bosom, but he had his hands full getting his niece to do the same thing; she finally gave in, very much ashamed to display nothing but bones under a dark skin; but I did her the kindness never to look at her. Doña Ignacia told her father how much she had enjoyed the adoration at Nuestra Señora de Atocha, and our visit to Los Balbazes, then she told him that she had seen the Duchess of Villadarias, who had invited me to call on her. At that the worthy man began discoursing on the lady's malady in a jesting vein, and mentioned a number of cases, which he and I discussed at length, and which the two cousins pretended not to understand. The good wine from La Mancha kept us at table for two hours; he told his niece that she could sleep with his daughter in the room next to mine, in which there was a wide bed, his daughter's bed in her room upstairs being very narrow and the night being torrid. I told them it would be an honor. Doña Ignacia blushed and said to her father that it would not be proper, for the room was separated from mine only by a door of which the upper half was glazed. I looked at Don Diego and smiled.

The worthy man then treated his daughter to a harangue which almost made me laugh. He reproached her with her pride, her maliciousness, her piety, her suspicious nature. He said that I must be at least twenty years older than she, and that her suspicion was a greater sin than any that she could have committed by some small amorous favor which she might have brought herself to grant.

"I am sure," he said, "that on Sunday you will forget to accuse yourself of the sin of having suspected that Don Jaime was capable of doing anything improper."

She looked at me, asked me to excuse her, and said that she would go to bed where we were. The cousin said nothing against it, and the father went upstairs very well pleased to have given me another proof of his nobility.

I decided to punish myself in order to exacerbate the love of Doña Ignacia, who loved me and who had perhaps determined on a resistance which would have grieved me. I bade them good night in the sweetest of terms, assuring them that they could be at their ease, and I went to my room, where I at once got into bed after putting out my candle. But I at once got up again to see if they might not take advantage of the opportunity to display their secret beauties, which they had no need to suspect that I was observing. The ugly cousin talked in a low voice to Doña Ignacia, who was already about to take off her petticoat, and a moment later she blew out the candle. I went to bed. The next morning at six o'clock I get up, and through the glass panes I see the bed made and the room tidied; not a sign of the two cousins. It was the third day of Whitsun week, they had certainly gone to mass at La Soledad.

Doña Ignacia came home alone at ten o'clock, I was writing, being dressed and ready to go out to mass at eleven. She told me that she had spent three hours in church with her cousin, whom she had left at her door.

"I imagine you went to confession."

"No. I went to it on Sunday, and I will go next Sunday too."

"I am delighted that your confession will not be longer on my account."

"You are mistaken."

"Mistaken! I understand you. Let me tell you that I will not be a party to our damning ourselves for mere desires. I did not come to your house either to torment you or to become a martyr. What you did with me on the last day of the Carnival made me fall completely in love with you, and you horrify me when I think that my affection and yours have become something of which you re-

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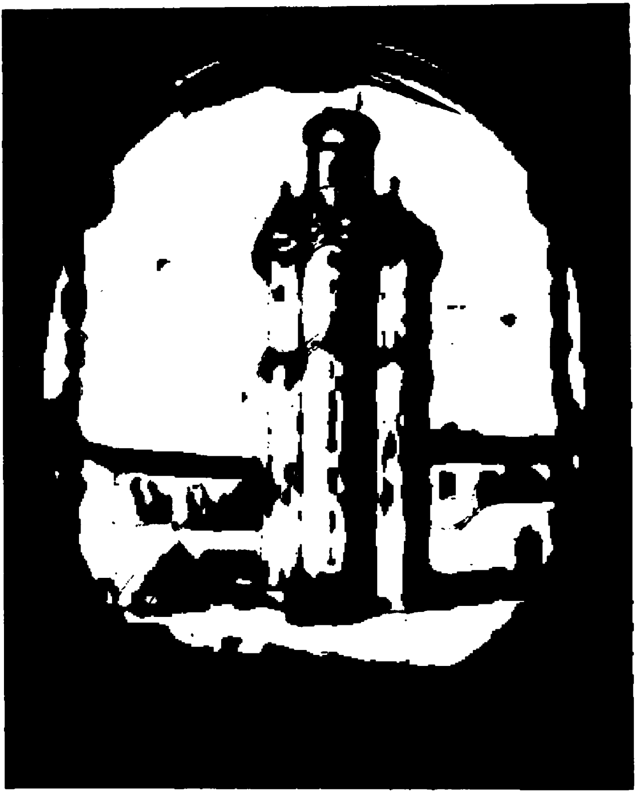

The Torre de San Juan Prison in the Citadel of Barcelona pent. I spent a very bad night, and I must take care of my health. I must think of forgetting you, and I must begin by avoiding your presence. I will keep your house, but tomorrow I will begin to lodge elsewhere. Believe me, if you know your religion as you should, you must approve of my decision. Inform your confessor of it on Sunday, and you will see that he will approve of it."

"What you say is true, but I cannot consent to it. It is for you to say if you will leave me, I will bear it in silence; I will let my father say what he will, but I tell you that I shall be the unhappiest girl in all Madrid."

After these words she lowered her beautiful eyes, she shed tears, and she touched my heart.

"Doña Ignacia, I love you, and I hope that the passion you have inspired in me will not be the cause of my damnation; I can neither see you without loving you nor love you without giving you the proofs of it which love imperiously orders me to give you in the way which my happiness demands. If I go away, you say that you will be unhappy, and I cannot bring myself to do it; if I remain and you do not change your behavior, it is I who will be unhappy and who will even lose my health. Now tell me what I must do. Am I to go or to stay? Choose."

"Stay."

"Then you will be kind and loving to me, as you were before, perhaps for my misfortune."

"Alas! I have had to repent of it and to promise *God* that I would not succumb to it again. I tell you to stay because I am sure that in a week or ten days we will become so used to each other that I will love you only as a father or a brother, and you will be able to clasp me in your arms as if I were your sister or your daughter."

"And you say you are sure of that?"

"Yes, my dear friend, sure of it."

"You are deceiving yourself."

"Let me deceive myself. Will you believe that I am happy in deceiving myself?"

"Good God! What do I hear? I see that it is true. Oh, ill-omened piety!"

"Why 'ill-omened'?"

"Nothing, my dear friend; it would take me too long, and I might endanger—— Let us say no more about it. I will remain in your house."

I went out unfeignedly distressed, more on the girl's account than on mine, though I saw myself cheated of what she would have granted me if she had not been under the domination of a misunderstood religion. I saw that I must get her out of my head, for even if I had the luck to enjoy her again one day, taking her by surprise at some moment when my words or my caresses had troubled her soul, Sunday would come, and a new promise to her confessor would send her back to me sullen and intractable. She admitted that she loved me, and she hoped she could come to love me in a different way. A monstrous desire, which can exist in a sincere soul only if it is the slave of a religion which makes it see crime where nature cannot allow crime to be.

I return home at noon, and Don Diego thinks he is pleasing me by dining with me. His daughter does not come down until the dessert. I ask her to sit down, politely, but gloomily and coldly. Don Diego asks her if I had got up during the night to go to her bed, he laughs at her, she replies that she had not insulted me by the slightest suspicion and that her hesitation had been only from force of habit. I put an end to her explanations by praising her modesty and assuring her that she would have reason to guard herself against me if the laws of duty did not have more power over me than the desires inspired in me by her charms. Don Diego pronounced this declaration of love sublime and worthy of a knight of the ancient Round Table. I had to laugh. His daughter told him that I was mocking her, and he replied that he was sure I was not and that he even believed I had known her for some time before I came to his house to ask to take her to the ball. At that she swore he was wrong.

"You have sworn it in vain," I said. "Your father knows more about it than you do."

"What! You had seen me? But where?"

"At La Soledad, when you had received the Blessed Sacrament and were coming out of the church after the mass with your young cousin, whom you met at the door. I followed you at a distance, and you can guess the rest."

Doña Ignacia was as dumfounded as her father was triumphant and proud of his perspicacity. He said that he was going *a los toros* ("to the bullfights"), that it was a delightful day, and that one must go early, for all Madrid would be there. I had never been to a bullfight, he advises me to go, and he tells his daughter to go with me. She asks me fondly if her company will give me pleasure. I reply that it will, but on condition that she will take her cousin with her, for I was in love with her. Her father bursts out laughing; his daughter says she believes it; she sends for her, and we go to the great amphitheater[22] outside the Puerta de Alcalá, which was to be the scene of the magnificent and cruel festival which is the delight of the nation. There was no time to lose. Nearly all the boxes were either occupied or engaged. We took places in one in which there were only two ladies, one of whom, to my amusement, was the same Duchess of Villadarias whom we had seen the day before at the Atocha. My young ladies sit in front, as was only right, and I on a higher bench directly behind the Duchess, who thus had her head between my knees.

She compliments me in French on the fortunate chance which made us meet at churches and spectacles. Doña Ignacia was beside her, she praises her, she asks me if she is my mistress or my wife, and I reply that she is a beauty for whom I sighed in vain. She laughs, she refuses to believe it, and she begins talking to Doña Ignacia and treating her to the most charming sallies on love, supposing that she is as well versed in the subject as herself. She whispers to her, the other blushes, the Duchess becomes ardent, she laughs heartily, she tells me that she is the most beautiful young lady in Madrid, she says that she will not ask me who she is, but that she will be happy if I will go to dine in her house in the country with the delightful girl. I promise to go, for I cannot do otherwise, but I decline to set a day. However, she makes me promise that I will visit her the next afternoon at four o'clock. What terrified me was that she said she would be alone. It indicated a formal assignation—with all its consequences; she was pretty, but she was too notorious; my visit would have occasioned too much talk. The bullfight began, and with it silence fell, for the spectacle absorbs all the attention of the true Spaniard.

A bull comes out of a small door in a fury, and swiftly enters the arena, then stops and looks to right and left, as if to discover who can be challenging it. It sees a man on horseback who gallops toward it with a long lance in his hand; the bull runs to meet him, and the *picadero*[23] gives it a thrust of his lance, avoiding it; the angered bull pursues him, and if it has not plunged one of its horns into the horse's belly at the first encounter it does so at the second or the third or the fourth, and often at each of them, so that the horse runs about the arena spilling out and dragging its entrails, covering the ground with the blood which spurts from its wounds, until it falls dead. It is seldom that the bull receives a lance thrust so well placed that it drops dead on the spot. When that happens those who preside over the festival grant the bull to the brave and skillful *picadero* who has killed him.

It very often happens that a bull in its rage kills the horse and its rider. This atrocity is watched without compunction; it makes the foreigner shudder. After one bull, another is sent in, as well as another horse. What distressed me at this barbarous spectacle, which I attended several times, is that the horse, with which I sympathized far more than with the bull, was always sacrificed, slaughtered by the cowardice of its wretched rider. What I admired in the cruel spectacle was the nimbleness and daring of the Spaniards who run about the arena on foot against the raging bull, which, though held back by men who control it with ropes, nevertheless does not fail to attack now one, now another of those who wound it and who then escape its fury without ever turning their backs to it. These bold men have no defense but an unfolded black cloak fastened to the end of a pike. When they see that the bull is ready to charge at them, they hold out the pike, showing the bull the spread cloak; the outwitted animal then turns from the man to charge at the cloak, and the challenger escapes with astonishing agility. He runs, turning somersaults and making dangerous leaps, sometimes jumping over the barriers. This occupies the spectator and may give him some pleasure, but, taking everything into consideration, the spectacle struck me as gloomy and terrifying. It is expensive. The receipts often come to four or five thousand pistoles. In every city in Spain there is an amphitheater built for these combats. When the King is in Madrid the whole Court attends except himself, who prefers hunting. Carlos III went hunting every day of the year except Good Friday.

On the way back to my apartment the two cousins thanked me endlessly. I kept the ugly girl to supper and she remained to spend the night, as on the day before; but Don Diego dined out and our supper was a sad occasion, for, being in a bad humor, I could find nothing amusing to say. Doña Ignacia too became gloomy and thoughtful when, on her asking if I would really go to see the Duchess, I replied that it would be bad manners on my part not to go.

"We will go to dine with her in the country one day too," I said.

"Certainly not!"

"Why?"

"Because she is mad. She whispered things to me at which I should have taken offense if I had not reflected that she thought she was doing me honor by treating me as her equal."

We rose from table and, having dismissed Felipe, we sat on the balcony to wait for Don Diego and also to enjoy a little breeze which, in the hot weather we were having, was delicious. Seated beside each other on the tiles, enlivened by the good food we had eaten, excited by love, invited by the mysterious darkness which, without preventing lovers from seeing, makes them hope that they will be seen by no one, we looked at each other amorously. I let my arm fall on Doña Ignacia, and I pressed my lips to her beautiful mouth. Letting me clasp her more closely, she asked me if I should go to see the Duchess the next day.

"No," I said, "if you promise me you will not go to confession Sunday."

"What will my father confessor say if I do not go?"

"Nothing, if he knows his business. But let us discuss it a little, I beg you."

We were both in the most decisive posture, and the cousin, who had seen us ready to surrender ourselves to love, had retired to the corner of the balcony, where she stood with her back to us. Without stirring, without changing my position, without drawing back my hand, which was enjoying the palpitation of her amorous heart, I ask her if at this moment she is thinking of repenting on Sunday of the tender sin she is already prepared to commit.

"No, I am not thinking now of the confusion I shall feel when I confess it; but if you make me think of it, I reply that I shall certainly confess it."

"And after you have confessed it will you continue to love me, as you do at this moment?"

"I must hope that God will grant me the strength not to offend him again."

"I must warn you, my dear friend, that if you continue to love me God will not grant you the strength. But since I foresee that, on your side, you will endeavor to deserve that grace, I am in despair, for I foresee too that at least on Sunday evening you will refuse to commit the sweet sin with me which we are about to commit at this moment."

"Alas, my dear friend! That is true! But why think of it now?"

"My dear heart, your quietism is a far more heinous sin than the work of the flesh which love makes so precious to us. I cannot be your accomplice in a sin which my religion forbids, despite the fact that I adore you and that I am at this moment the happiest of men. One thing or the other, then. Either promise me that you will stop going to confession for as long as I remain in Madrid, or allow me now to make myself the unhappiest of mortals by retiring, for I cannot truly surrender myself to love when I am thinking of the pain which your resistance will cause me on Sunday."

While preaching her this terrible sermon, I tenderly clasped her in my arms, giving her every kind of caress in all the effervescence of love; but before coming to the act I again asked her if she promised me she would abstain from going to confession on Sunday.

"Oh, my dear friend, now you are cruel, you make me unhappy. I cannot in conscience promise you that."

At this reply I become motionless, I proceed no further, I deliberately make her unhappy in order to put her in a condition to be perfectly happy in the future; it costs me an effort, but I bear everything, being certain that my pain will not last long. Doña Ignacia, whom I had nevertheless not pushed away, is in despair to see me inactive; modesty forbids her to urge me openly; but she allows herself to redouble her caresses, to reproach me with seduction and cruelty. Just then her cousin turns and tells us that Don Diego is entering the house.

We having returned to a decent position, and the cousin having sat down beside me, Don Diego paid his respects to me, then he left, wishing us a good night's sleep. I did the same in the saddest tone to the charming Doña Ignacia, whom I adored, whom I pitied, and whom I had to treat in this way in order to make her as happy as I was.

After putting out my candles I spent half an hour spying on her through the glass panes. Sitting in an armchair with a look of the utmost dejection, she never answered a word to all that her cousin said to her, which I could not hear. The cousin having gone to bed, I thought she would make up her mind to come to mine, and I got into it; but I was mistaken. The next morning very early they left my room, and Don Diego came down at noon to dine with me and to tell me that his daughter was suffering from a very bad headache so that she had not even gone to mass. She was in bed in a state of collapse.

"She must be persuaded to eat something."

"On the contrary. She will be well this evening if she eats nothing, and she will sup with you."

After taking a siesta, I went to keep her company, sitting down beside her and, for three whole hours, saying to her everything that such a lover as I could say to a girl whom he must force to change her behavior in order to make her happy; and she kept her eyes closed through it all, never answering me, only sighing when I said something very touching to her. I left her to go for a walk in the Prado San Jerónimo,[24] telling her that if she did not come down to sup with me I should take it that she no longer wanted to see me. Frightened by my threat, she came to table when I no longer expected her, but pale and weak. She ate very little, and she never said a word, because she was convinced, and she did not know what to say to me. The tears which now and again welled from her beautiful eyes, though her pretty face never underwent the least contraction, pierced my soul. The pain she caused me was incredible; I thought I could not bear it, for I loved her, and I had no diversion in Madrid which could make up to me for this abstinence. Before going up to her room, she asked me if I had paid the Duchess the visit I had promised her, and she seemed less sad when I told her I had not gone there, of which Felipe could assure her, for it was he who had delivered the letter in which I asked the lady to excuse me for not being able to have the honor of paying my court to her that day.

"But you will go some other day."

"No, my dear friend, for I see that it would grieve you."

I tenderly kissed Doña Ignacia, sighing, and she left me as unhappy as she was herself.

I saw very well that what I demanded of her was far too much; but I had reason to hope that I should bring her to terms, for I had had proof of her great inclination to love. I did not think it was with God that I was vying for her, but with her confessor. It was she herself who had told me that she would feel in a false position toward her confessor if she stopped going to confession; and, full of probity and feelings of Spanish honor, she could neither bring herself to deceive her confessor nor resolve to combine her love with what she believed she owed to her religion. She thought rightly.

On Friday and Saturday she did no more and no less. Her father, who had seen that we were in love with each other, made her dine and sup with me, counting on her sense of duty and on mine. He did not come down except when I sent him an invitation to do so. On Saturday evening his daughter left me more sadly than ever, turning her head away when I wanted to give her the kiss which I thought would assure her of my constancy. I saw what was in the wind. She had to go to receive the Blessed Sacrament the next day. I admired the candor of her soul, I pitied her, seeing the battle which the two passions must be fighting within her. I began to feel afraid, and to repent that I had acted in a way which would make me lose the whole because I had not been content with a part

Wanting to convince myself of the thing with my own eyes, the next morning I get up early, I dress unaided, and I wait for her to go out. I knew that she would go to fetch her cousin; I leave the house after her, I go straight to La Soledad, and I take my stand behind the sacristy door, from where I saw everyone who was in the church and where no one could see me. A quarter of an hour later I see the two cousins come in, pray together, rise, and separate. One goes to wait near one confessional, the other near another. I watched only Doña Ignacia. When her turn came she entered the box, and I saw the confessor, after giving an absolution to his right, bend his head to the left to listen to Doña Ignacia. The confession bored me, revolted me, for it never ended; what could she be saying to him? I saw the confessor speaking to his penitent from time to time. I was on the verge of leaving. It had been going on for an hour. I had heard three masses. At last I see her rise. I had already seen her ugly cousin at the high altar, receiving the Eucharist.

Doña Ignacia, with her eyes lowered and the look of a saint, goes and kneels on my side of the church, where I cannot see her; I suppose she is hearing the mass which is being said at the altar four paces from her. I expected to see her, at the end of the mass, at the high altar to receive the Sacrament, but not a bit of it. I see her rejoin her cousin at the church door and leave. "It is love. She made a sincere confession," I said to myself, "she confessed her passion, her confessor demanded sacrifices of her which she could not promise him, and the monster, true to his calling, refused her absolution. I am lost.

What will happen? My peace, and the peace of this worthy girl, truly devout and ardently in love, demand that I leave her father's home. Wretch! I should have contented myself with having her from time to time by surprise. Today I shall see her dining with me in tears. I must deliver her from this hell."

I go home extremely sad, extremely displeased with myself, and I dismiss the hairdresser because I want to go to bed, I tell the Biscayan cook not to serve me dinner until I call her; I hear Doña Ignacia come in, I do not want to see her, I lock my door, I get into bed, and I sleep until one o'clock. I get up, I order dinner served and send word that the father or the daughter is to come down and dine with me, and I see the daughter, wearing a black bodice with silk ribbons at every seam. In all Europe there is not a more seductive garment when the woman has a beautiful bosom and a narrow waist. Seeing her so pretty, noticing her serene manner, I cannot keep from complimenting her. Not expecting to see her in this mood, I forget the kiss which she had refused me the night before, I embrace her, and I find her as gentle as a lamb. But Felipe was coming down, I say nothing to her, and we sit down at table. I reflect on the change, I weigh it, I conclude that the Spanish girl has jumped the ditch; she has made up her mind. Now I am happy; but I must say nothing, pretend to know nothing, and watch her come to me.

Without concealing anything of the content which was flooding my soul, I talk to her of love whenever Felipe leaves me free, and I see her not only untrammeled but ardent. Before we get up from table she asks me if I still love her, and, in ecstasy at my reply, she asks me to take her to *los toros*. Quick, the hairdresser! I put on a taffeta coat with Lyons embroidery[25] which I had never worn, and we go to the bullfight on foot, not having the patience to wait for my carriage and being afraid that we shall not find places; but we find two in a big box, and she is glad not to see me, as she had done the time before, next to her rival. After the bullfight, the day being delightful, she wants me to take her to the Prado, where we find all the most fashionable people of both sexes in Madrid. Holding my arm, she seemed proud to display herself as mine, and she filled me with joy.

But along comes the Venetian Ambassador, on foot as we were, with his favorite Manuzzi, and meets us. They had arrived from Aranjuez that day, and I knew nothing about it. They accost me with all the Spanish ceremoniousness, and the Ambassador pays me a compliment which is infinitely flattering to Doña Ignacia, who pretends not to have heard it. After accompanying us for a time, he leaves, saying that he will be glad if I will come to dine with him the next day.

Toward nightfall we go to eat ices, and we return to the house, where we find Don Diego, who congratulates his daughter on being in a good humor and on having spent an enjoyable day with me. I ask him to sup with us, he accepts, and he amuses us with countless little tales of gallantry, each of which reveals more of his noble character. But before he goes up to his room these are the exact words, literally translated, with which he surprised me:

"Amigo Don Jaime, I leave you to enjoy the coolness of the night with my daughter on the balcony, I am delighted that you love her, and I assure you that, to become my son-in-law, you have only to do what is necessary to enable me to declare myself certain *de vuestra nobleza* ['of your nobility']."[28]

"I should be only too happy, my charming friend," I said to his daughter as soon as he left us alone, "if that were possible, but I must tell you that in my country only those are styled noble whose birth gives them the right to govern the State. I should be noble if I had been born in Spain; but such as I am, I adore you, and I have reason to believe that you will make me entirely happy here and now."

"Yes, my dear friend, entirely; but I want to be so too. No infidelity."

"None. On my word of honor."

"Come, then," she said. "Let us shut the door to the balcony."

"Let us wait a quarter of an hour. Put out the candles, and do not shut the door. Tell me, my angel, whence comes[27] my happiness? I should never have expected it."

"If it is a happiness, you owe it to a tyranny which was driving me to despair. God is good, and he does not want me to become my own executioner, I am sure. When I told my confessor that it was absolutely impossible for me to stop loving you, and at the same time possible for me not to do anything wrong with you, he told me that I could not have such confidence in myself, and the more so since I had already been weak. That being the case, he wanted me to promise him that I would not be alone with you again. I told him that I could not promise him that, and he refused to absolve me. I suffered that indignity for the first time in my life with a firmness of mind of which I did not believe myself capable, and, putting myself in the hands of God, I said: 'Lord, thy will be done.' While hearing mass, I made my decision. As long as you love me, I will be yours alone, and when you leave Spain I will find another confessor. What comforts me is that my soul is perfectly at peace. My cousin, to whom I told everything, is astonished; but she is very unintelligent. She does not understand that I am led astray only for the moment."

After this declaration, which made me see all the beauty of her soul, I took her in my arms and I led her to my bed, where she remained with me, free from any scruples, until the first rays of dawn. She left me more in love than ever.

CHAPTER IV

I commit an indiscretion which makes Manuzzi my bitterest enemy. His revenge. My departure from Madrid. Saragossa. Valencia. La Nina. My arrival in Barcelona.

IT IS now that the truth makes me contrite, for I am obliged to tell it and to confess myself guilty of an indiscretion which, however, may lead the reader to judge wrongly of me if he takes it to be characteristic.

I dined the next day at the Venetian Ambassador's, where I had the pleasure of learning that at Court the ministers and all those who had made my acquaintance had formed so good an opinion of me that I could not wish it better. Three or four days later the King returned to Madrid with the entire royal family and with the ministers, on whom I constantly called in pursuit of the Sierra Morena project. I was preparing to make a journey there. Manuzzi, who continued to give me proofs of the sincerest friendship, was to accompany me for his own pleasure, with an adventuress who went by the name of Portocarrero and who said she was the niece or the daughter of the late Cardinal,[1] which allowed her to assert great pretensions, but who in secret was nothing but the concubine of the Abbé Béliardi,[2] the French Consul in Madrid.

My affairs being in this posture, the Genius who opposed my Guardian Genius brought to Madrid the Baron de Fraiture,[3] of Liège, Grand Huntsman to the Principality,[4] a profligate, a gamester, and as great a scoundrel as those who today say that he was honest. He had known me at Spa, where I had told him that I was going to Portugal, and he was on his way to meet me there, counting heavily on my friendship to make such acquaintances as would fill his purse with the money of dupes.

Nothing in all my life has ever shown cheating gamesters that I was of their tribe; nevertheless, they always insisted on believing me a sharper. I could not but be one. They thought they were doing me honor. How could they believe I was stupid when I had all the outward signs, all the appearance and manner, of a man of intelligence? They talked to me openly, and, what is amusing, I did not deny the allegation, I equivocated; I had to do so, or declare myself insulted. Baron de Fraiture, then, who stopped at Madrid as soon as he learned that I was there, came to see me, appeared most happy to have found me, flattered me, and by his politeness obliged me to give him a good reception. It seemed to me that a few small favors and some acquaintances which I might procure for him could never compromise me. He introduced his traveling companion. He was a fat Frenchman, idle, lazy, ignorant, but a Frenchman. All the rest passes unobserved except by those who look closely, and they are very few who look closely into the character of a Frenchman who has a good appearance, who dresses well, who is gay at table, who loves women, and who can stand up to a debauch. This companion of Fraiture's was a cavalry captain in the French service, one of those who has had the good fortune to obtain an endless leave of absence.

On the fourth or fifth day Fraiture told me frankly that he had no money, and he asked me for thirty or forty pistoles, saying that he would consider himself indebted to me for them; I thanked him for being open with me, and I frankly told him that I could do nothing for him in the way of money, for I should soon be in need of it myself.

"But we will do some good piece of business, and you will be sure to have money."

"I do not know about that, and in the meanwhile I cannot go without the necessities of life."

"We do not know what to do to quiet our landlord. Come and talk to him."

"If I talk to him I shall do you more harm than good, for he will ask me if I vouch for you, and I will tell him that you are one of those noblemen who need no one to vouch for them; but the evasion will not prevent your landlord from thinking that if I do not vouch for you it shows that I am doubtful."

Since I had introduced Count Manuzzi to him on the promenade, Fraiture persuaded me to take him to call on the Count, and it was in him that, a week or ten days later, he confided. Manuzzi, obliging and himself a professional sharper, did not give him money; but he introduced him to a man who lent him some against pledges and without interest. They played a few times, they won something, without my ever taking part in it. Occupied by the colony and by Doña Ignacia, I wanted to be left in peace; my spending a single night away from the house would have alarmed her beautiful soul, which she was sacrificing to love.

During this time Signor Querini,[5] the new Venetian Ambassador, arrived in Madrid to replace Signor Mocenigo, whom the Republic had appointed Ambassador to the Court of Versailles. Querini was a man of letters, a talent not shared by Mocenigo, who loved only music and Greek friendship.

The new Ambassador became favorable to me, and I was convinced that in a few days I should be able to count on him even more than on Signor Mocenigo.

Meanwhile Baron de Fraiture and his friend had to think of leaving Spain; they found no gaming at the Ambassador's or elsewhere, no hope of any at the Escorial,[6] they must go back to France; but they owe at their inn, they need money for the journey, and they have none. I can give them nothing. Manuzzi imagines that he cannot do so either, we are sorry for their misfortune, but the obligation to think of ourselves first of all obliges us to be cruel to everyone else on earth.

But now for a surprise. Manuzzi comes to me one morning with a look of uneasiness and dismay which he tries in vain to hide.

"What is the matter?"

"I am beset despite myself. Baron Fraiture, to whom I have not been at home for a week, for, since I could not give him money, he distressed me, wrote me a note last evening in which he said that he will blow out his brains today if I do not lend him a hundred pistoles, and I am sure he will take that desperate step if I refuse him."

"He said the same to me three days ago, and I told him that I wager a hundred pistoles he will not kill himself. Angered by my flippant reply, he proposed to fight a duel with me; I replied that, in his state of desperation, he would have too great an advantage over me, or I over him, and I left him. Answer him as I did, or do not answer him at all!"

"I cannot. Here are a hundred pistoles. Take them to him from me, and have him give you a properly drawn note, so that he can be made to return the amount at Liège, where, after all, he has property."

Admiring his noble act, I undertake the commission, I go to him, I find him flurried, at his wits' end, and I am not surprised, for I attribute his dismay to his situation. I think I shall restore him to life and good humor by telling him that I have brought the hundred pistoles he needs to leave Madrid, and that it was Count Manuzzi who was doing him the favor; but not a bit of it, he accepts the money, he writes me out a note in the terms which I prescribe, and he remains sad and gloomy. However, he assures me that he will leave with his friend for Barcelona the next day, and that from there he will go to Avignon, where his friend has a relative. I wish him a good journey, I take the note to Manuzzi, who I see is still uneasy, and I remain to dine with the Ambassador. It was for the last time.

Three days later I go to dine with the two Ambassadors,[7] for they were living together in the Calle ancha de San Bernardo, and I am amazed when the porter tells me that no one is at home to me there and that I should do well not to present myself at the door in future, for he had orders to refuse me entrance whenever I should do so.

At this thunderbolt, of which I could not guess the cause, I go home, and I sit down and proceed to write a note to Manuzzi, a very short one for I had only to tell him what had happened and to ask him the reason for it. I seal it, I send it to him by Felipe, who brings it back to me unopened. An order had come from Count Manuzzi himself not to receive it. A fresh surprise. What has happened? I can divine nothing; but I am determined to die or to have an explanation. I dine very thoughtfully with Doña Ignacia, who is uneasy, but to whom there is no reason to tell the cause of my own uneasiness; and after dinner, just as I was about to take a siesta, in comes Manuzzi's lackey, who hands me a letter and leaves without waiting for me to read it.

In the letter I find another, which I read before reading Manuzzi's. I see that it is signed: "The Baron de Fraiture." The desperate wretch demanded a hundred pistoles of Manuzzi as an unsecured loan, promising that, if he gives them to him, he will unmask an enemy of his in the man who he thought was most attached to his interests and his person.

Manuzzi, calling me a traitor and ingrate, told me that, curious to know this enemy, he had at once arranged to meet Fraiture in the Prado San Gerónimo, where, after obtaining his word of honor that he would lend him the money, he had proved to him that the enemy was I, since it was from me that he had learned that the name he bore was genuine, but that all the titles he assumed were false. And here he entered into the appalling detail of all that I had told him, and so circumstantially that, since Fraiture could only have heard it from me, Manuzzi could be left in no doubt of my perfidy. He ended his letter by saying (and it was too much) that he advised me to leave Madrid within a week at the latest.

My reader cannot imagine the prostration of soul in which I was left after reading this letter. It was the first time in my life that I found myself guilty[8] of a monstrous indiscretion and one committed for no reason, of a gratuitous and infernal ingratitude which I did not find in my character, of a crime, in short, of which I did not believe myself capable.[9] Grieving, confused, ashamed of myself, recognizing the full extent of my wrongdoing, and knowing that, not deserving forgiveness, I must not even ask for it, I sank into the blackest gloom. Yet it seemed to me that Manuzzi, though justifiably angry, had made a great mistake by ending his letter with the absurd advice that I should leave Madrid in a week, for, knowing what kind of man I was, he ought to be certain that I would scorn his advice. He was not powerful enough to demand any such submission of me, and on my side I must not, after committing one base action, commit another which would declare me not only the vilest of men but also incapable of giving him any other kind of satisfaction. Plunged in the blackest melancholy, I spent the whole day unable to decide on a course, and at nine o'clock I kissed my dear mistress, asking her to eat her supper with her family and to leave, for I had to come to terms with the greatest trial I had had to bear in my life.

After sleeping well enough to restore my soul to a condition in which it could adopt the course most becoming to my guilt, I got up, and I wrote the friend whom I had offended the most sincere of confessions in a letter than which he could ask for nothing more submissive. In conclusion I told him that if he had a generous soul he should accept my letter as the fullest satisfaction; but that if by chance it did not suffice him he had only to inform me of whatever he demanded, assuring him that I would accede to everything except to a course which could make me suspected of fearing any treachery.

"I am willing," I said, "to leave it in your power to have me murdered; but I will not leave Madrid except when I choose and when I have nothing more to do there."

After sealing my letter with a commonplace seal, I had Felipe, whose handwriting he did not know, write the address, and, to make sure that Manuzzi would receive it, I sent him to put it in the royal box at El Pardo,[10] where the King had gone. I remained in my room all day with Doña Ignacia, who, seeing me recovered from my depression of the evening before, no longer insisted on knowing the cause of it. I also spent the next day at home, hoping for an answer, but in vain. On the next day but one, which was a Sunday, I go out to call on Prince della Cattolica, I stop at the door, and the porter comes politely to my carriage to whisper to me that His Excellency has reasons for asking me not to call at his house again. I did not expect it; but after this blow I expect all the others. I go to the house of the Abbé Béliardi, and it is his lackey in his anteroom who, after announcing me, comes out to tell me that he is not at home.

As I get back into my carriage, I see Don Domingo Varnier, who tells me he has something to say to me; I ask him if he would like to go on to mass with me, he gets in, and he tells me that the Venetian Ambassador, the former one, had told the Duke of Medina Sidonia that it was his duty to inform him that I was a scoundrel. The Duke had replied that as soon as he became aware of it himself he would no longer permit me access to him. These three dagger thrusts, entering my heart in the course of less than half an hour, leave me completely at a loss; I make no answer, I go to mass with my friend; but afterward I believe I should have died if I had not relieved myself by giving him a full account of the cause of the Ambassador's anger. He advised me to tell no one about it, for it could only enrage Manuzzi, who had become, with some show of reason, my bitter enemy.

Back at the house I wrote Manuzzi to renounce a too cowardly revenge, for he put me under the necessity of becoming indiscreet to all those who thought it their part to insult me in order to flatter the Ambassador's hatred. I send my letter, unsealed, to Signor Gasparo Soderini,[11] Secretary of Embassy, sure that he would transmit it to him. After that I dined with my mistress, and after dinner I took her to the bullfight, where by chance I found a place in a box next to one in which were Manuzzi and the two Ambassadors. I bowed to them, then did not look at them again.

It was on the next day that the Marchese Grimaldi refused to grant me an audience. I had nothing more to hope for. The Duke of Losada received me, for he despised the Ambassador because of his masculine loves, but he told me that he had already been instructed not to receive me again. He said that, in view of this persecution, I had nothing more to hope for at Court.

Such a fury was unbelievable. It was thus that Manuzzi displayed the power he had over his ambassadorial wife. To avenge himself, he had overleaped the boundaries of shame. I wanted to see if he had forgotten Don Manuel de Roda and the Marquis of Mora, but, calling on them, I found that they had been informed. I had no one left but the Count of Aranda, and I was thinking of going there, when an Adjutant came to tell me that His Excellency wanted to speak to me. At that I leaped to the most terrible conclusions.

The Count had signified at what hour I was to appear. I find that deep-minded man all alone, and I see that he looks serene; I gain courage. He makes me sit down near him, a favor which he had never granted me before; I feel reassured.

"What have you done to your Ambassador?"

"Nothing to him directly; but I have offended his lover where it hurts him most, and that out of sheer stupidity. I made an indiscreet confidence, with no intention of harming him, to a wretch who has gone and sold it to him for a hundred pistoles. Manuzzi, in his anger, has loosed on me the man of position, the man who idolizes him, the man whom he can make do whatever he wishes."

"You did wrong; but what is done is done. You must understand that you can no longer hope to succeed in your project, for as soon as it came to giving you a post the King, informed that you are a Venetian, would ask the Ambassador about you."

"Must I leave, My Lord?"

"No, but the Ambassador has urged it on me. I replied that I have not the power to expel you so long as you do nothing contrary to the laws. He told me that your lies and slanders insult the honor of a Venetian subject whom it is his duty to protect and whom he knows intimately. I replied that if you are a slanderer, you must be attacked in the usual way and delivered to the rigor of the law if you cannot justify yourself. He ended by asking me to order you not to speak of him or of his protégé to the Venetian subjects who are now in Madrid, and it seems to me that you might grant him so much. Aside from that, you can, living as you live, stay in Madrid as long as you please, with nothing to fear, and the more so since he will leave in the course of this week.''[12]

That was the entire conversation I had with the Count, and it was on that day I made up my mind to amuse myself and give up paying court to anyone. Friendship alone made me go to call on Varnier from time to time because I was fond of him, on the Duke of Medina Sidonia because I respected him, and on the architect Sabatini,[13] who always received me cordially, as did his wife. Doña Ignacia possessed me entirely, and she often congratulated me on having got rid of all the business which occupied me before Fraiture left. After the departure of the Ambassador, who, not having received permission[14] to visit Venice, went to Paris by way of Navarre, I wanted to see if Signor Querini would treat me as his uncle had done, and I laughed when his porter paid me the unwelcome compliment of informing me that his house was closed to me.

Six or seven weeks after the Ambassador's departure I left Madrid. I had to bring myself to it, despite the affection which kept me still in love with Doña Ignacia, for, aside from my having nothing more to hope for in Spain, I could not think of Lisbon, for I received no more letters and I had no more money. Carriage, table, theaters, and all the other little expenditures necessary to maintain life had brought me, though Doña Ignacia did not know it, to the end of my resources. I thought of selling a watch and a snuffbox in order to go to Marseilles, where I was sure to get money enough to sail for Constantinople. It seemed to me that I could not but make my fortune there without turning Turk;[15] but I should have been wrong. I was entering on the age which Fortune scorns.

In my distress I made the acquaintance of a learned Abate, the Auditor to the Papal Nuncio.[16] He was the Abate Pinzi,[17] who introduced me to a Genoese bookseller named Corrado, a rich man and so honest that, in a just estimation, his virtues and his candor outweighed the dishonesty of ten thousand Genoese.[18] It was to this man that I went to sell a repeating watch and a snuffbox the gold in which was worth twenty-five louis. Don Corrado would not hear of my selling my possessions; he lent me twenty doblones de a ocho, contenting himself with my word that I would send them back to him when I should be in a position to return them. Unfortunately for me, I could never have the pleasure of doing so. He had no children except a ravishingly pretty daughter, the only heir to his entire fortune, whom he married to the son of the Venetian painter Tiepoletto,[19] who, though his talent was of the slightest, was a young man of excellent qualities.

Nothing is sweeter than the life which a man in love leads with a woman who loves him equally and who responds to his every desire; but nothing is more bitter than separation when love has lost none of its strength. The pain seems infinitely greater than the pleasure they have had. The pleasure no longer exists, they feel only the pain. They are so unhappy that, to escape it, they wish they had never been happy. We spent the last days with Doña Ignacia in pleasures which were always followed by sorrow and in the tears which seemed to lessen it. Don Diego did not cry, he congratulated us on the tenderness of our hearts. Through Felipe, whom I left in Madrid, I had news of Doña Ignacia until the middle of the next year. She became the wife of a rich shoemaker, her interest dictating that she resign herself to the mortification which a misalliance caused her father.

Having promised the Marquis of Mora and Colonel Rojas that I would go to see them in Saragossa, I wanted to keep my word. I arrived there all alone at the beginning of September, and I spent two weeks there. I saw the manners and customs of the Aragonese.[20] The Count of Aranda's laws had no currency in that city; in the streets both by day and by night I encountered men who, wearing hats with wide, turned-down brims, and black cloaks which came down to their heels, were nothing short of maskers, for the same cloaks covered their faces to the eyes. One saw nothing. Under his cloak the masker carried *el spadino*;[21] it was a sword half again as long as honest men commonly carry in France, in Italy, and in Germany. These maskers were treated with great respect. They were most often scoundrels, but they might be great noblemen. At Saragossa I saw the great devotion paid to Nuestra Señora del Pilar.[22] I saw processions in which gigantic wooden statues were carried. I was taken to receptions where I found monks. I was introduced to a very fat lady who, I was told, was a cousin of the Blessed Palafox,[23] at which I was expected to fall into a transport of reverence; and I made the acquaintance of a Canon Pignatelli,[24] who was the presiding judge of the Inquisition and who every morning sent to prison the bawd who on the previous evening had arranged for him to sup with a whore,[25] who had then spent the night with him. He woke up, and, after thus exercising his judicial authority, he went to confession, he said mass, then he dined, the devil in the flesh overcame him, another girl was procured for him, he enjoyed her, and the next morning he did over again what he had done the day before; and it was the same thing every day. Always struggling between God and the devil, the Canon was the happiest of men after dinner and the unhappiest in the morning.

The bullfights at Saragossa were finer than at Madrid; the bulls were not restrained by ropes, they moved about the arena freely, and there was greater slaughter. The Marquis of Mora and Count Rojas gave me very fine dinners. The Marquis was by far the most amiable of Spaniards; he died very young two years later.[26] I was shown courtesans; but, with the image of Doña Ignacia pursuing me everywhere, it was impossible for me to find any woman worthy of love. The great Church of Nuestra Señora del Pilar is on the ramparts of the city. The

Saragossans consider this fortification impregnable; they are more than certain that, in case of a siege, the enemy might enter everywhere else, but never there.

Traveling from Saragossa to Valencia, where I had promised Signora Pelliccia I would be at this time, I saw on a hill the ancient city of Sagunto. *Eminet excelso consurgens colle Sagunthos* ("Saguntum towers, rising from a high hill").[27]

"I want to go up there," I said to a priest who was with me and to the driver, who wanted to arrive in Valencia that evening, and who put the well-being of his mules above all the antiquities on earth.

What objections, what remonstrances on the part of the priest and the driver!

"You will see nothing but ruins."

"I like them better when they are ancient than all the most beautiful modern buildings. Here is an écu; we will go to Valencia tomorrow."

The driver said that I was an *hombre de bien* ("true gentleman").

I saw the crenellations on top of the walls, which were in large part intact; yet it was a monument dating from the Second Punic War. I saw inscriptions on two gates, incomprehensible to me and to many more, but which La Condamine[28] or Séguier,[29] the Marchese Maffei's old friend, would certainly have copied. My admiration for this monument to an entire people, who had the courage to burn themselves rather than break faith with the Romans by surrendering to Hannibal, ravished my soul and drew a laugh from the priest, who would not have said a mass to become the owner of the place, whose very name has been destroyed, despite its title to respect and its being easier to pronounce than Murviedro,[30] which, though it comes from the Latin *muri veteres* ("old walls"), does not please me; but time is an untamable and ferocious monster bent on devouring everything:

mors etiam saxis nominibusque venit ("death comes also to stones and names").[31]

"This place," the priest said to me, "was always named Murviedro."

"That is impossible, for common sense does not permit a thing to be called old which must indubitably have been new at its birth. It is as if you were to tell me that your New Castile is not old because it is called New."

"However, it is certain that Old Castile must be older than New Castile."[32]

"Sir, that is not so. The new one will never be 'old,' and the old one is less ancient than the new."

After that the priest said no more to me and thought me a madman.

I tried my best, but in vain, to find the bust of Hannibal and the inscription in honor of Caesar Claudius, successor to Gallienus,[33] but I saw the remains of the amphitheater.[34]

The next day I saw the road paved in mosaic which had been discovered only twenty years earlier. I arrived at Valencia at nine o'clock in the morning, and I found myself very poorly lodged, for the impresario of the opera, the Bolognese Marescalchi, had taken all the good rooms for the actresses and actors who were to arrive from Madrid. He had with him his brother the Abate, whom I found erudite for his age. We went for a walk, and he laughed when I asked him to go to a coffeehouse. In the whole city there was not a place where a man who wants to rest can sit down and order something to drink to have a reason for giving the proprietor of the establishment four or five sous. Must we go to a pothouse and order wine? The idea is revolting: the place is ill-kept, the company one finds there is vicious or unsociable, and the wine is detestable, positively a poison not only for foreigners but for Spaniards as well, who can have excellent wine at home but who have good reason to drink only water in taverns. I found it inconceivable. In Spain, where the wines are excellent, especially on the coast where I was, close to Málaga and Alicante,[35] a foreigner cannot get a passable glass of wine except with the greatest difficulty. But what is the reason? It is the ignorance of the vintners, who are rogues everywhere on earth, but merciless scoundrels in Spain and at the same time fools, for their doctoring makes the wine undrinkable. During the first three days which I spent in that famous city, the birthplace of Alexander VI,[36] whom Father Pétau[37] calls *non adeo sanctus* ("not so saintly"), I saw everything, always in the company of the learned Abate Marescalchi. I saw that everything famous and beautiful in the world, if we judge by the descriptions and drawings of writers and artists, always loses when we go to see it and examine it closely. Valencia, situated in an excellent climate, very near to the Mediterranean, watered by the Guadalaviar,[38] in a smiling and fertile countryside rich in all the most delectable gifts which nature can offer mankind, animated by the healthiest and mildest air, distant only an hour from the famous *amenum stagnum*[39] ("lovely lake") which abounds in the most exquisite fish, inhabited by a numerous, very distinguished, and very rich nobility, where the women are, if not the cleverest, at least the most beautiful in all Spain, where there is an Archbishop and a clergy with an income of at least a million—this Valencia is a most unpleasant city for a foreigner because in it he can enjoy none of the comforts of life which he finds for his money everywhere else. In Valencia one is badly lodged, one eats badly, one cannot drink, one cannot converse because there is no society, nor argue with anyone, for, despite its university,[40] one does not find a single being there who deserves the name of man of letters. As for its material aspect, its five great bridges[41] over the Guadalaviar, its churches, its public buildings, the Arsenal, the Exchange, the Town Hall, its twelve gates, its ten thousand wells aroused no admiration in me in a city where the streets are not paved and where, to take a walk, one has to leave it. It is true that one is then very well satisfied, it seems one is in the Earthly Paradise, especially in the direction of the sea.

What did please me was the great number of one-horse cabriolets which are waiting everywhere to serve those who want to take a drive or even travel to some city at two or three days' distance. One is conveyed very rapidly, and very cheaply, to Málaga, to Alicante, to Cartagena, to Tarragona,[42] and even, if one wishes, to Barcelona, which is fifty leagues away. If I had been in a good humor I should have taken a trip through the Kingdoms of Murcia and Granada,[43] whose physical beauty surpasses that of all the provinces we have in Italy. Poor Spaniards! The beauty of their country, its fertility and richness, are the cause of their indolence, and the mines of Peru and Potosí are those of their poverty, their pride, and all their prejudices.[44] It is paradoxical, but my reader knows that what I say is true. To become the most flourishing of all the kingdoms on earth, Spain would need to be conquered, shaken to its foundations, and nearly destroyed, it would be reborn fit to be the land of the blessed.

I went to pay my respects to the sweet, modest, and noble Pelliccia. The first performance was to be given on the next day but one. It was not difficult, for the same operas were given which had been performed for the Court at the Sitios. This means at Aranjuez, at the Escorial, at La Granja,[45] for the Count of Aranda never dared to give the theater in Madrid permission to show the public an Italian *opera buffa*. The novelty would have been too great, the Inquisition would have opened its haggard eyes too wide. The balls at Los Caños del Peral had astonished it; but they had to be done away with two years later. So long as there is an Inquisition in Spain[46] she will never be happy.

Signora Pelliccia had scarcely arrived before she sent

Don Diego Valencia the letter of recommendation which the Duke of Arcos had given her three months before. She had not seen that great nobleman since Aranjuez. We dined—she, her husband, her sister, and an accomplished violinist who married her sister soon afterward. She has scarcely risen, when Don Diego Valencia is announced: he was the banker to whom the Duke had recommended her.

"Señora," Don Diego says to her, "delighted by My Lord the Duke of Arcos's doing me the favor of sending you to me, I come to offer you my services and also to inform you of the orders which he gives me and of which you may not know."

"Señor, I hope that nothing will happen to me which will oblige me to inconvenience you; I am very grateful for the favor My Lord the Duke has shown me, and for the trouble you have been at to come here to my lodging; I shall have the honor of going to thank you."

"That is not necessary, Señora. You should know that, as for any money you might need, I am ordered to furnish you with a total sum of no more than twenty-five thousand doblones."

"Twenty-five thousand doblones?"

"No more, Señora. Have the goodness to read his letter, for I think you should assure yourself of it."

He hands her the letter. It was four lines long:

"Don Diego, you[47] will furnish Doña Pelliccia when she orders you up to the amount of twenty-five thousand doblones, on my account. The Duke of Arcos."

She shows me the letter, we all read it and sit there mute and amazed. She returns the letter to the banker, who rises, bows to her, and goes. It is almost unbelievable.

It is only in Spain that such gestures are to be seen, and they are not uncommon. I have already spoken of the one in the same style to which Medina Celi had treated La Pichona.[48] Some thinkers make bold to disapprove of these divine actions, whereas it is at most permissible to criticize them; they put them among vicious actions; they attribute them to prodigality or to pride. As for pride, I admit that it may often be the cause of them, but at that moment it becomes beautiful, for it can only act in concert with a great, heroic, rare soul, entirely above the vulgar; and I do not deny that it may come from the vice which we call prodigality, for the prodigal, as long as he can continue it, never ceases to be one; he throws away, he scatters, he is equally the prodigal with everyone; he sometimes stops, but only when he sees himself on the verge of ruin, whereupon he becomes a miser. The Spaniard is ambitious by nature, and does nothing except in the hope of being admired and declared superior to his equals. He wants those who examine and judge him to consider him worthy of the throne, and to attribute virtues to him which no man can practice except disinterestedly. He is so afraid of being thought a prodigal that even Medina Celi, even Arcos, who spent immense sums, never made expenditures which could be called foolish and always refused a hundred pistoles to a man who asked for them if it seemed there was not a good reason for giving them.

After Don Diego left, the Duke's recommendation became the subject of our conversation. La Pelliccia said that the Duke had wanted to teach her what sort of man he was of whom she had asked a recommendation, at the same time doing her the honor to believe her incapable of abusing the confidence he had in her.

"For it is certain," she said, "that I would die of hunger before I would take a single pistole from Don Diego."

The violinist said that the Duke would consider himself slighted, and that she must take something; her husband pleased me by saying that she must either take it all or take nothing. As for me, I thought as La Pelliccia did: nothing, for if the Duke wanted to make her rich by a present so extraordinary he could find means to do so without her being obliged to reproach herself with having abused his generosity and perhaps giving him occasion to believe that she had duped him.

"I am sure," I said to her, "that the Duke will consider himself obliged to make your fortune precisely because you will have made yourself estimable by your delicacy."

It was what she did, to the great displeasure of the banker. But the city, the public, which at once learned the whole story, did not believe what it considered beyond likelihood. The charming woman let people believe what they pleased, and returned to Madrid two weeks later without having asked Don Diego for a copper. But it was not believed in Madrid, or at the Court. The King believed what everyone said, which was repeated to him by Don Almerico Pini,[49] who kept His Catholic Majesty amused with news of Madrid. He thought he ought to save the Duke of Arcos from ruin by ordering Signora Pelliccia to leave. At the same time the same order was given to La Marcucci,[50] a dancer from Lucca, with whom another extremely rich Spanish Grandee[51] was in love.

The two had to obey the order, and the Spanish Grandee who loved the dancer immediately paid her his last visit, leaving her a bill of exchange on Lyons for a hundred thousand francs. The Duke of Arcos, on the contrary, considered himself aggrieved, ill-treated, and entitled to consider the King's order most unjust, for he had known the Roman Pelliccia only from having spoken with her once or twice in public and he had never spent anything on her. Seeing himself become the cause of the good woman's misfortune, he felt it his duty not to put up with it. Since he could not oppose the King's order, and wanted neither to humiliate himself nor to sink to asking the monarch to spare her, he took the one course worthy of his great soul. He went to her house for the first time, to ask her to forgive him if he had been the innocent cause of her misfortune, and to do what he be-

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lieved had become his duty. So saying, he left her a hundred doblones de a ocho for her journey, giving her a sealed letter addressed to the Spirito Santo Bank[52] in Rome, and Signora Pelliccia thought herself entitled to accept from so great a nobleman a present in money which he in some sort owed her and a letter whose contents she could not know. But she knew it when she was in Rome. Signor Belloni[53] paid her eighty thousand Roman scudi. She invested them, and she settled in her native city, where for twenty-nine years she has maintained an establishment which shows that she is worthy of the good fortune which befell her.

At El Pardo on the day after La Pelliccia left, the King said to the Duke of Arcos that he ought not to be sad but should forget the woman whom he had banished from Spain for his good.

"Your Majesty, by sending her the order to leave, obliged me to make a truth of what was only a tale, for I knew the woman only from having spoken to her in public, and I had never given her the slightest present."

"Then you did not give her twenty-five thousand doblones?"

"Yes, Sire; but not until day before yesterday. Your Majesty is the *amo* ['master'], but it is certain that if you had not made her leave, I should never have gone to her house, and she would never have cost me a copper."

The King, very much surprised, did not answer a word and learned how much to believe the gossip of Madrid. I was informed of this incident, just as I have now written it, by Señor Moñino,[54] who was later known by the Castilian title of Floridablanca and who[55] now lives in exile in Murcia, his native province.

After Marescalchi's departure, when I was preparing to leave for Barcelona, I saw *a los toros*, outside the city, a woman whose appearance was impressive. I asked a Chevalier of Alcántara,[56] who was standing beside me, who she was.

"She is," he replied, "the famous Nina."[57]

"Why 'famous'?"

"If you haven't heard of her before, her story is too long to tell you here."

A minute or two later a well-dressed but unprepossessing-looking man leaves the side of the impressive beauty who was engaging my eyes, approaches the Chevalier who had spoken to me, and whispers something to him. The Chevalier modestly tells me that the lady whose name I had asked him wanted to know who I was. Foolishly flattered by her curiosity, I myself answer the messenger that, if the lady would permit it, I would myself tell her who I was after the performance.

"I judge from your accent that you are Italian, as she is."

"Yes, Sir, I am a Venetian."

"So is she."

After this exchange with her emissary, the Chevalier told me in a few words that she was a dancer with whom the Count of Ricla,[58] Captain-General (for there was no longer a Viceroy) of the Principality of Barcelona, was in love and whom he was keeping in Valencia for a few weeks until he could arrange her return to Barcelona, where the Bishop would not tolerate her presence because of the scandal. He told me that he had allowed her fifty doblones a day.

"But she does not spend them, I hope."

"She cannot, but she indulges in some folly every day which costs him a great deal of money."

Extremely curious to make the acquaintance of such a woman, and far from fearing that the acquaintance would be sure to cause me unhappiness, I could not wait for the performance to be over so that I could speak with her.

It was on the stairs that I approached her, paying her the usual sort of compliment, which she unabashedly returned, resting her hand, which despite her rings and her bracelets proved to be very beautiful, on mine. Arrived at her carriage, to which six mules were harnessed, she says that she will be glad if I will come to breakfast with her the next day; I promise to do myself the honor.

I do not fail to keep the appointment. I find her in a very large house, a hundred paces outside the city, the whole of which she rented and which was well furnished though without taste, and open to the air of the countryside, with gardens in front and behind. I see menservants in livery, maids coming and going, and I hear an imperious voice scolding in the apartment into which I was shown. The scolding voice was La Nina's, who was dressing down a man who was standing in amazement in front of an array of merchandise on a big table. She asks me to forgive her for being angry with the fool of a Spaniard who insisted on maintaining that his laces, which I saw there, were excellent. She wants me to look at them and give my opinion, and I say that I am no judge of lace. The man, losing patience, says to her that if the laces do not please her she has only to leave them to him, and he asks her if she wants the fabrics.

"I will keep the fabrics, and as for your laces I want to convince you that it is not to save money that I refuse them. Look!"

And she picks up a great pair of scissors and cuts them to bits. The man who had been with her at the bullring the day before told me that it was a pity, and that everyone in Valencia would call her mad.

"Be still, pimp."

Treating him to which fine epithet, she gives him a slap with the back of her hand. He leaves, calling her a whore.[59] She bursts out laughing. She tells the trembling Spaniard to write out a bill at once for all that she had bought, and he instantly obeys, avenging himself well for all the insults to which she had treated him. She signs, objecting to none of the prices, and she tells him to go to Don Diego Valencia, who will pay him at once. The man leaves, chocolate is brought, she makes me sit down beside her, and she sends to tell the man who had called her a whore to come at once to drink chocolate with us.

"Do not be surprised," she says, "at the way I treat him, for he is nothing but a clown whom Ricla keeps with me to spy on what I do. I treat him badly on purpose, so that he will write him everything."

To tell the truth I thought I was dreaming, or that the woman must be mad. In all my life I had never seen or imagined that a woman of such a character could exist. The unfortunate Bolognese, who was a musician and whose name was Molinari,[60] came and drank his chocolate without saying a word. He left afterward, and she spent a whole hour with me talking of Spain, of Italy, of Portugal, where she had married a dancer named Bergonzi. She told me that she was the daughter of Pelandi, the famous charlatan who sold the "Oil of Strazzon" in Venice, and whom I might have known. And in fact I had known him, just as everyone in Venice must have known him on the platform where he sold his balsam.[61]

After this confidence, which she imparted with so little reserve as to make it not one, she asked me to do her the favor of coming to sup with her, for supper was her favorite meal; I promised I would do so, and I went for a walk, reflecting on this strange phenomenon and on the great good fortune which the woman treated in such a fashion. After what I had seen I had to believe that she really had fifty doblones a day. She was of the most surprising beauty, but since I was of the opinion that beauty alone is not enough to make a man love, I did not understand how the Viceroy of Catalonia could be in love with her to such a degree. As for Molinari, after what I had seen and heard I had no doubt that he must be an infamous scoundrel, the most despicable of men. I would go to supper there to enjoy the performance, for, beautiful though she was,[62] she had not aroused the least sensation in me.

Toward nightfall I make my way to her house. It was the beginning of October; but in Valencia the weather was as hot as it is with us in August. She was walking in the garden with her jackanapes,[63] both of them nearly undressed, for she had on only a shift and petticoat and he only drawers. She invites me to make myself comfortable in the same way; but I offer excuses which she accepts as good, and I am glad, for the presence of the base scoundrel utterly shocked and revolted me. It was she who amused me until suppertime with talk than which nothing could be more lewd. She told me any number of stories of fuc. . . . ,[64] in which she was the principal figure, which had happened to her in the twenty-two years of her life.

All these stories would have had the effect they should have had on me, though without arousing love, were it not for the presence of the fellow with his revolting countenance and his abysmal stupidity. At table we were all very hungry; the supper was choice, with both meat and fish, the wine was excellent, I was well satisfied, and I should have been glad to go home; but she had no such intention. The wine had affected her, the clown was drunk, she wanted to be gay. She sent everyone away, she insisted on his undressing, and performed experiments on him which are too filthy and disgusting to commit to paper. The buffoon was young, and his drunkenness did not prevent him from attaining a state which did him honor under Nina's ministrations. It was obvious that the lascivious Nina wanted me to serve her in an orgy in the wretched scoundrel's presence; but his presence deprived me of the ability to satisfy Nina, who, without looking at me, had stripped naked. When she saw that I persisted in being inactive, she made use of the man, inviting me, if I wanted to amuse myself, to come and see how he went about it. I went reluctantly, suffering the torments of the damned, not from any desire to do what he was doing, for I was in a state of impotence, but from anger at seeing such a beautiful woman surrender herself to a man whose only merit was that of a donkey.

After she made him work until his powers were exhausted, she washed her parts, then she forced him to drink, and the swine vomited up his whole supper; she ran off into the other room, shrieking with laughter, and I followed her, for the stench was making me nauseous. After laughing her fill, seated beside me stark naked, she asked me how I had liked the entertainment. At that, my honor and my self-esteem demanded that I justify myself. I told her that my antipathy to the base fellow was so great that it had raised an insuperable obstacle to the effect which her charms should have on any man with eyes.

"I think it possible, for he is very ugly; but he is not here now, and yet you are still nothing. One would not think it to look at you."

"And rightly, my dear Nina, for I am as good as any other man; but at the moment it would be impossible. He has left me too disgusted. No, I beg you, it is no use, nothing will come of it; but it can happen tomorrow, if you do not offend my sight with a monster who is unworthy to enjoy you."

"You are mistaken, he does not enjoy it. I make him work. If I could suppose that he loved me, I would die rather than satisfy him, for I loathe him."

"What! You do not love him, and you use him to give yourself the pleasure of love?"

"As I would use a dildo." [35]

I found nothing in all that Nina said but the pure truth of a depraved nature. She urged me to come to supper the next day, saying that she wanted to see if what I said was true or false, and assuring me that Molinari would be ill.

"He will have got over the effect of the wine, and he will be well."

"No, he will be ill. Come, and come every evening."

"I leave day after tomorrow. I have already reserved my place."

"My friend, you shall not leave. You will leave in a week, after I do."

"That is impossible."

"You shall not leave, I tell you; it would be an insult which I would not stomach."

I did not contradict her, and I went home firmly intending to leave in spite of her. Though at my age I was no longer a novice in anything, I went to bed astonished at the woman's licentiousness, at her freedom of speech and action, and, even more, at her frankness, for she had confessed to me what no woman had ever confessed to anyone.

"I use him to do that because I am sure he does not love me. If I knew he loved me I would die rather than satisfy him, for I loathe him."

I knew about that sort of thing, but no woman had ever put it into words to me.

The next day at seven o'clock in the evening I went to her house. She told me with affected regret that we should sup alone, for Molinari had a very bad colic.

"You told me before that he would be ill. Have you poisoned him?"

"I wouldn't put it beyond me, but God preserve me from doing it."

"But you assured me he would be ill, and he is ill. So you must have given him something."

"No. Let us not speak of it. Let us play cards; afterward we will sup, and we will amuse ourselves until tomorrow, and tomorrow evening we will do it again."

"No, for I shall leave at seven o'clock."

"You shall not leave, and the coachman will not complain to you, for he has been paid. Here is his receipt."

All this being said in the playful tone of a love determined to have its way, I did not think it offensive. Being in no hurry to leave, I took it in good part, calling her a madcap and saying that I was not worth the present she had made me.

"It is astonishing," I said, "that, being what you are, and with such a fine house, you do not receive company."

"Everyone is afraid. They fear Ricla, who is in love and jealous and to whom the knave with the colic writes everything I do. He says he doesn't, but I am sure of it; I am even delighted that he writes to him, and sorry that until now he has had nothing of consequence to report."

"He will write him that I sup with you alone."

"So much the better. Are you afraid?"

"No. But I think you ought to tell me if I have reason to be afraid."

"None at all, for he can blame only me."

"But I should not want to be the cause of a falling out which would harm you."

"On the contrary, the more I irritate him, the more he will love me, and making it up will cost him dear."

"Then you do not love him?"

"I love him to ruin him; but he is so rich that it is impossible."

I saw before me a woman beautiful as an angel, black as a devil, an atrocious whore[66] born to punish every man who to his misfortune fell in love with her. I had known others of the same sort, but never one to equal her. I thought of turning her wickedness to profit by laying her under contribution. She sent for cards and invited me to play what is called primero.[67] It is a game of chance, but so complicated that the most careful player always wins. In less than a quarter of an hour I saw that I played it better than she did; but her luck was so great that when we stopped to go to supper I counted up the points and I found that I was the loser by eighteen or twenty pistoles, which I immediately paid her and which she took, at the same time promising me my revenge. We supped well, and after supper I joined her in all the amorous follies for which she asked and of which I was capable, for my great days were over. However, she declared herself satisfied, and she let me go home when I told her I needed to sleep.

The next day I went to her house earlier, we played, and she lost, and she lost on all of the five or six days she remained in Valencia, so the hussy yielded me a profit of nearly two hundred doblones, which at the time I could not regard with indifference. The spy had already recovered from his colic the next day, and he always supped with us, but his presence was no hindrance to me after she stopped prostituting herself with him in my presence. She had taken the opposite course. She gave herself to me, telling him to go and write to Count Ricla, whereupon he withdrew.

She finally received a letter from the Count, which she gave me to read. He told her in good Italian that she could return to Barcelona without fear, for the Bishop had received an order from the Court to consider her simply an actress who was traveling by way of Barcelona, so she could spend all the rest of the winter there and be sure that she would be left in peace, provided that she lived quietly and caused no scandal. She told me that during the whole of my stay in Barcelona I could visit her only at night after the Count had gone; which he always did at ten o'clock. She assured me that I ran no risk. I should perhaps not have stopped there at all had she not told me that, if I should be short of money, she would lend me as much as I needed. She insisted that I leave a day before her and stop to wait for her at the inn in Tarragona, which I did. I spent the day very pleasantly in that city full of ancient monuments.

I had a very choice supper prepared for Nina, as she had ordered me to do, as well as a room for her next to mine, so that I could sleep with her without causing a scandal. She left in the morning, after telling me not to leave until toward nightfall so that I should be in Barcelona the following morning, where I was to lodge at the

"Santa Maria."[68] She also ordered me not to go to see her until after she had written me a note. I did everything she prescribed, and I arrived in Barcelona at daybreak. It is only twenty leagues from Tarragona. The proprietor of the "Santa Maria" inn lodged me very comfortably. He was an old Swiss. He told me privately that he had received orders from La Nina to treat me well and show me every consideration.

CHAPTER V

My imprudent conduct. Passano. My detention in the Tower. My departure from Barcelona. La Castel-Bajac at Montpellier. Nîmes. My arrival at Aix-en-Provence.

I THOUGHT this action of La Nina's very imprudent, even though the innkeeper seemed to be a sensible, discreet man; for after all she was the mistress of the Captain-General, who might be a man of intelligence but who, as a Spaniard, could not be of an easygoing nature in the matter of a love affair. Indeed, she had described him to me as ardent, suspicious, and jealous by temperament; but the thing was done.

I went to bed, I slept until two o'clock, and on waking I found an excellent dinner, a local manservant, and the innkeeper, come to tell me that he vouched for him. I withdraw to my room with him, and I ask him if it is by Nina's order that he has found me the manservant, and he replies that it is, and that he has also seen to arranging for the weekly hire of the carriage I see at the door.

"I am surprised that La Nina goes to so much trouble, for it is only I who have the right to regulate my expenditures."

"Señor, everything is paid for."

"Everything is paid for? I beg you to believe no such thing, for I will never allow it."

"You shall settle matters with her, but meanwhile you may be sure that I will not accept a copper."

At that moment I foresaw many difficulties, but the unpleasant thought did not possess me long enough. I had a letter of recommendation from the Marquis of Mora to Don Miguel de Cevaillos[1] and another from Colonel Rojas to Don Diego de la Secada.[2] I went at once to deliver the letters. The next morning Don Diego came to see me and took me to call on the Count of Peralada;[3] and on the day after that Don Miguel presented me to the Count of Ricla, Captain-General in command of the Principality of Catalonia, Cavaliere of San Gennaro,[4] and the lover of the vicious beauty who made it appear that she was keeping me.

The Count of Peralada was a young, rich nobleman, handsome of countenance, short and ill-built, a great debauchee who loved bad company, an enemy of religion, morals, and public order, violent and proud of his birth, directly descended from the Count of Peralada who had served Philip II so well that he had earned a patent in which that famous King declared him Count "by the grace of God." It was the first parchment I read in his anteroom, on a table covered with glass. He kept it there so that all those who went to see him could read it during the quarter of an hour he kept them waiting, perhaps for no other reason. He received me with the free, easy manner of a great nobleman who renounces everything due to him because of his high birth. He thanked Don Diego for having brought me to call on him, and he talked to me at length about Colonel Rojas. He asked me if I had made the acquaintance of the Englishwoman he was keeping in Saragossa, and when I said that I had, he whispered to me that he had slept with her. After taking me to see his stables, where he had splendid horses, he invited me to dinner the next day.

My reception from the Captain-General was very different; he received me standing, so that he would not have to offer me a chair, and, having heard me address him in Italian, he replied in Spanish, giving me the title “Usía”[5] in return for the “Excellency” which, as in duty bound, I had given him. He talked to me at length about Madrid, and he complained of the Venetian Ambassador Mocenigo, who, instead of going to Paris by way of Barcelona, as he had promised him he would do, had gone by way of Bordeaux. I thought I might excuse the Ambassador by telling the Count that the other route saved him fifty leagues; but he replied that keeping *la palabra* (“his word”) would have been better. He asked me if I expected to make a long stay in Barcelona, and I surprised him by replying that, with his permission, I should stay there as long as I found that I was enjoying it.

“I hope,” he said, “that you will enjoy it, but I warn you that the pleasures which my nephew Peralada can procure you will not give you a good reputation in Barcelona.”

Since the Count had made this remark to me in public, I thought I might repeat it to Señor de Peralada the same day at table. It delighted him. He told me, as if boasting of it, that he had made three journeys to Madrid, and that each time the Court had ordered him to return to Catalonia. However, I followed the Count of Ricla’s advice; I refused all the parties which Peralada offered me with girls, both in the country and at supper at his house. On the fifth day an officer came to invite me to dine at the Captain-General’s, an invitation which very much pleased me, for I feared that, having heard of the life I lived in Valencia with his Nina, he would hold it against me. At table he addressed me several times, but always with a seriousness which forbade me to venture on a jest.

After a week during which, to my surprise, Nina never wrote me to visit her, I received a note in which she told me to come to her house at ten o'clock in the evening, on foot and without a servant. It is certain that, not being in love with her, I ought not to have gone; by not going, I should have been both prudent and wise, and I should have shown the Count of Ricla a respect which I owed him; but I was neither wise nor prudent. I had not yet had misfortunes enough in my life to have learned to be so. During the week I had constantly seen La Nina at the theater,[6] but I had never bowed to her.

At the appointed hour I went there alone, wearing a greatcoat and with only my sword. She was with her sister, who was fifteen or sixteen years older than she and who was married to a comic dancer called Squizza (Schizza[7] in Italian), because he had scarcely any nose. She had just supped with the Captain-General, who had left at a quarter before ten o'clock; it was his unchanging hour. She said she was delighted that I had dined with him, and the more so because it was she who had mentioned me to him, praising me and congratulating herself on my having kept her good company for a week or ten days in Valencia.

"Excellent, my dear friend; but I think you ought not to have me call on you at unwonted hours."

"It is to avoid giving the neighbors any occasion for malicious gossip."

"On the contrary, it is to give them one, and to put suspicions into the Count's mind."

"He cannot learn of it."

I left at midnight, after a conversation than which nothing more decorous could be imagined. Her sister, though she was far from scrupulous, had never left us alone together, and in her presence Nina neither did nor said anything which could make her suppose we had been much more intimately acquainted in Valencia. During the following days I went there every evening; she begged me to come, it gave her pleasure; nothing happened between us which would displease the Count if he chose to inquire into it. I went, and I feared nothing. But now for what ought to have made me stop going there.

An officer of the Walloon Guards[8] comes up to me one day at noon outside the city, where I was walking alone. He politely asks me to excuse him if, without the warrant of any friendship between us, he was going to speak to me about something which should be of concern to me, though he had no connection with it and no right to interfere in it.

"Speak, Señor, I cannot but take in good part whatever you may be kind enough to say to me."

"Very well. You are a foreigner, perhaps you do not know this city or Spanish customs, and so you do not know that you run a great risk by going every night to call on La Nina as soon as the Count leaves."

"What risk can I run? I would wager that the Count knows it, and that he has no objection to it."

"It is certain that he knows it, and that he perhaps pretends to her that he does not know it, for he fears her as much as he loves her. If she does not tell you that he objects to it, either she is deceiving you or he is deceiving her, for it is impossible that he loves her without being jealous of her. Take my advice, and pardon me. Go there no more!"

"I thank you, but I shall not take your advice. It would be discourteous to her, who receives me very well, and who enjoys my company as much as I enjoy hers. I shall not stop going there until she orders me to stop, or until the Count lets me know that my visits to his mistress offend him."

"He will never do that, for he would consider it humiliating."

The worthy officer then recounted to me all the injustices and arbitrary acts of violence which he had committed since he had fallen in love with the woman, who made him do whatever she wanted. Men whom he suspected of loving her dismissed from his service, others banished, others sent to prison, on specious pretexts.

"This man," he added, "who holds so high a post and who before he knew that Messalina was a model of justice and virtue, has become, since he made her acquaintance, unjust, violent, blind, scandalous."

Such a discourse should have affected me, but not at all. On leaving the officer I told him for politeness' sake that I would gradually stop going there, but I had no intention of doing so. When I asked him how he had learned that I went to Nina's, he answered with a smile that it was the talk of every coffeehouse. That same evening I went to her house, and I told her nothing about it. I still cannot understand it, for I was neither in love with her nor curious about her.

On November 14 I arrive at her house at the usual hour, and I see a man who is showing her miniatures; I look at him, and I see the infamous scoundrel Passano, or Pogomas.[9] The blood rushes to my head, but I control myself. I take Nina by the hand, I lead her into the next room, I tell her to send the vile creature away at once or I will leave at once and never return there in all my life.

"He is a painter."

"I know that, I am acquainted with him, I will tell you everything afterward, send him away now, or I will leave."

She calls her sister and tells her to dismiss the painter at once and tell him not to set foot in her house again. It was done instantly; her sister told us that when he left he had said that I would repent of it. I spent an hour telling her most of the grounds for complaint which I had against the monster.

The next day, November 15, I go to her house at the usual time, and I spend the two hours in the gayest conversation, Schizza's wife being always present. Midnight strikes, I leave. The door of her house was under the arcade which continued to the end of the street. I have scarcely gone twenty paces under the arcade, the night being very dark, when I am attacked by two men. I give a great leap back, I unsheathe my sword, shouting "Murder!" and thrusting it into the nearest body, after which I jump out of the arcade into the middle of the street across the low wall which bounded it. At the same time I hear the report of a gun or a pistol, I run, I fall, I rise without troubling to pick up my hat, and, still running and holding my naked sword in my hand, not knowing if I was wounded, I arrive at my inn breathless, I lay my sword, stained with blood up to the middle, on the counter, ordering the innkeeper to take charge of it. I tell the good old man all that has just happened to me, and at the same time I am relieved to find that the gun shot or pistol shot had missed me; but I find two unmistakable holes in my greatcoat, below the armpit.

"I am going to bed," I said to him, "and I leave you my greatcoat too. Tomorrow morning you shall come to the magistrate with me as my witness, to lay a charge of murder, for if a man has been killed it will be seen that I did it only to defend my life."

"I think you would do better to leave at once."

"Then you do not believe the thing happened as I have told you it did?"

"I believe every word of it; but leave, for I see from where the blow has come, and God knows what will happen to you."

"Nothing will happen to me. If I left, I should be pronounced guilty. Take care of my sword and my cloak. There has been an attempt to murder me. It is for the murderers to be afraid."

I go up to bed, and at seven o'clock in the morning I hear a knock on my door. I open it, and a police officer enters with the innkeeper.

"Give me all your papers," he says, "dress, and come with me. If you resist I will send downstairs for my men."

"By whose order have you come to demand my papers?"

"By order of the Government. They will be returned to you if there is nothing to prevent their being returned to you."

"And where am I to go with you?"

"To the Citadel, where you will be under arrest."

I open my trunk, and the man is astonished to see that it was at least two-thirds filled with notebooks. I take out my coats and my shirts, which I entrust to the innkeeper, and I leave him my trunk, giving him the keys to it. The officer tells me to pack a portmanteau with what I may need for the night, and he orders the innkeeper to send me a bed. He asks me if I have any papers in my pockets, and I say I have not, showing him that I have only my passports. He says with a bitter smile that it is above all my passports that he wants.

"My passports are sacred; I will give them to no one but the Governor-General, or you shall take my life. Respect your King: here is his passport, here is the Count of Aranda's, and here is the Venetian Ambassador's. They order you to respect me. You shall not have them until you have tied me hand and foot."

"Calm yourself. When you give them to me it is as if you gave them to His Excellency, and if you resist I will not have you tied hand and foot, but I will have you taken to the Palace,[10] where you will be obliged to hand them over in public. Give them to me, and I will write you a receipt."

The innkeeper told me that I would do better to yield, that I risked nothing, and that my passports could only speak in my favor, and I was persuaded. He wrote me a receipt, which I put in my portfolio, which he was kind enough to let me keep, and I left the inn with him, being followed by six constables, but at a distance. Remembering Madrid, I thought I was being treated humanely. The officer having told me that I could order the innkeeper to send me food, I told him to send me dinner and supper. He lent me an overcoat, for I did not want mine with two bullet holes in it, and on the way I told the police officer all that had happened to me at midnight. He listened attentively, never answering a word.

At the Citadel he turned me over to a military officer, who put me in a second-floor room without furniture, whose ungrated windows looked out on the square. A soldier locked me into it. A moment later a soldier brought me my night bag, and a quarter of an hour later I was brought an excellent bed with a coverlet of crimson damask and two others, for on the 16th of November the cold was beginning to be felt. Left alone, I gave myself to reflection.

''What sort of prison is this? What can it have to do with what happened to me at midnight? Nothing. My papers are to be examined, for reasons which, being completely innocent, I cannot guess, and I am put in a decent prison until they have been examined. So far so good. The attack on me is another matter. Even if the man I wounded has died, I have nothing to fear. The innkeeper's advice shows me that I have everything to fear if the cutthroats were ordered to kill me by someone who has unlimited power. He is right, but I must not suppose that. Should I have done well to take his advice and leave at once? No, because after such an incident I might have been followed, caught, and put in a far worse prison. This one is extremely mild. It will take only three or four days to examine my papers; I shall be freed, and they will be returned to me. My passports will be seen, and they will show that I am to be treated with respect. The attempt on my life cannot have come from a tyrannical order on the part of the only man who can give such an order in Barcelona, for he would not now be treating me so mildly. If the order came from him, he must have been informed at once that the attempt failed, and having me arrested was not the expedient to which he would best have resorted this morning. Should I write to Nina? Is one allowed to write here?''

Thus rehearsing a hundred arguments, lying on my bed, for I had not a single chair, and being able to reach no conclusion, I hear a noise outside and I open the window to see what it is. To my great surprise I see the scoundrel Passano conducted by a corporal and two soldiers into a room on the ground floor twenty paces from where I was. As he entered it the knave raised his eyes, and, seeing me, he laughed. This sudden apparition left me completely at a loss. Now I understood nothing. ''He told Nina's sister that I would repent. He must have made some slanderous accusation against me, and he is apparently being put in prison to testify to it.'' It was all that I could suppose.

I was brought a choice dinner, and the soldier, persuaded by a peso duro, which is worth exactly a hundred French sous, had a table and chair brought me. The same soldier brought me as much paper and as many pencils as I wanted; it was forbidden to bring pen and ink without the officer's permission. He also brought me candles and a candlestick; I passed my time making geometrical calculations. I had him sup with me, and he promised to speak well of me the next day to a soldier who was a friend of his and who would serve me faithfully. The guard was changed at eleven o'clock. My prison was mild; it cost me a great deal; but I had nearly three hundred doblones in my purse. I consoled myself by thinking that it would all be over at any moment. On the morning of the fourth day an officer enters my room and tells me sadly that he brings bad news.

''I did not expect it in this place. What now, Señor?''

''I am ordered to put you in the Tower.'' [11]

''Me?''

"None other."

"Then I have been found to be a great criminal. Let us go, Señor."

He orders two soldiers to carry everything I had there to the Tower, and two others and a corporal conduct me to the Tower, which was a hundred paces from where I was. It was raining in torrents. I see a round cell, a sort of cellar paved with stone, with four or five slits high up and two inches wide, through which came a sufficiency of light. The officer said that I had only to order what I wanted to eat once a day, for at night no one was allowed to have his cell opened. I think he called it a *calabozo*.[12]

"Who will bring me lights?"

"Keep an oil lamp always burning, and that will suffice you, for books are not allowed here. When you are brought your dinner, the officer on duty will come to open the pasty or the fowl, for there might be letters in them; and here it is permitted neither to write nor to receive letters."

"Were you given these orders expressly for me?"

"No, these are the customary regulations here. You will have a sentinel always in sight at your door, to whom you may talk."

"Then the door will be open?"

"Certainly not."

"And cleanliness?"

"The officer who will have dinner brought to you will come up with a soldier who for a trifle will make your bed and take away anything that may inconvenience you."

"May I make architectural plans with a pencil?"

"As many as you please."

"Then order paper brought me. Here is some money."

"I can do you the favor. I will tell the officer who will go on guard duty."

When he saw that I had everything there which had been in the room in the barracks, he went away sadly, trying to encourage me and advising me to be patient, as if I could have been anything else. He shut the heavy door himself, and through a square, grated window ten inches wide I saw a soldier standing guard.

The officer who came at noon brought me paper and cut up a fowl for me. He put the fork into the dishes in which there were ragouts to see if there were letters at the bottom of them. There was food enough for six. I told him that he would do me honor if he would dine with me; he replied that it was absolutely forbidden, and he made the same reply when I asked him for the newspaper. The lucky soldiers were my guards, for I gave them food and excellent wine. I was very curious to know if I was living at my own expense, or if it was Nina who was paying; but that was impossible, for the waiter from the inn had to leave my dinner at the guardhouse.

It was there that in forty-two days I wrote in pencil and without books my entire confutation[13] of the *History of the Government of Venice* written by Amelot de la Houssaye,[14] putting off quoting from it until, restored to freedom, I could work with the author I was refuting under my eyes. What surprised me one day, and almost made me laugh, was the soldier whom I saw on guard duty at my door. The thing seemed to me impossible. Here is the story

An Italian named Tadini[15] came to Warsaw while I was there, with letters of recommendation to Tomatis and to me. He said that he was an oculist. The person who recommended him to me was an actress in Dresden, who recommended him as such. Tomatis sometimes gave him dinner; not being rich, I could only give him kind words and a cup of coffee when he came at my breakfast time. He talked to everyone about his operations; he denigrated the oculist who had been established in Warsaw for twenty years, saying that he did not know how to remove a cataract, and the other countered by calling him a charlatan who did not know how the eye was constructed. Tadini asked me to speak in his favor to a lady whose cataract, which the other had removed, had recurred; she was blind in the eye which had been operated on and which was again covered over; but she saw all that she needed to see with the other. I told Tadini that I would have no part in the matter. He told me that he had spoken to her, and that he had mentioned me as someone who could vouch for him.

"You did very wrong, for in that respect I would not vouch for the most learned of men, and I know nothing about you. In your profession you should need no one's recommendation; you should cry aloud *operibus credite* ['let my works bear witness'].[16] That should be your motto."

Tadini, put out by my argument, shows me a quantity of testimonials which I might have read if the first one he handed me had not been from a person who bore witness *urbi et orbi* ("to the city and the world")[17] that Signor Tadini had cured him of *gutta serena*.[18] I laugh, and I ask him to leave. Some days later I find him dining with me at the house of the lady whose left eye was covered by a large cataract. I am cordial to him, and I let him talk his fill, but intending to find an opportunity to warn the lady not to trust him. I saw that she had almost resolved to have the cataract removed; but since he had mentioned me she wanted me to be present beforehand at a discussion between him and the other oculist, who arrived at dessert. It was then that I prepared to listen with great pleasure to the argument between the two professors. The old oculist, who was German but who spoke French well, attacked Tadini in Latin. Tadini stopped him by saying that the lady should be able to understand what they were saying, and I said that Tadini was right. Tadini did not understand a word of Latin.

The German oculist began reasonably enough by saying it was true that removing the cataract assured the doctor and the patient that it would not return, but that the operation was less certain and, in addition, might leave the patient blind even so, because of the irreparable loss of the crystalline humor. Tadini, instead of denying this, for the German was wrong, was stupid enough to take from his pocket a small box in which were small round objects which looked like lenses; they were highly polished and made of very pure crystal.

"What are they?" the old oculist asked.

"They are what I possess the skill to put under the cornea to replace the crystalline lens."

At that the German burst into laughter so loud, so long, and so often repeated that the lady could not but do likewise. For my part, ashamed to be thought the sponsor of so stupid a beast, I looked at him sadly, saying nothing. Tadini, taking my silence as proof that I was persuaded that the German had no reason to laugh at him, thought he could retrieve the situation by calling on me to give my opinion.

"My opinion is that, the difference between a tooth and the crystalline lens being very great, you are wrong to believe that one can replace the crystalline lens in the eye between the retina and the vitreous humor as you have perhaps placed a false tooth in a jaw."

"Sir, I have never replaced anyone's teeth."

So saying, the unmannerly brute rises and leaves. We continued to laugh, and the lady was thoroughly determined to see no more of the dangerous man; but the oculist was not satisfied with despising the impostor in silence, he thought him a danger; he had him summoned before the medical faculty to take an examination in his knowledge of the structure of the eye, and he printed in the gazette a humorous article on inserting the crystalline lens into the eye between the cornea and the retina, naming the wonderful artist who was then in Warsaw and who performed the operation as easily as a dentist replaced a tooth. The desperate Tadini waited for the oculist I forget where, and, sword in hand, forced him to take refuge in a house. He must have left on foot the same day, for he did not return to the room in which he was lodging.

So what a surprise it was, and how I wanted to laugh, when, going to the little window of the *calabozo,* where I was dying of boredom, I saw the oculist Tadini, dressed in white, with a bayonet fixed to the muzzle of his gun! I have never decided which of us should have been the more surprised—whether I seeing the oculist as the sentry at the door of my cell, or he seeing me in the depths of a tower and in a way under his guard. The fact is that he was thunderstruck when, despite the darkness, he recognized me, and that he felt no desire to laugh, whereas I did nothing but laugh during the whole of the two hours he stayed there. I gave him a good dinner and good wine and an écu, promising that I would do as much for him each time he came to guard me, but I had him only four times, for there were intrigues to be posted at my door in the daytime. Tadini amused me by telling me of all the misfortunes which had befallen him during the three years since we had seen each other in Warsaw. He had been to Cracow, Vienna, Munich, Strassburg, Paris, Toulouse, and finally to Barcelona, where the Catalan laws[19] had shown no mercy on his qualifications as an oculist. Having no recommendations, nor a diploma from any university to testify to his knowledge of the eye, and having refused to take an examination which was to be given in Latin, for the Latin language had nothing to do with diseases of the eye, he was not allowed simply to go elsewhere a free man, he was made a soldier. He confided to me that he would desert at the first opportunity. He consoled me by saying that since Warsaw he had said no more about his crystalline lenses, though he felt certain that they would succeed; he was convinced of it; and he had not performed the experiment, which, despite the lack of arguments for it, was absolutely necessary. I never learned what became of the poor fellow.

On December 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents,[20] exactly six weeks after the day I was imprisoned, the officer on duty entered my cell and told me to dress and go with him.

"Am I to be released?"

"I know nothing about it. I shall deliver you to an official of the Government, who is in the guardhouse."

I dress quickly, I put what I had in my portmanteau, I leave everything there, I follow him, he turns me over to the same officer who had brought me there, who takes me to the Palace, where a chancellery clerk shows me my trunk, gives me the keys to it, and tells me that all the papers which had been in it were there. After that he gives me my three passports, saying that they are authentic.

"I know that, and I knew it."

"There were strong reasons for believing the contrary. Look at this."

He shows me a document from Madrid, dated December 23 and signed by a name which I do not remember, certifying the authenticity of my three passports. I read it,[21] I hand it back to him, and I thank him. He goes on as follows:

"*Vuestra Señoría*[22] is justified so far as the passports are concerned. I am ordered to tell you that you must leave Barcelona in three days, and the Principality of Catalonia in eight. However, you are at liberty to go to Madrid to complain at the Court, if you think you have grounds for complaint."

"Señor, I shall go to France. Will you be so good as to give me in writing the order you have just conveyed to me?"

"That is not necessary. My name is Manuel Badillo,[23] Secretary to the Government. Señor ...... here will escort you to the 'Santa Maria' and to the same room from which he took you. You will find everything there that you left there, and everything you have left in the Tower. You are free. Good-by, Señor. Tomorrow I will send you a passport signed by His Excellency and myself.''

I return to the officer dressed in blue the receipt for my passports, and, followed by a manservant carrying my trunk, we go to the ''Santa Maria.'' On the way I see a placard announcing the opera for that evening, and I look forward with pleasure to attending it.

The host of the ''Santa Maria'' is glad to see me, he has a fire lighted for me at once, for an unusually strong north wind was chilling the air, he assures me that no one has entered my room except himself, and in the officer's presence he gives me back my naked sword, but from which the blood had been cleaned, and my greatcoat. What surprises me is the hat I had lost when I fell during my escape. The other officer, after seeing that everything I had had in the Tower had been brought, asks me if I acknowledge that all my belongings have been returned to me. I reply that I am sure of it.

''Señor, I wish you good day, and a good journey, whether to France or to Madrid.''

That, my dear reader, is the whole of the strange story of what befell me in Barcelona; you have never read anything more true, or more faithfully narrated, and it is known in all its circumstances to a number of people who still live in that city, all of them worthy of credit. Here is what followed.

I tell the innkeeper that I will dine at noon, and I go out with the same manservant with whom Nina had furnished me. I go to the post office to see if I shall find the letters which must have been sent to me marked *poste restante,* and I find five or six. Yet another surprise: the same Government which summarily seizes a man's person and all his papers does not permit itself to remove the letters addressed to him from the post office. The letters were all dated long before, from Paris, Venice, Warsaw, and Madrid. I had no reason to suppose that a single letter to me had been intercepted.

I go back to the inn to read my letters at my ease and to have a talk with the innkeeper which I expected would be of great interest to me. The first thing for which I ask him is my reckoning, and he replies that I owe him nothing. He shows me the whole account from before my imprisonment duly paid, and he tells me that he had been instructed by the same emissary to take nothing from me for anything he would supply me with in prison and, after that, until I left Barcelona.

"Then you knew how long I was to remain in the Tower?"

"I never knew anything. I was paid at the end of every week."

"At whose behest?"

"You know."

"Have you received any notes for me?"

"None."

"And the manservant?"

"I paid him and dismissed him; at present I have no orders in that respect."

"I want him to accompany me as far as Perpignan."

"I believe you are doing well to leave Spain, for in Madrid you will not obtain justice."

"What was said about the attempt on my life?"

"They said that the shot which was heard was fired by you; and that it must have been you who bloodied your sword, for no one was found either killed or wounded."

"That's as amusing as it is extraordinary. And my hat?"

"It was sent to me three days later; I sent everything to the Government, together with your sword and your greatcoat, on the morning of your arrest, as you ordered me to do."

"What an imbroglio! But was it known that I was in the Tower?"

"The whole town knew it. But two good reasons were given for it; one publicly, and the other was whispered about. The public one was that your passports were forged. The secret one, which, if you ask me, was the true one, was that you spent your nights at Nina's. I swore to everyone that you had never spent a night away; but that makes no difference. You went there. However, as it turns out, you did well not to leave when I tried to persuade you to go, for now you are justified in every respect."

"I shall go to the opera this evening, but not in the parterre. See to engaging me a box."

"I will do so. I hope you will not go to La Nina's."

"I shall not, that is certain."

Toward noon a young man, a banker's clerk, brought me a letter which gave me a fresh surprise. I open it, and I find the bills of exchange which I had drawn in Genoa in favor of Signor Agostino Grimaldi della Pietra.[24] His letter was short. Here is a translation of it, which I make from the original today:

"Passano is vainly trying to persuade me to send these bills to Barcelona to get you arrested. I send them to you as a present, and to convince you that I am not a man to increase the troubles of those whom Fortune persecutes. Genoa, this 30th November 1768."

Here was the fourth Genoese[25] whose conduct toward me had been truly heroic. Must I, I asked myself, for the sake of four such men of honor, forgive the Genoese Passano? Certainly not. I must deliver them from such an unworthy fellow countryman. But my wish to do so came to nothing. I learned some years later that the monster died in poverty in Genoa. But Signor Grimaldi's letter gave me urgent reason to find out where Passano was then. He had remained a prisoner in the barracks when I was taken to the Tower; I had to know where he was, either to attempt to crush him if he was in a position to harm me, or, having such a cutthroat as my enemy, to be on my guard. I confided my concern to the innkeeper, who ordered my manservant to make inquiries. Here is what I learned before I left Barcelona, though I could never learn more.

Ascanio Pogomas, for so he called himself, had been set free toward the end of November and had left by sea on a ship which sailed for Toulon three or four days after his release from the Citadel. On the same day I wrote Signor Grimaldi a four-page letter in which he must have found the quintessence of gratitude. It was a matter of so couching my thanks that they would pay him for a thousand zecchini[26] which I acknowledged that I owed him by my two bills, with which, if he had done what the monster told him to do, he would have caused me great distress.

But now for another piece of news which set Barcelona talking.

Two hours after noon all the placards advertising the opera for that evening were changed. The new placards announced that the theater would be closed until the day after New Year's because two of the leading actors were ill. Such an order could only come directly from the Viceroy, for everyone still called him so, saying that Catalonia was a Kingdom, not a Principality.[27] I said nothing, but I laid the suspension to my door. My character being what it is, I made a resolve of which I thought myself incapable: I resolved not to go out. It was a way to make the Count of Ricla blush for his tyranny, to reproach him for his blindness and the iniquities into which he had been driven by the unfortunate love which had reduced him to becoming the most unjust of men whereas before he was considered the justest. Petrarch says:

> *Amor che fa gentile un cor vilano*
>
> ("Love which makes a base heart
> gentle").[28]

Love had done the opposite to Ricla, whom it had found a decent man.

Nor did I write to the infamous Nina, whose black soul I had recognized on the first day I had made her acquaintance in Valencia. I left her free to boast that she had kept me. It was none the less true that she had worked my ruin and deliberately brought me to the verge of an abyss which was to have cost me my life. My reader will learn more about this dark business four months hence.

I should have left the same day, but for a superstitious fancy on my part. I wanted my departure from Spain to take place on the last day of the unlucky year that I had spent there. I devoted the whole of the three days to writing some thirty letters to all my most valued friends and acquaintances. Don Miguel de Cevaillos, Don Diego de la Secada, and the Count of Peralada all came to see me, but without meeting one another. Señor de la Secada was the uncle of the Countess A B [29] whom I had known in Milan. The three noblemen all related to me a most remarkable and singular circumstance, as are all the others which enter into the story I am telling. On the 26th of the same month, that is, two days before I was released from prison, the Abate Marchisio,[30] Envoy from the Duke of Modena, asked the Count of Ricla, in the presence of several people, if he could visit me to give me a letter which he could deliver into no hands but mine, which he regretted, for he had to leave for Madrid the next morning. Everyone was astonished that the Count made no reply to the Abate, who did in fact leave the next morning, the day before my release. I wrote to the Abate, whom I did not know, in Madrid, and I received no answer. I was never able to learn what the letter was which he had to deliver to me personally.

Everything in this affair being mysterious and inconceivable, it follows that I was involved in it only because of the despotism of the jealous Count Ricla, whom the infamous Nina had amused herself by convincing that I was in love with her and that she granted me her favors. Sending my passports to Madrid was nothing but a pretext, for in a week or ten days they could have been sent there and returned, supposing that someone had accused me of having forged them. It might have been a calumny on the part of Pogomas, supposing that he had learned that I had a passport from the King of Spain, which I could never have had without first having one from the Venetian Ambassador. The wretch might have said that I could not possibly have such a passport since I was in disfavor with the State Inquisitors. Despite his notion and his conclusion from it, I had nevertheless obtained one, and in the following fashion:

Having resolved at the end of August to leave my charming Doña Ignacia and Madrid for ever, I applied for a passport to the Count of Aranda, who answered me that, since he was bound by the regulations, he could not give it to me until I had first received a passport from the Venetian Ambassador; he said that the Ambassador could not refuse it to me. Satisfied with this decision, I go to the residence of the Ambassador, Signor Querini, who was then at San Ildefonso.[31] I tell the porter that I need to speak to Signor Olivieri,[32] the Secretary of Embassy; he announces me, and the idiot takes it on himself not to receive me. I write him the next day that I had not gone to Signor Querini's residence to pay court to him, the Secretary, but to demand a passport which he could not refuse me. I write him my name, and the very insignificant title of Doctor of Law, which he could not refuse me, and I ask him to leave it with the porter, to whom I would go for it the next day. The next day the porter tells me by word of mouth that the Ambassador had left an order that I was not to be given a passport.

It was then that I wrote to the Marchese Grimaldi[33] at San Ildefonso, and at the same time to the Duke of Losada, asking them both to tell the Venetian Ambassador to send me a passport, for, failing that, I should make public the shameful means which his uncle the Ambassador[34] had adopted to disgrace me. I do not know if the Duke and the Marchese showed my letter to the Ambassador, Querini, but I know that Secretary Olivieri sent me the passport, which Doña Ignacia put into my hands. I read the passport, and I see my name without any title at all, a thing which is noticed in Spain, for only a servant is refused the *Don,* as we refuse him the *Signor* and the French the *Monsieur,* while I was accorded only the *Sieur*. Burning with anger at this mark of contempt, I wrote a letter to Don Domingo Varnier, who, being on duty, was then at Court, and I send him my diploma as a Prothonotary[35] in which I am styled Cavaliere of the Golden Spur and Doctor of Law. In addition I send him the offending passport, and I ask him to convey my letter and my complaint to the Marchese Grimaldi if the Ambassador continued to insult me. Three days later he sent me back my diploma, saying that he had not needed to speak to the Minister, for the Ambassador had been convinced as soon as he saw my titles, of which he had not known before. He ended his letter by saying that the Secretary of Embassy would send me such a passport as I had a right to demand, whereupon it would rest with me to obtain one from the King through the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The next day I received the passport in the form in which I wanted it; I sent it to Don Varnier in San Ildefonso, who sent it back to me with the King's, signed by the Marchese Grimaldo de' Grimaldi,[36] which enabled me to obtain a passport from the Count of Aranda, who, when I told him the story, deigned to smile. Correspondence between Madrid and the Court when it is at one of the three Sitios[37] costs nothing. It is all at the King's expense. The organization, or the regulation, of the letter post is also different from what I have found all over Europe. Everyone can write letters to any country in the world and drop them in the public box without paying a copper; the letters are sent with the greatest punctuality; but one pays very high to obtain the answers from the post office. An answer from Petersburg costs a ducat. If the person to whom it is sent leaves it there, lacking the ducat or from parsimony, he cannot obtain one from Cadiz which would cost him only ten sous. If he goes to ask for it, he is refused it unless he also takes all the other letters addressed to him. The same thing is done in Naples.

On the last day of the year I left Barcelona, with my manservant sitting behind my barouche. I had contracted to reach Perpignan by short stages on the third day of the year 1769. My coachman was a Piedmontese. Perpignan is forty short leagues from Barcelona.[38] The next day at the inn where I dined the coachman came in with my servant and asked me if I had any reason to suspect that I was being followed.

"It is possible. Why do you ask?"

"There are three villainous-looking men, on foot and armed, whom I noticed yesterday when we left Barcelona, who spent last night in the stable of the inn where we lodged, who ate here today, and who left three quarters of an hour ago. They talk to no one, they strike me as being shady characters."

"What can we do to protect ourselves from being murdered, or to free ourselves from a suspicion which troubles me?"

"Set out late and stop at an inn I know a league this side of the usual stopping place, to which the fellows will have gone to wait for us. If I see them coming back to lodge in the poor inn at which we shall be, I shall have no more doubt; they are cutthroats bent on harming us."

I find his reasoning sound. I leave later, I travel most of the way on foot, and at five o'clock we stop where we find very poor accommodations but where we do not see[39] their three faces. At eight o'clock, when I was supping, my servant comes in and tells me that the three cutthroats are in the stable, where they are drinking with our coachman. My hair stands on end at the news, for there was no more doubt. We had nothing to fear at the inn, but very much to fear at the border, which we were to reach that evening. I urge my servant to show no sign, and to arrange for the coachman to come to speak to me when the fellows fall asleep. It was at ten o'clock that the coachman came; he told me point-blank that the men would murder us as soon as we got to the French border.

"After drinking a bottle at my expense," he said, "one of them asked me why I had not gone to the other post station, where we should have been better lodged, and I replied that you were cold and that it was late. I could have asked them why they did not stop there themselves, and where they are going, but I took good care not to. I only asked them if the road to Perpignan was good, and they answered that it is excellent and that one is not even aware that one is crossing the Pyrenees. They are asleep on bales of straw, wrapped in their cloaks, near my mules. We will leave before daybreak; but after them, of course, and we will dine at the usual stopping place; but after dinner, if you will trust me, we will leave after them, and I will drive at a trot by another road, and we shall be in France at midnight. I am sure of what I say."

If I could have engaged an escort of four armed men I should not have taken the coachman's advice; but in the situation I was in I had to do as he said. We found the three bravoes where the driver had told me they would be, and as we went downstairs I had glanced at them. They looked what they were. They left a quarter of an hour later, and a half hour after them my worthy coachman drove back for a quarter of a league, then hired a peasant to guide him, who got up behind to tell him if he went wrong. We made eleven leagues in seven hours; it was ten o'clock when we arrived at a good inn in a considerable village in France, where we had nothing more to fear. I slept well and dined there the next day, and that evening I was at the post house inn in Perpignan, sure that I had saved my life and that I owed it to my coachman. I could not guess from where the order to murder me might have come; but the reader will see how I learned everything three weeks later. At Perpignan I dismissed my manservant, whom I recompensed liberally, and I wrote my brother in Paris my good luck in escaping from the plots of three cutthroats. I told him to answer me at Aix-en-Provence, *poste restante,* where I should spend two weeks in order to see the Marquis d'Argens,[40] who ought to be there.

The next day I slept at Narbonne, and on the day after that at Béziers. From Narbonne to Béziers is only five leagues; but the excellent dishes which the most amiable of all hostesses had had prepared for me at dinner persuaded me to sup there with her and her whole family. Béziers was a city whose delightful situation was apparent despite the season. Fortunate site, a fit retreat for a philosopher who had renounced all the vanities of the world, and no less so for a voluptuary who wanted to enjoy all the pleasures of the senses without having to be very rich. The inhabitants of the place are all intelligent, the women are extremely beautiful, and the cuisine is as exquisite for flesh food as it is for fish. One drinks excellent wines, which the accursed vintners have not tampered with. I spent the next day in Pézenas, and on the day after that I arrived in Montpellier, going to lodge at the "White Horse,"[41] where I intended to spend a week.

It was there that I left my coachman, giving him a gratuity of a doblón de a ocho, which encouraged him to remain an honest man. I supped at the public table, where there were as many made dishes as guests. Nowhere in France does one eat better than in Montpellier. The next morning I went to breakfast at a coffeehouse, where I struck up an acquaintance with a stranger who, when he heard me say that I wanted to meet some professors,[42] himself took me to the house of one who enjoyed a considerable reputation and who had the urbanity which the man of letters in France rightly believes to be the finest jewel in Apollo's[43] crown. The true man of letters must be the friend of all who love letters, and he is so in France even more than in Italy; in Germany he is mysterious and reserved; he is too much inclined to think he must assert no pretensions, and because of this mistaken idea he does not gain the friendship of those who go to admire him at close range and to imbibe his doctrine.

I am told that the troupe of actors is very good; I go, and I find it so. I breathed again, finding myself in France after so many misfortunes had assailed me in Spain; I seemed to be reborn, and in fact I felt rejuvenated. I congratulated myself that at the play I had seen several very pretty girls and not one of them had roused desires in me. I wanted to find La Castel-Bajac,[44] more in the hope of rejoicing in her prosperous state than to renew a liaison which, if she had become reconciled with her husband, I thought criminal. I did not know how to go about finding her. I had written to her under the name of Mademoiselle Blasin; but that was not her name; she had always refused to tell me it. By making particular inquiries I feared I should be indiscreet and do her harm. Knowing that her husband must be an apothecary, I decided to become acquainted with them all; in this way I found her on the third day. I talked with all of them about the different practice of pharmacy in foreign countries, and as soon as I had reason to suppose that the one with whom I was speaking might be her husband I left, hoping that he would tell his wife about the traveler whom she might have known; I was sure that she could not but be curious about him. When the apothecary was not in his shop, I at once learned all his family affairs from the shopboy, and if the circumstances did not fit my case I went to another shop.

In this way I found her. On the third day I received a note from her, saying that she had seen me talking with her husband in a shop which she named. She told me to return there at such-and-such an hour and to be guided in my replies by her husband's questions, never telling him anything more than that I had known her under the name of Mademoiselle Blasin, and always as a seller of laces, in England, at Spa, at Leipzig, at Vienna, and that I had taken an interest in her in the last of those cities only to procure her the protection of the Ambassador.[45] She ended her note by saying that her husband himself would have the pleasure of surprising me by presenting his wife to me.

I followed her instructions. I went to his shop immediately after dinner, and the good man asked me if I had anywhere known a young seller of laces from Montpellier by the name of Blasin.

"Yes, but I do not know if she was from Montpellier. Pretty, well-behaved, and doing a good business. I saw her several times here and there in Europe, and in Vienna I was able to be of use to her. Her conduct gained her the affection and esteem of all the ladies with whom she had dealings. It was even at the house of a Duchess that I met her in England."

"Would you know her if you saw her?"

"Of course! Such a pretty woman! Is she in Montpellier? If she is, mention me to her. My name is So-and-so."

"You shall speak to her yourself."

He tells me to follow him upstairs, and he introduces me.

"What, Mademoiselle! You are here? I am delighted to see you again."

"Monsieur, she is not 'Mademoiselle'; she is my wife, by your leave, and I beg you not to let that keep you from kissing her."

"With great pleasure. So you found a husband in Montpellier! I congratulate you both, and I am grateful to Chance. Tell me if you had a good journey from Vienna to Lyons.''

She then began telling me everything she wanted to, and she found me as good an actor as herself. Our pleasure at seeing each other again was very great; but the pleasure the apothecary felt when he saw the respect with which I treated her was even greater. We conversed for an hour, in so natural a way that her husband never for a moment suspected that there had been a bond of love between us. She asked me if I thought of spending the Carnival in Montpellier, and she expressed regret when I told her that I should leave the next day. Her husband said that it could not be, to which she added that it should not be and that I absolutely must do her husband the ''honor'' of giving him two days so that I could come to their family dinner on the next day but one. After standing on ceremony for some time, I let myself be persuaded.

Instead of two days I gave them four. I dined and supped there. I thought her husband's mother as worthy of respect for her intelligence as for her age; like her son, she appeared to have forgotten everything which could prevent her from feeling all the affection for her daughter-in-law which the latter could ask. She told me herself, at times when we were alone, that she was happy, and if she said so she must have been so, for it is not possible in this world to be happy without feeling it. She never went out except to take the air with her mother, and she dearly loved her husband. During those four days I tasted the pure joy of true friendship, and the memory of the sweet life we had led together never once had the power to rekindle in us the desire to renew it. We did not need to communicate our thoughts to each other in order to know them. On the day on which I dined with her she told me that if I needed fifty louis she knew where to find them, and I answered that she should keep them for some other time when I should have the pleasure of seeing her again. I left Montpellier certain that my visit had increased the esteem which her husband and her mother-in-law felt for her. I congratulated myself that I could be happy without doing wrong.

On the day after I said good-by to one who owed me her happiness, I slept at Nîmes, where I spent three days with a most learned naturalist. He was Monsieur Séguier,[46] the intimate friend of the Marchese Maffei, of Verona, until his death. In the wonders of his collection he showed me the immensity of nature. Nîmes is a French city in which a stranger can profitably stay. There is excellent food for the mind in considerable monuments,[47] and for the heart in the fair sex. I was invited to a ball, where I enjoyed the privilege of a foreigner, a privilege unknown in Spain and Germany, where being a foreigner is counted against one.

On leaving Nîmes I decided to go to spend the whole of the Carnival at Aix, the seat of a Parlement,[48] where the nobility enjoys a distinguished reputation. I wanted to make the acquaintance of it. I lodged at the "Three Dolphins,"[49] if I am not mistaken; there I found a Spanish Cardinal who was on his way to Rome for the conclave to elect a Pope in place of Rezzonico.[50]

CHAPTER VI

My stay in Aix-en-Provence; serious illness; the unknown woman who takes care of me. The Marquis d'Argens. Cagliostro. My departure. Letter from Henriette. Marseilles. History of La Nina. Nice. Turin. Lugano. Madame de . . . .

MY ROOM being separated from His Eminence's only by a very thin partition, I heard him at supper severely reprimanding someone who must be his principal servant and in charge of their journey. The reason which provoked the Cardinal's just anger was that the man economized at dinner and supper as if his master were the poorest beggar in Spain.

"My Lord, I do not economize at all, but it is impossible to spend more, unless I make the innkeepers charge me twice the proper prices of the meals they give you, which you yourself declare to abound in everything you can want in the way of game, fish, and wines."

"That may be so, but with a little ingenuity you could send messengers ahead to order meals in places where I then would not stop, and which would be paid for nevertheless, you could have dishes prepared for twelve when we would only be six, and above all you could see to it that three tables are always served, one for us, one for my officers, and the third for my servants. I see here that you tip the postilions only twenty sous; I blush for it; in addition to what is prescribed for the guides, you must give at least an écu each time, and when you are given change from a louis you must leave it on the table. I have seen you put it in your pocket. That sort of thing is beggarly. It will be said at Versailles, at Madrid, at Rome—for everything becomes known—that Cardinal de la Cerda is a beggar or a miser. Understand that I am neither. Either stop dishonoring me, or leave."

Such is the character of the great Spanish nobleman; but, all in all, the Cardinal was right. I saw him set off the next day. What a man! Not only was he short, ill-built, tanned, but his face was so ugly and so common-looking that I understood his need to make himself respected by lavishness and to distinguish himself by his decorations, for otherwise he would have been taken for a groom. Any man who has a revolting exterior must do everything to keep the eyes which see him from examining his person. External ornaments are an excellent remedy for this sorry gift of nature. Display is the only weapon which the ugly command to fight beauty.

The next day I inquired for the Marquis d'Argens.[1] I was told that he was in the country, visiting his brother the Marquis d'Éguilles,[2] President of the Parlement; and I went there. The Marquis, famous rather for the unvarying friendship with which the late Frederick II [3] honored him than for his writings,[4] which no one reads any longer, was already old. Very voluptuous, a perfect gentleman, amusing, amiable, a determined Epicurean, he lived with the actress Cochois,[5] whom he had married and who had proved worthy of it. As a wife, she considered it her duty to be her husband's first servant. In any case, the Marquis d'Argens was deeply learned, thoroughly versed in Greek and Hebrew, endowed by nature with a most excellent memory, and hence full of erudition. He received me very well in consequence of what his friend Lord Marischal [6] had written to him, he at once presented me to his wife and to President d'Éguilles, his brother, an illustrious member of the Parlement of Aix, moderately rich, a lover of literature, whose virtuous life followed rather from his character than from his religion—which is saying a great deal, for he was sincerely devout, though a man of intelligence. A friend to the Jesuits to the point of himself being a Jesuit "of the short robe,"[7] as it is called, he dearly loved his brother, pitying him and hoping that efficacious grace would bring him back to the bosom of the Church. His brother smilingly encouraged him to hope, and they both took care not to offend each other by talking of religion. I was presented to the numerous company, which consisted of relatives, both men and women, all of them amiable and polished, as are all the Provençal nobility, which possesses these attributes in the highest degree. There was a small stage on which plays were performed, the fare was excellent, there were strolls in the garden despite the season. In Provence winter is unpleasant only when it is windy; unfortunately a north wind blows very often.

A lady from Berlin, the widow of a nephew of the Marquis d'Argens, was there with her brother, whose name was Gotzkowski.[8] Very young and very gay, he had thrown himself into all the pleasure afforded by the President's house, without paying any attention to all the religious devotions which were performed every day. A professed heretic when he happened to think of the Church, and playing the flute in his room when everyone in the house was attending the mass which the Jesuit confessor of the whole family celebrated every day, he laughed at everything; but the same was not true of the young widow his sister. Not only had she turned Catholic, she had become so devout that the whole household considered her a saint. It had been the Jesuit's doing. She was not more than twenty-two years of age. I learned from her brother that her husband, whom she adored, dying in her arms and lucid until his last moment, like all who die of consumption, had said to her, as his last words, that he could not hope to see her again in eternity unless she made up her mind to become a Catholic.

His words having thus been engraved in her memory, she had determined she would leave Berlin to visit her relatives on her late husband's side. No one had dared to oppose her wish. She persuaded her nineteen-year-old brother to accompany her, and, as soon as she was in Aix and her own mistress, she confided her vocation to her relatives, all of them devout believers. The disclosure had brought joy to the house; she was made much of, she was caressed, she was assured that there was no other way for her to see her husband again *in body* and in soul, the Jesuit had been able to ''proselytize'' her, as the Marquis d'Argens said to me, without needing to ''catechumenize'' her, for she had already been baptized and she had abjured. This budding saint was ugly. Her brother at once became my friend. It was he who, coming to Aix every day, introduced me at every house.

We were at least thirty at table. Excellent fare without profusion, the tone of good society, restrained and polished conversation which excluded not only equivocal allusions to the game of love but anything which could bring it to mind. I noticed that when such a remark escaped the Marquis d'Argens all the women made wry faces, and the father confessor quickly changed the subject. I should never have supposed that the man was either a Jesuit or a confessor, for, dressing as an abbé does in the country, he looked and acted neither part. The Marquis d'Argens had told me what he was. However, his presence in no way damped my natural gaiety. I told in decent terms the story of the image of the Blessed Virgin giving suck to the Infant Jesus, to which the Spaniards lost all their devotion when the scrupulous parish priest had her bosom covered by too opaque a veil.

I cannot explain what it was about the tone I gave my narrative which made all the ladies laugh. Their laughter so displeased the Jesuit that he took it upon himself to inform me that it was not permissible to tell stories in public which could bear an indecent interpretation. I thanked him by bowing, and the Marquis d'Argens, to change the subject, asked me what was the Italian name for a large force-meat pie which Madame d'Argens was serving and which the whole company declared excellent. I replied that we should call it *una crostata,* but that I did not know the name for the *béatilles* ("titbits") with which it was filled. They were little sausages, sweetbreads, mushrooms, artichoke hearts, fatted goose livers, and I know not what else. The Jesuit declared that by calling them *béatilles* I was making a mock of eternal bliss.[9] I could not keep from laughing loudly, and Monsieur d'Éguilles saw fit to come to my defense by saying that in good French *béatilles* was the generic term for all titbits of the sort.

Having thus differed from the director of his conscience, the Marquis wisely thought it best to talk of something else, and unfortunately he put the fat in the fire by asking me what Cardinal I thought would be made Pope.

"I would wager," I replied, "that it will be Father Ganganelli,[10] for he is the only Cardinal in the conclave who is a monk."

"By what necessity must it be a monk who is elected Pope?"

"Because only a monk is capable of committing the excess which Spain demands of the new Pontiff."

"You mean the suppression of the Jesuit order?"

"Exactly."

"Her demand will not be met."

"I hope so, for in the Jesuits I love my teachers; but I greatly fear it. I have seen a terrible letter. But aside from that, Cardinal Ganganelli will be Pope for a reason which will make you laugh but which is nevertheless very strong."

"What reason is that? Tell us, and we will laugh."

"He is the only Cardinal who doesn't wear a wig, and observe that since that Holy See has existed no Pope has ever worn a wig."

Since I said all this playfully, there was much laughter; but afterwards I was called on to speak seriously concerning the suppression of the order, and, when I repeated all that I had learned from the Abate Pinzi,[11] I saw the Jesuit turn pale.

"The Pope," he said, "cannot suppress the Jesuit order."

"Apparently, Abate, you did not study under the Jesuits, for their dictum is that the Pope can do everything, *et aliquid pluris* ['and somewhat more']."

Everyone thereupon thought that I did not know I was talking to a Jesuit; he did not answer me, and we spoke of other things. I was urged to stay for the performance of *Polyeucte*;[12] but I excused myself. I returned to Aix with Gotzkowski, who told me his sister's whole story and acquainted me with the characters of several members of Monsieur d'Éguilles's circle, with the result that I saw I could never adapt myself to it. But for this young man, who introduced me to some very agreeable people, I should have gone to Marseilles. Assemblies, suppers, balls, and very pretty girls made me spend the whole of the Carnival and part of Lent in Aix, always with Gotzkowski, who went back and forth from the country nearly every day to join me in parties of pleasure.

I had presented a copy of Homer's *Iliad* to Monsieur d'Argens, who knew Greek as well as he knew French, and an *Argenis*[13] in Latin to his adopted daughter,[14] who knew Latin. My *Iliad* had Porphyry's[15] scholia; it was a rare edition and very well bound. He had come to Aix to thank me, and I had to go again to dine in the country. Returning to Aix in an open chaise against a very strong north wind and without an overcoat, I arrived there chilled to the bone; and instead of going to bed I went with Gotzkowski to call on a woman who had a daughter fourteen years of age and beautiful as a star, who defied all the connoisseurs to make her see the light. Gotzkowski had tried the thing several times and had never succeeded; I laughed at him because I knew it was buffoonery[16] on the minx's part, and I went there with him that evening, determined to succeed, as I had done in England and at Metz. I believe I have written those two stories in their proper places.[17]

So we both set about the enterprise like seasoned warriors, the girl being at our disposal and, far from resisting, saying that she asked nothing better than that some man should rid her of her tiresome burden. Having at once seen that the difficulty we encountered came from her holding herself in a wrong posture, I should either have beaten her, as I had done to one of her sort in Venice twenty-five years earlier, or else have left; but not a bit of it, like a fool I determined to triumph over her by force, imagining that I was raping her. The age for exploits of that sort was long behind me. After vainly exhausting myself for two hours on end, I returned to my inn, leaving my friend there. I went to bed with a very severe pain in my right side, and after sleeping for six hours I woke feeling as ill as possible. Pleurisy had set in. An old physician who took care of me refused to bleed me. A violent cough began to torment me; the next morning I began spitting blood, and the disease made such strides in six or seven days that I confessed and received the last sacraments. It was on the tenth day, after I had been in a torpor for three, that the skillful old physician vouched for my life and assured all those who were concerned for me that I would recover; but I did not stop spitting blood until the eighteenth day. I then began a convalescence which lasted three weeks, and which I found more trying than the illness, for a sick person suffers but is not bored. To be bored without dôing anything takes intelligence, and an invalid has almost none. During the whole of this acute illness I was cared for and waited on day and night by a woman whom I neither knew nor had any idea who had sent her to me. In the state of apathy in which I was, I never tried to find out where she had come from; I saw that I was served to perfection, I waited to be cured in order to reward her and dismiss her. She was not old; but she was not of a figure to make me think of amusing myself; she had continued to sleep in my room until she saw that I was cured, and it was after Easter that, beginning to go out, I thought of paying her and sending her away.

When I dismissed her, well recompensed, I asked her who had sent her to nurse me, and she replied that it had been my physician. She left. Some days later I thanked the physician for having found me the woman, to whom I perhaps owed my life, and he replied that she had deceived me, for he did not know her. I asked the innkeeper's wife if she knew her, and she said she did not. No one could tell me either who the woman was or at whose instigation she had come to me. I did not learn it until I left Aix, and the reader will learn it in a quarter of an hour.

After my convalescence I did not fail to go to the post for my letters; and here is a strange piece of news which I learned by reading a letter from my brother, who wrote me from Paris in reply to the letter I had written him from Perpignan. He thanked me heartily for the letter I had written him because he had learned from it that I had not been murdered on the frontier of Catalonia.

"The person," he wrote me, "who gave me the fatal news as beyond doubt is one of your best friends, Count Manuzzi, an attaché at the Venetian Embassy."

Reading this revealed everything to me. My "best friend" had carried revenge so far as to hire three cutthroats to take my life. It was at that point that he made his first mistake. He was so sure of my death that he announced it as having already happened; if he had waited, he would have seen that, by announcing it before he was certain of it, he unmasked himself. When I came upon him in Rome two years later, and tried to convince him of his baseness, he denied everything, saying that he had received the news of it in Barcelona. But we will speak of that when we come to it.

The company at the public table being excellent, I dined and supped there every day. One day at dinner there was talk of a pair of pilgrims, a man and a woman, who had just arrived, who were Italians, who had come from Santiago de Compostela[18] on foot, and who must be persons of high rank, for, when they entered the city, they had distributed a great deal of money among the poor. The lady, we were told, was charming, only eighteen years of age; very tired, she had gone to bed at once. They were staying at our inn; we all became curious about them. As an Italian, it was for me to lead the band of us to visit the pair, who must be either fanatical zealots or rogues.

We find the female pilgrim sitting in an armchair, with the look of a person tired to exhaustion, and claiming our attention by her extreme youth, her beauty, which her melancholy increased, and a crucifix of some yellow metal, six inches long, which she held in her hands. She puts it down when we appear, and she rises to greet us graciously. The male pilgrim, who was fastening cockle shells[19] to his short cloak of black oiled cloth, does not stir; he seemed, glancing at his wife, to be telling us that we should be concerned only for her. He appeared to be five or six years older than she, he was short, well enough built, and his not unhandsome face expressed boldness, effrontery, cynicism, and deceit, in all which he differed entirely from his wife, whose countenance breathed nobility. The two strange creatures, who spoke

French only well enough to make themselves understood with difficulty, showed their relief when I spoke to them in Italian. She told me that she was a native of Rome, and she did not need to tell me so, for her pretty speech assured me of it; as for him, I put him down as a Sicilian, despite his telling me that he was from Naples. His passport, dated at Rome, gave his name as Balsamo;[20] hers was Serafina Feliciani, a name which she never changed. The reader will find Balsamo become Cagliostro ten years hence.

She told us that she was going back to Rome with her husband, glad to have made her devotions to St. James of Compostela and to Our Lady of the Pillar,[21] having gone there on foot and returned the same way, always living on alms, having vainly sought poverty in order to have and to gain more merit in the eyes of God, whom she had so greatly offended in her lifetime.

"It was in vain," she said to me, "that I never asked for more than a copper, I was always given silver and gold, so that, to fulfill our vow, whenever we entered a city we always had to give the poor all the money we had left, which, if we had kept it, would have made us guilty of failing to trust in Eternal Providence."

She told us that her husband, who was very strong, had not suffered, but that she had endured the greatest torments, having always to travel on foot and sleep in bad beds, almost always fully dressed for fear of contracting some skin disease of which it would prove very difficult to be cured.

It seemed to me likely that she mentioned this detail only to make us curious to see the cleanliness of her skin elsewhere than on her arms and hands, whose whiteness and perfect cleanliness she let us see gratis in the meanwhile. Her face had only one defect: her slightly rheumy eyelids marred the tenderness of her beautiful blue eyes. She told us that she intended to rest for three days and then leave for Rome, traveling by way of Turin to make her devotions at the adoration of the Most Holy Sudary.[22] She knew that there were several of them in Europe, but she had been assured that the true one was the one to be seen in Turin; it was the very cloth which St. Veronica had used to wipe the sweating[23] face of our Saviour, who had left the imprint of his divine countenance on it.

We left very well pleased with the pretty pilgrim, but doubting her devotion. As for me, still weak from my illness, I formed no designs on her; but all those who were with me would gladly have supped with her, if they had thought that her favors would await them afterward. The next morning the male pilgrim came to ask me if I would rather come up to breakfast with his wife and himself, or if they should come down; it would have been impolite to answer "Neither"; so I said I should be glad if they would come down. It was at this breakfast that, when I asked him what his profession was, the pilgrim replied that it was making drawings in ink in what is called "chiaroscuro." His ability consisted only in copying an engraving, and not at all in invention; but he assured me that he excelled in his art, for he could copy any engraving so accurately that he defied anyone to find the slightest difference between the copy and the original.

"I congratulate you. It is an admirable talent, with which, since you are not rich, you can earn a good living wherever you may be pleased to settle."

"Everyone tells me that, and everyone is mistaken. With my talent a man starves. Practicing my profession, I work a whole day in Naples and Rome, and I earn only a half a testone;[24] that is not a living."

After this explanation, he showed me some fans he had decorated, than which nothing could be more beautiful. It was done with ink, and they looked as if they were engraved. To convince me, he showed me the copy he had made from a Rembrandt,[25] which, if anything, was more beautiful than the original. Yet, excellent at his craft though he was, he swears to me that it does not bring him in enough to live; but I do not believe him. He was one of these lazy geniuses who prefer a vagabond life to hard work. I offer him a louis for one of his fans, and he refuses it, begging me to accept it gratis and to take up a collection for him at the public table, for he wanted to leave on the next day but one. I accepted his present, and I promised to make the collection for him.

I got together fifty or sixty écus for him, which his wife came to receive in person at the table, where we were still sitting. Far from acting immodestly, the young woman had an air of virtue. Invited to write down her name for a chance in a lottery, she excused herself, saying that in Rome girls who were brought up to be decent and virtuous were not taught to write. Everyone laughed, except myself, for, feeling sorry for her, I did not want to see her put to shame; but the thing made me certain that she must be a peasant.

It was she who, the next morning, came to my room to ask me for a letter of recommendation for Avignon, and I immediately wrote two for her, one to Monsieur Audifret, banker, the other to the proprietor of the "Saint-Omer" inn.[26] After supper that evening she gave me back the letter to Monsieur Audifret, saying that her husband had told her that he did not need it. At the same time she urges me to examine the letter she has returned and make sure that it is the one I had given her, and after looking at it I say there is no doubt that it is the same. At that she laughs and tells me I am mistaken, for it is only a copy. I refuse to admit it. She sends upstairs for her husband, who, with my letter in his hand, convinces me of the amazing imitation, which was much more difficult than copying an engraving. I expressed my admiration, saying that he could draw great profit from his talent; but that if he was not careful it could cost him his life.

The couple left the next day. The reader will learn at the proper time—which will be ten years hence—where and how I saw the man again, under the name of Count Pellegrini, with the good Serafina, his wife and his familiar spirit. As I write this, he is in prison, which he will never leave, and his wife is perhaps happy in a convent. I have heard that he is dead.[27]

As soon as my health was perfectly restored I went to take leave of the Marquis d'Argens at the house of President d'Éguilles. After dinner I spent three hours with the learned old man, who kept me well amused with countless anecdotes of the King of Prussia's private life, all of which would be new if I had the time and the wish to publish them. He was a monarch who had great qualities and great weaknesses, like nearly all great men; but the weaknesses were less in weight and in bulk. The King of Sweden who was assassinated [28] provoked hatred and then defied it to do its worst. He had the soul of a despot, and he had had to be one in order to satisfy his ruling passion, which was to get himself talked about and to be accounted a great man. His enemies all willingly risked death in order to deprive him of life. It would seem that he should have foreseen his fate, for his acts of oppression always drove his victims to desperation.

The Marquis d'Argens presented me with all his works.[29] When I asked him if I could really boast that I had them all, he said that I had, except the account of a period of his life which he had written in his youth[30] and allowed to be printed, and which he now regretted having written.

"Why?"

"Because with the mania of wanting to write the truth, I made myself eternally ridiculous. If the urge ever comes to you, resist it as you would a temptation; for I can assure you that you will repent, because as a gentleman you cannot write anything but the truth, and as an honest writer you are obliged not only not to leave anything that may have happened to you unrecorded, but also not to spare yourself in all the sins you have committed, while, as a sound philosopher, you must bring out all your good actions. You must blame and praise yourself by turns. All your confessions will be taken at face value, and you will not be believed when you tell truths which are to your credit. Besides all that, you will make enemies when you have to reveal secrets which will do no honor to the people who will have had dealings with you. If you do not give their names, they will be guessed, which comes to the same thing. Believe me, my friend, if a man may not talk about himself, still less may he write about himself. It is permitted only to a man whom slander forces to justify himself. Believe me: never think of writing your biography."

Convinced by his solid arguments, I promised him that I would never be guilty of that folly; nevertheless, I began my biography seven years ago, and by now I have promised myself that I will finish it, although I am already repentant. I write in the hope that my history will never be published; I flatter myself that in my last illness, grown wise at last, I will have all my notebooks burned in my presence. If that does not happen, the reader will forgive me when he learns that writing my memoirs was the only remedy I thought I could employ to keep from going mad or dying of chagrin over the vexations to which I was subjected by the scoundrels who inhabited Count Waldstein's castle[31] at Dux. By keeping myself busy writing ten or twelve hours a day, I have prevented black melancholy from killing me or driving me mad. We will speak of this when the time comes.[32]

On the day after Corpus Christi[33] I left Aix for Marseilles; but before leaving I must say something about the procession with which the feast is celebrated in every Catholic Christian city, but which at Aix-en-Provence has features so peculiar that any stranger whom they do not amaze must be a dolt. As everyone knows, at this procession the Being of Beings, displayed in body and spirit in the Eucharist and carried by the Bishop, is escorted by all the religious and secular confraternities. This is the case everywhere, and I will say no more about it. But what deserves to be observed and recorded, and what cannot but surprise, are the masquerades, the antics, and the buffoonery which are indulged in and performed. The Devil, Death, the Deadly Sins, most comically dressed, fighting one another in their rage at having to pay homage to the Creator on that day; the shouts, the catcalls, the booing of the populace deriding these personages, and the din of the songs with which the crowd mockingly hail them, playing all kinds of tricks on them, make up a spectacle far more unbridled than the Saturnalia[34] and than anything which we read was anywhere indulged in by the most frantic paganism. All the peasants from five or six leagues around are in Aix on that day to honor God. It is his feast day. God goes in procession only once a year; he has to be entertained, made to laugh on that day. This is implicitly believed, and anyone who should question it would be impious, for the Bishop, who cannot but be aware of what goes on, is himself the ringleader in it. Monsieur de Saint-Marc,[35] an important member of the Parlement, solemnly told me that it was excellent, for the day brought at least a hundred thousand francs into the city. Recognizing the cogency of his argument, I said not a word to the contrary.

During all the time I stayed in Aix, I constantly thought of Henriette.[36] Already knowing her real name, I had not forgotten the message she had sent me by Marcolina, and I was always expecting to find her at some gathering in Aix, at which I should have played toward her whatever role she wished. I several times heard her name spoken in different connections, but I took care not to question the person who had mentioned it, for fear of suggesting that I knew the lady. I always thought that she must be in the country; and, determined to pay her a visit, I had stayed on in Aix after my severe illness only in order to arrive at her house in perfect health. So I left Aix with a letter in my pocket in which I announced my arrival, intending to stop at the door of her country house, send it in to her, and not to get out of my carriage until she invited me to do so.

I had instructed the postilion accordingly. It was a league and a half before the Croix d'Or.[37] We arrive there. It was eleven o'clock. I give my letter to a man who had come to see what we wanted, and he tells me that he will send it to her.

"Madame is not here?"

"No, Monsieur. She is in Aix."

"Since when?"

"For the last six months."

"Where does she live in Aix?"

"In her town house. She will be here in three weeks to spend the summer, as she always does."

"Will you be so good as to let me write a letter?"

"You have only to get out, and I will open Madame's apartment for you. You will find everything you need there."

I get out, and no sooner have I entered the house than I am surprised to see the woman who had taken care of me during my illness.

"Do you live here?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Since when?"

"For the past ten years."

"And how is it that you came to nurse me?"

"If you will go upstairs, I will go up too, and I will tell you the truth."

She told me that her mistress had sent for her and had ordered her to go to the inn in which I was lying ill, to enter my room boldly, and to take care of me as if it were of her own self, and that if I should ask who had sent her she should answer that it was the physician.

"What! The physician told me he had no idea who you are."

"He may have told you the truth, and he may have been ordered by Madame to answer you as I did. I know nothing more; but I am amazed that you did not see Madame in Aix."

"It is certain that she receives no one."

"You are right, but she goes everywhere."

"It is astonishing. I must have seen her, and I cannot understand how I can have failed to recognize her. You have been with her for ten years. Has she changed? Has she had some illness which has changed her features? Has she aged?"

"On the contrary. She has put on flesh. To see her, you would think she was a woman of thirty."

"I will write to her."

She leaves; and, astonished to the point of confusion by this extraordinary situation, I consider if I can, if I should, go to Aix at once, that very day. "She is at home; she receives no one; who can prevent her from receiving me? If she does not receive me, I will go away; but Henriette still loves me; she sent me a nurse; she is hurt by my not having recognized her; she knows that I have left Aix, she is sure that I am here at this moment, and she is waiting for the last act of the play to bring me to her house. Shall I go, or shall I write to her?"

I decide to write and to tell her that I will wait in Marseilles for her answer, to be addressed to me at the post office. I give my letter to my nurse, and money to send it at once by express messenger, and I go to dine in Marseilles. Not wanting to be known, I go to lodge at a poor inn, where I am very glad to see Signora Schizza, Nina's sister. She had arrived there from Barcelona with her husband three or four days before, and she was about to leave for Leghorn. She had dined, her husband was not there, I was extremely curious to learn a great many things, I asked her to come to talk with me in my room until my dinner was brought.

"What is your sister doing? Is she still in Barcelona?"

"My sister is still in Barcelona, but she will not stay there long, for the Bishop will not have her either in his city or in his diocese, and the Bishop is more powerful than Count Ricla. She returned from Valencia only as a woman who cannot be refused passage through Catalonia on her way back to Italy; but one does not stay nine or ten months in a city through which one is only passing. She will certainly leave within a month; but she is not sorry; for she is certain that the Count will keep her lavishly wherever she goes, and she may succeed in ruining him. Meanwhile she is well pleased to have ruined his reputation."

"I have some idea of the way her mind works, but after all she cannot be the enemy of a man who by now must already have made her rich."

"Not a bit of it. She has nothing but some diamonds. But do you suppose the monster can feel gratitude? Do you suppose she has human feelings? She is a perfect monster, and no one knows better than I that she is a monster because she cannot be anything else. She forced the Count to commit innumerable injustices for no other reason than that all Spain should talk about her and know that she has made herself the mistress of his body, his wealth, his soul, and his will. The more flagrant the injustices she makes him commit, the more certain she is that she will be talked about, and that is all she wants. Her obligations to me are beyond reckoning, for she owes me everything, even her life, yet she is so wicked that, instead of having my husband confirmed in his appointment with an increase in salary, which would have cost her only a word, she had him dismissed."

"I am amazed that, with such a character, she treated me so generously."

"Yes, I know the whole story; but if you knew it too you would not feel in the least grateful to her for what she did for you. She paid your expenses at the inn and in the Tower only to convince people in general that, to the

Count's shame, you were her lover, and everyone in Barcelona knows that there was an attempt to murder you at her door and that the cutthroat whom you wounded died."

"But she cannot have ordered my murder, or been an accomplice in it, for that would be against nature."

"That I know; but is there anything in Nina which is not against nature? What I can tell you for certain is what I saw with my own eyes. During the hour the Count spent with her she did nothing but talk about you, your intelligence, your good manners, comparing the Spaniards with you to their disadvantage. The Count, annoyed, kept telling her to have done and talk of something else; but it was no use; in the end he left cursing you, and two days before what happened to you he told her that he would do her a favor she did not expect; and I can assure you that when we heard the shot a moment after you left she said with the utmost calm that it was certainly the favor the unfortunate nobleman had promised her. I told her that you might have been killed; and she replied that it was so much the worse for the Count, for his turn would come to find the man who would kill him. She began laughing at the thought of the sensation the news would produce in Barcelona the next day. However, at eight o'clock the next morning I saw her very well pleased when your servant came to tell her that you had been arrested and taken to the Citadel."

"My servant! I never knew that he had any communication with her."

"You were not meant to know it; but I assure you that the man loved you."

"I was convinced of it. But go on."

"She then wrote the proprietor of your inn a note which she did not show me but in which she must have ordered him to supply you with everything you needed. Your servant told us that he had seen your bloodstained sword and the hole in your cloak, and she was very glad to hear it; but never believe that it was because she loved you, for she said that, having escaped being murdered, you might take your revenge. What puzzled us was to guess on what pretext the Count had had you arrested.

"That evening we did not see him. He came the next day at eight o'clock, and the infamous creature received him with smiles and an air of the greatest contentment. She said she had heard that he had had you imprisoned, and that he had done well, for he could only have done it to safeguard you from what might be attempted against you by the same enemies who had tried to take your life. He replied drily that your being arrested had nothing to do with what had happened to you that night. He said that you were in custody for only a few days, for your papers would be examined, and you would be set free as soon as nothing was found in them to make you deserve a more rigorous imprisonment. She asked him who the man you had wounded was; and he replied that the police were making inquiries, for neither a wounded man nor any traces of blood had been found. He told her that your hat had been found and had been sent to you. I left her alone with him until midnight. Three days later everyone knew that you had been imprisoned in the Tower. That evening she asked the Count the reason for it, and he replied that all three of your passports might be forged, since the one you had from the Venetian Ambassador, dated at San Ildefonso, could not but be so. Everyone knew that, since you were in disfavor with your country, it was impossible that your Ambassador had given you a passport; and it was certain that, if the Venetian one was forged, the ones from the King and the Count of Aranda must be forged too, for foreigners are not given passports unless they first present one from their country's Ambassador. He[38] said that, on this supposition, you had to be strictly confined, and that you would not be released until your passports came back from the Court confirmed by those who were responsible for them. That was all.

"It was the arrest of the painter Pogomas which made us certain that it could only be he who had denounced you to the Government as a forger, to avenge himself for your having had him turned out of our house. The painter remained under arrest in the Citadel, and we thought that he must be being held to substantiate his accusation. This reasoning made us suppose that you would be released as soon as we learned that Pogomas had been removed from the Citadel only to be sent to Genoa. This meant that your passports had returned from the Court recognized as authentic; however, seeing that you were still kept there, Nina no longer knew what to think, and the Count made no reply to her further questions concerning your imprisonment. False as she is, she approved of his secrecy, respecting the reasons he might have for keeping silent on the subject.

"We finally learned that you had been unconditionally released. Nina was sure she would see you in the parterre and would triumph in her box before an audience which would consider her the person who had obliged the Captain-General to restore you to freedom. She was preparing to show herself in her box in her most splendid attire, when she was astonished to learn that there would be no more performances for three days. It was not until that evening that she learned from the Count himself that your passports and your papers had been returned to you and that you had been ordered to leave; she praised her mad lover's prudence. She saw that you would not dare go to her house, and she believed that you must have received secret orders, even to being forbidden to write to her, when she saw that you had gone without writing her a note. She said that if you had had the courage to ask her she would have left with you. But she was greatly surprised when she learned from your manservant a week later that you had only escaped the cutthroats by a sort of miracle. She laughingly told the Count the story, to which he replied that he knew nothing about it. Give thanks to God that you were able to leave Spain alive. Your becoming acquainted with the monster in Valencia should have cost you your life; the state of misfortune in which you find me is her doing, and God is justly punishing me for having brought her into the world.''

''What do you mean?''

''I mean what I say. Nina is my daughter.''

''Is it possible? Everyone thinks she is your sister.''

''She is my sister too, for she is the daughter of my father.''

''What! Your father loved you?''

''Yes, I was sixteen years old when he made me big with her. She is the child of sin; and a just God decrees that it shall be she who punishes me. My father died to escape her vengeance; but perhaps I shall cut her throat before she cuts mine. I should have strangled her in the cradle.''

Overcome with horror, I did not know what to say to this dreadful narrative, the truth of which was not to be doubted. I asked her if Nina knew that she was her daughter, and she replied that her father himself had told her so when she was eleven years old, and that it was the same worthy father who had had her virginity and who would certainly have given her a child too if he had not died in the same year

On hearing this second outrage committed by the charlatan Pelandi, I could not help laughing. The man had the misfortune to fall in love with his daughters and his granddaughters. I thought to myself that, in a state of nature, the thing would not arouse horror, and that all the horror that was felt for it came only from education and force of habit. I asked the woman how Count Ricla had come to fall in love with Nina.

''Listen. It is not a long story, and it is a strange one.

She had no sooner arrived in Barcelona two years ago, coming from Lisbon, where she had left her husband Bergonzi, than she was engaged as a figurante in the ballets because of her beautiful face, for, so far as talent goes, she can't dance a step. All she can do is make the turning leap called *rebaltade*; when she makes it she has the pleasure of hearing the parterre applaud her because they see her underdrawers up to the waist. You must know that there is a theatrical regulation here which makes any dancer who shows her drawers to the audience in a caper liable to a fine of an écu. Nina, who knew nothing about it, did her *rebaltade,* the audience applauded, she did another, even higher, and at the end of the ballet the censor told her that at the end of the month she would be docked two écus because of her shameless capers. She cursed and swore, but she could not get the better of the law. Do you know what she did the next day to avenge herself? She appeared without drawers, and she did her *rebaltade* the same as ever, which raised a storm of laughter in the parterre such as had never been heard in Barcelona. Count Ricla, who, in his stage box, had seen her better than anyone, being equally overcome by horror and admiration, told the censor, for whom he sent at once, that the audacious flouter of the law must be exemplarily punished otherwise than by fines.

" 'Meanwhile,' he said, 'have her brought to me.'

"Whereupon Nina marches into the Viceroy's box with her impudent air and asks him what he wants with her.

" 'You are a shameless creature who has failed in respect to the public and the laws and who deserves to be severely punished.'

" 'What have I done?'

" 'You made the same jump as you did day before yesterday.'

" 'That is true, but I did not break your Catalan law, for no one can say that he saw my drawers. To make sure that no one would see them, I didn't put any on. Could I do any more in obedience to your accursed law, which has already cost me two écus? Answer me.'

"The Viceroy and all the grave personages of his entourage had to make an effort to keep from laughing, for, as you know, gravity does not countenance laughter. The diabolical Nina was in the right after all, and to discuss whether the law had been broken or not would have entailed bringing up the most laughable details in order to prove Nina twice guilty. So the Viceroy merely told her that if she ever took it into her head to dance without underdrawers again she would be sent to prison on bread and water for a month. She obeyed.

"A week later a new ballet of my husband's was given which pleased the audience so much that an encore was demanded. The Count sent word that the audience was to be satisfied, and the dancers, male and female, were told in their dressing rooms to return to the stage and take their positions. Nina, who had nearly undressed, tells my husband that he will have to do without her. It was not possible; she had a role which was necessary to the ballet. She laughs at his arguments, she refuses. My husband tells the censor for what reason he cannot satisfy the audience; the censor goes into Nina's box, he tries to persuade her, he does not succeed, he scolds her, he threatens her, it is no use; he speaks roughly to her; at that Nina gets up and pushes him out the door so forcefully that the little fellow almost falls down. He repairs to His Excellency's box, tells him what has happened, and two soldiers instantly go to bring Nina before the Governor as she is, not in her shift, but in a state of undress to offend decency and to prove the undoing of a man who, if he was to punish her, did not need to see her so nearly naked. You know how beautiful the vixen is. In an unsteady voice the Governor says what he has to say to her, but Nina boldly tells him in so many words that he can have her killed but that he cannot make her dance.

" 'To the devil with Spain, the audience, and the whole earth, I do not want to dance, and you are in the wrong to try to force me to, since it is not in my contract that I must appear in the same ballet twice on the same evening; and I am so outraged by your tyrannical proceedings and the insult you have put upon me by an act of abominable despotism that I now tell you that I will not dance on this stage either tonight or tomorrow or ever. I do not ask a copper of you, let me go home, and know that I am a Venetian and free. I admit that, despite that, you can subject me to all kinds of ill-treatment. I will bear it firmly, and if you do not have me killed I will avenge myself by going to proclaim to all Italy how you treat decent women in your country.'

"The astonished Governor declared that Nina was mad. He sent for my husband again and told him to give the ballet without her, and not to count on her in future, for she was no longer engaged. He then told Nina to go, and gave orders that she was not to be interfered with. She went back to her box, where she dressed and returned to our house, where she was living. My husband gave the ballet as well as he could, but the Governor, Count Ricla, found that he had fallen violently in love with the shameless creature. She had a valuable ring, which she was thinking of selling in order to return to Italy at once.

"It was Molinari,[39] a very bad singer, who came the next morning to tell her that His Excellency wanted to see her on the next day at a small country house, to assure himself that she was not mad, or that, having spoken to him as he had never in his life been spoken to before, she was so. It was just what Nina wanted; she felt sure that she would complete her conquest of him. She told Molinari to tell His Excellency that he would find her well-behaved and amenable. That first interview, under Molinari's proc . . . . ship,[40] was followed by all the rest. To keep the nobleman and assure herself that he will never escape from her chains, she ill-treats him from time to time, and thus she makes him happy when she is gracious to him. He cannot leave her."

This is all that I learned from the incestuous Schizza, who was then perhaps forty years of age. Two years hence my reader will find himself in Bologna, where he will see Nina again. We will speak of her at that time.

The next day I found Henriette's answer at the post office. Here is a copy of it:

"Nothing, my old friend, is more like a romance than our meeting at my country house six years ago and our present encounter twenty-two years[41] after our parting in Geneva. We have both aged. Will you believe that, though I still love you, I am very glad that you did not recognize me? It is not that I have become ugly, but putting on flesh has given me a different countenance. I am a widow, happy, and well enough off to tell you that if you should be short of money with the bankers you will find it in Henriette's purse. Do not come back to Aix to recognize me, for your return might give rise to speculation; but if you come back some time hence, we can see each other, though not as old acquaintances. I feel happy when I think that I may have helped to prolong your life by putting with you a woman whose kind heart and whose fidelity I knew. I am very glad that she told you all. If you would like to maintain a correspondence with me, I shall do all that I can to make it a regular one. I am very curious to know what you did after your escape from the Leads. I promise, now that you have given me such strong proof of your discretion, that I will tell you the whole story of what brought about our meeting at Cesena,[42] and of my return to my country. The first is a secret from everyone. Only Monsieur d'Antoine[43] knows a part of it. I am grateful to you for not having made any inquiries about me here, though Marcolina[44] must have told you all that I asked her to. Tell me what became of that charming girl. Farewell."

Her letter made up my mind for me. Henriette had grown wise; the force of temperament had diminished in her as it had in me. She was happy, I was not. If I went back to Aix for her, people would have guessed things which no one should know; and what would I have done? I could only become a burden to her. I wrote her a long letter in reply, and I accepted the correspondence which she proposed. I gave her a general account of all my vicissitudes, and she told me all the details of her life in thirty or forty letters which I shall add [45] to these memoirs if Henriette dies before me. She is still alive today, old and happy.

The next day I called on Madame Audibert[46] and I went with her to pay a visit to Madame N. N.,[47] who by then had three children whom her husband adored; I gave her the good news of Marcolina which I had received from Venice and of which I shall speak in the year 1774, when I return to my country. I also told her the story of what had happened to me with Croce, and of the death of Charlotte,[48] which greatly touched her. She gave me very recent news of Rosalie,[49] who, with her husband's fortune, had become very rich. Alas! I could not hope to see her again, for in Genoa the sight of Signor Agostino Grimaldi would not have amused me.[50] My dear ex-niece mortified me without being aware of it. She told me that she found me aged. A man can easily rise above the unwelcome feeling this compliment may arouse in him; nevertheless it is still displeasing to one who has not renounced gallantry. She gave me a fine dinner, and her husband made me offers which I was ashamed to accept. I still had fifty louis, and, having decided to go to Turin, I had resources there. At Marseilles I found the Duke of Villars[51] whom Tronchin was keeping alive by his art. That nobleman, the Governor of Provence, invited me to supper, where I was surprised to find the Marquis d'Aragon,[52] who held the bank. I punted for small stakes, I lost, and the Marquis invited me to dine with his wife, an old Englishwoman, who had brought him, as I think I said before, a dowry of forty thousand guineas and twenty thousand which would revert to a son she had in London. It was from this fortunate Neapolitan that I was not ashamed to borrow another fifty louis.

I left Marseilles alone, having taken a place in a carriage which was going to Antibes, and from there I went to Nice, where I joined company with an Abate to go to Turin by way of the Colle di Tenda,[53] which is the highest of all the Alps. Going by this route, I had the satisfaction of seeing the beauty of the country which is called Piedmont. I arrived in Turin, where the Cavaliere Raiberti[54] and the Comte de la Pérouse[55] received me with the greatest satisfaction. They both found me aged, but after all I could only be relatively so at my then age of forty-four years. I struck up a close friendship with Sir XXX,[56] the English Envoy, a charming man, well read, rich, with excellent taste, who kept a choice table, whom everyone loved, among others a Parmesan dancer named Campioni,[57] than whom it was difficult to see a prettier woman.

As soon as I told my friends my idea of going to Switzerland to print at my expense a confutation in Italian of the *History of the Venetian Government* by Amelot de la Houssaye, they all eagerly undertook to find me subscribers who would pay me in advance for a certain number of copies. The most generous of all was the Comte de la Pérouse, who gave me twenty-five Piedmontese gold pistoles for fifty copies. I left a week later with two thousand Piedmontese lire in my purse for copies thus paid for in advance, which enabled me to print the entire work, which I had sketched out in the Tower in the Citadel of Barcelona, but which I had to write in full with the author whom I wanted to refute at hand, together with the *History of Venice* by the Procurator Nani.[58] Provided with these books, I set out, resolved to go to have my work printed in Lugano, where there was a good press and no censorship. In addition I knew that the proprietor of the press was a man of letters, and that there was excellent fare there and good society. Not far from Milan, very near to Varese, where the Duke of Modena went to spend the season, close to Coire, to Como, to Chiavenna, and to Lake Maggiore, in which were the famous Borromean Islands, I should be in a place where I could very easily amuse myself; I went there, and I at once went to lodge at the inn which was considered the best. Its proprietor was Taglioretti,[59] who immediately gave me the best of all his rooms.

The next morning I went to see Doctor Agnelli,[60] the printer, who was a priest, a theologian, and a man of good reputation. I made a formal agreement with him, in which he promised to give me four sheets a week, each in twelve hundred copies, I undertook to pay him each week, and he reserved the right of censorship, hoping, however, that he would always be of the same opinion as I. I began at once by giving him a preface and a foreword which would keep him busy for a week, after choosing my paper and prescribing the size I wanted, large octavo.

When I got back to the inn for dinner the innkeeper announces the Bargello,[61] who wanted to speak to me. The Bargello was the chief constable. Though Lugano belonged to the thirteen cantons, its police had the same organization as those of Italian cities. Curious to know what this ill-omened personage could want with me, and in any case having no choice but to listen to him, I have him shown in. Hat in hand, he tells me that he has come to offer me his services, to assure me that, though a foreigner, I should enjoy every privilege in his city with no fear for my safety in the streets if I had enemies or for my personal liberty if I had difficulties with the Venetian Government.

"I thank you, and I am sure that what you tell me is true, for I know that I am in Switzerland."

"I make bold to tell you that the custom is that all foreigners who come here, and who want to be sure that the asylum they are granted is inviolable, pay a trifling sum in advance, either by the week or the month or the year."

"And if they should not want to pay?"

"They could not count themselves safe."

"Very good. I will tell you that I fear nothing, and that consequently I count myself safe, and more than safe, without going to the trouble of paying."

"Excuse me, but I know that you are on bad terms with the State of Venice."

"You are mistaken, my friend."

"Oh, no I'm not."

"See if you can find someone who will wager two hundred zecchini that I have nothing to fear from Venice, and I will put them up in an hour."

The Bargello is taken aback, the innkeeper, who was present, tells him that he may well be mistaken, and he leaves in great astonishment. The innkeeper, very glad to have overheard the dialogue, told me that, since I intended to stay in Lugano three or four months, I might well show the Captain, or High Bailiff, who was equivalent to the Governor and who had all authority, the courtesy of going to call on him. He was, he said, a very honest and amiable Swiss gentleman, with a young wife who was very intelligent and as beautiful as possible.

"Oh, in that case I assure you I will go there tomorrow."

Toward noon the next day I go there, I am announced, I enter, and I see Monsieur de ——[62] with his charming wife and a little boy five or six years old. We stand there motionless, staring at one another.

CHAPTER VII

Marazzani punished. My departure from Lugano. Turin. Monsieur Dubois in Parma. Leghorn. Departure of Orlov with the fleet. Pisa. Stratico. Siena. The Marchesa Chigi. My departure from Siena with an Englishwoman.

THEY ARE my life's finest moments—these happy, unforeseen, unexpected, purely fortuitous meetings, due to chance alone, and hence all the more precious. Monsieur de R. was the first to break the silence and embrace me fondly. We quickly exchanged the excuses we thought we owed each other as old friends, for in other respects we had both done our duty, I not having known his name, and he thinking that other Italians might bear the same name as I. It went without saying that I had to take pot luck at dinner with them that very day, and in the course of it our old acquaintance was entirely renewed and everything we had to say to each other was said. His Republic had given him this extremely lucrative governorship; he was only sorry that it would last but two years. He was delighted, as I was, that Fortune had placed him there at a time when he could be of use to me, and he assured me that I could count upon him in anything that lay in his power. I could ask nothing more. He learned with the greatest delight that, being there to print a work of which I was the author, I should have to make a stay of four or five months, and he was greatly disappointed when I told him that I could accept his offer of his table at most once a week, for, the work being only sketched out, I had to write at night what I would give to be printed during the day, when I should be equally busy correcting proofs.

Madame could not get over her surprise. It was nine years since I had left her at Soleure, so beautiful that I should never have believed that a few more years could make her more beautiful, yet I found her so. I congratulated her on it, and she seemed to know that I was not flattering her; she kept calling my attention to their only offspring, a boy whose mother she had become four years[1] after my departure. She loved him more than the light of her eyes, so she seemed to be on the way to making a spoiled child of him. However, I am told that he is now most likable. In a quarter of an hour Madame de R. informed me of all that had happened at Soleure after my departure which could be of interest to me. The principal piece of news was that Lebel [2] and his wife had gone to settle in Besançon, where she believed that they were very prosperous. As for the story of all that had happened to me in nine years, Madame de R. saw from the summary I gave her that it would be enough to keep her entertained for several days during the long stay I was to make in Lugano.

A truth which the charming woman told me, namely, that she did not find the look of youth in me which I had had in Soleure, was enough to make me renounce any idea I might have had of resuming an amorous relationship with her. "So much the better," I said to myself on the way back to my inn, "I will be her friend, and I will make myself worthy to be Monsieur de R.'s." The work which I intended to publish could not permit me the least distraction, and a love affair would have absorbed the better part of my time. I set to work the next morning, being interrupted for only an hour by a visit from Monsieur de R. On the following day I received the first sheet, which I corrected, and I was well enough pleased. I spent the whole of the first month in my room, going out only on feast days to hear mass, to dine at Madame de R.'s, and to take the air with her and her baby. Since I worked fourteen hours a day, at the end of a month the printer delivered the first volume to me; meanwhile I had got the whole of the second ready. A month later I finished the entire work, divided into three volumes, which the printer delivered to me at the end of October. In less than a year I sold my whole edition.

My purpose in printing this work was to earn a pardon from the Venetian State Inquisitors. After traveling from one end of Europe to the other, I was so overcome by a longing to return to my native country that it seemed to me I could no longer live anywhere else. Amelot de la Houssaye had written his *History of the Government of Venice* as an inveterate enemy of the Venetians; his history was a satire, which contained learned disquisitions interlarded with slanders. In all the seventy years during which Amelot's work had been in everyone's hands, no one had taken the trouble to refute it. A Venetian living in Venice who wanted to challenge the author's lies by pointing them out in print would not have obtained permission from the Government, whose rule is not to let anyone discuss it, either in praise or in blame. Hence until then no writer had dared to refute the satirical historian, for instead of the reward he had deserved he could expect nothing but punishment. I thought it was my part to undertake such a work. The reasons I might have for complaining of a government from which a body which despotically persecuted me drew its powers freed me from any suspicion of partiality; and the irrefutability with which I was sure I could expose Amelot's lies and blunders to all Europe made me sure of a reward which, since it consisted only in an act of justice, seemed to me certain. Permission to return to my country was due me, after fourteen years in which a despotic power forced me to remain absent from it. I thought the State Inquisitors could not but seize the opportunity to repair their injustice on the pretext of giving me a reward which my patriotism had deserved. The reader will see that I guessed rightly; but they made me wait for it five more years. Signor Bragadin having died, I had only two friends left in Venice, Signor Dandolo and Signor Barbaro. It was they who secretly procured me fifty subscribers even in Venice.

During all the time I spent in Lugano the only house I frequented was Monsieur de R.'s. I had several conversations with the Abate Riva,[3] a man both learned and wise, to whom I had been recommended by the celebrated Signor Angelo Querini,[4] a relative of his. The Abate enjoyed so great a reputation for prudence among his compatriots that he was chosen to be the arbiter in almost all the differences which arose among them and which they would otherwise have had to take to court. The brood of chicaning lawyers loathed him and considered him their greatest enemy. Their hatred was his aureole. His nephew, Count Giovanni Battista,[5] devoted in equal measure to the Muses, to Bacchus, and to Venus, was my only friend, though I could not drink glass for glass with him. He lent me all the girls whom he had initiated, and they only loved him the more, for I gave them money. It was with him and two very pretty sisters that I made a voyage to the Borromean Islands in Lake Maggiore.

I knew that Count Federico Borromeo,[6] who had honored me with his friendship in Turin, was there, and, sure that I should be well received, I went there with my friend and the two pretty girls, one of whom was to pass as his wife. In this way her sister would be properly accounted for. At Count Borromeo's they slept together. That nobleman, though ruined, lived there like a prince.

It is impossible so to describe these islands as to give the reader any adequate idea of how delicious they are. One enjoys a perpetual spring there; it is never either hot or cold. The Count treated us to delicate fare; and he amused our young ladies by a fishing party. Very ugly, old, disgraced, ruined, he was still able to please. On the way back to Lugano on the fourth day, when I tried to give room to a carriage on a viaduct, my horse slipped over the edge and fell ten feet. Having hit my head against a large stone, I thought I had cracked my skull. A copious bleeding, performed as soon as I got back to Lugano, freed me from all apprehension. It was the last time I rode horseback.

During this time the inspectors sent by all the thirteen cantons[7] arrived in Lugano. The Luganese call them Ambassadors, Monsieur de R. called them *avoyés*. They all lodged at Taglioretti's. I ate with them during the whole of the week they spent there. The one from Bern[8] gave me news of my poor friend M. F.[9] and his family which pleased me. His charming daughter Sara[10] had become the wife of Monsieur de V., and she was happy.

It was after the inspectors left that one fine morning I saw in my room the unfortunate Marazzani,[11] whom I no sooner saw than I took him by the collar. He shouts, he vainly uses all his strength to defend himself, I drag him outside, he falls, and I fall on him before he has time to use either his walking stick or his sword; I slap him, I pummel him, the innkeeper comes running at the noise, and the servants force me to contain my fury. I tell the innkeeper not to let him get away, and to send for the Bargello to put him in prison. I go back to my room, leaving him shouting protests, and I try to dress quickly to go and tell the whole story to Monsieur de R. The Bargello arrives, he comes to ask me why he is to put the man in prison, and I reply that he will learn the reason from Monsieur de R., to whom I am going at once. Here is the reason for my anger.

The reader may remember that I had left the wretch in Buen Retiro when the Alcalde Messa had released me from that inferno and escorted me to my inn. I learned afterward that he had been sent to a Presidio[12] in Africa, where he served the King of Spain as a rower on a galley with the pay of a soldier; but, not knowing what to do about it, I blotted him from my memory. Yet the man was guilty of no crime. His only offense had been that he was without a sponsor, without money, and without employment in the city of Madrid, where at that time the police regulations were very strict and especially in respect to vagabonds.

Eight months later at Barcelona I saw among the dancers at the opera La Bellucci,[13] a Venetian girl whom I had loved before her marriage. I had left her husband in Riga, where he still is today; I felt that I should like to go and give her news of him, and also, if she liked, to renew our old relationship. I go there the next day; she cries out for joy when she sees me, she returns my embrace, and she says she is happy that I have had the good luck to escape from the terrible misfortune into which tyranny had plunged me.

"I do not know what misfortune you mean."

"The Presidio, where you were sentenced to hard labor, which usually costs those who are not used to it their lives."

"I was never sentenced to labor in any Presidio. Who told you this tale, which is an insult to me?"

"A Count Marazzani, who spent three weeks here, who had the same misfortune, and who, luckier than you, managed to escape."

"The shameless scoundrel lied to you, but the slander will cost him dear."

From that moment on the fact that the man existed never arose in my memory without my burning with the desire to find him somewhere and make him pay for such a black calumny. It was at Lugano that his destiny brought him into my presence. What I had done had sprung from a first impulse, and it seemed to me that I had done nothing, for after all I had only engaged in a fist fight with him, in which I had perhaps received as much as I gave. He was in prison, and I went to see what punishment Monsieur de R. could inflict on the scoundrel to give me some slight satisfaction.

As soon as Monsieur de R. was informed of the facts, he said that he could neither keep him in prison nor banish him from the city unless I would lodge a complaint with him in which I would ask him for protection from the man, who I had good reason to believe had come to Lugano expressly to murder me. He told me that I could substantiate my accusation by citing the genuine complaints I had against him and by putting the most sinister interpretation on his appearing in my room without having had himself announced.

"Do that," he said, "and we shall see what he answers; I will ask him for his passport; I will drag the thing out; I will order him treated harshly; but in the end I shall only be able to banish him from the city, unless he gives good security for himself and his behavior."

It was all I could ask of the worthy man; I drew up the complaint, and the next morning I insisted on having the pleasure of seeing him brought before him in chains in my presence. He said that it was certainly not true that he had entered my room to murder me, and that he had said in Barcelona that I was in a Presidio, sentenced to hard labor, only because he had been told as much, and that if it was not true he was very glad that he had been misinformed. The Captain told him that hearsay cannot excuse anyone who publicly repeats a calumny which casts doubt on a man's honor, and that he could not in justice refuse me the reparation which I demanded. He also told him that my suspicion that he had entered my room to murder me might be well founded, since I alleged that he had given a false name at the inn, which I undertook to prove, offering security, which would compensate him if it turned out that he was, as he claimed to be, Count Marazzani. In consequence, he told him, he would remain in prison only until an answer came from Piacenza to say whether he was or was not what he said he was.

"If you are Count Marazzani," he said, "Monsieur Casanova will give you whatever satisfaction you wish, and if you are not I promise you that your only punishment will be banishment from Lugano and the entire district."

He had to go to prison, where the Bargello did not have to be asked twice to make it unpleasant for him, since the scoundrel had not a copper. Monsieur de R. wrote to the agent of the thirteen cantons in Parma to obtain the requisite information; but the shameless scoundrel, knowing that the answer could not be what he wanted, wrote me a letter intended to touch me in which he confessed that he was a poor commoner from Bobbio,[14] and that though his name was Marazzani he had no connection with the Marazzani family of Piacenza. He begged me to let him go somewhere else.

After showing this letter to Monsieur de R., I had him set free, but under orders to leave Lugano within twenty-four hours. He remained in prison only four days, and, considering myself amply satisfied, I gave him some money and a letter of recommendation to Baron Sellentin,[15] who was in Augsburg recruiting soldiers for the King of Prussia. We will return to this fellow at the proper time and place.

The Chevalier de Brézé[16] came to the fair at Lugano[17] to buy horses; he spent two weeks there, constantly in my company at Madame de R.'s, whose charms had conquered him. Three or four days after his departure I left Lugano too, having resolved to spend the winter in Turin, where the friends I had and the English Envoy[18] led me to hope for every enjoyment. About this time I received a bill of exchange for a hundred ducats from Prince Lubomirski, who, after the death of the Grand Marshal to the Crown, Bielinski,[19] had been raised to that exalted post. The hundred ducats were the price of fifty copies of my work which I had sent him.

Arrived in Turin, I found at the post office a letter from the same noble Venetian, Signor Girolamo Zulian,[20] who, with the permission of the State Inquisitors, had recommended me to the Ambassador, Mocenigo, in Madrid. In the letter I found another, addressed to Signor Berlendis,[21] Resident of the Republic in Turin, who, when I delivered it to him, thanked me for having thus spared him the difficulty he would otherwise have had in receiving me. Berlendis, rich and with an excessive inclination for the fair sex, maintained a splendid establishment. That was enough to have it said in Venice that he did honor to his position as Resident of the Republic. To represent Venice at foreign courts intelligence was no requirement. On the contrary, it was the man who had it and tried to use it who would fall into disfavor with the Senate, which does nothing but what the College[22] commands. In Venice "the College" means the council of the Ministers of the State Cabinet. Berlendis could not but be well regarded, for he had no pretensions to intelligence.

Sure that it could only do me good, I persuaded him, after giving him two copies of my work, to send it officially to the State Inquisitors. I thought the answer he received,[23] and which he gave me to read, very strange. The Secretary of the redoubtable Tribunal told him that he had done very well to send the Tribunal a work the mere title page of which was enough to prove the author's audacious temerity. He told him that it would be examined, and that in the meanwhile he was to keep a close watch on me and above all not to favor me in any way which could lead the Court to suppose that he was protecting me as a Venetian. The Secretary expressed the mind of the Tribunal. Its members at that time were not those who had opened the way to the Ambassador in Madrid for me. I thought it my part to be as circumspect as Berlendis, never going to see him except sometimes early in the morning to drink coffee. A Corsican Abate, his son's tutor, interested me much more than he did. He was a man of letters, a good writer in prose and a good poet. He is the Abate Andrais,[24] who now lives in England a free man.

I spent my time in Turin very tranquilly in the company of Epicureans. The old Cavaliere Raiberti, the Comte de la Pérouse, a charming Abate di Rubione,[25] a pleasure-loving Count Rica,[26] the English Envoy, and some literary work kept me very pleasantly occupied; no love affairs. Frequent suppers with very pretty girls quenched our desires before they had become strong enough to make us unhappy. A milliner who was La Pérouse's mistress died about that time after swallowing her lover's portrait instead of the Eucharist. The incident inspired me to write two sonnets, which pleased me and still please me. I had a literary controversy with Baretti,[27] who died while he was still in London and whose motto should have been: *Ille Bioneis sermonibus et sale nigro* ("Another [enjoys] Bion's satiric discourses with their caustic raillery").[28] He wrote in pure Italian, and his only claim to fame was the biting wit which filled everything he wrote, for he was completely without learning and without sound literary judgment. He had a thorough command of English, yet he made it unpleasing by trying to combine it with the beauties of Italian.

During this time[29] I thought I could make my fortune by going to Leghorn and offering my services to Count Alexis Orlov,[30] who was in command of the fleet which was to go to Constantinople and which might have gone there if it had been commanded by an Englishman.

The English Envoy, Sir XXX,[31] gave me a strong letter of recommendation for Leghorn addressed to his country's Consul there. I left Turin with very little money in my pocket and without a letter of credit on any banker. The Englishman Aston[32] recommended me to an English man of business who had settled in Leghorn, but his recommendation did not go so far as to authorize me to ask him for money. Another letter, from the Abate Andrais, recommended me to the Corsican Rivarola,[33] also settled in Leghorn, a man of intelligence and a great friend of Paoli's.[34] The Englishman Aston was then engaged in a strange affair in Turin. He had fallen in love in Venice with a very beautiful woman, I forget whether Greek or Neapolitan. The woman's husband was a Turinese named Sclopis,[35] who put nothing in the way of the rich and generous Englishman's amour, but who was becoming an inconvenience to the lover and his wife precisely at the moments when common decency demanded that he should not be. Such a husband is more trying than a jealous one, and unfortunately the lover cannot talk sense to him, for he is the husband. Aston, in a situation the embarrassment of which an English gentleman, generous and in love, cannot tolerate, determined, with his beauty's approval, to speak plainly to her husband. He asked him if he needed a thousand guineas, and he offered them to him on condition that he would let him travel for three years with the lady without going to the trouble of escorting her. Signor Sclopis accepted the proposal, and signed an agreement in writing. The three years having expired, Sclopis, who was in Turin, wrote his wife, who was in Venice, to return to him, and wrote Aston not to prevent her from doing so. His wife answered that she would no longer live with him, and Aston gave him to understand that he neither could nor would send her away; and, thinking that the cuckold would no doubt apply to the English Envoy, he informed Sir XXX of the matter and asked him for his good offices; Sir XXX at once spoke to the Cavaliere Raiberti, who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs. Sclopis spoke to him at the same time, demanding that he write to the Resident in Turin, the Commendatore Camerana,[36] to demand her officially from the Venetian Government, and persuaded Berlendis to add to his letter that, his (Sclopis's) claim being perfectly justified, his demand should be honored and his wife made to leave Venice, even against her will. There is no doubt that the thing would have been done if the Commendatore Camerana had demanded her at the same time, but the Cavaliere Raiberti, more a man of honor than a scrupulous Christian in respect to the laws which consider marriage a sacrament, not only did not write to the Resident Camerana, but, informed of the matter by XXX, and having a view of it directly contrary to that of the Venetian Resident Berlendis, cordially received Aston, who had come to Turin to pursue it, having left Signora Sclopis in Venice under the protection of the English Resident.[37] Sclopis was ashamed to complain publicly, for the agreement he had signed covered him with opprobrium; but Berlendis made everyone laugh by saying publicly that the husband Sclopis was in the right, and that it was shameful that he was not given his due without delay, for after all he was the husband; and, there being no legal divorce between his wife and himself, he could not be prevented from living with her again, and the more so because the three years for which he had been weak enough to cede his rights in her had passed.

"What would you say," I asked Berlendis on the day before I left, "if Sclopis, whom you are protecting, had sent word to Aston that he would stop plaguing him in return for a thousand guineas which he would give him for another three years' lease?"

"It is too infamous; I do not believe it."

"You are wrong. The thing is well known, and you are making yourself ridiculous, or, if that were possible, suspect of something which would dishonor you; but take comfort, no one believes that, for you are known to be rich and a gentleman. I advise you to abandon what you call the just cause of Signor Sclopis, who is unworthy to enjoy the privileges of a sacrament which he is willing to sell."

Berlendis blushed fiery red. *Erubuit: salva res est* ("He has blushed: all is well").[38] I left, and two years later in Bologna I found Aston and La Sclopis, whose beauty I admired. She had a charming little Aston in her lap. I gave her news of her sister; but I will speak of that in the proper place.

I traveled from Turin to Parma with a Venetian, who, like myself, was wandering about outside his country, unable to live there for reasons known to the State Inquisitors. He had turned actor to earn his living, and he was going to Parma with two actresses, one of whom was worthy to be loved. When he learned who I was, he became my intimate friend; and he would have allowed me to share in all the pleasures which our traveling companions could have offered us; but I was not in the mood for amusement. I was going to Leghorn with chimerical ideas. I thought I could make myself indispensable to Count Alexis Orlov in his intended conquest of Constantinople; I imagined that, without me, he would never pass the Dardanelles,[39] that such was the decree of Fate, like the one she had pronounced in regard to the taking of Troy, which could never have been accomplished without the presence of Achilles.[40] Meanwhile, I took a great liking to the young Venetian, whose name was Angelo Bentivoglio,[41] and whom the State Inquisitors never forgave for a crime than which philosophy knows none more trifling. I will speak of him when my reader finds me back in Venice, four years hence.

Arriving in Parma about noon, I said good-by to Bentivoglio and his two companions. I was at once told that the Court was at Colorno;[42] but I had no business at the Court. Determined to leave the next day for Bologna, I invited myself to dinner with the hunchbacked Dubois-

Chatellerault,[43] Director of the Infante's[44] Mint, a man of intelligence, vain, and with a great deal of talent. My reader may remember that I had known him twenty-two years earlier, during the happy days when I was in love with Henriette; I had seen him only twice since then, each time only for a moment. He received me with the cries of joy with which one greets an old acquaintance, and showed himself greatly obliged to me for my courtesy in spending my few hours in Parma with him. I told him that I was on my way to Leghorn, where Count Orlov was expecting me, and that I should travel day and night, for at the time we were speaking he must be setting sail. He assured me that he was ready to leave, and he showed me letters which he had just received from Leghorn; but with a little smile I assured him that he would not leave without me, whereupon Monsieur Dubois gave me a bow of politic admiration. He wanted to talk about the expedition, which was then setting all Europe to calculating; but my reserve made him change the subject. He showed me his fine engravings, which were indeed masterpieces, and he did me the honor to have me dine with his housekeeper. We spoke a great deal about Henriette, whose identity he boasted that he had managed to discover, and, though he spoke of her with great respect, I never gave him time to get anything out of me. So he spent the whole afternoon talking to me about himself, complaining of all the sovereigns in Europe, except the King of Prussia, who had created him a Baron though he did not know him and though he had never had anything to do with him either directly or indirectly.

He complained most of all of the Infante Duke of Parma, in whose service he was and who, never making up his mind to establish a mint, gave him nothing to do; he would not have entered his service if he could have foreseen that he would be like a canon in a chapter who was there only to enjoy his emoluments. He complained bitterly of the Court of Louis XV, at which he had asked for nothing but a glass of water, and had not obtained it. The "glass of water" was the order of St. Michael,[45] which was given to men of talent who certainly were no more worthy than he. Finally he complained of the Republic of Venice, which had not properly rewarded him for what he had done for it. He had spent a year in Venice setting up a coining press in the Republic's mint,[46] and he had done it well. After the operation Venice was able to strike edge-rolled coins, like all the other powers in Europe, and the present he had been given was a mere trifle. He had spent eight times what he had received. After telling him that he had every reason in the world to complain, I asked him to arrange for some banker to give me fifty zecchini, which I would return at whatever bank in Leghorn I was directed to; he answered very generously that there was no need of my going to a banker for such a trifle, for he could give me the amount himself. I accepted his offer, promising to return the money to him soon, but I was never in a position to repay this small debt. I do not know if he is still alive; but even if he should live to Nestor's age,[47] I have no hope that I shall ever be in a position again to return that small sum to him. I grow poorer every day, and I know that I am at the end of my career.

The next day I arrived in Bologna, and the day after that in Florence, where I found the Cavaliere Morosini,[48] nephew of the Procurator, a young man of nineteen, who was traveling with Count Stratico,[49] Professor of Mathematics at the University of Padua. He was with the young nobleman as his tutor. He gave me a letter for his brother,[50] a Dominican monk, Professor of Belles-Lettres at the University of Pisa. I stopped in Pisa for two hours only to make the acquaintance of this monk, who was as celebrated for his wit as for his learning. I found him even greater than he was famed to be, and I promised him I would spend some time in that city on another occasion expressly to enjoy his company. I stopped for an hour at the baths,[51] and I made the acquaintance of the "Pretender-in-vain" to the throne of Great Britain.[52] I arrived in Leghorn, where I found Count Orlov only because the weather was stormy.

The English Consul[53] immediately presented me; he was staying in his house. When he saw me, he seemed delighted to have the pleasure of seeing me again, for he had been well acquainted with me in Petersburg; and he seemed even better pleased when the Consul showed him the letter he had received from the English Envoy in Turin. He hastily told me that he would be delighted to have me with him on his own ship, so I should have my things taken on board, for he would leave as soon as the wind allowed; and, having a great deal to do, he left me with the Consul, who asked me in what capacity I was going to Constantinople with the Admiral.

"That is what I want to know before I have my few things taken on board his ship. You can understand that I must talk to him and that he must talk to me. Would one ever have believed that a Russian would have become such a Frenchman?"

"You cannot talk to him until tomorrow morning."

I go very early the next morning and I send him in a note in which he reads that before having my trunk sent on board his ship it was indispensable that I talk with him privately for at least a quarter of an hour. He was writing in bed, his Adjutant told me, so he asked me to wait.

"Gladly."

In comes Dall'Oglio,[54] Agent to the King of Poland in Venice and his old friend; he knew me from Berlin, and indeed had known me from my birth through old connections.

"What are you doing here?" he asked me.

"I must speak to the Admiral."

"He is extremely busy."

After giving me which news, he goes in. It is a piece of impertinence. Can he tell me more clearly that he is not busy for him? A moment later I see the Marchese Marucci,[55] with his order of St. Anne[56] and his stiff manner, who, congratulating me on my being in Leghorn, tells me that he is reading my confutation of Amelot, in which he had not expected to find himself.

He was right not to expect it, for there was nothing in common between him and my work; but he was not the sort of man to see nothing in the world except things he expected. If he had not gone in to the Admiral, I would have told him so. He told me he did not expect it only to make me understand that he had not found himself in it as he would have wished to be, and I knew it. I did not care: *nescit vox missa reverti* ("words once uttered cannot be recalled").[57] But I was annoyed to see that these gentlemen were inside, while I was outside. I began to dislike my project. Five hours later the Admiral comes out, followed by a great many people, to go to call on someone, saying pleasantly that we should speak at table or after dinner.

"After dinner," I replied.

He came back at two o'clock and sat down to dinner, at which the guests were those who sat down first. Fortunately I was one of them. Orlov, constantly repeating "Eat, gentlemen, eat," did nothing but read letters, handing them to a secretary after making notes on them in pencil. After dinner, during which I never spoke, when everyone was taking coffee standing, he looked at me as if startled, and, with a "by the way," took me by the hand and led me to a window niche, where he told me to have my trunk sent on board his ship at once, for if the wind held as it was he would leave before dawn.

"Permit me to ask you in what capacity you will take me with you; what post shall I have?"

"I have no post to give you, but that may come. Come on board as my friend."

"A most honorable condition, which would certainly always make me run the most obvious risk to my life in order to defend yours, but which will avail me nothing after the expedition, and even during the expedition, for you alone in your goodness would show me marks of confidence and esteem; all the others would have no regard for me at all. I should be considered no more than a man to make you laugh, and I should perhaps kill the first man who dared to show me the slightest sign of contempt. I need a post which makes it my duty to serve you in your uniform. I can be useful to you in every way. I know the country to which you are going, I speak the language, I am in good health, and I am not lacking in courage. I do not want your valuable friendship for nothing, I want the honor of earning it."

"My dear friend, I have no definite employment to give you."

"Then I wish you a good voyage, and I shall go to Rome. I hope you will never repent of not having taken me with you. Without me you will never pass the Dardanelles."

"Is that a prophecy?"

"It is an oracle."

"We shall see, my dear Calchas." [58]

This was literally the dialogue which I had with the worthy Count, who did not pass the Dardanelles. No one can know if he would have passed them if I had been with him.

The next morning I delivered the letters I had to Signor Rivarola and to the English man of business; the fleet sailed. On the following day I went to Pisa, where I spent a week very agreeably with Father Stratico, who two or three years later[59] became a Bishop by a very bold stroke which might have ruined him. He took it upon himself to deliver the funeral oration for Father Ricci,[60] who was the last General of the Jesuits. His oration, which praised the deceased, not ironically but in the most serious style, put Pope Ganganelli under the necessity of either punishing the orator, which would have been taken very ill, or of giving the world an example of heroic virtue by rewarding him; His Holiness found the latter course preferable to the former. Father Stratico himself told me, four or five years after he obtained the bishopric, that, knowing the human heart, he was sure that the Holy Father would punish his daring by a splendid reward.

In Pisa the monk initiated me into the charming society in which he delighted. He had chosen two or three well-born girls who combined beauty with talent, so that he could teach them to sing improvisations in which he accompanied them on the guitar. He had taught them the art of Corilla,[61] who was then famous and who six years later was crowned *Poetessa* by night on the Capitol[62] in Rome, the same place where our greatest poets had been crowned, which caused a great scandal, for after all Corilla's talent, though unique of its kind, consisted in nothing but a splendid show. The crowned Corilla was attacked in scathing satires, and the authors of them were even more in the wrong than those who profaned the Capitol by crowning her, for all the poisoned darts with which black envy made every effort to lacerate the celebrated woman found nothing to say but that chastity was not her favorite virtue, which proved the ignorance of the poets who assailed her. All the women poets who have existed from the time of Homer, from the time of the Sibyls, until ours were all votaries of Venus. But for that, their names would not have come down to posterity, for they could not become famous except by being immortalized by the pens of those who enjoyed their favors.[63] No one would have heard of Corilla if she had not been able to make men her lovers, and she would never have been crowned in Rome if she had not enslaved Prince Gonzaga Solferino,[64] who later married the pretty Rangoni, the daughter of the Roman Consul whom I knew in Marseilles.

To the door of the temple[65] in which the woman was crowned the following verses were affixed the day before the august ceremony took place:

Arce in Tarpeia, Caio regnante, sedentem
Nunquam vidit equum, Roma videbit equam.
Corillam patres obscura nocte coronant.
Quid mirum? Tenebris nox tegit omne nefas.

("In the reign of Caius a horse was never seen on the Tarpeian rock; Rome will now see a mare there. The Senators crown Corilla in the darkness of night. No wonder! Night hides all evil in its shadows.")

She should have been crowned by the light of day, or never; night was chosen, and it was a mistake. The day after her coronation these verses were posted up all over the city:

Corillam patres turba plaudente coronant
Altricem memores germinis esse lupam.
Proh scelus! impuri redierunt saecla Neronis
Indulget scortis laurea serta Pius.

("The Senators crown Corilla before an applauding crowd, remembering that the she-wolf [66] nurses her cubs. What infamy! The time of filthy Nero has returned. Pius [Pope Pius VI] bestows the laurel wreath on prostitutes.")

The thing is an ineffaceable stain on the pontificate of that Pope,[67] who still reigns, for it is certain that in future no poet will aspire to an honor which until that day Rome, far from scattering broadcast, had conferred only very rarely on geniuses who seemed to rise above human nature; hence this distich was posted on the Vatican:

Sacra fronde vilis frontem meretricula cingit;
Quis vatum tua nunc praemia Phoebe velit?

> ("The base harlot binds her brow with the sacred branch; what poet will now want your prizes, Apollo?")

A young Abate put a large sheet of paper containing the following four verses into Corilla's hands just as, trembling with fright, she entered the theater of Apollo, where she was awaited by a considerable number of Cardinals, by the Senator, and by the Conservatori of Rome. She took the paper, thinking it was a eulogy, and since the quatrain was in Latin it was read to her by Prince Gonzaga, who did not expect the next to the last word:

Quis pallor tenet ora? Tuos tremor occupat artus?
Ad Tarpeia times tecta movere pedes?
Femina pone metum: sint pronae Heliconis alumnae
Si nec Apollo tibi praesto, Priapus erit.

> ("Why is your face so pale? Are your limbs trembling? Do you fear to move on to the Capitol? Woman, be not afraid! May the Heliconian Muses favor you. If Apollo is not your guardian, Priapus will be." [68]

The impertinent Abate was looked for, but he had disappeared. On the next day but one after her coronation Corilla and her lovers all left Rome, ashamed to have succeeded in solemnizing such a scandal. The Abate Pizzi,[69] guardian of the sacred forests of the Arcadians,[70] who had been the chief promoter of the *Poetessa*'s apotheosis, inundated with pamphlets and caustic satires from every direction, did not dare to leave his house for several months. But after this long digression let us return to Father Stratico, to whom I owed eight happy days in Pisa.

The monk, who, though not handsome, perfectly possessed the art of making himself loved, persuaded me to go to spend a week in Siena, promising me every pleasure of the heart and the mind from two letters of recommendation which he would give me, one to the Marchesa Chigi,[71] the other to the Abate Ciaccheri.[72] Having nothing better to do than to find pleasures where I could, I accepted his offer, and I went to Siena by the shortest road, not troubling to visit Florence.

The next morning I took Father Stratico's letter to the Abate Ciaccheri. He promised me all the amusements in his power, and he kept his word; but above all, as soon as I told him that I had a letter to the Marchesa Chigi, he himself took me to call on the lady, who made an unresisting conquest of me as soon as, still standing, she quickly read to herself the letter from her "dear Stratico." This was the epithet she accorded him as soon as she recognized his handwriting.

The lady was still beautiful. Though past her prime, she must have been sure that she could still please, for she knew how to make up for her want of youth by obliging ways, by graces, by an easy and affable manner, by her intelligence, by the pretty turn she gave to her remarks, and by the charms which she added to the beautiful language of her country by her own eloquence, which shone the more because she treated it as nothing, without the slightest pretension. I have told my reader beforehand what I found in her the next day, for I spent the first day entirely in studying her.

"Let us sit down," she said; "you will spend a week here, according to what my dear Stratico tells me; it is little for us, and hence too much for you. I hope he has not given you too favorable a report of us."

"He told me nothing, Signora, except that I must stay here a week, promising me that I should find here the charms of the heart and the mind; but I did not believe him. I have come to see if he told me the truth, at the same time resolved to keep my word to him. You see that I have not let him make up my mind for me."

"So much the better; but Stratico should have sentenced you to at least a month, without mercy."

"Why without mercy? What risk could I have run?"

"Of being bored to death, or leaving a piece of your heart in Siena."

"All that can happen in a week; but I defy either of those dangers, for Stratico protected me from the first of them by counting on you, and from the second by counting on me. You will receive my homage, and so that I may offer it to you pure, it will be only of the mind. My heart will leave this place as free as it is now; for since it cannot hope for a return, its defeat would make me unhappy."

"Is it possible that you are among the despairing?"

"Yes, fortunately; for I owe all my peace to my despair."

"But how unfortunate for you if you are mistaken!"

"Not as great a misfortune, Signora, as you suppose. Apollo assures me of an admirable subterfuge, he gives me an infallible way of escape. He leaves me only the freedom to enjoy the moment; but since it is a favor the god does me, I use it to the top of my bent. *Carpe diem* ['Seize the day'] [73] is my motto."

"It is the voluptuous Horace's; but I approve of it only in so far as it is convenient. The pleasure which follows on desires, and sometimes even on desires unsatisfied, is preferable, for it is infinitely more acute."

"True, but one cannot count on it. That distresses the philosopher who calculates. God preserve you, Signora, from learning that cruel truth from experience. The good to be preferred to all other goods is the good one enjoys; the good which one desires is often limited merely to the pleasure of desiring. It is a figment of the soul, the vanity of which I have too often experienced in my life. Yet I congratulate you if you have not yet learned that Horace is right."

At that the Marchesa, with a gracious smile, excused herself from either admitting or denying it. Ciaccheri, who had not said a word, told us that the most fortunate thing that could happen to us was never to agree; the Marchesa admitted it, laughing at Ciaccheri's subtle thought; and I denied it.

"If I admit it," I said, "I renounce the happiness which you make dependent upon never being in agreement. I would rather contradict you, Signora, than renounce the hope of pleasing you. The Abate Ciaccheri is a spoilsport who has thrown the apple of discord between us; but if we go on as we have begun, I will settle in Siena."

The Marchesa, very well pleased to have given me a good taste of her wit, then talked of everything and nothing, of Pisa, of Stratico, of Leghorn, of Rome, of the pleasure of traveling, and asked me if I wanted to make my way with the prettiest women in Siena by attending all the great assemblies, offering to take me everywhere; and, in all seriousness, I asked her not to think of going to that trouble.

"I want to be able to say, Signora, that during the week I spent in Siena I paid court to no one but you, and that no one but the Abate Ciaccheri showed me the monuments of the city and introduced me to its men of letters."

Flattered by this ultimatum, she invited me to dine next day, with the Abate, at a charming house which she owned a hundred paces from the city and which she called Vico.[74]

The older I grew, the more what attached me to women was intelligence. It became the medium which my blunted senses needed in order to enter into play. In men of a temperament different from mine, what happens is exactly the opposite. A sensual man who grows old wants only the material, women skilled in the arts of Venus, and not philosophical discourses. As we left the Marchesa's house I told Ciaccheri that if I stayed in Siena she would be the only woman I would see, and that the outcome should be as God willed. The Abate Ciaccheri could not but agree that I was right. In the course of the week he showed me everything worth seeing in the city, and made me acquainted with all the men of letters, who did not fail to call on me. Toward evening he took me to a house, where, he said, everything was free and easy—no formality, no introductions; people talked to be amusing, there was singing, there was instrumental music, beautiful verses were read aloud, one girl composed them to make up for her ugliness, her very pretty younger sister enjoyed their beauties and was content to afford a subject for them to those whom all of her charming person fired with love. The two sisters had two brothers, one of whom played the harpsichord, the other was a painter. Such was the house to which Ciaccheri took me to spend the evening, with another Abate, a young professor, whose name was Pistoi.[75] I saw neither father nor mother nor servants. But if the younger of the two sisters was a perfect beauty, the other was ugly without being either hunchbacked or lame or squint-eyed or dirty; but she was ugly, and all ugliness repels. Nevertheless the ugly girl did not lose heart, but talked to me sweetly and modestly about poetry, and asked me to recite her something of mine, promising me something of hers in exchange. I recited whatever came into my head, and she replied with a poem in the same style and of a beauty which I praised as it deserved, pretending to believe that she was the author of it. Ciaccheri, who had been her teacher, seeing that I could not believe the girl was so clever, suggested *bouts-rimés*.[76] It was the pretty sister who proposed the rhymes, and, all four working at the same time, it was the ugly one who, having finished, was the first to put down her pen. The rhymes were for a sonnet. The girl's sonnet, in verses of eight syllables, was the prettiest; I am astonished, and, still doubting, I compose an improvisation in her honor, and I present it to her written down; she returns the eulogy immediately on the same rhymes, and at that I become serious. I ask her her name, and she replies that, both as a shepherdess in the Arcadian Academy and as her family name, she is Maria Fortuna.[77]

"What! You are she?"

I had read some stanzas of hers in praise of Metastasio, which she had had printed. I tell her so, she rises and fetches the reply which the immortal poet had sent her in his own hand. Overcome with admiration, I no longer talk to anyone else, and all her ugliness vanishes. If I had had a delicious conversation with the Marchesa that morning, my conversation with Maria Fortuna turned my head. Going back to my inn with Ciaccheri, I thanked him again and again for the pleasure he had given me to enjoy. She was a girl in whom he had happened to discover poetic genius, and in three years he had taught her all that she knew. I asked him if she improvised as Corilla did, and he said that she wanted to but that he would not let her do it, for, he said, it would be a shame to spoil the girl by indulging her in it.

Supping with me, Ciaccheri had no difficulty in persuading me that he would spoil his pupil if he let her improvise, for I was of the same opinion. The intelligence of a poet, called upon to discourse in verse on some subject without first meditating on it and deciding upon the heads of his argument, cannot produce good things except by chance, for though his mind pursues the subject he has been given to discuss, he usually finds himself led astray by the rhyme, to which he is enslaved despite his great knowledge of the language in which he is speaking. He finds himself obliged to use the first rhyme which chance offers him, and not having time to look for one which will more properly express his thought, he cannot say what he wanted to say, and he says what he did not want to say and what he would not have said if he had been composing pen in hand. Improvisation enjoyed some reputation among the Greeks only because Greek poetry, like the Latin, rejected rhyme. It was just tolerated in prose. But that did not lead to our great Latin poets' being willing to *speak* in verse; they could only produce lifeless ones, of which they were ashamed afterward. Horace often spent a sleepless night in order to say in a vigorous verse the thing he wanted to say, and when he had found it wrote it on the wall and went to sleep content and at peace. The verses that cost him nothing were the prosaic ones which he uses in masterly fashion in several of his *Epistles.* We can learn from this that the Latin poets like the Greeks heard the quantity of the first syllable in all their words, even in dissyllables —a truth which we cannot conceive, for we know perfectly well that *sine* is a word of two short syllables; but we do not know the reason for it when we consider that we could not pronounce it otherwise if its two syllables were long.

I have written this discourse because it belongs entirely to the Abate Ciaccheri, the learned and charming poet. He confessed to me that he was in love with his ugly pupil, and that he would never have expected to fall in love with her when he began teaching her to compose verses. I told him that I could easily believe it, for *sublata lucerna* ("when the lamp has been taken away");[78] but he laughed.

"No *sublata lucerna,*" he said; "it is with her face that I fell in love, for it is inseparable from her."

I believe that a Tuscan can more easily write in beautiful poetic language than an Italian from another province, since he has the beautiful language from his birth, and the language spoken in Siena is dainty, more copious, more graceful, and more energetic than the Florentine, though the latter claims the first place and indeed holds it because of its purity, which it owes to its Academy,[79] as it does its richness, which is the cause of our treating subjects much more eloquently than the French do, for we have a choice among many synonyms; whereas it would be hard to find a dozen in the language of Voltaire, who laughed at those of his countrymen who said that it was not true that the French language was poor, for it had all the words it needed. He who has only what he needs is poor; and the obstinacy of the French Academy in refusing to adopt foreign words proves nothing except that pride goes with poverty. We continue to take all the words which please us from foreign languages; we like to grow constantly richer; we even take pleasure in stealing from the poor: such is the character of the rich.

The Marchesa Chigi gave us a choice dinner in her pretty house, the architect of which had been Palladio.[80] On our way there Ciaccheri had warned me not to mention the pleasure I had enjoyed the evening before at La Fortuna's; but at dinner the Marchesa said to him that she was sure he had taken me there, and he did not have the face to deny it. After that I did not conceal from her all the pleasure I had had there; and I pronounced a splendid eulogy on his pupil's great talent.

"Stratico," she said to me, "admires it as you do, and, having read something of hers, I certainly give her all the praise she deserves; it is a pity that one cannot go to their house except secretly."

"Why is that?" I asked, a little taken aback.

"What!" she said to Ciaccheri, "didn't you tell him whose house it is?"

"I did not consider it necessary, for her father never shows himself, or even her mother."

"I can well believe it, but it makes no difference."

"Who, pray," I asked, "are her father and mother? He's not the executioner, I imagine."

"He's worse. He's the Bargello.[81] You can see that it is not possible for a foreigner to come here and at the same time to frequent that house, where he will never find decent company. It is certainly not a prejudice, for honest as the Bargello may be, he must always be the man of his trade, and no communication between his house and decent houses is permissible."

I saw Ciaccheri a little mortified by this discourse, which was not without justification, and I thought it my part to say that I would not go there again until the eve of my departure, to take leave of the charming family, which one would never believe to be that of a man of such an occupation.

The Marchesa then said that his daughter, the pretty one, had been pointed out to her in the street, and that she had really thought her ravishingly beautiful; she added that it was a pity that a girl of such great beauty, and of irreproachable morals, could only hope to be married in another city to a man of her father's trade. I said that I had known a certain Coltellini,[82] the son or brother of the Bargello of Florence, and that I would write to him to propose the marriage; and the Marchesa declared that it would be suitable. This Coltellini, whose acquaintance I had made at Calzabigi's in Vienna, was endowed with the rarest qualities. I have been told that he is dead. Nothing is more odious in all Italy than a Bargello, except in Modena, where the spineless nobility frequent his house and take pot luck with him; which is surprising, for a Bargello must by his profession be a spy, a liar, untrustworthy, a scoundrel, and everyone's enemy, for the scorned hate the scorners.

As the result of these conversations I spent the whole of my week in Siena with the Marchesa Chigi and Ciaccheri, who introduced me to all the Professors. The anatomist Tabarrani[83] made me a present of his book, and I gave him mine. In Siena a Count Piccolomini,[84] if I remember rightly, was pointed out to me; he was a wit, well read, and most likable, but an oddity because he spent six months of the year at home without ever going out or receiving visitors or speaking to anyone, even his servants, always reading and writing; but he made up for it during the other six months, which he spent in company of all sorts, talking from morning to night. He was a Chevalier of St. Stephen,[85] and he may still be alive.

The Marchesa promised me she would come to Rome during the summer, where she had a more than intimate friend in Bianconi,[86] who had given up the practice of medicine to become Chargé d'Affaires for the Court of Saxony. She did come to Rome, but I did not see her. On the day before I left, the coachman who was to take me to Rome alone, and who, having made that agreement with me, could not dispose of the other seat in his calèche without my permission, came to ask me if I wanted a traveling companion, who would save me three zecchini.

"I want no one."

"You are keeping me from earning a zecchino, and you are making a mistake, for it is a pretty girl, who has just arrived."

"All alone?"

"No indeed. She is with a gentleman who has a horse and who wants to ride it to Rome."

"Then the girl arrived here with someone?"

"No indeed, she arrived on horseback too, and she does not want to ride any farther. She was exhausted and went straight to bed. Her gentleman will give me four zecchini to take the lady to Rome. Do it. I am a poor man."

"Then her gentleman will ride along with us at a slow pace."

"Let him ride as he chooses, it makes no difference to me, or to you."

"You say she is young and pretty?"

"So I hear, I have not seen her.'

"What sort of man is her companion?"

"A good-looking man who scarcely speaks Italian."

"Has he sold the horse on which the young lady arrived?"

"No, for it was hired, and the peasant who owned it has already left."

' What luggage have they?"

"He has only a small trunk; he will spare his horse by putting it behind the carriage."

"I will decide nothing before I talk with him, for the whole thing seems strange to me."

"I will tell him to come and talk with you."

In comes a young Frenchman in uniform, spruce, cocky, not unprepossessing, who tells me just what the coachman had told me, and ends by saying he is sure I will not refuse to take his wife with me.

"Your wife, Monsieur?"

"Oh, thank God you speak my language! Yes, my wife, who is English and not at all demanding. She will be no trouble to you."

"Very well. I should not want to delay my departure. Can she be ready at five o'clock?"

"You can be sure of it."

The next morning at the appointed hour I see her in the carriage. I pay her a brief compliment; I sit down beside her, and we set off.

CHAPTER VIII

Miss Betty. Count de l'Étoile. Sir B. M. made to see reason.

IT WAS the fourth adventure which I had had of this kind, and which was not unusual if one was traveling alone and in a hired carriage; but this one seemed more like something out of a romance than the three others. I had about two hundred zecchini, and I was forty-five years old; I still loved the fair sex, though with much less ardor, much more experience, and less courage for daring enterprises, for, looking more like a father than a lover, I believed I no longer had rights or justifiable claims. The young woman beside me was perfectly charming, very nicely dressed in the English style, blonde, rather thin, with small breasts which a gauze gorget allowed me to glimpse, a childish timidity which expressed itself in fear of discommoding me, a noble, delicate countenance, and a modesty of manner which was almost virginal.

"I hope, Madame, that you speak French."

"And a little Italian too, Monsieur."

"I am very fortunate that Fate has appointed me to escort you to Rome."

"Perhaps I am more fortunate than you."

"I was told that you arrived on horseback."

"Yes. It was foolish, and I shall never do it again."

"I should think your husband should have sold his horse and accompanied you in a two-seated soufflet[1] like this one."

"He cannot sell the horse. He hired it at Leghorn, and he has to deliver it in Rome to an address which he was given. From Rome we shall go to Naples together by carriage."

"You enjoy traveling."

"Very much, but much more comfortably."

So saying, the beautiful little blonde, whose white face showed not the slightest sign that there was blood in her veins, went red to the ears. Sure that I had troubled her beautiful soul, I begged her pardon and I fell silent. I spent an hour and more thinking of the young creature, in whom I was beginning to take a violent interest, but, knowing myself, I held myself in check. I knew that my impulse did not spring from virtue, and, despite the very questionable circumstances under which we had met, I waited to see things more clearly at Buonconvento,[2] where the coachman had told me we should dine, and where the lady's horseback-riding husband was to wait for us.

We arrived there at exactly ten o'clock. Coachmen in Italy never drive at more than a walk; one can travel faster on foot. They make only three miles an hour;[3] one is bored to death, and when the weather is hot one falls ill if one does not stop for five or six hours at the height of the day. The coachman told me that, not wanting to go farther than San Quirico,[4] where the inn was very good, he would not leave until four o'clock. So we had six full hours before us to rest and to shelter ourselves from the heat in a room which faced north.

The lady, astonished not to see her husband, kept looking about for him. I ask where he is, and the innkeeper tells us that he had had his horse fed a measure of oats, meanwhile eating a pigeon and drinking a glass of wine, and had ordered him to tell us that he would go on to wait for us at San Quirico, where he would have a good supper prepared for us. This seems to me a trifle odd, but I let it pass as the sort of thing Frenchmen do. But the lady thinks it rude, she tells me so, she begs me to excuse the thoughtlessness of a man who, having met me only the evening before, treated me as if I were an old friend.

"It is a mark of your husband's confidence in me," I replied; "I cannot take offense at it; it is very French."

"You are right; for it is certainly not English."

The innkeeper asks me if it is the coachman who pays for my food or I, and I reply that it is I. The young woman uneasily asks the innkeeper to go and ask the coachman if he is obliged to feed her. The innkeeper comes back with the coachman, who, to convince the lady that he is under no such obligation, takes from his pocket the agreement her husband had made with him. I read it, and I see that it is signed "Count de l'Étoile,"[5] who undertakes to pay him four zecchini, two on leaving Siena and two more on arriving in Rome, in return for conveying his wife the Countess there in five days. There is no stipulation that the coachman shall pay for her meals. Enough said, the innkeeper knows what his situation is, they both leave. No sooner have we entered the room than the charming lady begs me to ask the innkeeper to prepare dinner only for me, for, having supped too heavily, she should go without dinner.

I see it all instantly, and, divining how ashamed the girl must feel to be treated in this way by the man who called himself her husband, I undertake to put her at ease by marshaling all the powers of sympathy in words which only friendship can find and utter.

"Madame, I divine that you have no money with you, and I beg you not to deprive yourself of dinner for that reason. Your husband the Count will repay me, if he insists on it. You must understand that if I told the innkeeper to prepare dinner only for me, I should dishonor your husband, and you, and myself most of all."

"Monsieur, I understand that; you are right. You must let the innkeeper prepare dinner for two, but I will not dine. I already feel ill, and I beg you to permit me to lie down on the bed."

"I am more than sorry to hear it, but pray make yourself comfortable. This room is excellent, I will have the table set in the other; lie down if you wish and sleep if you can. I will order dinner served three hours from now, I hope that you will be feeling better. Forgive your husband this little oversight too."

Not leaving her time to answer me, I went out, I shut her door, and I went to tell the innkeeper what I wanted to eat at three o'clock. He was intelligent; I taught him how to make a pudding,[6] and to broil slices of fillet of beef on a grill. After that I went and lay down too. The Englishwoman, whose figure I had not seen before I got into the carriage, was a beauty. Her self-possession was perfect; her distress, her shame had won me over completely. I felt that I should certainly fight a duel with her self-styled husband, whom I no longer believed to be her husband. It must, I thought, be an elopement, a seduction; and, superstitious as always, I was sure that it had been her guardian angel who had sent me to protect her from I knew not what, to rescue her, to take care of her, to save her from the insults to which brutality, avarice, and her situation could subject her. Thus did I foster my budding passion. I laughed at the name "Count de l'Étoile," and when I considered that the adventurer might well have abandoned the girl to my care for ever, I thought it a little too serious; but I felt sure that I would never abandon her. With these romantic ideas, I fell asleep.

It was the innkeeper's wife who woke me by saying softly that three o'clock had struck. I told her to wait a little longer before serving dinner, and I go quietly to see if the Englishwoman is asleep. And asleep she was; but a slight noise which the door made when I tried to close it woke her. She asked me if I had dined, I replied that if she did not come to the table I did not care to dine, and that I hoped that, after sleeping five hours, she felt better. She said very sweetly that she would come, and I went out to order dinner served.

She ate little, but with a good appetite, astonished to find two English dishes, and the pudding made with good butter. She asked the innkeeper's wife if the cook was English, and, when she answered that the cook was I, she showed, though saying nothing, that she was overcome with gratitude. She became gay, she congratulated me on my appetite, she drank when I did, but sparingly and always doing justice to the excellent Montepulciano[7] which the innkeeper gave us, as well as to the Montefiascone.[8] I was tipsy, and she was not, for she only sipped while I emptied glasses. She spoke to me in the Italian she had learned during the six months she had spent in Florence; she told me that she had been born in London, that she had learned French in school, and I thought I should die for joy when, on my asking her if she knew La Cornelys, she answered that she had known her daughter Sophie at the school to which they had both gone, but not her mother.

"Tell me if Sophie has grown tall."

"No. She's short, but very pretty, and full of talent."

"She must be seventeen years old[9] now."

"Yes, just my age."

With these words she stops, she lowers her eyes, and she blushes.

"Do you feel ill?"

"Not at all; I'm afraid to tell you that Sophie is the very image of you."

"Why should you be afraid? I've been told so more than once. It's a coincidence. But it's been a long time since you saw Sophie, hasn't it?"

"A year and a half. She was going back to her mother's on Soho Square to be married, I heard; I don't remember to whom."

"You have told me a very interesting piece of news, Madame."

The innkeeper comes in with the bill, on which I see three paoli[10] which the rider had expended for himself and his horse.

"He told me," says the innkeeper, "that you would pay."

The English beauty blushes, I pay, and we leave. Her blushing gave me the greatest pleasure; it convinced me that she was not an accomplice in her husband's practices. I was dying to learn by what chance she had left London, how she could have become the wife of a Frenchman, how she had left Leghorn without luggage, what she was going to do in Rome; but I feared to embarrass her by asking her questions; for, if she had wanted to, she could have told me her story, at least in brief, when she told me that she had last seen Miss Cornelys a year and a half before. Having three hours to spend before we reached San Quirico, I got her to talk about my daughter Sophie. When she said that she had lived with Sophie for a whole year in the same school, I asked her if Miss Nancy Stein was still there. The reader may remember that she had dined with me, a charming child ten or eleven years old whom I had devoured with kisses and whose father had given my daughter a ring.[11]

On hearing Nancy's name she sighed, saying that she was there when she had entered the school, but that she had left seven or eight months later.

"Was she still pretty?"

"A perfect beauty; but beauty is often but a fatal gift of nature which only spurs men on to make the innocent possessor of it unhappy. In eight months Nancy became my intimate friend; we loved each other dearly; our sympathy perhaps arose from the fact that the same destiny was setting the same snares for us. Nancy, the tender, sincere Nancy, is perhaps unhappier than I am."

"Why do you say unhappy? Can you complain of your destiny? Can you be unhappy with the beautiful letter of recommendation which nature has given you?"

"Alas, Monsieur! Let us talk of something else, I beg you."

I see her emotion in her eyes. I silently pity her, and, becoming more and more interested in her, I lead her back to the subject of Miss Nancy.

"Should you consider yourself at liberty to tell me why you think Nancy may have become unhappy?"

"She went away with a young man with whom she had fallen in love, unable to hope that she could ever be his with her father's consent; and after that nothing was heard of her; you see that my love for her cannot but make me fear."

"You are right. I feel that I would sacrifice myself for her if I found her in need of help."

"Where did you meet her?"

"In my own house. She was only twelve years old. She dined there, and her father came there to eat oysters with her."

"I know about that. He gave Miss Cornelys a pretty ring. Ah, Monsieur, it is you! If you knew how often I have heard Sophie talk about you! Nancy loved you as much as she loved her father. She congratulated Sophie on your fondness for her. I heard her say that you had gone to Russia, and that afterward you had fought a duel with a general in Poland. Is that true? Would that I could send my dear friend Sophie news of you! Alas, I cannot hope to do so now!"

"It is all true, Madame; but why can you not hope for so trifling a pleasure as sending news of yourself to anyone you please in England? I am most keenly interested in you; trust me, and you can send your news to anyone you choose.''

''I am infinitely obliged to you.''

After this expression of gratitude, she fell silent, and I left her to her thoughts. At seven o'clock we arrived in San Quirico, where the Count de l'Étoile came to the carriage and embraced his wife most joyfully and lovingly, giving her countless kisses in public; which made all the bystanders believe that she was his wife and that I must be her father; the alternative would have been that she was a trollop and I could only be her pi . . .[12] At this greeting from the Count I see the young Englishwoman looking very happy and satisfied and meeting all his ardor halfway; she does not reproach him, she goes upstairs with him, giving not the least sign that she remembers all the politeness I had shown her. I attribute it to love, to youth, and to a certain thoughtlessness; it was annoying, but, dismissing the thought, I go upstairs with my night bag. The innkeeper serves us immediately, for the coachman wanted to leave at three o'clock in the morning, in order to reach Radicofani[13] before the heat of the day began. It was a journey of six hours.

We sat down at table, and the supper was excellent; I had no doubt that it would be, for the Count, having arrived six hours before us, had given the innkeeper time enough to prepare it; but what astonished me and made me a little angry was that the young Englishwoman, who appeared to be more in love with him than he was with her, did not even mention me. It was not until the roast that she said that it was not as good as the sliced fillet of beef which she had eaten at dinner. The gaiety, the jests, the horseplay in which the young man saw fit to indulge at table cannot be described. The Englishwoman laughed at the top of her lungs, and I had to laugh too. For a moment I thought he might be a well-born, rich, undisciplined young officer, of the type who treats everything with that kind of levity and for whom nothing is important; I had known any number of such odd characters in Paris—intolerable and at the same time amusing, frivolous triflers yet sometimes dangerous, keeping their honor in their pockets, only to display it at a moment's notice and risk it as the whim took them. On this supposition, I was very ill pleased with myself, for I thought that the Frenchman, treating me too cavalierly, took me for an outright dupe and insulted me while perhaps thinking that he did me honor. Assuming that the Englishwoman was his wife, I saw myself being treated as a man of no consequence, and I did not want to play the role. Inferior though it was, it was obviously the role which everyone who saw me must attribute to me.

Clean sheets were brought, there were two beds, I told the innkeeper's wife to give me another room. The Count would not hear of it, and his insistence was polite, the lady saying nothing; but no less politely I obliged him to let me leave him and his wife together in perfect freedom. I had my bag taken into the next room, and I even bolted my door. I thought it odd that neither of my traveling companions had a night bag. I concluded that all their luggage must have been sent on to Rome. The little trunk must contain the few things they needed, and since they did not order it brought up they were hardy enough to do without it. I go quietly to bed, much less interested in the lady than I had been all day. The change pleased me.

I am waked before dawn by a servant bringing me a light; I dress quickly and, hearing that they are dressing in the other room, I open the door and, without going in, wish them good morning. A quarter of an hour later I hear quarreling in the courtyard. It was the Frenchman talking in broken Italian to the coachman; I open the window, and I see that it is serious. Though it was not yet light, I make out the coachman holding the Frenchman's horse by the bridle, which the Frenchman was trying to wrest from his hands. I guess what is the matter, for I had read the agreement; the driver wanted money, and he was right. I surmise that the Frenchman has not a copper; I expect to see them come up to my room; and I prepare to do my duty without mercy. The Frenchman enters first and says to me:

"This b . . . . .[14] doesn't understand me; however, he may be right. Be so good as to give him two zecchini, which I will return to you in Rome; as chance would have it, I have run out of money; he has nothing to fear, for he has my trunk; but he says he needs the money. Do me the favor, Monsieur; in Rome you shall know better who I am."

So saying, he goes downstairs; he does not trouble to wait for my answer, the coachman does not follow him; hardly believing my eyes, I see him mount his horse in silk stockings and ride away. The lady was there before me, looking nonplused, and the coachman neither moved nor spoke. I sit down on the bed, drying my hands, and, after considering the adventure, I surrender to the hysterical laughter which overwhelms my entire imagination. I see the thing as so amusing, so new, so comical that I cannot take it in all at once.

"Laugh, Madame, I beg you, for, despite my sympathy, your sadness is out of place; laugh, I say, or I will not get up from this bed."

"It is laughable, but I have not the wit to laugh at it."

"At least sit down."

I give the coachman two zecchini, I tell him that no harm will be done if we arrive a quarter of an hour later, and that I want coffee. The Englishwoman's desolate look wrung my heart.

"I understand," I said, "that you have good reason to be sad, and I am even willing to put your sadness to your credit; but I beg you to overcome it during our journey, in which I promise you that I will deal with every contingency. I ask you for only one favor, which I very much need. If you refuse it, you will see me become as sad as you are, and that will not be amusing."

"What favor can I do you?"

"Tell me on your honor as an Englishwoman if that strange individual is your husband or your lover."

"Very well. I will tell you the truth, and gladly. He will not be my husband until we reach Rome, but there he will be."

"I breathe again. He will not be your husband, and so much the better for you. I am sure that he has seduced you; I see that you are in love with him, but I hope you will get over it."

"That is impossible, unless he deceives me."

"He has already deceived you. I am sure he has told you he is rich, that he is well-born, that he will make you happy, and every word of it is false."

"How can you know it is false?"

"As I know a great many other things, which only experience of the world teaches. He is a lunatic, unprincipled, brazen, willful, who may perhaps even marry you; but it will only be to become your master and to use you to support himself."

"He loves me, and I cannot but be convinced of it."

"What convinces you is not love, my dear child, but caprice and libertinism. You see that he does not know me, and he leaves you in my care. Do you think that a true lover can thus abandon the woman he loves?"

"He is not jealous; Frenchmen are not, you know."

"A Frenchman who is a man of honor is no different from an Englishman, an Italian, and a man of any other nationality. Do you think that if he loved you he would have left you without a copper at the mercy of a man who might have threatened to abandon you in the street or have demanded favors from you which would horrify you? What would you do at this moment if I were such a brute? You understand my meaning. Answer me, you are not in danger."

"I would defend myself."

"Very well. I would leave you here at the inn. What would you do here? Learn that, though you are very pretty, and though you have refined feelings, there are men who, pretty as you are, would have nothing to do with you unless you sacrificed your feelings to them, and who, if you continued to act like a woman whose feelings entitle her to respect, would not give you a scudo. The man whom it is your misfortune to love did not know me, and he exposed you to wretchedness and shame. That will not happen, for I am the man you needed; but permit me to tell you that it is something of a miracle. Do you now think the fellow loves you? He is a monster. I am most sorry to see you crying, or rather, to have made you cry; but it was necessary, and I do not repent of having been cruel, for the way I shall treat you will justify me. Know that I find you exceedingly attractive, and that I am concerned for you only because you inspire me with the most ardent desires; but know too that I will not ask you for one kiss, and that even in Rome I will not abandon you; but before we get to Rome I will convince you that the Count not only does not love you but is a scoundrel."

"You will convince me of that?"

"Yes, I give you my word of honor for it. But dry your tears, and let us try to spend the day as we did yesterday. You cannot imagine how glad I am that you have fallen to my charge. It is of my friendship that I want to convince you; if love does not follow, I shall bear it patiently."

The innkeeper brought me the bill for the whole supper, as I expected he would do; but I paid without once looking at the lovelorn girl, I even feared I had said too much to her. Too strong a dose of medicine, instead of curing her, might do her harm. I was dying to learn her story, and I flattered myself that I should manage to do so before we reached Rome. We set off, and we did not speak a word until we came to the inn at La Scala,[15] where we got out.

I thought I should do well to hire two post horses, because going from La Scala to Radicofani with the coachman's horses would take four hours, whereas with post horses it could be done in two. So I told the coachman to go on and wait for us there, and I ordered the post horses for ten o'clock. It was only six o'clock, and I much preferred spending four hours where I was to leaving at once, for I should have overtaken the libertine who had deceived the poor girl. The arrangement greatly pleased the coachman, who saw himself relieved of the effort of dragging his carriage over the mountain and his purse spared the cost of a third horse.[16] The young Englishwoman broke the silence to say that, since I had decided to travel post, it would be better to do so at once, for from ten o'clock to noon the heat would be intense.

"That is true," I said, "but Count de l'Étoile, whom we should certainly find at Radicofani, would not be glad to see me."

"Why so? On the contrary."

A feeling of pity kept me from answering her, for the reason I should have given her would have made her shed more tears. I considered the girl's love literally a sickness which blinded her intelligence; it did not let her see her seducer in his true role of her destroyer, and she hastened to her ruin because she had not strength enough to deny her instinct. To cure her, I could not use the gentle eloquence which persuades; I needed the harsh reasoning which convinces; it was a tooth which I could not extract except with the tongs, feeling no pity for her pain and disregarding the tears it would make her shed. But was what impelled me to act in this way virtue? Was it love for the innocent beauty whom I had before my eyes and whose grief pierced my soul? All that entered in; but since it was more than clear that if I had found her ugly and sullen I might well have left her to die of starvation, it followed that my efforts were only for myself. So farewell virtue! She was a delicate morsel which I wanted to snatch from another in order to gobble it down myself;

but I did not tell myself so; when I suspected it, I turned my thoughts elsewhere; in all sincerity I was playing a false role, which I could not play well except by imagining that I was not playing it.

After the coachman left, I invited the Englishwoman to take a walk in a countryside than which poetry can invent none more beautiful. Betty (such was her name) tried to persuade me that the English countryside would be still more beautiful if the grape grew there, and to distract her I pretended to yield to her arguments, the charm of which ravished my soul. She spoke the Florentine language with the oddities and the faults which come from too much stress, which, combined with her English accent, treated my ear to a music which filled me with delight. I languished, seeing her parted lips which I dared not kiss; for that was the goal of it all. Love which wants to praise knows no other language.

We had walked for two hours when, hearing all the bells of the church pealing and seeing the people going there, Betty told me that she had never seen a Catholic service, and I was delighted to give her the pleasure. It was a feast day. She attended the high mass with perfect modesty, doing whatever she saw the others do; no one would have supposed that she was English. Leaving the church, she said that our rite was much more fit to prosper, and to make religion loved, than the English one, and she thought that the English peasant girls were nothing in comparison with those she had just seen, their elaborate attire having surprised her. She asked me what time it was, and, when I thoughtlessly said that I was surprised she did not have a watch, she replied with a blush that the Count had asked her for it to leave as a pledge with the innkeeper who had given him the horse. I at once repented of having asked her such a tactless question, for her blush could only come from a painful feeling of shame. Betty knew that she was guilty, and she was incapable of lying.

We left with three horses at exactly ten o'clock, and a breeze which tempered the heat allowed us to arrive at Radicofani at noon very well satisfied with our journey. The innkeeper, who was at the same time the post master, at once asked me if I would pay the three paoli which he was owed by the Frenchman who had passed through, who had eaten and drunk, and who had paid nothing. As soon as I told him that I would pay I saw that he was less uneasy; but that was not all.

"The gentleman," he said, "beat three postilions with his naked sword, and one of them, who was wounded in the face, has already followed him, and it will cost him dear. He beat them because they tried to keep him from leaving without paying me and without paying at the stable for the oats his horse ate."

"You were wrong to try to use force with him, for he does not look like a thief, and you should have believed that I would pay you when I arrived."

"You are mistaken. There was no need for me to believe it. I have been cheated that way countless times in my life. If you want to dine, your table is laid for you. If your coachman had arrived a quarter of an hour earlier, all would have been well."

I saw that Betty was in despair. Her whole soul appeared in her face, and her silence made me respect her. Far from taking her to task for her lover's vagaries, I tried to amuse her by light talk, and I urged her to dine well and to cheer her soul with the excellent muscat of which the innkeeper brought us a large flagon. But my efforts to cure her despondency would have been vain if I had not summoned the coachman and told him that I wanted to leave as soon as we had finished dinner.

"We shall only go as far as Centino,"[17] he answered, "and we'll be there in two hours. Let us wait till it is cooler."

"Certainly not. The Signora's husband may need help.

The wounded postilion has followed him, and God knows what may happen to him."

"Very well, we will leave."

Betty looked at me, with her face the picture of gratitude, and to give me a token of it she pretended to be very hungry. She had already learned that it was a way to thank me. While we dined, I have one of the postilions he had beaten come up and tell me the story. The scoundrel was a braggart; he admitted that the Count had beaten him with the flat of his sword, but he boasted that he had thrown a stone at him which must have hurt him; I gave him a paolo, and I promised him a scudo if he would go to Centino to testify against his fellow postilion, and he undertook to do so. He instantly began arguing on the Count's side, which made Betty laugh. He said that the wound on his face was only a scratch, and that in any case he had asked for it, for he should not have resisted him. By way of consolation, he assured us that the Frenchman had been hit three or four times by stones, which did not console Betty. I saw that the thing was turning into a comedy, and that nothing would come of it. The postilion, now a partisan of the Count, left at once, and we followed him a half hour later.

But Betty was very much disappointed when, arriving in Centino, we found that the Count had gone on to Acquapendente,[18] that the wounded postilion had followed him, and the postilion who was on our side had gone there too. It was no use my telling Betty that there was nothing to fear, that the Count was no fool and would know how to defend himself, and the more so because his having been stoned proved that he had acted only in self-defense; Betty did not answer me, and I saw that she was in despair. Perhaps she was afraid that, since she would have to spend the night alone with me, I would demand some recompense for the money and the effort I was expending on her. I think, I calculate, I see the truth. I ask Betty if she wants us to go on to Acquapendente at once. At my question her brow clears, she opens her arms, and I embrace her.

Ah, nature! I do not stop to consider from what source the kiss I had received had come; I rise, I call the coachman, who had already put his horses in the stable, and I tell him that I want to go to Acquapendente at once. He rudely answers that I am free to go there by post, but that he will not leave.

"Very well. Order two horses at once."

It was at that moment that Betty, overcome with gratitude, and seeing herself so well paid for a mere kiss, would, I believe, have granted me all that I could have asked, for she fell into my arms. I laughed, enjoying her joy, and, assuring her that I could have no will but hers, I did no more than cover her lips and eyes with kisses. She seemed to esteem me the more for my moderation. The horses were already harnessed to the carriage, and, after paying the innkeeper for the supper which he said he had prepared, we set off. The coachman told us that he would be at Acquapendente too at eight o'clock, for we must leave at daybreak the next morning in order to dine at Montefiascone [19]

It took us only three quarters of an hour to reach Acquapendente, where we found the wild Count, who gaily and happily embraced the unfortunate Betty, who I saw was in ecstasies to find him safe and sound. He at once told us triumphantly that he had given all the scoundrels in Radicofani a thrashing, while he himself had only been hit by a few stones, from which he had adroitly protected his head.

"But where," I asked him, "is the wounded postilion?"

"Drinking my health with the other one; they all asked me to forgive them."

"At the price of a scudo," Betty said to him.

"A scudo? You shouldn't have given it to them. They'll let themselves be beaten all over again."

Before supper he showed us the bruises on his thighs and the sides of his chest; the young scoundrel was a very handsome man. Betty's adoring manner vexed me; but I put up with it the more willingly after the tokens she had given me of the power which gratitude had over her. At supper he talked and acted as wildly as he had the evening before; he insisted that I should not go to bed in another room; but I did so. I clearly saw that I should have embarrassed Betty, who was not yet hardened to the libertine freedom into which the wretch wanted to initiate her.

The next morning the Count told me he would order us a good supper at Viterbo,[20] and that it would be well if I lent him a zecchino so that he could pay for his dinner at Montefiascone. He offhandedly showed me a bill of exchange for three thousand écus which he had in a portfolio. I said that I was convinced of it without reading it.

Betty, after seeing that, despite the tears I had made her shed, she could count on my doing as she wished, had begun to treat me on a footing of friendship. She talked more openly, and she had almost granted me the right to question her freely, reserving to herself that of correcting my mistaken conjectures.

"You see," she said to me at Montefiascone, "that it is only by chance or from thoughtlessness that my lover is without money, for he has a big bill of exchange."

"I believe it is forged."

"That is spiteful."

"I judge it from his behavior. Twenty years ago I should have thought it genuine. If his bill of exchange is on Rome, why did he not discount it in Siena, in Florence, in Leghorn?"

"Perhaps he did not have time enough. He was in a hurry to leave. Oh, if only you knew all!"

"I do not want to know anything, my dear Betty, but what you are pleased to tell me; but in the meanwhile I will tell you that all the things I have said to you are neither suspicions nor conjectures, but truths which follow from all that I have seen.''

''You persist in the idea that he does not love me.''

''He loves you only in a way to deserve your hatred.''

''How can that be?''

''Would you not hate a man who would keep you only in order to live by your charms?''

''I resent your believing that.''

''I can convince you of it this evening at Viterbo, if you are willing.''

''I beg you to convince me, but with positive proof. It will hurt me to the quick, but I shall be obliged to you.''

''And when you are convinced, do you think you will stop loving him?''

''Certainly, for I fell in love with him only because I think him honest.''

''You are mistaken. You will still love him when you have found that he is a scoundrel, for the fellow has turned your head; he has deprived you of the ability to reason. But for that, you would see as clearly as I do.''

''What you tell me is more than unlikely, but it may be true. Show me beyond doubt that he does not love me, and then it will be for me to convince you that I shall be able to despise him.''

''You shall see proof this evening; but tell me if you have known him long.''

''About a month. But we have been together only five days.''

''And before those five days had you granted him your favors?''

''Not even a kiss. He spent every night under my windows, and during the day I never looked out of them into the street without seeing him pass by. Do you think it likely that a young man who does that can be only pretending to love?''

''I admit, my dear Betty, that he loved you, but in the way I have already told you—to make his fortune at the cost of your happiness; and perhaps without even being aware of it, for it is possible that the fellow thinks that prostituting yourself would not make you unhappy.''

''How can you assume that a man whom, after all, you do not know, is such a villain?''

''Would to God that I did not know him! I am sure that, unable to enter your house, he persuaded you to run away with him.''

''That is true. He wrote to me, and I will show you his letter. He is to marry me in Rome.''

''And who vouches to you for his constancy?''

''His love.''

''Are you afraid you may be followed?''

''No.''

''Did he take you from a father, a lover, a brother?''

''From a lover, who will not return to Leghorn for a week or ten days, who has gone to London on business, and who left me with a reliable woman who, though she had no authority over me, would never have let me receive visits from a new lover.''

''Now I see and know everything. I am most sorry for you. Tell me if you loved the Englishman who is to return to Leghorn and if he was worthy to possess you.''

''Alas! I loved him alone until the moment when, after he left, I was in Boboli[21] and saw this Frenchman, who, for good or for ill, made me become unfaithful to a man who adored me and who will be in despair when he does not find me.''

''Is he rich?''

''Not very, but he is well enough off; he is a merchant.''

''Is he young?''

''No. He is your age, a kind, honest man who was only waiting for the death of his wife in order to marry me and take me back to London; and his wife, who is consumptive, may be dead now.''

"How sorry I am for him! Have you given him a child?"

"No. But I must say that God had not destined him for me, for Monsieur de l'Étoile has conquered me irresistibly; he has positively taken possession of my will."

"That is what everyone thinks who has been led astray by love."

"Now you know all, and I am not sorry to have hidden nothing from you, for twice yesterday I found that you were truly my friend."

"My dear Betty, you will find me so in the future too, and you will need me very much; and I give you my word of honor that I will not abandon you. I love you, I have told you so, and I repeat it; nevertheless, so long as you love this Frenchman you will not find me asking to be anything to you but a true friend."

"Very well, I accept your assurance and I promise that I will never hide anything from you."

"Tell me why you didn't bring even a little luggage with you."

"I escaped on horseback, but my trunk, filled with dresses and shifts, will be in Rome two or three days after we get there, together with the Count's. I had it taken from my house the day before I left, and the man who received it, and whom I knew, had his instructions directly from him."

"Good-by to your trunk!"

"Oh, my dear friend, you foresee only evils!"

"It will be enough for me, my dear Betty, if my foresight does not have the power to make them arrive. I shall be happy if I am mistaken. But despite your having come as far as Siena on horseback, it seems to me that you should have worn a cloak and have a few things in a night bag."

"All that is in the small trunk, which I will have brought up this evening."

After dining well, we slept until four o'clock, and at seven we arrived at Viterbo, where we found the Count in high spirits, and where I was to convince Betty that he did not love her as she believed he did. To that end, I began to put on a show of being enchanted by Betty, to congratulate myself in exaggerated terms on my good fortune in having met her, and him on his possessing such a treasure, and him again on his heroism, which even rose above any fear that leaving her in the company of another man might lead to her breaking her conjugal vows. The harebrained fellow thereupon began to go even further than I had done in my praise of him; he said that jealousy was so little in his nature that he could not conceive either how a man who truly loved a woman could be jealous of her or how he could love her constantly unless he saw her inspiring desires in all the men who came near her. He began a dissertation on the subject, and I let him talk on as he pleased, never contradicting even one of his statements. Satisfied with what I had thus learned about my man, I saved the second part of my plan for after supper, for that would be the opportunity I must seize to bring it off.

At supper I got him to drink a great deal, I constantly made remarks which would encourage him to declare his libertine principles, always praising the strength of mind it took to trample on all prejudices; and it was at dessert that I returned to the subject of love and of the various perfections it must have in order to make two lovers truly happy. He laid it down that two perfect lovers must above all do everything possible to further each other's wishes.

"Betty, who loves me," he said, "must procure me Fanny's favors if she discovers that I have a liking for her, and I, who love Betty, must procure her the pleasure of sleeping with you if I find that she loves you."

Betty listened to her lover's extravagances in the utmost astonishment, staring at him and never saying a word.

"I admit, my dear Count," I said, "that your principle is sublime and that it appears to be the only one which could establish perfect happiness on earth, but it is chimerical. All the beautiful and lofty things you have said to me are superb in theory, but impossible and ridiculous in practice. I believe you have great courage, but I do not believe you have enough of it to put up calmly with the certainty that another man was enjoying your mistress's charms. I wager twenty-five zecchini—here they are—that you would not let your wife sleep with me."

"Permit me to laugh. I wager fifty that I have the strength of mind to be present at the performance. Meanwhile I accept your wager. Betty, my dear Betty, let us punish this skeptic; be so good as to go to bed with him."

"You are joking."

"No. Please do as I say. I will only love you the more."

"I think you are mad. I will never go to bed with anyone but you."

At that, the Count took her in his arms and, with the fondest caresses and the most sophistical arguments, tried to persuade her to do him the favor, not so much for the twenty-five zecchini as to prove to an Italian, in my person, how far the daring of such a Frenchman as he could go. He talked to her for half an hour, giving her, in my presence, caresses which she modestly repulsed, for she thought them improper; but Betty, still gently refusing his importunities, told him that he had already won the wager (and perhaps she was right); giving him the fondest kisses, she begged him to stop trying to persuade her to do what she would never do, even under the threat of death. The beast suddenly loses patience, pushes her away, begins to rage, calls her a f . . . . . . fool, treats her to the vilest insults for a quarter of an hour, and ends by telling her that her reluctance was mere hypocrisy, for he was sure that during these three days she had already granted me all that a wh . . .[22] of her sort could grant me.

At these words, seeing Betty trembling, I spring for my sword to run it through his body, but the scoundrel makes off into the next room and locks the door. In despair at having been the cause of the pitiful state in which I saw the charming innocent, I go to her to try to soothe her distress. She was shaking all over, her throat was swollen, her chin trembled, but her staring eyes could not shed the tears which would have relieved her heart. Everyone was asleep in the inn, I had water, and I knew nothing else to do but to bathe her temples and say to her all that I thought could possibly comfort her. She looked at me, she answered nothing, now and again she gave a deep sigh, she seemed to need to cry, but she could not. After an hour of this despair, her eyelids closed, and she sank into sleep, refusing to lie down on the bed despite my urging. So I spent two full hours beside her, watching her sleep, hoping that when she woke she would not be forced to remain at the inn either by the fever which might overtake her, or by convulsions, or by any of the natural infirmities which I feared in the state in which I saw her.

At daybreak I heard her tyrant leave, and I was very glad of it. Betty came out of her lethargy when the inn servant knocked at the door to tell us it was time to dress. He thought we had gone to bed. I asked her if she was able to leave, and she replied that she felt well and only begged me to have tea made for her, taking a sufficient quantity of it from an ivory box which she had in her pocket. I left her there in order to go and make the tea myself, but it proved to be a hard nut to crack. Going upstairs again, I found her in the other room, where she had opened the windows to breathe the air while she watched the sun rising above the horizon. I saw that she was calm, and I thought I could hope that I had cured her. She drank three or four cups of tea, which restored to her face the freshness of which the terrible night she had spent had robbed it. Hearing someone in the next room, in which we had supped, she broke her silence to ask me if I had taken my purse, which I had left on the table. I had forgotten it when I had offered to wager the madman twenty-five zecchini. I also found there a paper, which I at once unfolded. I read a bill of exchange for three thousand écus. The impostor had taken it from his pocket to match my stake; I read it through and I find that it was issued in Bordeaux and drawn on a wine merchant in Paris to the order of a name which was also written on the back of the bill to make it over to Count de l'Étoile. It was at sight, and it was dated six months earlier. Nothing could be more irregular. I take it to Betty, who replies that she knows nothing about it, and who begs me in God's name not to mention the man to her again.

"For pity's sake," she said, "take care of an unfortunate girl who until now has known none but honest people."

I again vowed that I would never abandon her, and we left

Exhausted by her grief, poor Betty fell asleep, and I did the same. We both woke very much surprised when the coachman told us we were at Monterosi.[23] He had driven for six hours, making eighteen miles without our once waking. We were to rest until four o'clock, and we were very glad of it, for we had to decide on a course. I at once inquired if the wretch had passed through, and I was told that he had said he would spend the night at La Storta.[24] He had eaten and he had paid. I told all this to Betty, who was looking well, which filled me with joy.

After dining with a fairly good appetite, it was she who said to me that we must again discuss the wretch who had brought her to the verge of ruin.

"Be a father to me," she said, "and do not advise me but command me. I will do exactly what you tell me to do. You have guessed a great deal, and perhaps everything, except that I shall continue to love the cutthroat even after discovering his black character. I can assure you that he fills me with horror.''

''Can you count on your first lover's forgiving you?''

''I think so.''

''Then we must go back to Leghorn. Tell me if you think it sound advice, if it pleases you, and if you feel prepared to follow it. I warn you that if you adopt it, it must be put into execution immediately. Young, pretty, and the honest girl I have seen you to be, you must not suppose that I would consider letting you go alone, or in company with people for whom I could not vouch as for myself. No, my poor Betty, I love you dearly, and the proof which I owe you of the love you have inspired in me is to take you to Leghorn myself. If doing that will convince you that I love you, and that I am not unworthy of your esteem, I am happy, and I ask you for nothing more as my reward. I will live with you like a father with his daughter, if you are reluctant to give me tokens of a stronger feeling which does not come from your heart. Be sure of my good faith. It is my duty to teach you that there are men in the world as honest as the young libertine who seduced you is depraved.''

After my short discourse Betty remained for a good quarter of an hour with her elbows on the table and her head resting on her hands, staring at me fixedly without saying a word. She looked neither sad nor surprised; I was very glad to see her waiting to give me her answer until she was ready to give me a final one. Here is what she said to me:

''Do not think, my dear friend, that my silence arises from an irresolution which would make me contemptible to myself; believe me, it does not. I have judgment enough to recognize both the wisdom of your advice and the beauty of its source. I adopt it; and I consider it a great blessing of Providence that I have had the good fortune to have fallen into the hands of a man of your character, and to have inspired in you a concern for me which leads you to do everything for me that you could do to help a dear daughter for whom you felt a father's affection. So let us go back to Leghorn, and let us leave at once. What has kept me in doubt, and still does so, is how I am to go about making sure that Sir B. M.[25] will forgive me. I am certain that he will forgive me, but the way to it is difficult; for, though gentle, affectionate, and in love, being very delicate on the point of honor, he is apt to yield to the violence which is the first impulse of a pure soul which finds itself outraged. The thing is to avoid that fatal moment, for he might kill me and he would kill himself afterward. You must think it over on the way, and tell me what you consider the best course. I should tell you that he is highly intelligent and that he will not be taken in by any lie. I think he should be informed of the whole story in a letter, without concealing the slightest detail, for disguising the truth angers him; and when he thinks it is being concealed from him he becomes furious. If you are thinking of writing him, you must take care not to tell him that I deserve his forgiveness, for he must be left to decide if I deserve it or not. He will judge of my repentance by the letter I will write him in English, in which he will see my soul and my tears; but he must under no circumstances know where I shall remain in hiding until he writes me that he has forgiven me; after that there will be nothing to fear from him. The slave of his word, noble, and honest, he will live with me another fifty years; but he will never reproach me for my folly. He is a generous soul. Alas for me! How can I have failed him as badly as I have done!"

"Be so good as to tell me if you ever failed him before."

"Never, my dear friend; but I know his whole history. His first wife caused him great unhappiness, he fought two duels in the Antilles, where he was serving in the army; then he married again; but weighty reasons made him separate from his wife. I made his acquaintance two years ago at our boarding school, which he visited with Nancy's friend. My father having died then, and his creditors having seized all his possessions, I had to leave the school, since I could not pay what it cost, and Nancy, Sophie, and all the other girls were distressed, for everyone liked me. Sir B. M. undertook to provide for me and settled a small income on me, enough to save me from poverty for the rest of my life. Gratitude made me fall in love with him. It was I who asked him to take me with him when I learned that he had decided to leave England for some time; my request surprised him; like the honest gentleman he is, he told me that he loved me too much to take me with him and expect it of himself that he would treat me as if I were his daughter. He thought it impossible that I loved him as one loves a lover. You see that his declaration, instead of raising difficulties, removed them. I told him that, in whatever way he loved me, I could only be happy, and thereupon he gave me a written undertaking that he would marry me as soon as the laws would allow him to do so. I never failed in my duty to him."

"Yes, charming Betty, he will forgive you; dry your tears and let us leave. I have friends in Leghorn, and no one can know that I have made your acquaintance. I will put you in safe and honorable hands, where you shall want for nothing, and where I will never go to see you. I promise you that I will not leave Leghorn until I see you restored to the arms of Sir B. M., whom I already love, and, if it turns out that Sir B. M. is inexorable and refuses to forgive you, I promise I will never forsake you and will even take you to England if you command me to do so."

"How can you abandon your occupations for me in this way?"

"I will not lie to you, my dear Betty, to måke it appear that I am more than I am. Nothing summons me to Rome except my wanting to see again the beautiful things that are to be seen there. That is not an occupation; but saving you from ruin is one"

"Then what am I to do for you?"

I called the coachman and told him that I absolutely must go back to Viterbo, where I had left my portfolio on the bed.

"Send a postilion for it"

"I cannot trust one. If he makes off with my portfolio, I am ruined."

"Take post horses, and I will wait here; but you must pay me for the day."

"Here is a zecchino. Order post horses at once; but follow us slowly with your own horses, for we shall leave again early tomorrow morning."

The zecchino instantly persuaded him, the horses were harnessed at once, and at seven o'clock we arrived in Viterbo, where I pretended to be in despair over not finding my portfolio. The maid swore that no one but she had entered the room. I calmly ordered supper, making Betty understand that I must act as I was doing in order to keep the coachman from protesting against taking her back to Siena, since he could consider that she had been put in his charge by her husband. At ten o'clock he arrived with his horses, and he brought up the small trunk as soon as she asked for it. I easily forced open the little padlock which was on the end of a chain, and Betty took out her cloak and a package in which she had four shifts, stockings, handkerchiefs, and nightcaps. The other things belonged to the villain; but I was too curious not to look at his possessions. Perhaps it was all that he owned in the world.

We found old breeches, old stockings, five or six torn shirts, a powder bag in which there were combs and pomade, and eighteen or twenty part-books, all either comedies or comic operas. There was also a packet of letters, which promised to be very interesting, and which Betty said she would read with me. The first notable thing we found was that all the letters were addressed to "Monsieur l'Étoile, Actor," well known in Marseilles, Montpellier, Toulouse, Bayonne, and several other cities in southern France. I pitied Betty. She could not laugh. She saw that she had been duped by a base actor, and her shame over it was bitter. I told her we would read the letters the next day, and she breathed again.

"Be so good," she said, "as to go out until I can get into bed, for at last I can change my shift."

"Whatever you please, my angel, and if you like I will have a bed made in the other room."

"No, my friend, I cannot but love and cherish your company; you have convinced me of your friendship only too well. Without you, what would have become of me?"

I did not come back until she was in bed, and, having gone to her, kissed her, sat down on the bed, and seen that she was not alarmed, I thought she might forgive me if, doing justice to her charms, I tried to satisfy the desires they inspired in me. Either from fear of seeming unjust, or because she felt what she made me feel, Betty showed herself amenable. On discovering this, I asked her if she would make my happiness complete by allowing me to undress.

"Will you still love me afterward?"

A charming answer when it comes from the heart, and whose falsity is apparent when it comes only from the mind. She offered so little resistance to my perfect happiness that she gave me reason to conclude I was making her happy too. Since Doña Ignacia, I had enjoyed only imperfect pleasures, for I had never seen them shared; but Betty gave me a proof of love which left me in no doubt. She sweetly opposed me when she suspected that I wanted to spare her. We had scarcely fallen asleep before the inn servant knocked at our door.

I dressed to talk to the coachman, who thought he was to take us to Rome, whereas we wanted to go back to Siena.

"Listen," I said, "I absolutely must recover my portfolio, and I feel certain that I shall find it at Acquapendente."

"I guessed it, by God! Pay me for the journey as if I had taken you to Rome, and then give me a zecchino a day, and I'll take you to England if you like."

"You have your wits about you, my lad; I will give you six zecchini now, and you shall give me a receipt; and tonight at Acquapendente I will give you another, and I will do the same every evening."

Ink and writing desk were at hand, the thing was done at once. I told him that I wanted to stop in Montefiascone, where I had business; and we arrived there at seven o'clock. The business was the letter I wanted to write to Sir B. M., in which I was to prepare him to forgive Betty by telling him all her unhappy story. Betty sat down to write him in English. I had already decided to lodge her with the Corsican Rivarola,[26] of whose intelligence I had had proof, and who had a beautiful and discreet woman staying in his house. Betty had acquired a look of satisfaction and assurance which delighted me; she told me again and again that she no longer feared anything, and she laughed when she thought of the deceiver who would vainly wait for us in Rome. She hoped that we would meet the carriage which was carrying her big trunk and that we could easily recover it; and when I said that he might pursue us, she maintained that he would not dare, and I agreed with her. In any case, I was prepared to give him a reception which would make him tremble, for there was no question of my doing him the honor to let him draw his sword. I had excellent pistols, ready to give him the treatment he deserved. Before I began my letter, Betty repeated her warning to tell him the whole truth.

"Always excepting the reward which you have granted my fervent friendship."

"Alas! It is the one thing which he must not know."

In less than three hours we had finished writing, and Betty was very well satisfied with my letter. But Betty's was a masterpiece; it could not fail. I was thinking of taking post horses as soon as I got to Siena, in order the sooner to put her in a safe place before her lover arrived. The only difficulty was the mad actor's bill of exchange, which, whether genuine or forged, I must try to find a way to return to him—but how to go about it? We left immediately after dinner, despite the heat, and we arrived at Acquapendente just as day was giving place to a night which we spent in the delights of love, which is always innocent when it is sincere and disinterested. In the morning I learned that a coach from Leghorn, bound for Rome, was about to leave, and Betty guessed that it was the one on which her trunk and the actor L'Étoile's must be. She went downstairs with me, and she recognized it at once. She talked to the coachman much better than I could have done to persuade him to let her have it; but he was not to be moved, and, since the arguments he used were excellent, she had to give in. The only thing she did, with the help of a notary of the city, was to sequestrate the trunk at the Roman customs office for a month, which would give her time to prove her right to prevent its being delivered to anyone who might come to get it. The notary had the order of sequestration legalized by the city magistrate, and the driver had to accept it and give a receipt for it. He also assured us that he had not received any other trunk from the same sender, which convinced us that the actor was a beggar whose only possessions were those we had seen in the small trunk.

After this achievement, Betty became perfectly charming. She saw herself able to make amends for all the wrongs which her misguided love had made her commit. I congratulated her on so quickly being cured of a passion which had completely deprived her of her reason. She shuddered when she recollected the monster. However, she told me that she would not have come to her senses and been convinced that he did not love her, if the wretch had not finally told her that she was a mere hypocrite and that he was sure she had granted me everything that such a wench as she could not have refused me.

"It was then," she said, "that I saw the monster in all his ugliness, and that I expected to see him fall, run through by your sword. I would have helped you to pierce his heart, if that had been necessary. So he did well to take to his heels. But it's better that it did not happen, for now we should be in a most grievous quandary. I am sure that the scoundrel won't dare to show his face again, either to you or to me."

We arrived in Radicofani about ten o'clock, and we busied ourselves adding to the letters which were to make Sir B. M. see reason. We were at the same table, Betty on one side, facing the door, which was shut, and I on the other side, with my back to the door and so close to it that anyone who opened it to come in could see me only by looking around it. Betty was fully dressed and very modestly; but I, having taken off my coat, was in shirt-sleeves—the heat was torrid. However, at that season I could have been as I was in the presence of the most respectable of women.

I hear heavy steps in the hall, my door is opened, and the man who comes bursting in, seeing Betty, says:

"*There you are!*"

But I do not give him time to turn and see me. I take him around the chest, pinning his arms, just at the moment when, seeing me, he would have fired the pistol in his right hand at me. As I spring on him, the impact shuts the door, and just as he was shouting to me, "*Let me go, traitor!*" and struggling to free himself, Betty fell on her knees before him, saying, *"You are wrong,* he is my savior!"

But Sir B. M., whose fury deprived him of both hearing and reason, kept saying, *"Let me go, traitor!"* and struggling, while, as long as he still held the pistol, I would have died before I would let him go. Trying to escape from my arms by force, he fell, and, naturally, I fell on top of him. Outside there was a noise of people trying to get in, but they could not, for we had fallen in front of the door. Betty bravely snatched the pistol from his hand, whereupon, seeing that his other hand was empty, I let him go, saying, *"You are wrong,"* while Betty kept repeating, *"He is my savior, calm yourself, listen."*

"What do you mean by 'your savior'?"

At that Betty takes the letter which I had in front of me, hands it to him, tells him to read it, and the Englishman, without getting up, begins to read. At that, sure of the outcome, I get up, I open the door, I tell the innkeeper to serve dinner for three and to leave and take his people with him.

CHAPTER IX

Rome. The perfidious actor punished. Lord Baltimore. Naples. Sarah Goudar. Betty's departure. Agata. La Callimena. Medini. Albergoni. Miss Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston. The Prince of Francavilla. The swimmers.

FALLING DOWN with the Englishman, I had struck my left hand so violently against the leg of the table that I had made a deep cut on the back of it at the joint of my fourth finger. Blood was coming out as if the vein had been opened by a surgeon. Miss Betty helped me to wrap up my hand in a handkerchief and tie it very tightly, while Sir B. M. read my letter with the utmost attention. The girl's confidence that her lover would come back to his senses pleased me greatly. I took my night bag and my coat and went to the next room to change my shirt and get dressed. I was the happiest of men, seeing that the thing had taken a turn which left me with nothing to fear for Betty. I was not at all vexed to find myself at the end of an amour whose sweets I had only begun to taste. My certainty that I had given her back a happiness which she had lost made up to me for all the distress I knew I should suffer from leaving her.

I had already been dressed for half an hour, and I still heard her talking forcefully to her lover, who answered her at intervals; they were speaking English, and I did not understand what they were saying, but their dialogue was calm. I thought I should not go in. After a long silence, he knocked lightly on my door, he came in, looking sad and mortified, and saying magnanimously that he clearly saw I had saved Betty, and, what was more, had cured her of her aberration.

"I could not guess," he said, "that the man I should find with her would be her savior, nor that the carriage which I saw here, and in which I was told that a young lady and a man had arrived, had come from Rome. If I had been told that, I would not even have come upstairs. I come up, I see Betty, I have no more doubts, you very sensibly catch hold of me, for, if you had delayed even an instant, my seeing you and killing you would have been simultaneous. And now I should be the unhappiest man alive. God be praised that you were not sitting where Betty was. Be my friend, Monsieur, and forgive me for my mistake."

At that I embraced him cordially, assuring him that what he had done was exactly what I should have done myself in his place. We went back to the other room, where Betty was sitting beside the bed in tears. We remained there for more than a quarter of an hour, saying nothing, while Sir B. M. carefully read my long letter over again. Since my hand was still bleeding, I sent for a surgeon, who, to stop the flow of blood, had to put on a compress and a bandage and make a sling from two handkerchiefs. The cut had severed the vein, but there was no danger. Betty continuing to weep, I took the liberty of telling Sir B. M. that she fully deserved his forgiveness.

"What, Monsieur! Do you think I have not forgiven her already? I should be the most savage of men if I did not know that she deserved it. My poor Betty! She saw her error as soon as you convinced her of the truth. I am sure that her tears have their source in nothing but the grief she feels at having had the weakness to commit a crime for which she cannot forgive herself. In three or four days you cannot have learned to know her as I know her.''

At these words she sprang up and, clasping the angelic man to her bosom, gave way so completely to her emotion that I have never seen repentance shed such a flood of tears. Sir B. M. could not hold back his, and at that I gave in and let mine flow, though I could not keep from varying them from time to time with a little laugh when the happy ending to the tragedy rejoiced my soul. Sir B. M. pleased me when, analyzing our situation, he declared that our tears, since they sprang solely from virtue, could not but be closely allied to laughter. He laughed when he saw his coat all stained with blood. It was of pekin,[1] and he at once sent it to be washed. We sat down to the table where, Sir B. M.'s caresses having calmed his mistress, she ate and pleased her lover by drinking all the muscat he pressed on her. As he was no longer in a hurry, he said that we might as well stay in Radicofani until the next day, for, having ridden fifteen stages at a gallop, he was exhausted. He had arrived in Leghorn the day before, and, not finding Betty at his apartment, had immediately learned by whom her trunk had been taken to the ''Maltese Cross'';[2] the same man had told him that it had been sent to Rome and that the officer who had sent it, after addressing it to Roland,[3] innkeeper, on the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, had hired a horse, leaving the man from whom he had hired it a watch as security. He had gone there at once and had recognized Betty's watch. Thus made certain that Betty must be either in the carriage which was carrying the trunk or on horseback with the officer, he had not hesitated a moment before deciding to follow them.

''I was sure,'' he said, ''that I would overtake you on the road. I took only a good pair of pistols; but not with the intention of killing my sweetheart. Yes, my dear Betty; my soul's first impulse was to pity you; the second, which will last until it is satisfied, was to blow out the villain's brains. We will leave tomorrow for Rome."

I was happy to see Betty delighted by the conclusion of her lover's story. The thought of revenge rejoiced her soul.

"We shall find him," she said, "staying at Roland's."

At that Sir B. M. looked at me and smiled, his eyes shining with content, holding Betty in his arms, as if he wanted to force me to admire the greatness of an English soul, whose natural strength far exceeded the weaknesses to which it might occasionally succumb.

"I understand you," I said, "and you shall not carry out your plan without me. Let us embrace, but promise me that you will follow my advice blindly. Otherwise I will start at once, I will arrive in Rome before you, and I will save the villain who tried to ruin Betty. Remember that if you had killed him before he got to Rome, it would have been nothing; but if you think you can safely blow out his brains in Rome now that you have recovered Betty, you are mistaken. You could have reason to repent; you do not know Rome and priestly justice. Come, Sir B. M., give me your hand and your word of honor that you will do nothing without my consent, or I shall leave you here and now."

Sir B. M. was of my height, somewhat thinner, younger than I by four or five years, and of a character with which my reader must already be so well acquainted that I need not describe it. The rather overbearing tone of my harangue must have surprised him, but, instantly recognizing the source of it, he could not refuse to shake hands with me. I immediately knew that he was a brother,[4] and his brow cleared. We embraced cordially.

"Yes, dear heart," he said to Betty, "let us entrust our revenge to the friend whom Heaven has sent us."

“I consent, provided that we remain together and always act in concert ”

Thereupon he went off to bed, and I left him with Betty. I went downstairs to pay the coachman for his day and to tell him that we would leave the next morning for Rome.

“For Rome? Then you have found your portfolio? You would have done better not to have come looking for it.”

Seeing me with my arm in a sling, the coachman, like everyone else in Radicofani, thought that I had fought a duel.

Sir B. M. having gone to bed, I spent the whole day with Betty, whose sense of her extraordinary good fortune in having been reconciled with him had left her incapable of any but the most exalted sentiments. She told me that we must remember what had happened between us only to remain good friends until death, without the slightest amorous intercourse, and I consented without much urging. As for her desire to be avenged for the insult the actor had put on her, I made her understand that she must persuade her lover to renounce any idea of violence in such a city as Rome, since it might cost him too dear. I promised her that the day after we arrived in Rome I would have him locked up, which I could do easily and, above all, without causing talk, for otherwise her reputation might suffer. After sleeping until seven o'clock, Sir B. M. woke much less angry with Betty's seducer, and adopted my plan, on condition that he should have the pleasure of paying him a visit, for he wanted to know him. After agreeing on this, and eating a good supper, I went to bed in another room, not without regret

We set out at daybreak the next morning, Betty sitting on Sir B. M.'s lap; but the Englishman could bear the boredom of the slow pace of the carriage only as far as Acquapendente. We agreed that we should do better to travel post to Rome, hiring a carozzino[5] in which there was room for four, on which I at once had my trunk put. In this way we covered in twelve hours a distance which would have cost us three days if we stayed in the same carriage. We arrived there at daybreak the next morning, and as soon as we came to the customs office[6] I gave the chief clerk the notarized document authorizing Betty to recover her trunk. He told us that, after the necessary formalities, he would send it to us at whatever inn we might choose, and it was done the next day. After a polite search of my trunk by two clerks, the postilion took us to an inn opposite the Church of San Carlo,[7] where, after having my trunk taken to a separate room, I begged Sir B. M. to remain calm, assuring him that I would attend to the whole matter in the course of the morning and that we should dine together well satisfied. He replied with a laugh that he was going to bed.

I went straight to the Bargello's.[8] The Bargello in Rome is a person who can do a great deal, who takes on all sorts of business, and who is very expeditious when he sees clearly and when his clients are not afraid to spend money. In consequence he is rich, surrounds himself with a certain ceremony, and has immediate access to the Cardinal Vicar,[9] the Governor of Rome,[10] and even the Holy Father. Having been granted a private audience at once, I laid the whole matter before him, not concealing the slightest detail. I ended by telling him that all we wanted was to have the scoundrel put in prison, and to be certain that he would leave it only to be banished from Rome.

"What we demand," I said, "is perfectly just, and you see that we could obtain it by the ordinary legal procedures; but, being in a hurry, I have come to ask you to take the whole matter in hand, and, to help you to look into it speedily, I offer you the fifty scudi which we shall save in court costs."

He at once asked me for the bill of exchange for three thousand écus and for the entire contents of the adventurer's small trunk, including his letters. I gave him the bill of exchange, taking a receipt for it; as for the contents of the trunk, I told him to send to our inn for it at one o'clock. He assured me that it would all be done in the course of the day, after he had made him admit in someone's presence the principal facts of which I had informed him. He already knew that he was staying at Roland's, and that he had called at the customs office to get his trunk. He laughed when he saw me astonished that he knew all this. He said that the thing was grave enough to send him to Civitavecchia[11] (to the galleys), if we would give a hundred scudi instead of fifty, and I replied that it might be possible. He was very glad to learn that the horse did not belong to him; he told me to call on him at nine o'clock in the evening, when he would certainly have news for me. I promised I would do so in company with the Englishman, which pleased him.

In pursuit of my intentions, I had a great deal to do in Rome, and above all to see Cardinal de Bernis;[12] but I put everything off for the sake of the business in hand. It had become my only concern. So I went back to the inn, where I found a local valet whom Sir B. M. had already engaged to serve us and who told me that after breakfasting he had gone to bed. It was only eight o'clock. Since we needed a carriage, I thought I should speak to the innkeeper, and I was not a little surprised when I saw that he was none other than Roland. I thought the actor was staying at his inn.

"I thought, my dear Roland, that you still had your inn on the Piazza di Spagna."

"I gave it to my eldest daughter, whom I married to a Frenchman who is making a good thing of it; and I took this palazzo, where I have splendid apartments."

"And are there many foreigners staying at your daughter's now?"

"There is only a Frenchman, who calls himself Count de l'Étoile, who is waiting for his luggage, and who has a good horse which I expect to buy."

"I advise you to wait until tomorrow to buy his horse, without telling anyone who gave you the advice."

"Why should I wait?"

"I can tell you no more."

Roland was the father of Teresa, whom I had loved nine years earlier and whom my brother Giovanni married in 1762,[13] a year after I left, as my reader may remember. He told me that my brother was in Rome with Prince Beloselski,[14] the Russian Ambassador at the Court of Dresden.

"I thought my brother could not come to Rome."[15]

"He is here with a safe-conduct which the Dowager Electress of Saxony[16] obtained from the Holy Father through her Ambassador. He wants to have the case which went against him tried over again, and there he is making a mistake, for if he had it tried a hundred times the case would go the same way and he would receive the same sentence. No one sees him, everyone avoids him. Even Mengs refuses to see him."

"Then Mengs[17] is here? I thought he was in Madrid."

"He was granted a year's leave of absence; but his whole family are in Madrid."

"I need a hackney carriage by the day for as long as the foreigners I am with stay here."

"You shall have it."

After hearing all this sufficiently unwelcome news, for I did not want to see either Mengs or my brother, I went to bed to sleep until dinnertime. I was waked for dinner at one o'clock, being told at the same time that someone was waiting to deliver a note to me; it was a servant of the Bargello's, come to take all the actor's belongings. I sent them to him, together with the trunk.

At table I informed Sir B. M. of all that I had done, and he promised to be with me at nine o'clock. We spent the afternoon driving to see some villas, and, after taking Betty to the inn, we went to call on the Bargello, who told us that our man was already locked up and that, if we wished it, such a bad case could be made for him that he would certainly be sent to the galleys. Sir B. M. said that he would first like to speak to him, and the Bargello told us how to go about seeing him the next day. He said that he had made no trouble about confessing everything, laughing all the while and saying that it was a trifle which could bring him to no harm, for the young lady had gone with him of her own free will. He had given him back his bill of exchange, which he had received with the utmost indifference; he had told him it was true that his passion was acting, but that he was nevertheless a man of rank, and, as for the horse, that he was at liberty to sell it, since the watch he had left as security was worth more. I had forgotten to tell the Bargello that the watch belonged to Betty. After paying the worthy representative of Rome's summary justice fifty Roman scudi, we went to sup with Betty, who had already received her trunk. She was very glad to learn that the scoundrel was in prison, but she did not care to pay him a visit. We went there the next day after dinner. The Bargello had provided us with an advocate, who at once made out a document in which he summoned the prisoner to pay the costs of the journey and of his arrest, and a pecuniary compensation to the young woman he had deceived, unless he could prove within six weeks, on the testimony of the French Ambassador,[18] that his title of Count was genuine; meanwhile he was to remain in prison.

We found him holding the document, which had been translated into French for him. The first thing he said when he saw me was that I owed him twenty-five zecchini on the wager I had lost, for he had let Betty sleep with me. On my informing the Englishman of this, he said that it was a lie, but that he knew that she had slept with him. The actor, hearing his English accent, asked him if he was Betty's lover.

"Yes, and if I had overtaken you on the road I would have killed you, for you deceived her and you are nothing but a beggarly actor."

"I have three thousand écus."

"I will put up six thousand which will be yours if the bill is not forged; but you shall stay in prison until the answer comes; if it is forged, you shall go to the galleys."

"I accept your proposal."

"I will speak to the advocate."

We left him and went to the advocate's, for Sir B. M., sure that the bill was forged, wanted to have the pleasure of seeing Betty's seducer in the galleys; but the thing could not be arranged, for, though the actor was willing to hand over the bill, he insisted on being given a scudo a day for his expenses until the answer came.

Wanting to see Rome, since he was there, Sir B. M. had to have clothes made for him, even down to shirts. Betty had everything she needed. Becoming their inseparable companion, I never left them; I put off embarking on a regular life until after they were gone. There was nothing any more between Betty and me, but I still loved her, and I had taken a liking to Sir B. M., whose intelligence and English uprightness made him a pleasant companion. He was thinking of spending two or three weeks in Rome, and then going back to Leghorn; but, Lord Baltimore[19] having arrived five or six days after we did, and being an old friend of Sir B. M.'s, he persuaded him to go to spend two weeks in Naples. His Lordship, who had a pretty Frenchwoman and two menservants with him, undertook to arrange the little excursion, and insisted upon my being one of the party. My reader may remember that I had known him in London. I seized the opportunity to see Naples and my old acquaintances there again; I left with them, we arrived there in two days, and we went to lodge at the "Crocelle,"[20] at Chiaia. The first thing I learned was that the Duke of Matalona[21] had died and that the Duchess his widow had become the Princess of Caramanica. This put an end to my renewing the acquaintances I had made at the Palazzo Matalona;[22] so I thought of nothing but amusing myself and calling on no one, as if I had never been in Naples. Lord Baltimore had been there several times, but his mistress, who had never been there, wanting to see everything, as did Betty and Sir B. M., we went everywhere with our traveling companions, dispensing with guides. His Lordship and I were far better informed than they.

On the day after we arrived I was surprised to see the too well-known Chevalier Goudar,[23] whom I had known in London, come to call on Lord Baltimore. The famous libertine was in Naples, living in style in a house in Posilipo[24] with his wife, and his wife was the same Irish Sarah who had been a barmaid in a beer house[25] in London. Since he knew that I knew her, he had to forewarn me. He invited us all to dine at his house on the next day but one.

Sarah Goudar was not surprised to see me, for he had told her to expect me, but it was I who could not get over my surprise. Seeing her dressed with all the elegance a French or an Italian woman could have commanded, carrying herself well, receiving her guests even better, without constraint but with perfect dignity, speaking Italian with all the eloquence of a born Neapolitan, ravishingly pretty, and finding myself unable to forget what she had been when I had last seen her in London, I was stupefied; she saw it and laughed heartily; she seemed to me to be disguised as a princess; but she wanted me to think that it was when I saw her in London that she had been in disguise. In less than a quarter of an hour we saw five or six ladies of the highest standing in the town and at Court arrive at Madame Goudar's house, as well as ten or a dozen dukes, princes, and marquises, with foreigners from every country. Before a table was laid for more than thirty, she sat down at the harpsichord and sang an air with the voice of a nightingale and a brilliance which did not surprise the company, for they knew her, but which astonished me and my traveling companions, for her talent was amazing. Goudar had done it all. Such was the education he had given her in six or seven years. Having begun by marrying her in order to have an unquestionable right to her, he had taken her from London to Paris, where he would have given her to Louis XV as his mistress if La du Barry[26] had not found a way to forestall her. He had then taken her to Vienna, to Venice, to Florence, and to Rome, and having nowhere found the fortune for which he hoped, he had gone to settle in Naples, where, to launch the fair Sarah, he had made her abjure the Anglican heresy and turn Catholic under the sponsorship of the Queen.[27] The amusing thing is that Sarah was Irish and a Catholic. The conversion was a trick.

What I found strange, inconsistent, and unworthy was that all the highest nobility of both sexes went to Goudar's house, and that Madame Goudar could go nowhere, for she was invited nowhere. It was Goudar himself who informed me of all this before dinner. He could not wait to tell me that he supported himself by gambling. Faro and biribissi supplied all his income; and it must have been considerable, for everything in his establishment was splendid. Invited to become his partner, I took good care not to refuse, certain that I should share in all the profits which I could bring to the association by pursuing an activity with whose rules and principles I was already well acquainted and to which my discreet behavior would lend the proper tone. My purse was rapidly reaching the point of emptiness, and I very probably had no other way of maintaining my accustomed style of life. Having come to this decision, I declined to return with Betty. Sir B. M. wanted to reimburse me for all that I had spent on her behalf, and I was in no situation to insist on being more generous than he.

Two months after he left, I learned from the Bargello in Rome that L'Étoile, released from prison by the intervention of Cardinal de Bernis, had also left Rome; and the next year I learned at Florence that Sir B. M. was no longer in Leghorn. He had gone to England with his dear Betty, who presumably became his wife on the death of the one he had.

As for the famous Lord Baltimore, the suzerain of Boston,[28] he left a few days after they did, bent once again on making a tour of Italy, where he died three or four years later[29] from exposing himself to the pestilential air of August in the Roman Campagna, which at that season mercilessly kills all travelers who, not fearing it, dare to spend the night and sleep there. It is enough to sleep a single night in Piperno or its vicinity never to wake again.[30] Those who have to pass that way, going from Rome to Naples or from Naples to Rome, either do not stop there or refrain from sleeping if they value their lives. Lord Baltimore paid with his life for his English skepticism.

Continuing to stay at the "Crocelle," where all rich foreigners came to lodge, I easily got to know them all, and I did them the favor of sending them to lose their money at the beautiful Madame Goudar's. I was sorry for it, but such is the nature of things.

Five or six days after Betty left, I happened on the Abate Gama[31] at Chiaia, very much aged, but in good health and as gay as ever. After we entertained each other for half an hour with accounts of our respective adventures, he told me that, all the differences between the Holy See and the Court of Rome having been settled by the courage of Pope Ganganelli,[32] he would return to Rome in a few days, but that before he left he wanted to take me to call on a person whom I should be very glad to see again.

I thought of Donna Leonilda, or her mother Donna Lucrezia;[33] or who else could it be? But what a pleasant surprise when I saw the dancer Agata,[34] with whom I had been in love in Turin after I left La Corticelli to her fate! The Abate had not forewarned her, though he could have done so, for he did not take me to see her until the next day. After all the astonishment on either side which unexpected recognitions always inspire, and all the words which spring from the satisfaction one feels at those sweet moments, we calmed ourselves in order to tell each other of our vicissitudes. Agata's story, which could have been very short, took a long time; mine, which should have been very long, took only a quarter of an hour. Agata had danced in Naples for only a year. An advocate who had fallen in love with her had married her; and she showed me four children, and their father, who arrived at suppertime. She had talked of me to him so often that she had scarcely spoken my name before he fell on my neck. He was quick-witted, like every Neapolitan *paglietta.*[35] He assured me that he was most eager to know me. We went down to the quay to sup by moonlight, and, the Abate Gama having left, I remained alone with Agata and her husband. I left them at midnight, promising that I would go to dine with them the next day.

Though Agata was in the bloom of youth, she did not kindle the least spark of the old fire in me; but such was my nature. In addition I was ten years older. My coldness pleased me. I was very glad to find that I need not fear that the power of love would force me to trouble the peace of so happy a family.

Not being far from Posilipo, where Goudar lived, knowing that there was play there, and having a considerable share in the bank, I go there. It was not an unusual hour. I see the table surrounded by ten or a dozen punters, and I am surprised when I see the banker. It was Count Medini.[36] It had been only three or four days since he had been ejected from the house of the French

Ambassador, Choiseul,[37] because he had been caught cheating at play. In addition, I had an old grudge against him. My reader may remember that we had fought a duel, and that I might not have forgotten our difference. He had made his way into Goudar's circle. I glance at the bank, and I see that it is at its last gasp. It ought to contain six hundred once,[38] and I see scarcely a hundred. I had a one-third interest in it. I study the face of the punter who had wreaked this havoc, and I guess everything. It was the first time the sharper had been seen in Goudar's house. At the end of the deal Goudar takes me aside and tells me he is a rich Frenchman whom Medini himself had brought there, that he was able to lose a great deal, and that I should not be distressed if chance had made him lucky the first time, for he would not be so the next. I reply that it was all a matter of indifference to me, for I had told him that I would not have a share in the bank when Medini was dealing; he replied that, telling Medini so, he had wanted to reduce the bank by a third, but that he had taken offense and had told him to leave it as it was, and that if he lost he would repay me the amount of the loss.

"If he does not repay me tomorrow morning, there will be trouble; but in any case it is for you to repay me; for I told you in so many words that I will have no share in the bank when Medini insists on dealing."

"You can certainly claim your two hundred once from me, but I hope you will listen to reason, for it would be very hard on me to have to lose two thirds."

I did not believe a word of all this, for Goudar was even more of a scoundrel than Medini; and I waited impatiently for the end of the game to clear the matter up. An hour after midnight it was all over; the lucky punter left, laden with gold, together with the others, and Medini, affecting a most inappropriate cheerfulness, said that the victory would cost the victor very dear. I at once asked him if he would pay me two hundred once, for I was not in the game, as Goudar must have told him; he replied that he admitted he owed them to me, if I was determined to leave the partnership, but that he asked me to tell him for what reason I did not want to have a share in the bank when he dealt.

"Because I have no confidence in your luck."

"You must see that the reason you give me is specious, and that I might put an unpleasant interpretation on your unwillingness."

"I cannot prevent you from misinterpreting, and what I see or do not see is for me to say. I want two hundred once, and I leave you to enjoy all the victories you may win over the gentleman. You have only to arrange matters with Monsieur Goudar, and you, Monsieur Goudar, will return me my two hundred once at noon tomorrow."

"I cannot return them to you until Count Medini gives them to me, for I have no money."

"I am sure that you will have them at noon tomorrow. Good-by."

Not wanting to listen to arguments which could not but be beside the point, I went home, still considering them clearly a pair of cheats and determined to see no more of the gambling den after recovering my money peaceably or by force. At nine o'clock the next morning I receive a note from Medini in which he asks me to come to his lodging to finish our business. I answer that he should settle the matter with Goudar, asking him to excuse me if I could not go to see him. An hour later he enters my room, and he uses all his eloquence to persuade me to accept his note for two hundred once, payable in eight days. I refuse, saying that I would deal with no one but Goudar, from whom I wanted my money at noon, determined to do everything if he did not return it to me, for he had it only on deposit. Medini raises his voice, saying that my refusal insults him; and I take up a pistol, ordering him to leave, which he does, turning pale and not saying a single word in reply.

At noon I go to Goudar's without a sword but with good pistols in my pocket, and there I find Medini, who reproaches me with having tried to murder him in my room. I do not answer him, and, remaining on my guard, I tell Goudar to give me back my two hundred once; Goudar asks Medini for them, and here the quarrel would have broken out, if I had not prevented it by taking to the stairs, threatening Goudar with unrestrained hostilities which would do him the greatest harm. When I was outside the house, I saw the beautiful Sarah at the window, begging me to come up by the back stairs to talk with her privately. I ask her to excuse me, and she says she will come down. She tells me that I am in the right, that her husband is in the wrong, but that I must wait, for he has no money, and she vouches for it that I will have my money in three days. I reply that nothing can pacify me but the money, and that she will not see me in her house again. At that she takes from her finger a ring which I recognized, and which was worth more than twice the amount, and offers it to me as security; I take it, I look at it, and I accept, making her a bow and leaving her there astonished, for she was in a state of undress in which she had probably never suffered a refusal.

Well pleased with my victory, I go to the house of the advocate, Agata's husband, where I was to dine. I tell him the whole story in detail, and at the same time I ask him to find me someone who will give me two hundred once, keeping the ring as security and writing me a note guaranteeing that the bearer can recover the ring on payment of two hundred once. At that he acts in his professional capacity, having me do everything in accordance with the forms of law; he himself gives me the two hundred once, and he sends a note in my name to Monsieur Goudar, in which he names the depositary of the ring, and sets forth the undertaking by which it will be returned upon payment of the same amount.

After dealing with this matter I recover all my good humor, and I enter Agata's apartment, where I find her with a charming company of men and women and the Abate Gama. Before dinner Agata took me into her dressing room, where, opening a jewel case, she showed me, besides the beautiful girandole earrings, all the other pieces of jewelry I had given her when I was rich and in love with her. She tells me that she is rich, and that, since she owed me all her good fortune, it will make her happy if I will take back everything I had given her; she assures me that what she has proposed had been agreed upon that morning between her and her husband; and, to overcome my scruples, she shows me her diamonds, which had belonged to her husband's first wife; their value was greater than that of mine. Admiring so much generosity and a proposal so delicate and so magnanimous, I reply only by a silence which could not but make her understand the depth of my gratitude and the justice which I did her.

Her husband comes in, Agata shuts the jewel case, and with a pleasant laugh he tells me that I must not scruple to do what Agata had proposed, and, so saying, he embraces me. We go to join the company, which numbered ten or twelve; but the only person I notice among the men is a youth whom at the first glance I see is in love with Agata. He was Don Pasquale Latilla;[39] and he had everything to make him loved and everything to make him happy, for to intelligence he added a sweet and attractive manner. We became well acquainted at table. Among the women I was surprised by a girl of rare beauty. At fourteen years of age, she was already as well formed as if she were eighteen. Agata told me that she was studying music, so that she could earn her living by it on the stage, for she was poor.

"Such a beauty, and poor?"

"Yes, for she does not want to give herself piecemeal, and the man who would want to possess her entirely would have to assume too heavy a burden, for since she has nothing he would have to do everything for her. Men who would bring themselves to do that are very scarce in Naples."

"It is impossible that she has not a lover, for she is striking."

"If she has, no one knows of it. You can make her acquaintance and go to see her. In three or four visits you will learn everything."

"What is her name?"

"La Callimena;[40] she lives on the Largo del Castello del'Ovo.[41] The person who is speaking to her now is her aunt, and I am sure they are talking of you."

We sit down at table, the dinner is of game, fish, and shellfish, all exquisite, with delicious wines, and I saw Agata's heart leap for joy at the thought that Fortune had so favored her that she could prove her happiness to the man but for whom she would never have been happy; old Gama was congratulating himself on having brought me there, Don Pasquale Latilla could not be jealous of the attentions his idol bestowed on me, for he considered them due to me as a foreigner, and Agata's husband showed that he prided himself on having a mind above common prejudices. But amid all the attentions which were showered on me, Callimena, who was across the table from me, caused me distractions for which I could not forgive myself. Dying to find her witty, I often addressed some remark to her, she answered politely, but so briefly that I could not start a subject which would give scope for repartee. The girl's eyes were such a brilliant black that, try as she might, she could neither prevent them from making any man who looked into them fall in love nor keep them from saying more than they said despite herself. For this reason she never let them rest on any man who wanted to awaken their interest.

I asked her if Callimena was her family name or a nickname, and she replied that it was her baptismal name.

"It is a Greek name," I said, "and no doubt you know what it means."

"No."

"It means beauty in a rage, or beautiful moon."[42]

"I am very glad to have learned that I have nothing in common with my name."

"Have you brothers and sisters?"

"I have only a married sister, whom you perhaps know."

"What is her name? Whom did she marry?"

"Her husband is Piedmontese, but she does not live with him."

"Is she Signora Sclopis, who is traveling with Sir Aston?"[43]

"None other."

"Then I will give you news of her which you will not be sorry to hear."

After dinner I asked Agata what entitled the charming girl to come to dine with her.

"My husband was her godfather, and he does something for her. He pays the master who is teaching her to sing."

"What is her age exactly?"

"She is fourteen."

"She is a prodigy. What beauty!"

"But her sister is even more beautiful."

"I know her only by name."

But at this juncture Monsieur Goudar is announced and comes in. He asks the advocate to hear something he has to tell him, and they go into another room. A quarter of an hour later the advocate came back and told me that, having received the two hundred once, he had given him back his ring. So that was the end of the matter, much to my satisfaction. I saw that I had made an eternal enemy, but I did not care. The company sat down to cards, and Agata made me play with Callimena, whose calm put the finishing touch to my enchantment. Her character was like her beauty, completely without artifice. I told her everything I knew about her sister, and I promised I would write to Turin to learn where she was then, and give her the information afterward. I told her that I loved her, and that if she was willing I would pay calls on her, and I was very well satisfied with her answer.

The next day I could scarcely wait to go to her house at breakfast time. I found her at the harpsichord with her music master; her talent was mediocre, but love made me find it superlative. After the master left, I was alone with her. She launched into apologies for her frowzy dress, her inadequate furniture, her inability to offer me a dinner. I said that it all conspired to make her more beautiful in my eyes, and that I deeply regretted I was not rich enough to make her fortune. When I began to praise the beauties of her face, she did not resist a storm of kisses which saluted her eyes, her lips, the roses of her cheeks; she stopped me when my daring hand tried to uncover a bosom of which I saw only half, but, even while resisting, she gave me her lips to assure herself that I should not hold her resistance against her. I accepted the kiss, and by an effort assumed a calm which I did not feel.

"Charming Callimena, tell me the truth and earn my gratitude. Have you a lover?"

"No."

"Have you had one?"

"Never."

"But for a time . . . a passing fancy?"

"Not even that."

"What! Formed as you are, with eyes and a countenance which assure me that your heart is tender, how can I believe that there is not a man in Naples who has inspired desires in you?"

"Not one, for no man has ever tried to inspire them. No one on earth has ever made such a declaration to me as you did a moment ago. That is the simple truth."

"I believe you; and I see that I must hasten to leave Naples, for otherwise I should become the unhappiest of men."

"How so?"

"By loving you with no hope of possessing you."

"Love me, and stay. Why cannot you believe that I will love you? Only restrain your ardor, for you must see that I cannot fall in love with you unless I see that you can control yourself."

"As I am doing now, for example?"

"Yes. Seeing you calm, I think that you are denying yourself in order to please me, and love often follows gratitude."

It was as much as to tell me that she did not yet love me, but that she would come to love me little by little; I saw that to win her heart I must pursue no other course than the one she pointed out to me. I had reached the age when a man begins to have the strength to wait. After kissing her beautiful eyes, and being ready to go, I asked her if she was in need of money; in answer she blushed, and a moment later she told me to go and ask her aunt, who was in the next room.

I go in by myself, and I am amazed to find her with two unassuming Capuchins, who were amusing her with small talk while she sewed; some little distance away three very young girls were also sewing. She starts to rise, I stop her, I ask after her health, I laughingly congratulate her on her company, she laughs too, the Capuchins do not vouchsafe me even a look and remain where they are. I take a chair and sit down facing her.

The aunt might be fifty years old, she was well preserved for her age, she had a frank expression and traces of a beauty which had left her with her youth. I had scarcely looked at her at dinner the day before. Though I am free from prejudices, the presence of the two bearded men, in their monstrous habit, sweating great drops and giving off a more than unpleasant odor, very much annoyed me; I thought their not leaving was an insult to me. I knew that, being men as I was, they must have the same desires as I; but I could not forgive them for the effrontery with which they encroached on my privileges, despite their knowing that I had the right to send them about their business. I saw clearly that my mortifying them would displease the lady, and I felt sure that the two impostors counted on a consideration which I could not fail to show except to my own disadvantage. No one is more adept at such calculations than a priest. After a long acquaintance with the whole of Europe, I can say that I have never seen the regular clergy remaining within the bounds prescribed by their vows, except in France; there I have never found monks at social gatherings; I have never dined in decent houses with priests or bishops brazen enough to eat meat on the days when the Church forbids it to them; I have never seen monks or abbés in public resorts or at theaters except in secular dress. In Italy, on the contrary, in Spain, and in some German cities, priests, monks, and the whole tribe of abbés appear freely in all the places where it would seem that no one should go but those who, having taken no vows, are sure that they will scandalize no one by their presence there.

After being patient for a quarter of an hour, I could not help telling the worthy aunt that I had something to say to her in private; whereupon I thought the stinking monks would leave; but not a bit of it, she herself rose and took me into the next room to hear what I wanted to say to her. On my asking her if she was in need of money she replied that she was only too much in need of twenty ducati del regno[44] to pay the rent of the house. Twenty Neapolitan ducati come to eighty French francs. She was astonished, and full of gratitude, at my unhesitatingly giving her the amount. I went back to the "Crocelle" without giving her time to thank me.

Something which happened to me on the same day is worthy to be recorded. While I was dining alone in my room, I was told that a Venetian hermit, who said that he knew me, had come to speak to me. I have him shown in, and I see a face which was not unfamiliar but which I could not place. Of my height, but thin, gaunt, showing all of his sixty years, with hunger, poverty, and weariness depicted in his every feature, with a long beard, a bald head, a brownish-gray robe hanging down to his heels and fastened by a rope from which hung a rosary, a dirty handkerchief, a hood falling down on his back, a long cylindrical basket in his left hand, and a staff in his right, he strikes me as being not a servant of God, a penitent sinner, a humble seeker of alms, but a man in despair perhaps come to murder me in my room.

"Who are you? I seem to have seen you before; but I cannot pretend that I remember you."

"I will tell you who I am, and I will surprise you with the story of my misfortunes; but first have food and drink brought for me, for since day before yesterday I have eaten nothing but some thin soup at the hospice."

"Certainly. Go down and let them give you dinner, and come up afterward, for you cannot talk to me while you are eating."

My local valet goes down with him to order him given something to eat, and I order him not to leave me alone with the man, who really terrified me. Sure, however, that I must know him, I could not wait to learn who he was. Three quarters of an hour later he came up again, looking as if his face were on fire with fever. I tell him to sit down and speak freely, for my servant would stay on the balcony, where he could hear nothing of what he should say to me. He began by telling me his name.

"I am Albergoni."[45]

I instantly remember him. He was a Paduan gentleman with whom I had been on terms of close friendship twenty-five years earlier, when, Signor Bragadin having granted me his protection, I had given up earning my living as a violinist. The Paduan nobleman had only a very small fortune, but he had intelligence, a strong character, great knowledge of the world, and a splendid constitution able to withstand every debauch in the service of Bacchus and Venus; if his morals were unbridled, so was his tongue, which mocked now the government, now religion; he was brave to the point of temerity, a gamester who did not confine cheating to the bounds of prudence, a disciple of the antinaturalism which long ago brought the fires of Heaven down on the five cities.[46] In addition, the man whom I had before me and who presented me with the veritable image of ugliness had been handsome until the age of twenty-five; but that is not surprising: the way from beauty to ugliness is very short, much shorter than the way from ugliness to beauty. In the first change Nature descends, in the second she rises. It was twenty-five years since I had seen Albergoni, and fifteen since I had heard any news of him. I saw him before me dressed as a hideous hermit. Here is what he told me.

"A club of five or six young men of whom I was one had a casino on La Giudecca[47] where we spent delightful hours without harming anyone. Somebody took it into his head that our gatherings were enlivened by illicit relations forbidden by the law. We were indicted in the greatest secrecy, the casino was closed, and all the members of it ran away except myself and a certain Branzardi. We were arrested. Two years later Branzardi was sentenced to be burned after being beheaded, and I was sentenced to ten years in prison. In the year '65 I was released, and I went to live in Padua, where I was not left in peace. I was accused of the same crime, and, thinking it best not to wait for the bolt to fall, I went to Rome. Two years later the Council of Ten sentenced me *in absentia* to perpetual banishment. One can bear banishment patiently if one has an income, and I should have had enough to live on if my brother-in-law, who had taken

The Palace in Portici at the Foot of Vesuvius over my estate, did not decide to profit by my misfortune to obtain full possession of it. A lawyer in Rome was ordered to pay me two paoli a day if I would sign an undertaking assuring them that I would never make any further claims. I refused to accept the two paoli on this unjust condition, and I left Rome to come here to be a hermit. It is as such that I have lived for two years, and I am at the end of my tether, for misery kills. Anyone who defies it can only be some wretch who has never experienced it."

"Go back to Rome. I think that with two paoli a day you can manage to live."

"I would rather die than submit to injustice."

I condoled with him, I gave him a zecchino, and I told him that as long as I remained in Naples he could come to eat at my inn every day, and I thought I saw him leave satisfied; but two days later his name was on every tongue in Naples. My valet told me when he entered my room in the morning that the hermit to whom I had had dinner given for two days was lying stark naked at the door of an inn on the Via Toledo.[48] The innkeeper had found him dead, hanging in the room in which he had slept, and, having immediately informed the magistrate, had been ordered to expose him publicly to find out who he was. I quickly dress to go and see the spectacle. I see the wretch who had strangled himself, and who made the spectators tremble. His face was black and livid, and his scrotum was so swollen that he appeared to have a very big hernia. I go to speak with the innkeeper, who tells me that for two days he had supped very well and drunk even better, paying him in advance as was the practice in the case of all mendicants. He took me to the room in which he had killed himself (he did not know at what hour), leaving the door unlocked. He had given his basket and all his rags to the magistrate, and he could not wait to have them come to fetch his body and bury it in the carrion pit. On the floor I see a sheet of paper, I pick it up, and I read my name at the head of eight or ten others, among which was that of Count Medini. After giving us the flattering title of his benefactors, he tells us that, life having become a burden to him, he thought it best to free himself of it and deserve our approbation. In recompense for what we had done for him, he gave us five numbers. I gave the paper to the innkeeper, who received it as if it were a treasure. The death of the wretched madman was very advantageous to the Neapolitan lottery. All the players staked on the five numbers, not one of which came out; but experience has never had power to dispel superstition. Five numbers written down by a man who hanged himself a quarter of an hour later could not but be those which would come out at the first drawing.

I go into a coffeehouse for breakfast, and hear someone discoursing at length on the reason why a man who was determined to commit suicide should choose to hang himself; he claimed that it was a delightful death, and the great proof he alleged was that every hanged man at his last moment had an erection and an ejaculation of sperm. As I left the coffeehouse, I finally seized the hand of a pickpocket just as he was spiriting away my handkerchief. In less than a month I had been robbed of at least twenty handkerchiefs. Any number of rogues live in Naples by nothing else, and their skill is admirable. As soon as the rascal saw that he was caught, he begged me not to raise a row, assuring me that he would give me back all the handkerchiefs he had stolen from me, and he confessed that he had robbed me of seven or eight.

"You have robbed me of twenty, and more."

"Not I, but some of the others. Come with me, and perhaps you'll find them all, and whoever has them will let you have them very cheap."

"Is it far?"

"On the Largo del Castello;[49] but let go of me, for people are looking at us."

The rascal took me to a shabby inn ten paces from

Callimena's house, and a minute later he shows me into a room where a very wide-awake man asks me if it is true that I want to buy secondhand goods. Hearing that I want to buy handkerchiefs, he opens a cupboard which looked like a door and he shows me at least two hundred, among which I found ten or a dozen of mine, which I bought for ten times less than they were worth. In the course of the following days I bought several more, feeling restrained by no scruple despite my being sure that everything I bought was stolen. Two or three days before I left, by which time he had got to know me well and concluded it was not in me to betray him, this honest Neapolitan merchant told me confidentially that if I would invest ten or twelve thousand ducati in his merchandise I would make a profit of thirty thousand by selling it in Rome or elsewhere.

"What sort of merchandise have you?"

"Watches, snuffboxes, and rings which I dare not sell here, for they are all stolen."

"But are you not afraid?"

"I haven't much to fear, but I do not confide in everyone."

I thanked him, but I would not even look at his jewelry; I was too much afraid that I could not resist the temptation to buy for ten what was worth fifty. I should have run the risk of somewhere running into the owner of the thing I bought.

Back at the inn, I found that among the newly arrived foreigners were some people whom I knew. Bertoldi[50] had arrived from Dresden with two young Saxon gentlemen whose tutor he was. The young Saxons were handsome and rich and looked as if they were bent on pleasure. I had known Bertoldi for twenty-five years. He had played the role of Arlecchino in the company of Italian actors[51] in the service of the King of Poland, and after the King's death he had been appointed a Councilor with the duty of superintending the *opera buffa,* which was much to the taste of the Dowager Electress, who loved music. They were given rooms near mine, and we were soon very well acquainted.

The other foreigners, who had arrived at the same time with a large suite of servants, were Miss Chudleigh,[52] who had become Duchess of Kingston, with an English Lord and a Knight whose name I have forgotten. The lady at once recognized me and did not hesitate a moment to accept the homage which I proposed to offer her; an hour later Monsieur Hamilton[53] came to see her, and I was delighted to make his acquaintance. We all dined together. Hamilton was a genius; I have been told that he is now married to a young woman who had the skill to make him fall in love. This misfortune often overtakes men who have managed to guard against it all their lives; age weakens the heart as it does the mind. Marrying is always a folly, but when a man who is getting old is guilty of it it is deadly. The woman whom he marries can offer him only grudging favors, for which he pays with his life, which he certainly shortens; or if it happens that she is in love with him, he is in an even worse situation. He will infallibly die in two or three years. Seven years ago I came very near to succumbing to this folly in Vienna,[54] *a qua me servavit Apollo* ("from which Apollo saved me").[55]

After dinner I presented the two Saxons to the Duchess of Kingston, to whom they gave news of the Dowager Electress of Saxony, of whom she was very fond. We all went to the theater. As chance would have it, Madame Goudar was in the box next to ours; Hamilton entertained the Duchess by telling her the beautiful Irishwoman's story. The Duchess showed no wish to make her acquaintance.

After supper she got up a game of quinze,[56] with herself, the two Englishmen, and the two Saxons; the stakes being small, not much was lost, the Saxons won; I decided to play another time. The next day we all went to dine at the Prince of Francavilla's;[57] he gave us a splendid repast and toward nightfall took us to a small pool which he had by the seashore, where he showed us a wonder. A priest[58] dived into the water stark naked and swam, resting from time to time without sinking. He used no artificial means to keep afloat. We were forced to conclude that it could only be due to his internal organization. After that the Prince gave the Duchess a very agreeable spectacle. He had all his pages swim naked before her; they were charming boys fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen years of age, all of them minions of the amiable Prince, whose nature made him prefer the male to the female sex. The Englishmen asked the Prince if he would give them the same spectacle with girls as the swimmers, and he promised that he would do so the next day at a house he owned near Portici, where he had a pool in the garden.

CHAPTER X

My amour with Callimena. My journey to Sorrento. Medini. Goudar. Miss Chudleigh. The Marchese della Pettina. Gaetano. Mrs. Cornelys's son. Anecdote about Sarah Goudar. The Florentines blanketed by the King. My happy journey to Salerno, my return to Naples, my departure thence, and my arrival in Rome.

THE PRINCE of Francavilla was a rich, lavish, extremely intelligent Epicurean, whose favorite motto was *Fovet et favet* ("He forwards and fosters").[1] He was in favor in Spain, but the King had thought it best that he should live in Naples, because he foresaw that he might easily have initiated the Prince of Asturias[2] and his brothers into his antinatural practices. At his little palace on the afternoon of the next day he showed us his small lake enlivened by ten or twelve young peasant girls, who swam in our presence until nightfall; Miss Chudleigh and two other ladies found the treat as boring as they had found the one on the day before delightful. The English visitors and the two Saxons did not prevent me from paying two visits a day to my dear Callimena, with whom, the more she kept me languishing, the more I found myself in love. Agata, whom I saw every day, was the confidant of my passion, and would have been glad to find a way to forward my desires; but her dignity did not permit her to act openly; she promised to include her in the party one day when we were to go to Sorrento, where I could easily make progress during the night we should spend in that charming countryside.

But before the party with Agata could be arranged, Monsieur Hamilton arranged the same excursion with the Duchess of Kingston, and, since it was to be a picnic, I paid my respects to her by joining it with the two Saxons and a charming Abate Giliani,[3] with whom I became better acquainted later in Rome. We left Naples at four o'clock in the morning in a twelve-oared felucca, and at nine o'clock we arrived at Sorrento. There were fifteen of us, all in high spirits, and all enraptured by the pleasures of the place, which we thought truly a terrestrial paradise. Monsieur Hamilton took us all to a garden which belonged to the Duke of Serracapriola,[4] who happened to be there with his wife the Duchess, a Piedmontese lady, beautiful as a star, and in love with her husband.

The Duke had been banished there with her for two months because he had appeared in public with too fine a carriage and liveries; the Minister Tanucci[5] had intimated to the King that it was necessary to punish a nobleman who, by breaking the sumptuary laws, had set a very bad example; and the King, who had not yet learned to oppose Tanucci's will, had banished the couple to the most delightful prison in all his kingdom; but for the most delightful place in the world to become distasteful, one has only to be obliged to live there. The Duke and his beautiful wife were bored to death. When they saw Hamilton leading a numerous party, they sighed with relief and recovered from their gloom. An Abate Bettoni,[6] whose acquaintance I had made nine years before at the late Duke of Matalona's, came to call on the Duke and was delighted to see me. He was a Brescian gentleman, and he had chosen Sorrento as his permanent residence. With an income of three thousand scudi, he lived in luxury, enjoying all the gifts which Bacchus, Ceres, and Venus could bestow on him. Whatever he wanted he could have, and he could want no more than nature offered him at Sorrento; he was content, and he laughed at the philosophers who said that man could not be so, since he enjoyed moderate but sufficient wealth, had no ambition, and was in perfect health. What displeased me was to see him accompanied by Count Medini, who, after the scene which had taken place at Goudar's, could not but be my enemy. We scarcely bowed to each other. At table we were twenty-two or twenty-four, and we enjoyed delicious fare without needing the offices of a cook, whose art consists in nothing but making tasty what would not be so without it. Everything at Sorrento is delicious—greenstuff, all the products of the dairy, red meat, veal, and even the flour, which gives all the pastries a delicate flavor which is found nowhere else. We spent the afternoon strolling about villages whose tree-lined streets were more beautiful than those of all the gardens of Europe and Asia.

At the Abate Bettoni's house we found ices flavored with lemon, with chocolate, with coffee, and pot cheeses than which nothing more delicious could be imagined. Naples excels in these delicacies, and the Abate Bettoni saw to it that his table was well served. He had five or six young peasant girls, all of them pretty, so nicely dressed they looked anything but servants. Their beauty astonished me, and when I asked him privately if it was a seraglio he replied that it might be, but that jealousy had no place in it, as I was free to learn for myself by spending a few days in his house. I looked at the fortunate man, but with a sigh, for he was at least twelve years older than I. His happiness could not last much longer.

Toward nightfall we went back to Serracapriola's, where a supper of ten or twelve different kinds of fish and shellfish had been prepared. The air of Sorrento never leaves those who live there without an appetite. After supper the English Duchess wanted to play faro; the Abate Bettoni, who knew that Medini was a professional gamester, suggested that he be banker; but Medini declined, saying that he had not money enough. However, the Duchess had to be satisfied, and I offered myself. Cards were brought, I emptied my purse on the table; it contained all I possessed, which did not amount to more than four hundred once. The whole company took gold from their pockets and accepted livrets.[7] One of the Saxons asked for counters, and I begged him to excuse me from carrying him on his word, whereupon his friend gave him fifty ducati. Medini asked me if I would let him take a share in my bank, and I replied that since I did not want to count my money it was impossible. I dealt until an hour after midnight, and stopped only because I had but thirty or forty once left; the two Duchesses and almost all the other punters were lucky, except a Sir Rosebery,[8] who, instead of gold, smilingly staked London bank notes. I put them in my pocket without examining them, while the whole company thanked me warmly for the favor I had done them. Medini did not play. In my room I looked at the English notes, and I found four hundred and fifty pounds sterling, which came to about twice what I had lost. I went to bed very well pleased with my day, determined to tell no one the amount I had won.

The Duchess of Kingston having said that we should leave at nine o'clock, Signora Serracapriola invited her to drink coffee before going on board the felucca. After the breakfast Bettoni and Medini arrived, and the latter asked Hamilton if he might intrude so far as to return to Naples with us; the Englishman replied that his company would be an honor. At two o'clock we arrived at our inn, where, about to enter my room, I was surprised to see in the antechamber a young lady, who, coming toward me with a sad look, asked me if I knew her. She was so changed that she might well have asked me the question, but I had no difficulty in recognizing her. She was the eldest of the five Hanoverian sisters whom I had loved in London, the one who had run away with the Marchese della Pettina.[9] I imagine that my reader will remember the whole episode. My curiosity is as great as my surprise. She tells me that if I am alone she will be glad to dine with me, and I order for two.

Her story was not long. She had arrived in Naples with the Marchese, whom her mother had refused to see. He had taken lodgings with her at a miserable tavern, where he had sold everything she possessed, and two or three months later he had been sent to prison in the Vicaria[10] for seven or eight different charges of forgery. She had been supporting him in prison for seven years, and, being at the end of her resources, and having learned from the Marchese himself that I was in Naples, she had come to ask me, not to help by giving her money, as the Marchese wished, but to use my influence with the Duchess of Kingston to persuade her to take her back to England with her in her service.

"Are you married to the Marchese?"

"No."

"How have you managed to support him for seven years?"

"I have had lovers. Imagine anything, and it will be true. Can you arrange for me to speak to the Duchess?"

"I will mention you to her, and I warn you that I will tell her nothing but the truth."

"Good. And I will do the same. I know her character."

"Come tomorrow."

About six o'clock I went to ask Hamilton how I could exchange the English notes I had won the evening before, and he did it for me himself at the current rate of exchange. Before supper I spoke to Miss Chudleigh about the Hanoverian, and, remembering the five girls, she said that she must have made her acquaintance, for she had come to her with her sister to ask for her protection. She told me she would speak with her and would make up her mind afterward. So I introduced her the next morning and left her alone with her. The result of the interview was that she engaged her to take the place of a Roman chambermaid, whom she dismissed, and took her to Rome a week later, and that winter left to return to England with her. I never learned what became of her.

But when two or three days after she left Naples Pettina begged me in a very well-written letter to come to see him in prison in the Vicaria, where he was, I could not refuse. I found him with a young man whom, since they looked exactly alike, I at once recognized as his brother; but despite their striking resemblance the elder brother was ugly and the younger handsome. Between beauty and ugliness there is often no more than an almost imperceptible point. The visit, in which curiosity played a greater part than magnanimity, did not amuse me: I had to put up with a very long and very boring account of all his misfortunes and of all the mistakes which had brought him to a prison from which he had no hope of being released until the death of his mother, whom he called his bitterest enemy and who was only fifty years of age. He thought he had a right to reproach me for having arranged the departure from Naples of the woman without whom he would die of starvation, for he had only two carlini[11] a day, which were not enough to satisfy his hunger. His brother had been in prison with him for two years because of his kind heart. He had persuaded him to circulate bank notes which he had forged; they had been recognized, he had been discovered to have been the source of them, and he had been sent to prison; he would have been hanged if their mother had not paid; but it was on their mother's complaint that he was being kept in prison, where, like himself, he had only two carlini a day.

What astonished me at the end of his story was a proposal which he made to me with no idea that it was insulting. He assured me that he could forge the signatures of the ministers Tanucci and Di Marco,[12] on the strength of which he tried to persuade me to go to Palermo with papers which he would give me, stay there for only three days, and receive a hundred thousand ducati. He would trust me completely, giving me the papers and the necessary instructions, certain that on my return to Naples I would give him twenty thousand ducati, with which he would pay his debts and get out of prison despite his mother.

It would have been a mistake to take offense at his confiding in me and to pick a quarrel with the poor youth for insulting me by making me a proposal which he could make me only if he assumed that I was a thief; for, being himself a scoundrel and a forger, he was simply treating me as an equal. Indeed he thought he was honoring me with a mark of the greatest consideration. So I declined politely, telling him that, since I had to go to Rome, I had not time to go to Palermo. He ended by asking me for money, but I could find no good reason to give him even a carlino. I left, telling him to change his way of life or to prepare to die on the gallows. My advice made him laugh, but his younger brother was impressed by it; I saw him turn pale and, a moment later, red as fire.

At the foot of the stairs a prison official told me that a prisoner wanted to speak to me.

"Who is he?"

"He's a relative of yours, his name is Gaetano."

A relative of mine, named Gaetano—I thought it must be my brother the Abate,[13] whom some strange chance might have sent to prison in Naples. I go up to the third floor with the official, and I see eighteen or twenty wretches sitting on the floor, singing bawdy songs in chorus. In prisons and the galleys gaiety is the resource of misery and despair; nature provides this relief by the instinct which commands it to preserve itself. I see one of the unfortunates coming toward me; addressing me as "godfather," he makes to embrace me. I fall back at once and I recognize him as the Gaetano who, under my sponsorship twelve years earlier in Paris, had married a pretty girl whom I had later helped to escape from him. I think my reader will remember the incident.[14]

"I am sorry to see you here. How can I be of use to you?"

"By paying me the nearly a hundred écus which you owe me for goods you bought from me on several occasions in Paris."

The thing being completely false, I turn my back on him, saying that prison had apparently driven him mad. I go downstairs and inquire of the jailer, and I learn that he is sentenced to prison for the rest of his life and that he had escaped the gallows only because of a flaw in the criminal proceeding which was to have sent him there. But what surprised me was an advocate who came to me that afternoon to demand a hundred écus which I owed Gaetano, and, to prove that I really did owe them to him, showed me a thick book belonging to his client in which my name appeared under ten or twelve different dates as owing him for such-and-such goods which I had bought from him in Paris and for which I had not paid. I answer the advocate that I owe the scoundrel nothing and that his having written my name in his book was no proof.

"You are mistaken, Signor, it proves a great deal, and the courts in this country are very favorable to poor creditors in prison. I am their advocate, and I warn you that if you do not pay, or do not come to some arrangement today, I will have you summoned to court tomorrow."

I control myself, and I ask him his name, which he writes down; then I tell him to go, assuring him that I will arrange everything in less than twenty-four hours. I at once went to Agata's, and her husband laughed heartily when I told him all that the advocate had said to me. He at once had me sign a power of attorney by virtue of which he became my surety in any proceedings, after which he sent the scoundrelly *paglietta* who had threatened me official notice that he must now deal only with him. This ended the whole affair. The rabble of chicaning lawers in Naples is extremely dangerous, for the tricks by which they evade the law are beyond counting, especially when they have to deal with foreigners.

Sir Rosebery having stayed on in Naples, through him I became acquainted with all the English people who arrived. They all came to stay at the "Crocelle," we often went on excursions with the two Saxons, and I passed the time very pleasantly; nevertheless, I should have left Naples after the Fair[15] if my love for Callimena had not detained me. I saw her every day, I made her presents, but her concessions to my desires were of the slightest. The Fair was about to end, and Agata arranged the excursion to Sorrento which she had promised me, choosing a three-day holiday so that her husband could share in the pleasure without hurt to his business. Agata asked her husband to invite a woman he had loved before he had married her; for his own part, her husband invited Don Pasquale Latilla;[16] and they did me the kindness to invite my dear Callimena. So we were three men with three women whom we loved, and the expense of the excursion was to be divided equally between the three of us; Agata's husband the advocate was to direct everything. But before the day on which we were to start I saw, to my great surprise, Joseph, Mrs. Cornelys's son,[17] appear before me, delighted to have found me in Italy, as he had expected to do.

"What chance," I asked him, "brings you to Naples, and whom are you with?"

"I am here alone. I wanted to see the whole of Italy, and my mother has made it possible. I've seen Turin, Milan, Genoa, Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome, and now here I am in Naples. When I've seen everything worth seeing here, I'll return to Rome, and from there I'll go to see Loreto, then Parma, Modena, Ferrara, Mantua, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Ostend, where I will take ship for home."

"And how long will you have devoted to the journey?"

"Six months."

"You will return to London able to give a full account of all the things worth seeing in your journey through this beautiful part of Europe."

"I hope I shall be able to convince Mama that she won't have thrown away what my journey is costing her."

"How much do you think that will be?"

"The hundred guineas she gave me, and no more."

"What! You will have supported yourself for six months and made this long journey, and you will have spent only a hundred guineas? It passes belief."

"If one will take the trouble to economize, one can spend even less."

"Perhaps. And to whom did you have letters of recommendation in all these countries you now know so well?"

"To no one. I have an English passport, and I let people suppose that I am an Englishman wherever I go."

"Aren't you afraid of bad company?"

"I neither let such people come near me, nor approach them myself. I confide in no one; when I am addressed I answer only in monosyllables, I eat and engage lodgings only after having come to an agreement, and I travel only in public conveyances, where the places are at a fixed tariff."

"Here, in the meanwhile, you will economize, for I will pay all your expenses, and I will give you an excellent guide, for you cannot do without one."

"You will excuse me if I accept nothing. I gave Mama my word of honor that I would accept nothing from anyone."

"You must see that that would not apply to me."

"No exceptions. I have relatives in Venice,[18] whom I saw, and my vow to my mother kept me from accepting a dinner. I have never broken a promise I have given."

I knew that he was a fanatic on the point, and I did not press him further. Joseph was twenty-three years of age, he was very short, very handsome, and he would have been taken for a girl if he had not let his whiskers grow so that they covered his cheeks. Despite all its patent absurdity, there was something about his journey which I could not help admiring. Since I was curious to know what his mother's situation was, and what had become of my daughter, he told me everything he knew straightforwardly. His mother was more in debt than ever, her creditors sent her to prison five or six times a year, she always got out by finding sureties or making new arrangements with her creditors, who had to let her come out so that she could pay them in part by the profits from the balls and assemblies which she gave, and which she could not have given if she had stayed in prison. My daughter, who must have been seventeen years old at the time, was pretty, full of talent, and enjoyed the protection and esteem of all the most highly placed ladies in London. She gave concerts and was still living with her mother, who mortified her every day, and over the merest trifles, which made poor Sophie shed tears. I asked him whom she had been supposed to marry when her mother took her out of the boarding school in which I had put her; and he replied that he had never heard of any marriage.

"Have you any employment?"

"None at all. Every year my mother wants to send me to the Indies in a ship loaded with merchandise belonging to me, by which she supposes I will lay the foundations of a great fortune; but it will never happen, for to get merchandise takes money, and my mother has nothing but debts."

Despite his promise I persuaded him to accept the services of my manservant as his guide. In a week he saw everything, and he insisted on leaving; all that I said to persuade him to stay for a week or ten days more was of no avail. He wrote me from Rome that he had left behind six shirts, which must be in one of the drawers of the chest in his room, and his greatcoat; he asked me to get them and bring them to him in Rome, but he failed to tell me where he was staying. He was a scatterbrain, yet he was confidently traveling through half of Europe, and, with the help of three or four well-tried maxims, he was coming to no harm.

I had an unexpected visit from Goudar, who, knowing that I had made my way into distinguished company, came to ask me to invite him and his wife to dinner with the Saxons and the English people, the diversions I was sharing with whom he knew did not include cards. He said that it was a pity not to introduce gaming among them, for they were born to lose. Being of the same opinion myself, I promised to do him the favor, on the understanding that there should be no play in my apartment, for I did not want to risk any unpleasantness. It was all that he asked of me, being sure that his wife would attract them to his lodgings, where he could play, he said, without fear of ill consequences. I undertook to give the dinner upon my return from Sorrento, for which we were to leave the next day.

The excursion to Sorrento was the last real pleasure I enjoyed in all my life. The advocate took us to a house where we were lodged as comfortably as we could wish. We had four rooms, one of which was occupied by Agata and her husband, another by Callimena and the advocate's former mistress, a very charming woman though no longer young, and the two others by Don Pasquale Latilla and myself. We went to call on the Duke of Serracapriola and the Abate Bettoni, though we declined their invitations to dinner and supper. After supper we went to bed early, and we rose in the morning to go walking, the advocate and his former mistress in one direction, Don Pasquale and Agata in another, while I took Callimena in yet another. At noon each day we were all back at the house for a dinner which was always delicious, and after it, leaving the advocate to take a siesta, Don Pasquale set out with Agata and her husband's former flame, and Callimena accompanied me along shaded walks where the least ray of the by then fiery sun could not penetrate. It was there that Callimena rewarded my passion, after struggling with herself for two days. On the third day, at five o'clock in the morning and in the presence of the rising Apollo, we sat down side by side on the grass and yielded to our desires. Callimena sacrificed herself neither to cupidity nor to gratitude, for I had given her only trifles, but to love, and I could have no doubt of it; she gave herself to me, and she was sorry that she had so long put off making me the gift. Before noon we changed our altar three times, and we spent the whole afternoon going everywhere on foot and stopping as soon as the least spark of passion inspired us with the desire to quench it.

On the fourth day, the wind being too strong, we returned to Naples in three carriages. Callimena persuaded me to confide to her aunt all that had happened between us, which would enable us to have the pleasure of spending some nights together in perfect freedom. Convinced that it would be my best course, and sure that her aunt would raise no objection in view of an arranagement of which I had already thought, I brought her niece back to her and then took her aside.

"Callimena," I said, "whom, as you know, I love dearly, has satisfied all my desires; but I do not feel entirely happy because I am not in a position to make her fortune. However, I can do something for her, under your guidance, by supplying her with such things as she needs and which she seems to be without, and by giving you enough to pay a master, who will perfect her in the art which she intends to practice, until she is accomplished enough in it to appear on the stage. So it is for you, my dear aunt, to tell me if you have any small debts, which I will pay to put your mind at ease, and what you will need to equip her with all the linen she needs as well as dresses to put her on an equal footing with all the other young ladies in the companies which she frequents.''

The aunt, who was a most worthy woman, was delighted by my frankness, and she told me that she would give me a written list of all the things Callimena needed the first time I should call on her; I told her that, having to go back to Rome in a few days, I would sup with Callimena every evening, and, finding her more than willing to grant me that favor, I went with her to her niece, who was delighted to hear of our arrangements. I began that same day to sup and sleep with her and indeed to win her heart completely, for I spent at least six hundred Neapolitan ducati to put her beyond want. I thought I had bought my happiness very cheaply. Agata, to whom I confided everything, was delighted to have been the agent of it.

Two or three days later I gave a dinner for the Englishmen, the Saxons, and the Saxons' tutor Bertoldi, with Madame Goudar, who came with Medini, which very much displeased me, for after the trick he had played on me I could not bear him; however, I immediately concealed my feelings, waiting for her husband, with whom I had it out. We had agreed that his wife should come to my house with no one but himself. The master scoundrel beat about the bush and tried to assure me that Medini had nothing to do with breaking my bank, but he wasted his eloquence.

Our dinner was choice and gay, and the beautiful Irish Sarah shone. She was a woman who had everything to please—youth, beauty, grace, intelligence, high spirits, talent, and, with all that, an air of distinction. After dinner the Russian Count Buturlin,[19] a great admirer of the fair sex, entered the drawing room where we were, which was next to the apartment in which he was staying. He came drawn by the sweet voice of the beautiful Madame Goudar, who was humming a Neapolitan song, accompanying herself on the guitar. The rich nobleman fell in love with her that day. It was he who, ten months after I left, obtained her favors in consideration of five hundred pounds sterling which Goudar needed to obey the order he received to leave Naples with his wife within three days.[20] This thunderbolt was launched by the Queen, who discovered that the King had had an interview with her in Procida,[21] and that the thing might go much further. She came upon her royal husband laughing heartily over a note and refusing to show it to her. The Queen's curiosity made her insist, and, the King yielding at last, the Queen read:

"Ti aspetterò domani nel medesimo luogo ed all'ora stessa con l'impazienza medesima che had una vacca, che desidera l'avvicinamento del toro" ("I will expect you tomorrow at the same place and the same time with all the impatience of a cow desiring the approach of the bull").

The Queen pretended to laugh, but on her own authority she signified to the cow's husband that he had only three days to go to live elsewhere. But for this order, Count Buturlin would not have been cured so cheaply.

Goudar invited the whole company to sup at his house in Posilipo the next day, and the supper was magnificent; but when Count Medini sat down at a large table and took up the cards to deal at faro before a heap of gold pieces which might come to five hundred once, no one chose to sit down to punt. Madame Goudar tried in vain to distribute livrets; the Englishmen and the Saxons told her that they would punt if she would hold the bank herself, or would have me deal for her, for they all feared

Count Medini's too lucky hand. At that, Goudar took it upon himself to ask me if I would deal, taking a one-fourth share in the bank, but he found me inflexible. I told him that I would have dealt on equal shares with him, and putting up my half of the bank in cash. On hearing my answer, Goudar spoke to Medini, who, fearing to lose the opportunity of winning a great deal, did no more than rise and take back his money, leaving Goudar's on the table. Having only two hundred once in my purse, I took two hundred more from Goudar, and I sat down in the place which Medini had vacated. In less than two hours all my money was gone, and I went quietly home to console myself in the arms of my dear Callimena.

Thus left without money, I the next day determined to lighten the conscience of Agata's husband, who with his wife continued to urge me to take back the earrings and all the other pieces of jewelry which I had given her in Turin and Alessandria.[22] I told Agata that I would never have consented to such meanness if Fortune had not used me ill. When she told her husband the news he came out of his office with open arms to thank me as if I had made his fortune.

I told him that I would accept the value of the jewelry in cash, and he undertook to arrange it. The next morning he handed me the equivalent of fifteen thousand French livres, about fifteen hundred ducati. With this money I prepared to leave for Rome, intending to spend eight months there; but before I left, the advocate wanted to have me to dinner at a charming house he owned in Portici. What food for thought it gave me when I found myself in the very house in which, twenty-seven years earlier, I had made a small fortune by confounding the honest Greek with my false augmentation of mercury![23]

The King being then at Portici with the whole Court, we went there, and we witnessed an extraordinary spectacle which, though laughable, did not make us laugh.

The King, who was then only nineteen years of age, was amusing himself and the Queen in a large room by all sorts of pranks. He took it into his head to be blanketed, that is, to be thrown up into the air by means of a blanket held by four strong arms which simultaneously pull it taut. But after having made his courtiers laugh, the King wanted to have his turn at laughing. He began by proposing the same sport to the Queen, who protested only by shrieks of laughter, and the King did not press it upon the ladies who were present—for fear, I believe, that they would accept. The older courtiers, who were afraid, stole away, to my regret, for I should have been delighted to see a number of them flying into the air, among others the Prince of San Nicandro,[24] who had brought him up very badly, that is, too much in the Neapolitan way, giving him his own prejudices. So the King, who wanted more of the sublime sport, was reduced to proposing it to the young noblemen who were present and who perhaps hoped to receive such a proof of their playful monarch's favor. I did not fear I should be accorded the distinction, for I was unknown and not of a rank high enough to deserve it.

So after subjecting three or four young courtiers to a tossing, which they took with various degrees of courage and which set the Queen and all the ladies present laughing, and laughing in the Neapolitan manner, which is not the covert laughter of the Spanish Court, nor even has much in common with that of France and of other Courts, where sneezes are stifled and every gentleman is ruined if he dares let himself be seen yawning, his eyes fell on two young Florentine noblemen, brothers or cousins just arrived in Naples, who were there with their tutor, who had not been able to keep from laughing with his precious charges when they saw His Majesty and his favored victims bounding into the air.

The King very graciously approached the two unfortunate Tuscans, both of them hunchbacks, short of stature and ugly of countenance, who were flabbergasted by his proposal that they undress and display themselves to the entire company. Everyone listened in the deepest silence to the eloquence of the King, who, at the same time that he urged them to undress, gave them to understand that it was very unmannerly of them to refuse, for, he argued, they could not be humiliated by doing what he had himself done first. Their tutor, knowing that the King would be angered by a refusal, told them that they should accept the honor which His Majesty was offering them, whereupon the two little misshapen creatures took off their clothes, the silence ceased, and laughter broke out at the sight of their structure, which, offering the eyes of the spectators nothing but bodies with humps before and humps behind, set on long, thin shanks which made up three fourths of their height, drew uncontrollable laughter from everyone present, including their grave tutor, who was doing his best to encourage them and ashamed to see the elder of his hunchbacks crying. The King, assuring him that he ran no risk, took him by the hand, put him in the middle of the blanket, and, to do him as much honor as possible, himself took one corner of it.

How could anyone help shrieking with laughter at the sight of that misshapen body flying into the air three times to a height of ten or twelve feet? After getting through it, he put on his clothes, and the other hunchback submitted to the same ordeal with somewhat better grace. Their tutor, to whom the King was bent on conferring the same honor, had taken to his heels, at which the monarch laughed heartily.

We enjoyed for nothing a spectacle which was worth gold. Don Pasquale Latilla, whom the King had fortunately not seen, told us at table countless anecdotes of the good King, all of which testified to an excellent character and an irresistible bent for gaiety at the expense of the cumbersome gravity and dignity in which royalty is made to consist. He told us that all who came near him could not but love him, because he preferred the pleasure of being treated as a friend to the feeling of pride with which the human heart may be filled when it sees itself surrounded by faces on which nothing is depicted but respect and fear. He was never so unhappy as when his minister Tanucci forced him to be severe in cases where severity was his duty, and he was never so joyful as when he found himself able to do a favor, so that he could be regarded as the fortunate sovereign whom the poet so well depicts in the distich:

> *Qui piger ad poenas princeps ad praemia velox*
> *Quique dolet quoties cogitur esse ferox*
>
> ("A prince who is slow to punish, quick to reward, and who grieves each time that he has to be severe").[25]

His education had been such that he had read nothing and learned nothing, he had no interest in any kind of literature, but he had an excellent mind and the highest esteem for men who had gained a distinguished reputation either by their probity or by their knowledge. He revered the minister Di Marco, he had the greatest respect for the memory of Don Lelio Caraffa,[26] of the ducal house of Matalona, and he had provided generously for a young nephew of the scholar Genovesi[27] out of consideration for his illustrious uncle.

Gambling being forbidden, he had one day come upon the officers of his guard playing faro. Terrified at the sight of the King, they tried to hide the cards and the money; but he told them not to let him disturb them, but to be very careful that Tanucci did not learn of their foolhardiness, at the same time assuring them that he would tell him nothing. When he was scarcely forty years of age, the King seized the opportunity to make himself loved and esteemed by all Italy and a good part of Germany, everywhere giving proofs of his good character and his virtues. His father loved him dearly until the time came when good reasons of state obliged him to resist the orders he wanted to give him in accordance with the views of his ministers. Ferdinand knew that, though he was the King of Spain's son, he must none the less be King of the Two Sicilies.[28] He had deferred long enough to Tanucci's authority in the Government. A few months after the suppression of the Jesuits he wrote his father a letter[29] the beginning of which is very amusing.

"Of all the things which I do not understand," he wrote, "four astonish me. The first is that not a soldo was found among the suppressed Jesuits, who were said to be so rich. The second is that all the *scrivani*[30] in my Kingdom are rich, though the law forbids their receiving any pay. The third is that all young wives who have young husbands become pregnant one day or another, and that mine[31] never does; and the fourth is that everyone dies when his time comes except Tanucci, who will live, I believe, until the end of the world."[32]

The King of Spain showed this letter to all his ministers at the Escorial to convince them that his son, the King of Naples, was clever, and he was right. A man who writes like that without instruction is clever.

A day or two later the Cavaliere Morosini, the nineteen-year-old nephew of the Procurator and sole heir of that illustrious House, came to Naples with Count Stratico,[33] his tutor, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Padua, who had given me a letter to his brother the monk, Professor at the University of Pisa. He came to lodge at the "Crocelle," and our pleasure in seeing each other again was mutual. The young Venetian was traveling to complete his education by learning to know Italy; he had spent three years at the Academy[34] in Turin; and he had with him a man with whom he could have become everything he could wish in order one day to be capable of filling the most important posts in his country and distinguishing himself from the common run of those who make up the Venetian nobility, which rules the Republic;

but unfortunately the rich, handsome, and not unintelligent youth had no will to learn. He had an animal love of women, he enjoyed rioting with libertines, and good society made him yawn. Detesting study, he devoted himself entirely to inventing ways to amuse himself and to spend money broadcast, more to avenge himself for the economy his uncle wanted him to practice than from natural generosity. He complained that though he had reached his majority his uncle still tried to keep him under tutelage. He had calculated that he could spend eight hundred zecchini a month, and he thought it very unjust that he was confined to spending only two hundred; in this conviction he tried his best to get into debt, and he sent Count Stratico packing when he mildly reproached him for his extravagance and pointed out that, by practicing economy, he could be lavish when he returned to Venice, where his uncle had arranged an incomparable marriage for him with a very pretty girl who was the heiress to the House of Grimani de'Servi.[35] The only thing about him which did not dismay his tutor was that he could not bear cards, either played socially or for money; for this reason I did not hesitate to introduce him to Madame Goudar as soon as, having learned that I knew her, he asked me to do him the favor.

After my bank had been broken I had been at Goudar's house, but I had always refused to play. Medini had become my mortal enemy; he left when he saw me arrive, but I pretended not to notice it. He was there on the day when I introduced Morosini and his tutor, and, forming designs on him, he at once became very intimate with him; but when he found him firmly resolved not to play, his hatred of me redoubled, for he felt certain that if the young man did not play it could only be because I had warned him. Morosini, enchanted by the charms of the beautiful Madame Goudar, thought of nothing but winning her favors by the force of love. He would have hated her if he could have supposed that the only way to conquer her was to offer her money. He told me more than once that, if he was reduced to paying a woman he loved to obtain her, he would feel so debased that he would certainly be cured of the love she had inspired in him; for he maintained, and he was right, that his virtues as a man were at least equal to any that La Goudar might have as a woman. Another of Morosini's quirks was that he refused to be the dupe of a woman with whom he had fallen in love and who wanted to receive presents from him before she had granted him her favors, and La Goudar's particular game was exactly contrary to any such principle. She wanted her lover to give her credit. His tutor Stratico was delighted to see him cultivating this acquaintance, for the great thing was to occupy the young man, who otherwise would find no way to amuse himself except riding horseback, not like a gentleman but galloping ten or twelve stages a day, foundering horses for which he paid afterward. His worthy tutor every day expected to hear that he had had an accident.

It was when I had already resolved to leave that Don Pasquale Latilla came to see me with the Abbé Galiani,[36] whom I had known in Paris. My reader may remember that I had made the acquaintance of his brother in Sant' Agata, that I had lodged in his house, where I had left Donna Lucrezia Castelli.[37] I at once told him that I intended to pay him a visit, and I asked him if Donna Lucrezia was still staying with him. He replied that Donna Lucrezia was living in Salerno with the Marchesa della C. . . ,[38] her daughter. But for this visit I could not have had news of my former mistress except at the Marchese Galiani's, and I should not have had one of the greatest pleasures my soul has enjoyed in all my life. I ask him if he knows the Marchesa della C. . . , and he replies that he knows only her husband, who is old and very rich. I ask him no more.

A day or two afterward the Cavaliere Morosini gave a dinner for Madame Goudar, her husband, two other young men whom he had met gaming at her house, and Medini, who still hoped to make the Cavaliere his dupe in one way or another.

Toward the end of dinner it happened that Medini differed from me on a certain subject. Since he had expressed his opinion with considerable acerbity, I put it to him that a polite man ought to speak in a different tone; he replied that it might be so, but that he had no intention of taking lessons in good manners from me. I restrained myself, but I was tired of putting up with such shafts from a man who might have reason to hate me, but who, having been originally in the wrong, ought to conceal his hatred. I thought that he might attribute my prudence to fear and, on that supposition, would become constantly more insolent. I resolved to teach him better once again. My reader may remember over what we had fought a duel.[39] He was drinking coffee on the balcony, enjoying the cool breeze from the sea, when, with my cup of coffee in my hand, I approached him and, there being no one within earshot, told him that I was tired of putting up with his bad temper when chance brought us together in company. He replied that I would find him still more cutting if we could be alone together without witnesses. I replied with a laugh that if we were alone together, I could easily teach him a lesson. He riposted by saying that he should like to see how easily, and that our being alone together could be arranged at once. I invited him to follow me as soon as he saw me leave, as if nothing were afoot, and he said that he would not fail to do so.

At that I left him and returned to the company, and a quarter of an hour later I left the inn, walking slowly toward Posilipo. I saw him following me at a distance, and then I had no doubt that we should fight, for he was brave. We were both wearing our swords. I turned right at the end of the beach, and when I saw that I was in the country, where we could even hide our encounter behind trees, I stopped, and when he came up I thought I might speak to him, and even that he would not be sorry to have it out in words; but, doubling his pace, the brute came at me like a madman, with his sword in his right hand and his hat in his left. I quickly unsheathed, and, without a thought of giving ground, I stopped him by lunging just when, instead of parrying, he lunged too, with the result that we ran our swords halfway up each other's coat sleeves. We at once withdrew them, but his only pierced my sleeve in two places, while mine wounded him in the forearm and in the flesh above the elbow. When I made to continue, he fell back, and, having seen that his parry had no vigor, I said that I would give him quarter if the wound I had given him prevented him from defending himself. So saying, and seeing that he did not answer me, I played with his sword, then, with a smart blow near the hilt, I knocked it to the ground and at once set my foot on it. Foaming with rage, he said I had got the better of him that time, because the slight wound I had given him had deprived him of the strength to hold his sword, but that he hoped I would give him his revenge. I promised to do so at Rome, and, seeing that he was losing much blood, I put his sword in the sheath myself, and I left, advising him to go to Goudar's house, which was two hundred paces away, to have his wound dressed at once.

I returned perfectly calmly to the "Crocelle," as if nothing had happened. The Cavaliere Morosini was flirting with the beautiful Sarah, and Goudar was playing quadrille[40] with Stratico and the two others. An hour later I left, without having said a word to them about Medini. I went for the last time to sup and sleep with my dear Callimena, whom I did not see again until six years later in Venice, performing brilliantly on the stage of the Teatro San Benedetto.[41] I went to the "Crocelle" at daybreak, and at eight o'clock I set out, taking leave of no one, in a post chaise into which I put all my luggage. At two o'clock in the afternoon I arrived in Salerno, where, after putting my trunks in an excellent room, I wrote a note to Donna Lucrezia Castelli in care of the Marchesa della C. . . . I asked her if I might pay her a visit, after which I would leave Salerno. I asked her to answer me at once, while I was dining.

A half hour later, when I was in the middle of dinner, I see Donna Lucrezia herself enter my room with her face the picture of joy and run to my arms, declaring herself happy to see me once more in her country. The enchanting woman was exactly my age, but she looked at least ten years younger than I. After telling her that it was from the Abbé Galiani that I had learned where she was, I ask her for news of our daughter, and she replies that she was awaiting me with her husband the Marchese, a worthy old man who was eager to meet me.

"How does he know that I exist?"

"Leonilda has talked to him about you countless times in the five years since she became his wife. He even knows that you gave her five thousand ducati; and you shall sup with us tonight"

"Let us go there at once, my dear friend, I am dying to see her again, and the kind husband God has given her. Has she children?"

"No, and it is unfortunate for her, because all of her husband's estate will go to his nearest relatives when he dies; but Leonilda will still be rich, for she will have a hundred thousand ducati."

"And you have never wanted to marry?"

"Never"

"You are beautiful, as you were twenty-six years ago, my charming old flame; but for the Abbé Galiani, I should have left Naples without seeing you."

I quickly pick up my hat, I lock all my belongings into my room, and I go with her to the house of the Marchese della C. . . . I find Donna Leonilda at least three inches taller, and, at the age of twenty-five, become a perfect beauty. Her husband's presence does not trouble her, she comes to me with open arms, and she saves me from the embarrassment into which I should have been thrown by a prejudice which would have made it impossible for me to act freely. She was my daughter, and nature, far from preventing me from having all the feelings of a lover toward her, forbade me to have only the inconsequential ones of father. After two fond embraces, which lasted only a moment, she introduces me to her husband, who, suffering from gout, could not stir from the chair to which it condemned him. Seeing him with a smile on his handsome face, his nightcap in his hand, and his arms open, I kissed the worthy man on both cheeks, and I was surprised by a third kiss, which he offers to my lips and which I return with a sign which sufficed to tell us that we were brothers.[42] The Marchese expected it, but I did not. A nobleman seventy years of age who could boast that he had seen the light was a rare phenomenon thirty years ago in the Kingdom of Sicily. I sit down beside him, whereupon, our certainty of our divine alliance being renewed, our embraces begin again, and the two women who were their astonished witnesses cannot understand how the recognition could have come about. Donna Leonilda is delighted to find that her husband had long known me, she tells him so, embracing him, and the worthy old man laughed loud and long. Only Donna Lucrezia suspects the truth; her daughter can make nothing of the scene, and saves her questions for another time.

The Marchese della C. . . was a nobleman who had traveled in every part of Europe, who had lived life to the full, and who did not think of marrying until his father died at the age of ninety. Finding himself provided with an income of thirty thousand ducati, which comes to a hundred and twenty thousand French livres, and hence wealthy in a country where everything is cheap, he thought he could still have children despite his advanced age. He saw Donna Leonilda at the theater in

Naples, and in a few days he signed the contract, granting her a dowry of a hundred thousand ducati. The Duke of Matalona having died, and Donna Lucrezia living with her daughter at the time, she went to live with her in Salerno. Her husband, though he lived sumptuously, could never spend half of his income. All his relatives had lodgings in his immense palace; there were three families of them, each living apart from the others. All these relatives were well off, and they were all waiting for the Marchese to die so that they could share his wealth among them, which distressed him, for he did not like them. He had married only to have an heir, and he no longer hoped for one; but that did not lessen his love for his wife, who made him happy by the charm of her intelligence. Like her, he was a freethinker, but in the greatest secrecy, no one thought freely in Salerno, so he lived with his wife and his mother-in-law like a good Christian, adopting all the prejudices of his fellow countrymen. All this I learned from Donna Leonilda three hours later while walking in his beautiful garden, to which he sent us after talking with me for three hours on all sorts of interesting subjects, which could be of no interest either to his wife or to his mother-in-law, though both of them remained with us, delighted to see the worthy man in ecstasies over having someone to talk with who thought as he did.

About six o'clock he asked Donna Lucrezia to take me to the garden and entertain me there until nightfall, and at the same time he asked his wife to remain with him because he had something to say to her. We were in the middle of August, and the heat was intense; but a gentle breeze tempered it in the apartment on the ground floor in which we were. Since I saw through the open window that the air was perfectly still, for the leaves of the trees were not moving, I could not help telling the Marchese that I was astonished to find perfect spring weather in the room in which we were. He told Donna Lucrezia to take me to the place which would show me what caused the coolness we had enjoyed.

Fifty paces from the room in which we were, after passing through a suite of five or six, we came to a closet in one corner of which was an opening four feet square. It was this dark window which gave passage to a very cool wind, which indeed was much too strong, so that it would have been unhealthy for anyone who stood at the window too long. The aperture was at the top of a flight of more than a hundred stone steps, which led to a grotto in which there was a perpetual spring of ice-cold water. Donna Lucrezia told me that I should run a great risk if I went down to the grotto without first dressing as if in the dead of winter. I have never been foolhardy enough to risk that kind of danger. Lord Baltimore would have made light of it. I told my dear friend that I could well imagine how the thing could be, and indeed understood how it must be; so we went to the garden, which was separated from another larger one used by the three other families; but in this one there was every delight for which one could wish—flowers scenting the air, fountains, grottoes decorated with shellwork and furnished with couches stuffed with down, than which nothing could be softer. A large round pond, more than ten fathoms[43] deep, contained fish of twenty different kinds and of every color, which swam sinuously about and which, being intended only to please the sight, and so not fearing the rapacity of the epicures who would have liked to catch and eat them, came fearlessly sporting even into the hands held close to the surface of their element. The covered walks of this pretty paradise were overhung with vines and great bunches of grapes as broad as the leaves which separated them, and fruit trees to left and right formed the colonnade which supported them.

I told my dear Lucrezia, who was enjoying my delight, that I was not surprised that the garden aroused more pleasing sensations in me than the vineyards of Tivoli and Frascati, for everything extensive is more apt to dazzle than to charm. In half an hour she informed me of all her daughter's happiness and all the good qualities of the Marchese, who, except for the gout, enjoyed perfect health. His only misfortune, his sorrow which he nevertheless had the strength of mind to hide, was that he had no children; it was a hard trial for his philosophy, for, among ten or twelve nephews, he had not found one who promised to be distinguished either in body or mind.

"They are all ugly," she said, "and all dullards, brought up like peasants by boors and ignorant priests."

"But is our daughter really happy?"

"Very happy, even though she cannot find in the husband she adores the lover whom she needs at her age."

"The Marchese seems to me a man incapable of jealousy."

"He is not jealous, and I am sure that if, among the nobility of this city, she could have found a man capable of pleasing her the Marchese would have made a friend of him and would even not have been sorry to see her become pregnant"

"Is he in a position to be absolutely certain that, if she gives him a child, he cannot be its father?"

"Not entirely certain, for when his health is good he comes to sleep with her, and, according to what my daughter has told me, he could flatter himself that he had really done what he had not done. But there is no longer any likelihood that his ardor will have happy results. My daughter had reason to hope so during the first six months of their marriage, but after that his attacks of gout became so much worse that his nerves were weakened to the point that she herself concluded that the transports of conjugal love might be fatal to him. Hence she is never so distressed as when he wants to sleep with her."

In ecstasies of admiration for the unchanging qualities of my dear former mistress, I was beginning to tell her what power her charms still had over my amorous soul, when the Marchesa appeared in the covered walk down which we were strolling, followed by a page who held up the train of her dress and a young lady on her left who kept half a pace behind her. As she approached I went through all the motions of showing the most profound respect, to which she responded by affecting the most refined politeness. She said that she had come to negotiate a matter of the utmost consequence, for if she failed she would lose all the confidence her husband had in her.

"Where, beautiful Marchesa, is there a negotiator with whom you can fear not to succeed?"

"It is yourself."

"If it is I," I replied with a laugh, "your reputation runs no risk, for I give you carte blanche even before I know what it is all about. I make only one exception."

"So much the worse, for unfortunately the exception might be the very thing. Tell me what it is, I beg you, before I speak."

"I was about to leave for Rome on urgent business, when the Abbé Galiani told me that Donna Lucrezia is living with you. I made the necessary arrangements so that sixty extra miles will not interfere with my business."

"And could a short delay put your life or your honor in danger? Are you no longer your own master? To whom are you responsible? This is the ruin of my negotiation."

"Wait, I beg you, and let me see that beautiful countenance serene again. Your orders, and even your wishes, can never endanger either my life or my honor. Yes, I am still completely my own master, and I will never cease to be so except at this moment. I am yours to command."

"Very good. You shall come to spend a few days with us at an estate which is only an hour and a half from here.

My husband will have himself carried there. You will allow me to send to your inn for all your luggage and have it brought here."

"Here, Signora, is the key to my room. Happy the man to whom you grant the opportunity to obey you!"

At that she gave the key to her page, ordering him to go there himself with some menservants to take everything and see to it that nothing was left behind. The page was a very handsome boy; and her chambermaid, or maid-in-waiting, who was following us, was a charming blonde. I told her so, thinking that she did not understand French; she smiled and told her mistress that I knew her but had forgotten her.

"You saw me and talked with me several times, and even made me angry with you, when I was with the Duchess of Matalona, now Princess of Caramanica."

"It is possible; you must have been very different nine years ago from what you are today. I am sorry, Signorina, that I do not remember having done anything to make you angry."

The Marchesa and her mother laughed heartily at the exchange, and urged her to tell what I had done to make her angry, but she blushed and said no more than that I had played jokes on her. I remembered that I had given her a few kisses, almost by force; but the Marchesa and her mother believed what they pleased. Since I had some knowledge of the human heart, it seemed to me that Signorina Anastasia (such was her name) had quite given herself away by reproaching me, and that if she wanted me she should have said nothing.

"You were," I said to her, "much shorter and very thin."

"I was only twelve years old. You have changed too, for it seems to me your eyes were blacker and your complexion lighter."

"That is to say, less dark. I am old, Signorina."

But full of ardor for both the mother and the daughter, I turned the conversation to the late Duke, and Anastasia left us. We went and sat down in a grotto, where, as soon as were alone, we surrendered to the pleasure of addressing each other by the fond names of daughter and father, which gave us the right to intimacies which, though imperfect, were sinful nevertheless. The Marchesa thought it her duty to calm my transports by saying that when we had given rein to our senses despite the ties of blood she was her own mistress, whereas now she had a master. Donna Lucrezia, who saw me in ecstasies with her daughter in my arms, and who saw that her daughter was moved too and offered very little resistance to my caresses, warned us to restrain ourselves and take good care not to be led into consummating our mutual crime, and, so saying, she went to another part of the walk. But her words, followed by her departure, had the very opposite effect to the advice she had given us. Determined to consummate the so-called crime, we came so close to it that an almost involuntary movement forced us to consummate it so completely that we could not have done more if we had been acting according to a premeditated plan conceived by the free exercise of reason. We remained motionless, looking at each other without changing our position, both of us serious and silent, lost in reflection, astonished, as we told each other afterward, to feel neither guilty nor tormented by remorse. We arranged our clothing, and my daughter, sitting beside me, called me "husband" even as I called her "wife." By sweet kisses we confirmed what we had just done, and even if an angel had come to tell us we had monstrously outraged nature we should have laughed at him. Absorbed as we were in this perfectly decorous tenderness, Donna Lucrezia was edified to find us become so calm.

We did not need to discuss it together to know that we must keep our secret. Donna Lucrezia was intelligent, but everything compelled us not to tell her what it was neither necessary nor advantageous to confide to her. It seemed to us that, by leaving us alone, she had wanted only to be sure that she would not witness what we were going to do. But in fact, as she told us immediately, she believed that we had let ourselves indulge in nothing but inconsequential toying, and she laughed when we could not deny it. We recalled the beautiful night we had all three spent in one bed, and Donna Lucrezia was very well pleased by my candor when I told her that my hand had found her daughter almost exactly as she was when she had slept with us nine years before. We left the walk, and we returned to the palace with Anastasia.

The Marchese received his wife very gaily, congratulating her on the success of her negotiation, and telling me that at his country house I should be lodged better than in the apartment to which my luggage had been taken. He told his mother-in-law that he hoped she would not be sorry to have me in the room next to hers. She replied that our good days were over. I was surprised that, knowing that I had wanted to marry Donna Leonilda, he should think that I was sufficiently cured of my passion to prefer her mother to her. Five places were laid on a large table, and scarcely were we served before I saw an old priest come in and sit down without looking at anyone. Nor did anyone ever speak to him. The same handsome page, as he was called, stood behind the Marchesa, and ten or twelve others busied themselves serving everyone. Having dined on nothing but soup, I ate like an ogre. The Marchese had a French cook, who employed his art to give him excellent fare; so, except for the dish of macaroni, the supper was composed entirely of entrées; the Marchese exclaimed with delight when he saw how I ate; he said it was his great misfortune that both his wife and her mother were not hearty eaters. At dessert, our spirits raised by the excellent wines, the conversation became animated, and, since we were speaking French and the priest did not understand a word of what we were saying, he left, after reciting the *Agimus*.[44] The Marchese told me that he had held the post of confessor in his house for fifteen years, but that no one had ever confessed to him; he warned me against saying anything heretical in the ignoramus's presence, but added that I could say anything I pleased in French. Being in the vein, I kept them amused at table until an hour after midnight. Before we parted he told us that we should leave after dining, and that he would arrive an hour after we did. He assured his wife that he felt well, and that he intended to convince her that I had taken ten years from his age. She then kissed him very fondly, begging him to take care of his health; but it had no effect, he promised her a visit.

I then left with Donna Lucrezia, wishing them a fine boy, to be delivered in nine months.

"Draw up the bill," he said, "and tomorrow morning I will accept it."

"I will do everything in my power," said Donna Leonilda, "to keep you from going bankrupt."

Donna Lucrezia showed me to my room, where, after turning me over to a tall lackey, she wished me good night. After sleeping for eight hours in an excellent bed, I got up and I went to find Donna Lucrezia, who took me to breakfast in the apartment of the Marchesa, who was already dressing. I at once asked her if I could venture to draw my bill at nine months, and she replied that it would very likely be paid.

"Really?"

"Really; and it will be to you that the Marchese will be indebted for the only happiness which he lacks, and for which he longs with all his soul. He told me so himself when he left me an hour ago."

What a disappointment not to be able to give her a hundred kisses! She was as fresh as a rose, but we had to restrain ourselves. She was surrounded by pretty girls, all of them in her service. I flirted with Anastasia, and Leonilda pretended to encourage me. Understanding what she had in mind, I made a show of passion, and I saw that I should not be dismissed unheard. But I set myself certain bounds, so that I should not be taken at my word.

We went to breakfast in the apartment of the Marchese, who was expecting us and who received me joyfully. The worthy man's health would have been excellent if the gout had not deprived him of the use of his legs for walking. He could not even stand up, or bear the slightest touch on his feet: any contact caused him intolerably acute pain. After breakfast we heard mass, at which I saw more than twenty menservants and maids, and after the mass I kept him company until dinnertime. He was very grateful to me for preferring his company to that of his wife and his mother-in-law, with whom he believed I was still in love.

After dinner we left for his country estate, I in a carriage with the mother and daughter, he in a covered litter carried on two shafts by two mules, one in front of the other. In an hour and a half we came to his estate, which was between Picenza and Battipaglia.[45] His ancestral castle was large and beautiful and very well situated. While we waited for the Marchesa's chambermaids to arrive, she took me to her gardens, where, my love having revived, she abandoned herself to it once again. We agreed that I was not to enter her apartment except to flirt with Anastasia, for we must not give anyone the least occasion for suspecting our love. Indeed, my flirtation with Anastasia was to amuse the Marchese, whom she would not fail to keep informed of it. Donna Lucrezia approved of our measures, for she did not want the Marchese to think that I had stopped in Salerno on her account. My apartment adjoined hers, but I could not enter hers except through the room in which Anastasia slept with another of her chambermaids, who was even prettier.

The Marchese arrived an hour after us, with all the menservants and with mine, who brought me my luggage. Carried in a comfortable armchair, he himself took me to see all the beautiful walks of his gardens, while waiting for his wife and his mother-in-law to arrange everything in the castle. After supper, being very tired, he withdrew, leaving me with the ladies. I escorted the Marchesa to her room, and when I started to leave she told me that I could go to my room by way of her maids' room, and she ordered Anastasia to escort me to it. Politeness demanding that I show myself not insensible to this piece of good fortune, I told the beauty who was lighting my way that her mistrusting my proximity to the point of locking herself in would be a reflection on my character which I hoped she would spare me. She replied that she felt no mistrust, but that she would lock her door nevertheless, for it was her duty, and the more so because the room was her mistress's anteroom and because the maid who shared it with her would think the worst of her if she dared to leave her room unlocked. Admitting that she was right, I asked her to sit down beside me for a moment and remind me of what I could have done to anger her nine years earlier. She replied that she did not want to remember it, and she asked me to allow her to leave, which I did after she permitted me a kiss which I made her think I wanted. After she left, my manservant having come in, I told him that I did not need his services after supper. He understood what I meant, and on the following nights he did not come. The next day the Marchesa laughingly repeated to me the whole of the conversation I had had with Anastasia. She had confided it all to her, withholding not the slightest detail, and she had praised her for refusing to leave her door unlocked, but she had told her that she could offer me all her services in my room. The Marchesa purposely regaled her husband with the story, and he, believing that I was in love with Anastasia, twitted me with it good-humoredly after dinner, and that evening he had her sup with us, which obliged me to play the part of respectful suitor to the girl, who was much flattered by my giving her the preference over her charming mistress and by the latter's kindness in showing no disapprobation either of my passion or of the concessions by which she might keep it alive. The Marchese enjoyed the pretty comedy which the intrigue suggested to his imagination, for by making it possible for me to play it he considered that he was doing me the honors of his house and making me want to stay there a few days longer.

Anastasia came with a candle to show me to my room, where, when she learned that I had no servant, she insisted on dressing my hair for the night; gratified that I did not venture to go to bed in her presence, she sat with me for a good half hour, during which, since I was not in love with her, I had no difficulty in playing the timid suitor. When she wished me good night she was delighted that my kisses were less bold than those I had given her the evening before. The Marchesa said to me the next morning that, if what Anastasia had told her was true, she concluded that I must find her a trial, for she was sure that if I loved her I should not be timid.

“She is no trial at all, for the scene we play is pretty and amusing; but I am amazed that you think I can love her, when we agreed that it was to be only a feint to amuse the Marchese and put the servants' suspicions to sleep.”

“Anastasia believes that you adore her, and I am not sorry that you are giving her a decided liking for coquetry.”

“If in the meantime I can bring her to leave her door unlocked I could easily go to your room without her having the least suspicion, for when I leave her bed, where I would have done nothing of consequence, she could never imagine that instead of going to my room I go to yours.”

“Take care how you go about it.”

“I will open negotiations this evening.”

Both the Marchese and Donna Lucrezia credited me with behaving as became a man of discretion, but at the same time they were certain that the girl Anastasia slept with me every night, which delighted them. Meanwhile I spent all day with the Marchese, who insisted that I made him happy. It cost me nothing, for I liked his principles and his intelligence. During the third supper with Anastasia I showed myself more ardent than usual, and she was astonished when she found me cold in my room; she said that she was glad to see me become calm. I replied that the reason for it was that I imagined she thought she was in danger when she was alone with me.

"Not a bit of it. I believe you have learned wisdom; you are very different in that respect from what you were nine years ago."

"But what extravagances did I commit then?"

"It was not that; you simply failed to consider that I was still a child."

"I gave you a few harmless caresses, for which I am sorry because now they make you think you must be on your guard and keep your door locked."

"It is not because I am mistrustful, but for the reasons I told you, which you acknowledged were sound. I could also say that it is a kind of mistrust which keeps you from going to bed while I am here."

"Good God! You must think me a great fool. I will go to bed at once. But you shall not leave until you have come and kissed me."

"Gladly."

So I got into bed; and Anastasia came and spent half an hour with me, during which I had the greatest difficulty in denying myself everything; but I had to act so, for I was afraid that she would tell it all to the Marchesa. When she left, Anastasia gave me such a sweet embrace that I could no longer control myself. Her own hand, guided by mine, convinced her that I loved her, and she went away—whether edified or annoyed by my restraint I do not know.

Very curious the next morning to hear how she had described the scene to the Marchesa, I was not sorry to learn that she had said nothing of her touching me. This made me certain that she would leave her door unlocked for me, and I promised my dear Leonilda that I would come and spend two hours with her. When Anastasia visited me after supper I challenged her to show as much confidence in me as I had shown in her, and she said that she would willingly do so provided that I would blow out my candle and never once put my hand on her. I promised, and I was certain I would keep my word, for I must not risk cutting a poor figure with my dear Marchesa. I put out my candle as soon as she left, and I saw her undress, kneel down in her shift to say her prayers, then get into bed and blow out the candle.

At that I undressed quickly, went into her room barefoot, and sat down beside her, when she at once took hold of both my hands. I made no effort to free them, which she attributed to my great love and the promise I had made her. The only part of us which allowed itself freedom of action was our lips, which in half an hour gave and received a quantity of kisses, but silently for fear that her roommate would hear them. For the same reason we never said a word to each other. The half hour passed very slowly for me and with a discomfort which it is hard to imagine. I had to believe that Anastasia enjoyed it, for she found that she had the power to make me do whatever she pleased. When I left her I went to my room; but as soon as I thought she was asleep, I crossed hers and entered Leonilda's; she was expecting me, but she did not know that I had come in until she felt me embrace her. After giving her the liveliest tokens of my love, I told her, hiding nothing, all that I had done to persuade Anastasia to leave her door unlocked for me, and all that I had done during the half hour I had been beside her on her bed. After spending two delicious hours with my dear Leonilda, I left her, certain that they would not be the last. I returned to my room without making the slightest noise to betray the secret. I slept until noon. The Marchese and Donna Lucrezia twitted me with it at dinner, and at supper they twitted Anastasia, who played her role very well. When we were alone together she told me that she would no longer lock her door, but that it was useless and even dangerous for me to come to her in her room, so it would be better if we talked by candlelight in mine, but that to assure her that she was not inconveniencing me I must go to bed. I had to consent. I hoped that nothing would happen which could prevent me from going to spend another two hours with the Marchesa after Anastasia had spent a constrained hour with me; but I miscalculated, and it was my own fault.

In bed, with Anastasia in my arms and her lips pressed to mine, I told her that she did not trust me enough to undress and get into my bed with me; thus challenged, she replied by asking me if I would promise to be on my good behavior. Only a fool would have answered no. I made up my mind, and, answering yes, I prepared to make her happy, for the poor, pretty girl had fought against herself quite long enough the evening before. She took off her dress, she let her petticoat drop, and she came to my arms, in a surrender which left her with no thought of demanding that I keep my promise. Appetite, says the proverb, grows with eating. Her ardor made me amorous, she threw off all restraint, she displayed all her beauties to me, and I did not cease to do her justice until sleep overcame my senses. She then had to leave me. When I woke, feeling strangely put out, for what had happened so unseasonably was bound to interfere with my visits to the Marchesa, I laughed when I saw that I should have to tell her everything. I saw that I had become Anastasia's victim despite myself, for, aside from its being unforgivable if I had sent her away after half an hour's amusement, she would have locked her door; and even if she had not locked it, what would I have done with Leonilda after Anastasia had exhausted me?

When I told Leonilda the whole story she could not but laugh, and she saw as well as I did that I could have nothing more for her. We had to resign ourselves. During the five or six more days that I stayed on there, I had Leonilda only two or three more times in an arbor in the garden and in the greatest haste. I had to receive Anastasia in my bed every night, and to end by her thinking me a traitor when I raised objections to her offer to come to Rome with me, where she told me she had a very rich uncle who would take care of her when I no longer loved her. She declared that if I loved her I could not refuse her offer; and she was right, but I did not love her enough to make her my mistress, when my whole fortune amounted to only a thousand zecchini.

The evening before I left, the Marchese della C. . . strangely surprised me by a proposal he made to me in private. Without any long preamble, the generous man, after thanking me for having kept him such good company, told me that he had learned from the Duke of Matalona himself the reason why I had not married his wife, and that he had always admired me for making her a present of five thousand ducati when I left Naples, though I was not rich.

"Those five thousand ducati," he went on, "with five or six thousand more which she had from the Duke's generosity, made up her dowry, to which I added a hundred thousand, so that she is sure of a fortune even if I die without having a child. What I now ask is that you be kind enough to accept the return of the five thousand ducati you gave Leonilda; it is she who wants to give you this token of her affection and esteem; I approved of her noble generosity, but I did not want her to deprive herself: it is from me that you shall receive them today. She did not dare to express to you what I have just told you, because of a delicacy for which you must be grateful to her. She thought you would be offended by her trying to discharge her obligation to you by this restitution."

"And she would have been right, I should have refused to accept the five thousand ducati from her, but I do not refuse them from you, for I consider them only a gift inspired by the noblest of all your virtues. A refusal on my part, my dear Marchese, could spring from nothing but a stupid and most inappropriate pride, for I am not rich. What I wish is that your wife and her mother shall be present when you make me this gift."

"We will do it after dinner."

The city of Naples was my Temple of Fortune each of the four times that I stayed there. If I went there now, I should die of starvation. Fortune scorns old age. The last time I went there, she sent me two rich and happy women, who gave me back what I had given them, as if it had been lent. Leonilda and her mother wept for joy when the Marchese handed me the five thousand ducati in bank notes in their presence and at the same time gave another five thousand to Donna Lucrezia by way of rewarding her for having been the person who introduced me to him. He was discreet enough not to reveal the more important reason to her. Donna Lucrezia did not know that the Duke of Matalona had told him that Leonilda was my daughter. Gratitude tempered my high spirits all the rest of the day, and Anastasia spent a rather gloomy night with me. When she reproached me with not loving her, I replied only ambiguously. I left the next morning at eight o'clock, after the most refined sentiments on all our parts found expression only in words which interpreted them most inadequately. I very gladly promised the Marchese that I would write to him from Rome. I arrived at Agata's house in Naples at eleven o'clock, finding her amazed to see me, for she thought I was in Rome. Her husband received me with expressions of the greatest friendship, despite *li flati*[46] from which he was suffering severely that day. I told him that I was determined to leave after dinner, and that I had only come to embrace him and ask him to get me a bill of exchange on Rome against the five thousand Neapolitan ducati which I gave him. He promised me that it would be ready before three o'clock, and Agata, who was delighted, at once sent word to Callimena to come to dine with her.

Very much surprised to see me still in Naples when she thought I had been in Rome for two weeks, the good-hearted girl told me all the details of her amour with the young Cavaliere Morosini, which lasted only ten days; but she had nothing to complain of but his inconstancy. He had left her for a dancing girl. My two weeks' disappearance was the puzzle which enlivened our dinner; I satisfied no one's curiosity. I left them at three o'clock after the fondest embraces, and I traveled all night; I stopped at Monte Cassino,[47] which I had never seen, and I was delighted to have done so, for I found there Prince Xavier of Saxony under the name of Count Lausitz,[48] with Signora Spinucci,[49] a lady of Fermo, whom the Prince had married but whose position he did not make known. He had been there for three days. He had had to wait for the Pope's permission for Signora Spinucci, for by the Rule of St. Benedict women were expressly forbidden to enter the monastery, and, since Signora Spinucci refused to comply, the Prince had to send an express messenger to Signor Bianconi[50] in Rome to obtain permission. After seeing everything worth seeing in Monte Cassino and sleeping there, I left to go on to Rome without stopping, for though it was the middle of September it had not yet rained and the air was still noxious. I went to lodge at the inn on the Piazza di Spagna kept by Roland's daughter, the sister of Teresa, the wife of my brother, who was still in Rome with Prince Beloselski.

CHAPTER I

1770. Margherita. La Buonaccorsi. The Duchess of Fiano. Cardinal de Bernis. The Princess of Santa Croce. Marcuccio[1] *and his sister. The excommunication attached to the visiting room is abolished.*

HAVING ALREADY made up my mind to spend a quiet six months in Rome, confining my activities to learning to know the city and making such acquaintances as doing that should bring me, on the day after I arrived I took a pleasant apartment opposite the palace of the Spanish Ambassador, who was then Monsignor Azpuru;[2] the apartment was the one which had been occupied twenty-seven years earlier by the teacher of languages to whom I had gone for lessons when I was in the service of Cardinal Acquaviva.[3] The landlady of the apartment was the wife of a cook,[4] who came to spend the night with her only once a week. She had a daughter sixteen or seventeen years of age, who, despite her rather too dark complexion, would have been very pretty if smallpox had not deprived her of one eye. She wore a false eye, which, being of a different color from the other and also larger, made her face repulsive. The girl, whose name was Margherita, made no impression on me; even so, I could not refrain from giving her a present, than which none other could have gratified her more. An English oculist who was known as the Chevalier Taylor[5] being in Rome, and lodging on the same square, I took Margherita and her mother to him and, for six zecchini, had her fitted with a porcelain eye which matched the other and could not have looked better. My generosity made Margherita think that, overwhelmed by her beauty in twenty-four hours, I had already fallen in love with her; her mother, being a devout woman, feared to burden her conscience by judging my motive too unfavorably. I was not long in learning all this from Margherita herself, when we reached the point of an intimate acquaintance. I came to terms for dinner and supper without any luxury. Rich in the possession of three thousand zecchini, I determined to pursue a course of conduct which would assure me that I could live in Rome not only without needing anyone but even cutting a respectable figure.

The following morning I found letters at almost all the post offices,[6] and found, too, that the head of the Banca Belloni,[7] who had long known me, had already received notice of the bill of exchange of which I was the bearer. Signor Dandolo,[8] always my faithful friend, sent me two letters of recommendation written by the same Venetian nobleman, Signor Zulian,[9] who had recommended me to the Venetian Ambassador in Madrid, Signor Mocenigo, with the consent of the State Inquisitors. One of his letters was addressed to Signor Erizzo,[10] the Venetian Ambassador, which greatly pleased me. He was the brother of the Erizzo who had been Ambassador in Paris. The other was addressed to his sister, the Duchess of Fiano.[11] I saw that I should soon make my way into all the great houses in Rome; I was delighted at the thought of presenting myself to Cardinal de Bernis after I had become well known in the city. I engaged neither a carriage nor a servant; it is not necessary in Rome, where both can be procured at a moment's notice when they are needed.

The first person to whom I presented my letter was the Duchess of Fiano, who, having heard from her brother that I would call on her, received me most graciously. She was an extremely ugly woman, not at all rich, but with an excellent heart; having very little wit, she had taken the course of being amusingly malicious to prove that she had a great deal of it. Her husband the Duke, who used the name of Ottoboni, to which he had a right, and who had married her to obtain an heir, was impotent, which, in the language of Rome, is *babilano;*[12] this was her first confidence to me, vouchsafed the third time I saw her; but she did not say it in a way to make me conclude that she did not love him or that she wanted to present herself as a woman to be pitied, for it appeared that she said it only to make fun of a confessor she had who had threatened to refuse her absolution if she continued to do everything she could to make him potent. She gave a supper every evening to her circle of intimates, composed of some seven or eight people, to which I was not admitted until a week or ten days later, when, all of them having met me, they seemed to value my company. Her husband, who did not like society, supped alone in his room. The cavalier who danced attendance on the Duchess was the Prince of Santa Croce,[13] whose wife's cavalier was Cardinal de Bernis. The Princess, daughter of the Marchese Falconieri,[14] was very young, pretty, extremely animated, and a woman to please all who came near her; however, proud of possessing the Cardinal, she let no one hope for the honor of taking his place. Her husband the Prince was a handsome man, elegant in his manners and with a sufficiency of intelligence; but he used it only in commercial speculations; he believed, and rightly, that a nobleman does not derogate from his birth by availing himself of all the advantages to which it entitles him. Not liking to spend, he attended the Duchess of Fiano because he spent nothing, and he felt that he was in no danger of falling in love with her.

Though not bigoted, he was a fanatical Jesuit, and indeed a Jesuit of the short robe,[15] like Président d'Éguilles,[16] brother of the Marquis d'Argens, whom I had known in Aix. As soon as, two or three weeks after I arrived, he heard me complain of the difficulties a man of letters encountered when he went to work in the Roman libraries,[17] the Minerva, for example, or still more the Vatican, he offered to introduce me to the Superior of the professed house at Il Gesù and at Sant'Ignazio.[18] One of the librarians presented me once and for all to all the assistants, and from then on I found I could not only go to the library on any day and at any hour but could also take home whatever books I needed, only writing the title of the book on a sheet of paper which I left on the table at which I was writing. I was brought candles when it appeared that I did not have light enough, and the courtesy I was shown even extended to my being given the key to a small door by which I could enter the library at all hours, very often without being seen. The Jesuits were always the most courteous of all the regular ecclesiastics of our religion, and even, if I may say so, the only courteous ones; but during the crisis in which they were then involved they carried their courtesy so far that they impressed me as servile. The King of Spain[19] wanted the order suppressed, and they knew that the Pope had promised [20] him that he would do it; but, sure that the final blow would never fall, they were unafraid. They could never persuade themselves that the Pope could have a courage which, according to them, surpassed the moral strength of mankind. They even managed to have him indirectly warned that he did not have the necessary authority to suppress their order without convoking a Council; but all was in vain. The Pope found it difficult to make up his mind because he knew that decreeing the suppression of the Company would be decreeing his own death. He did not bring himself to it until he saw that his honor was seriously endangered. The King of Spain, who was the stubbornest of all sovereigns, wrote him in his own hand that, if he did not suppress the order, he would print and publish in every language of Europe the letters he had written him when he was a Cardinal and on the strength of which he had had him created Supreme Pontiff of the Christian religion. A man of a different stamp from Ganganelli could have answered the King that the Pope was not obliged to do what he had promised as a Cardinal, and the Jesuits would have supported the doctrine, which is not the most specious of all those put forward by the adherents of probabilism;[21] however, in his heart Ganganelli had no love for the Jesuits, he was a Franciscan, he was not born a gentleman, his manners were rustic, and he was not strong-minded enough to defy the shame he would have felt at finding himself exposed as a man of ambition and capable of breaking the promise he had made to a great monarch in order to become the occupant of the Chair of St. Peter.

I laugh at those who say that the Pope poisoned himself by taking counterpoisons. It is true that, always afraid that he would be poisoned, he took antidotes and preservative drugs. Being wholly ignorant of pharmacy, he was gullible in that respect; but I am in a position to say that it is morally certain (if there is such a thing as moral certainty) that Pope Ganganelli died from being given poison[22] and not from his alexipharmics.[23] The grounds for my certainty are as follows:

At the time when I was in Rome, which was the third year of Ganganelli's pontificate, a woman from Viterbo,[24] who made enigmatic predictions with surprising particulars, was sent to prison. In obscure terms she predicted the destruction of the Company of Jesus without naming the time at which it was to occur; but what she said perfectly clearly was this: *"The Company of Jesus will be destroyed only by a Pope who will reign five years, three months, and three days, exactly as long as Sixtus V,*[25] *not a day more, not a day less."* Most of those who read this prophecy made light of it, and nothing more was said of the Sibyl, who was nevertheless imprisoned. I ask my reader to tell me if a man of judgment, if a man who can think, can doubt that the Pope was poisoned when, at his death, the prophecy was found to have been fulfilled. In such a case moral certainty becomes the same as material certainty; the mind which made the woman from Viterbo its mouthpiece was clever enough to inform the world that, if the Jesuits were suppressed, they would not fail to avenge themselves. The very powerful man who poisoned the Pope could certainly have poisoned him before he suppressed the order; but we must believe that he never thought he would be capable of it. It is obvious that, if he had not suppressed the order, he would not have poisoned him, and so the prophecy would not have been false. Let us note that Ganganelli was a monk of the Order of St. Francis, like Sixtus V, and that the one was no more of noble birth than the other. The strange thing is that after the Pope's death the Sibyl was declared insane and released from prison and nothing more was heard of her, and that, despite the fact that the prophecy I have mentioned was widely known, men of learning and noblemen alike all insisted on saying that it was true that the Pope had been poisoned, but that it was by his alexipharmics, which he constantly took and even without his faithful friend Bontempi[26] being present. I ask any thinking man what inducement the Pope, unless he was insane, could have to fulfill the woman of Viterbo's prophecy to the letter. Those who will tell me that the whole thing could have been the result of pure chance will strike me dumb, for it is a possibility which I cannot deny, but I shall continue to argue as I have always argued. The poisoning of Pope Ganganelli was the last example of their power to which the Jesuits, even after their extinction, treated the world. The unpardonable mistake they made was not to have killed him before that, for true policy consists only in foresight and precaution, and the worst of all politicians is he who does not know that there is nothing on earth which, in case of doubt, precaution must not sacrifice to foresight.

The second time that the Prince of Santa Croce saw me at the Duchess of Fiano's he asked me *ex abrupto* ("without preamble") why I did not go to see Cardinal de Bernis; I replied that I intended to go there the next day.

"Go, for I have never heard His Eminence speak of anyone with as much regard as he does of you."

"He put me under an infinite obligation to him eighteen years ago;[27] and I would gladly risk my life to convince His Eminence that I have not forgotten what I owe him."

"Then go to see him, and we shall all be delighted."

The Cardinal received me the next day with every sign of the unfeigned pleasure it gave him to see me again.[28] He praised me for my reticence in speaking of him to the Prince of Santa Croce at the Duchess's, being sure that I would say nothing about the circumstances of our friendship in Venice. I told him that, except for having grown stouter, I found him as handsome and fresh-looking as when he had left Paris twelve years earlier, but he replied that he felt different in every way.

"I am fifty-five years old," he said, "and I am reduced to a vegetable diet."

"Is it in order to keep down the inclination of the flesh for the work of love?"

"I wish people believed it; but I do not think it deceives anyone."

He was delighted when he learned that I had a letter to the Venetian Ambassador, which I had not yet delivered. He promised me that he would approach him in a way which would assure me of a good reception from him.

"Meanwhile," he said, "I will begin breaking the ice tomorrow. You shall dine with me, and he shall learn of it."

I told him I had plenty of money, and I saw that he was delighted to know it, and even more pleased when I told him I was all alone and determined to be on my good behavior and to live without ostentation. He said that he would write M. M.[29] of my presence in Rome and my resolve. I amused him very much by telling him the story of my adventure with the nun in Chambéry.[30] He said that I should not hesitate to ask the Prince of Santa Croce to introduce me to the Princess, with whom we could spend pleasant hours, but not of the sort we used to spend in Venice, for she had no resemblance to M. M.

"Yet she provides Your Eminence with your only agreeable occupation."

"Yes, for want of anything better. You will see."

The next day as we rose from table the Cardinal told me that Signor Zulian had mentioned me to the Ambassador, Erizzo, who had shown the greatest desire to make my acquaintance; and I was very well satisfied with the reception he gave me. The Cavaliere, brother of the Procurator Erizzo, who is still alive, was a man of great intelligence, a good citizen, very eloquent, and a consummate politician. He congratulated me on being on my travels, and on being protected by the State Inquisitors instead of persecuted by them, for Signor Zulian had recommended me to him with their consent. He kept me for dinner, and he told me to come there whenever I had nothing better to do.

It was at the Duchess's on that same evening that I asked the Prince of Santa Croce to introduce me to the Princess; he replied that she wished it, the Cardinal having talked of me for an hour on the previous evening. He said that I could go there every day, either at eleven o'clock in the morning or at two in the afternoon. I went there the next day at two o'clock; she was in bed, where she took a siesta every day, and, since I had the privilege of being a person of no importance, she had me shown in at once. In a quarter of an hour I saw everything that she was: young, pretty, gay, animated, curious, merry, always talking, asking questions, and never having the patience to hear out the answers. I saw that the young woman was a perfect plaything to amuse the mind and the heart of a voluptuous and discreet man who was burdened with important affairs and needed distraction. The Cardinal saw her only on the three regular visits he paid her every day: when she rose in the morning and he went to see if she had slept well; every afternoon, when he went to drink coffee with her in her apartment; and every evening at the assembly in her palace. He played a game of two-handed piquet with her, at which he saw to it that he lost six Roman zecchini[31] every day, neither more nor less. This made the Princess the richest young woman in Rome. Her husband, though so lacking in magnanimity as to be jealous, had practical intelligence enough not to object to his wife's enjoying an income of eighteen hundred francs a month without doing anything which could lead either her to reproach herself or others to speak ill of her, for the thing was done in public and the money was honestly won at a game success in which could be attributed only to luck.

So the Prince of Santa Croce could not but cultivate and set the highest value on the Cardinal's friendship for his charming Princess, who, being extremely fecund, gave him a child not only every year but sometimes every nine months, despite the fact that the physician Salicetti[32] had assured her that proper care for her health demanded that she should not become pregnant again until after the six weeks of discharge after her lying-in had elapsed.

In addition the Prince enjoyed the advantage of being able to receive all the fabrics he wanted from Lyons, without giving any occasion for objections on the part of the Grand Treasurer,[33] who was then Monsignor Braschi[34] (now the Pope), since they were addressed to the Cardinal-Ambassador of France. Add, too, that the Cardinal's friendship for his house protected him against all those who would have annoyed him by courting his wife. The man who was in love with her at that time was the Constable Colonna,[35] whom he had taken by surprise in a room in his palace conversing with her during one of those quarters of an hour when she was morally certain that the ring at the door did not announce the arrival of the incumbent Eminence. No sooner had the Prince-Constable left than the offended husband told the Princess to be ready to leave for the country with him the next day. The Princess protested that such an unexpected, unwonted, and unprepared departure was only a whim to which her honor did not permit her to yield; but his mind was made up, and she would have had to obey if the Cardinal himself, having arrived and heard the whole story from the ingenuous and innocent beauty, had not proved to the husband that he could, and under the circumstances must, go to the country alone, leaving his Princess in Rome, where she would take greater care in future to avoid encounters which were always troublesome and of a nature to give rise to unfortunate misunderstandings likely to destroy the peace of the family.

In less than a month I became the person whose presence discommoded none of the three chief actors in the play. Taking no part in the dispute while it raged, listening, approving everything, and, when it was over, always declaring that the victor was in the right, I became almost as necessary to them as the marker is to the billiard player. I occupied the dreary time which follows such quarrels with stories or amusing comments; everyone felt better, everyone attributed it to me that the thing had been patched up so quickly, and I was rewarded by never being unwelcome at any time and in any situation.

In the Princess, the Prince, and the Cardinal, I saw three nobly innocent and inoffensive souls going their[36] way without harming anyone or doing anything to subvert the peace and the just laws of society in general.

The Duchess of Fiano, conceiving that her possessing the husband of her whose possession he allowed the Cardinal to enjoy showed that her own merits were of the highest, and not a little vain of what she thought Rome must be saying in consequence, whereas in fact no one was taken in, was angry with me for being stupid enough to see everything through rose-colored glasses. She would never have supposed me so lacking in intelligence, she was amazed that I did not see that only an unconquerable jealousy kept the Princess of Santa Croce from ever calling on her; she spoke to me one day so hotly to convince me that such was the case that I saw that if I did not admit it I should lose her good graces. As for the Princess's charms, I had had to grant her from the beginning that it was incomprehensible how they had succeeded in dazzling the Cardinal, for she was the thinnest creature alive and none of her sex in Rome had a mind that was giddier or more incapable of reasoning. What was, however, the incontrovertible truth was that the Princess of Santa Croce was a jewel perfectly adapted to make a voluptuous and philosophical lover like the Cardinal happy. At certain moments I was more inclined to wonder at his good luck in possessing such a treasure than at the eminent dignity to which Fortune and his innate qualities had raised him. I loved the Princess, but, never allowing myself to hope, I remained within the bounds which assured me that I should forever keep the place which I then held. Trying to attain something more, I should have risked losing everything, for I should have offended the lady's pride and shocked the delicacy of her lover, whom age and the sacred purple had, despite his philosophy, made a different man from what he had been when we had shared possession of M. M.[37] It must be added that the Cardinal had always told me that he felt for her only the fondness of a father; it was enough to show me that he would have taken offense at my attempting to be, or to become, anything more than the favorite among all her most humble servants. I had to be satisfied and consider myself very fortunate that she feared me no more than she did her chambermaid. Indeed, to be as agreeable to her as I could, I pretended not to be looking at her when she knew that I saw her. The course one must pursue to gain the good graces of a woman who pampers herself is not easy to find, especially if she has a king or a cardinal dancing attendance on her.

The life I had been leading during the month I had been in Rome was everything I could want in the way of tranquillity. At my lodging Margherita had found the way to capture my interest by her attentions. Since I had no servant, she was in my room morning and evening; I looked at her, very well pleased with the present of the false eye I had made her, which looked natural and real to all who had not known her as one-eyed. The girl was extremely intelligent, though completely uneducated, and enormously vain in the matter of dress. With no particular intention, I played up to her by holding long, amusing conversations with her morning and night and making her little presents; and, by giving her money, I catered to her love of finery which made her looked at in the Church of the Holy Apostles[38] every feast day and Sunday when she went to mass. In a few days I became aware of two things: first, that she was astonished that, loving her, I never came to a declaration in words or in acts; second, that, if I loved her, I could conquer her without much difficulty. The latter I could not but divine when, urged to tell me the story of all the little adventures she must have had from the age of eleven to her then age of seventeen or eighteen, she told me anecdotes which I greatly enjoyed and which she could not have told me without trampling on every feeling of modesty. I had reached this point with her by giving her three or four paoli every time I thought she had been frank; I told her so; and I gave her nothing when I felt sure that she concealed the most interesting circumstances of the intrigue. By this course I forced her to confess to me that she no longer had her maidenhead, that a charming girl whose name was Buonaccorsi and who came to see her every Sunday and feast day no longer had hers either, and what man it was who had conquered them both. She assured me that she did not make love with the Abate Ceruti,[39] whose room was next to mine and to whom she had to go whenever her mother did not have time enough. This Piedmontese Abate was handsome, learned, and in general a man of prepossessing qualities, but he was poor, burdened with debts, and in very ill repute in Rome because of an ugly story which everyone had heard and of which he was the unfortunate hero. It was said that he had confided to an Englishman who was in love with Princess Lanti[40] that she was in need of two hundred zecchini, and that the Englishman had given them to him to give to her, but that the Abate had kept them for himself. This black fraud had been revealed in the course of a conversation between the lady and the Englishman, who, after telling her that he was ready to do anything for her, had assured her that he considered the two hundred zecchini he had sent her nothing. The lady, very much surprised, having denied all knowledge of it, the Englishman had prudently not insisted; but the Abate had been suddenly banished from the Lanti palace and the magnanimous Englishman had done no more than refuse to see him again.

The Abate, who was one of the people Bianconi employed to write the *Roman Ephemerides*[41] which came out every week, had become my friend as soon as I came to stay in Margherita's house. I had noticed that he was in love with her, and it was a matter of indifference to me, for I did not love her, but I should not have believed that

Margherita treated him unkindly. The girl assured me that she could not bear him and that she was very much displeased whenever she had to enter his room. The Abate was already under obligations to me. He had borrowed some twenty scudi from me, promising that he would return them three or four days later, and three weeks had passed without his giving them back; but I did not ask him for them, and I would even have lent him another twenty without his asking me for them, but for what happened next.

When I supped at the Duchess of Fiano's I came home late, and Margherita would be waiting for me. Her mother would be asleep, and, wanting to be diverted, I would keep her with me for an hour or two, regardless of the fact that our amusements made noise enough to disturb the Abate Ceruti, who, separated from the room in which we were entertaining ourselves only by a board partition, could not but hear even what we said and painfully resent our gay conversations when Margherita did nothing to quench the fire with which he burned for her.

Coming home one evening toward midnight, I was very much surprised to find, instead of Margherita, her mother.

"Where is your daughter?"

"My daughter is asleep. It goes against my conscience to let her stay in your room all night."

"She stays only until, being ready to go to bed, I tell her to leave, and this change offends me, for it shows me only too clearly your unjustified suspicions. What can Margherita have said to you? If she has complained, she lied, and I will leave your house tomorrow."

"You would be wrong. Margherita has said nothing to me, on the contrary she maintains that you only joke with her."

"Exactly so. Do you see any harm in joking?"

"No, but you might do something else."

"And on that assumption, meanwhile, you base an unworthy suspicion which should burden your conscience, if you are a good Christian."

"God keep me from suspecting my neighbor, but I was informed that your laughter and joking are carried to such extremes that there can be no doubt that your meetings are immoral."

"So it was my neighbor the Abate who was indiscreet enough to set you worrying."

"I cannot tell you from whom I know it, but I know it."

"So much the better for you. I shall remove to other lodgings tomorrow, and thus put your conscience at rest."

"But cannot I render you the services my daughter does?"

"Certainly not. Your daughter amuses me, and I need it. You are not a woman to amuse me. I leave tomorrow, I tell you. You have insulted me, and it must not happen again."

"I should be sorry to have you leave, because of my husband, who would ask me the reason, and I should not know what to tell him."

"What your husband may say about it is nothing to me. I shall leave tomorrow. Be so good as to go, for it is time I went to bed."

"Permit me to serve you, to take off your shoes."

"Neither that nor anything else. If you want me to be served, send Margherita."

"She is asleep."

"Wake her."

At that she left, and three minutes later in comes Margherita, with nothing much on but her shift and without her false eye, which she had not had time to put in, at which I burst out laughing.

"I was asleep, and my mother told me to come and persuade you not to leave our house, for my father would think the worst of it."

"I will stay, but you shall continue to come to my room alone."

"Gladly, but we must not laugh any more, for the Abate complained of it."

"So it was the Abate who told your mother?"

"Can you have any doubt of it? Our joy made him bitter. Our gaiety offended his passion."

"He is a wretch who needs to be punished. If we laughed day before yesterday, we will laugh even more tonight."

She agreed; whereupon we played every imaginable trick, accompanied by constant laughter, which must have driven the talebearer to despair. At the height of our romp, which must have gone on for an hour, the door opens; it was Margherita's mother who entered, expecting to catch us in the act. She sees me with Margherita's cap on my head, and Margherita with a pair of mustaches which I had painted with ink. She could not help laughing too.

"Well," I said, "do you think us great criminals?"

"No, and I see that you are right; but consider that your innocent orgies keep your neighbor from sleeping."

"Let him go and sleep somewhere else. I shall do as I please. I will even tell you that you have only to choose between him and me. I will stay in your house only on condition that you turn him out, and I will take his room for myself"

"I cannot turn him out until the end of the month; but I foresee that he will say things to my husband which will make trouble in our household."

"He will say nothing to your husband, of that I am sure. Let me take care of it. I will speak to the Abate myself tomorrow morning, and he will leave your house of his own free will without your having to say anything to him. And that, my good woman, will save you from even greater worries. In future, fear for your daughter when you know that she is alone in a room with a man and they are not talking and not laughing. Then you can be sure that they are doing something serious."

After this little sermon she left well satisfied and went off to bed. Margherita, congratulating me in advance on the brilliant move that I had promised to make the next day, became so gay that I could not keep from doing her the justice she deserved; she spent an hour in my bed without laughing, then left, proud of her victory.

The next morning early I entered the Abate's room, where, after reproaching him for his talebearing, which he could not deny, I told him in so many words that he must find other lodgings at once or take the consequences of my declaring myself his enemy, beginning by implacably demanding the twenty scudi he owed me, undeterred by the fact that he could not pay them. After beating about the bush for some time, he told me that he could not leave without paying what he owed the innkeeper and without having money to pay a month in advance on another room which he would at once go to look for; and to get rid of all these difficulties I gave him another twenty scudi. So the whole affair ended well;[42] I found myself better lodged, in full possession of Margherita, who soon put me in that of the charming Buonaccorsi, whose attractions were much greater than hers.

The two girls introduced me to the young hero who had had the art to seduce them both. He was a tailor's apprentice fifteen years of age, handsome, short, but so generously endowed by nature that I had to say they were right when I saw the object the sight of which had deprived them of the power to resist. The youth was very well-mannered; I found in him a refinement which declared him to be above his station. He loved neither Margherita nor La Buonaccorsi. Seeing them together, and hence without constraint, he had thought they were curious about what they did not see, and he had satisfied their curiosity. But the satisfaction of their sight was followed by desires for something more tangible; the youth became aware of it, and, being polite and magnanimous, he took the first step by offering them everything in his power. Thereupon the two girls consulted together, and, pretending only to humor him, obtained the enjoyment of the splendid object.

Loving them both, and feeling the greatest friendship for the youth, I often arranged to have the pleasure of watching him performing amorous exploits, very glad to see that, instead of being jealous of his enjoyment and his abilities, I felt their beneficent influence to the point of sharing in the festivities with an increase in enjoyment which the sight of the youth, handsomer than Antinoüs,[43] procured me. I outfitted him with linen and some fine coats, and before long he trusted me completely, confiding to me all that filled his heart, in love with a girl on whom his entire happiness depended and whose love made him miserable, because she was cloistered; and, since he could obtain her only by marrying her, he was in despair, for, earning only a paolo a day, he had not enough even to live on alone. Constantly telling me of the rare beauty of the girl he adored, he made me want to see her, and I saw her; but before telling my reader how it came about I must give him an account of my situation in Rome at the time when I made this acquaintance.

Having gone to the Capitol on the day on which prizes were to be conferred on young students of painting and drawing,[44] I saw the painter Mengs, who, with Pompeo Battoni[45] and two or three others, was to decide which students deserved the preference. Not having forgotten how Mengs had treated me in Spain,[46] I was going to pretend I did not see him, when, greatly to my surprise, he came up to me.

"Despite what happened between us in Madrid," he said, "we can forget it all in Rome and speak without tainting our honor."

"Why not?" I replied, "provided we do not raise the subject of our quarrel, for I, at least, could not discuss it coolly."

"If you had known Madrid as I do, and the necessity I was under to give no opening to evil tongues, you would not have forced me to do what I did. Learn that I was believed to be a Protestant, and that to add color to the suspicion I had only to show myself unconcerned by your behavior. Come to dine with me tomorrow, and we will make peace under the auspices of Bacchus. It will be a family dinner; I have heard that you do not see your brother, and I can assure you that you will not find him in my house,[47] for if I received him all the decent people who frequent it would forsake it."

I did not fail to go there. My brother left Rome some time later, still in company with Prince Beloselski, the Russian Envoy to Dresden, with whom he had gone there, and still without having obtained what he demanded to clear his honor. Senator Rezzonico[48] was inexorable. We saw each other only three or four times.

Five or six days before he left, I was surprised to see my brother the Abate[49] appear before me, dirty, in rags, and unbashedly demanding that I help him.

"Where have you come from?"

"From Venice, where I could no longer make a living."

"And how do you expect to make a living in Rome?"

"By saying mass and teaching French."

"You, teach French? You don't even know your own language."

"I know it, and I know French, and I already have two pupils."

"Who are they?"

"The son and daughter of the proprietor of the inn where I am staying; but you must help me at first."

"I will not give you a soldo; leave my presence."

I paid no attention to his protests, I finished dressing, and I left, telling Margherita to lock my apartment. The wretch went to the Duchess of Fiano's and sent in his name; she received him to find out what it was about. He implored her to take pity on him and persuade me to help him, and she dismissed him, promising that she would speak to me. I felt ashamed and annoyed when she mentioned it to me that evening. I begged her not to speak of it again, and even not to receive him again. I gave her a brief account of all the base acts to which he had descended and told her what I had to fear from him, and she refused to listen to him after that. He went about reviling me to all my friends, even the Abate Gama,[50] who had rented the fourth floor of a house opposite the Church of Trinità dei Monti; everyone told me I ought to help him or make him leave Rome, and it annoyed me. It was the Abate Ceruti who, ten or twelve days after going to lodge elsewhere, came to tell me that if I did not want to see my brother begging in the streets I must do something for him; he said that I could make provision for him outside of Rome, and that he was willing to go there if I would give him three paoli a day. I consented; but the Abate Ceruti arranged the thing in a way which greatly pleased me. He spoke to a parish priest who was then in Rome and who served a church belonging to a Franciscan nunnery. The priest took my brother with him and promised him a testone[51] a day to say a mass in his church every day, in payment for which he would receive the testone, and other worthwhile perquisites if he was a success at preaching, of which the nuns in his convent were passionately fond. So my brother left, and I did not care if he knew that his three paoli a day came from me. I gave the Abate Ceruti all my old shirts to give to him and an old black coat, and I refused to see him. The place to which he went was

Palestrina,[52] the ancient Praeneste, which was the site of the famous Temple of Fortune. As long as I remained in Rome he never failed to receive the nine scudi a month; but after I left he went back to Rome, then left it for another convent, where he died suddenly, thirteen or fourteen years ago.[53] He may have poisoned himself.

Medini[54] had been in Rome ever since I arrived there, but we never saw each other. He lodged on the Strada delle Orseline[55] in the house of one of the Pope's light-cavalrymen, where, living on gaming, he tried to cheat all the foreigners who arrived. Having accumulated some money, he had sent to Mantua for his mistress and her mother and another daughter she had, twelve or thirteen years of age. Thinking that he could do much better in furnished lodgings, he had taken a fine apartment on the Piazza di Spagna, five or six houses away from the one in which I was staying. I knew nothing of all this.

One Sunday when I had gone to dine at the Venetian Ambassador's, His Excellency told me that I should be dining with Count Manuzzi,[56] who had just arrived from Paris and had been delighted to learn that I was in Rome.

"I imagine you know all about him; be so good as to tell me who the Count is, for I am to present him to the Holy Father day after tomorrow."

"I met him in Madrid with Ambassador Mocenigo; he makes a good impression, he is modest, handsome, polite—that is all I know."

"When he was in Madrid was he presented at Court?"

"I believe so."

"I think not. You are not telling me all you know—but it doesn't matter. I risk nothing by presenting him to the Pope. He says he is descended from the famous thirteenth-century traveler Manuzzi[57] and from the famous printers[58] of the same name who did so much honor to literature. He showed me the anchor[59] in his coat of arms, which has sixteen quarterings."

Greatly astonished that a man who had carried vengeance to the point of trying to have me assassinated should speak of me as of an intimate friend, I determined to conceal my feelings and wait to see what turn the thing would take. So I saw him appear without showing any sign of my justified resentment, and when, after paying the Ambassador the usual compliments, he came to me ready to embrace me I received him with open arms and asked him for news of the Ambassador.[60] He talked a great deal at table, telling any number of lies, all of them to my honor, about everything I had done in Madrid, flattering himself (I conclude) that by lying he obliged me to lie and thus inviting me to do as much for him. In no position to do anything else, I swallowed all these bitter pills, but I was determined to have it out with him the next day at the latest.

The person who interested me, and who had come to dine at the Ambassador's with Manuzzi, was a Frenchman who went by the name of the Chevalier de Neuville.[61] He had come to Rome to obtain the annulment of the marriage of a lady who was in a convent in Mantua; he had a special recommendation to Cardinal Galli.[62] Telling us a quantity of amusing stories, he diverted the entire company; and when we left the Ambassador's house I did not refuse to get into his carriage with Manuzzi to take a drive until evening. Toward dusk he told us that he would take us to the house of a pretty woman where we would sup and where there was a bank at faro. The carriage stops at a house on the Piazza di Spagna, not very far from mine, we go up to the third floor, and I find myself face to face with Count Medini and his mistress, whom the French Chevalier had praised and whom I think of little account. Medini gives me a friendly greeting and thanks the Frenchman for having persuaded me to forget the past and come to his house. The Frenchman says that he knows nothing about it, but I change the subject and begin observing the company, which was gradually assembling.

When Medini thought there were punters enough he sat down at a big table, put five or six hundred scudi in gold and notes in front of him, and began dealing. Manuzzi lost all the money he had, Neuville won half the amount in the bank, and I did not play. After supper, Medini having asked the Frenchman for his revenge, Manuzzi asked me for a hundred zecchini, or for what I had if I did not have that much. I gave him a hundred zecchini, which he lost in less than an hour, and Neuville came within twenty or thirty zecchini of breaking the bank. We all went home. Manuzzi was lodging at my sister-in-law's,[63] Roland's daughter. I saw him in my room the next morning just as I was dressing to pay him a visit with an intention which would have put us both in danger. After returning my hundred zecchini, he embraced me, and, showing me a letter of credit for a large sum on Belloni, he offered me all the money I might need and, not giving me a chance to say anything, he argued to me that we should forget everything and be good friends for the rest of our lives. My heart betrayed my mind, as has happened to me on many other occasions, and I agreed to the peace which he offered me and asked of me. On the next day but one I went to dine with him alone. The French Chevalier arrived at the end of our dinner, and after him the unlucky Medini, who persuaded the three of us to play, each dealing in turn. We played until nightfall, and the winner was Manuzzi. He won twice what he had lost the evening before; my losses were inconsiderable. Neuville, however, lost four hundred zecchini, and Medini, who had lost only fifty, wanted to jump out the window.

A few days later Manuzzi left for Naples, after giving two hundred zecchini to Medini's mistress, who had gone to sup with him alone; but the two hundred zecchini did not keep Medini from being arrested for debts amounting to more than a thousand scudi. He wrote me some very urgent letters from prison, trying to persuade me to help him; but the only effect they had on me was to induce me to look after what he called his family, in return for the favors granted me by his mistress's young sister. At this time the Emperor arrived in Rome with his brother the Grand Duke of Tuscany;[64] and, some gentleman in the suite of one or the other of the two princes having made the girl's acquaintance, Medini was released from prison and left Rome a few days later. We shall return to him in five or six months.

I continued the same course of life; in the evening at the Duchess of Fiano's, every afternoon at the Princess of Santa Croce's, and at my inn, where I had Margherita, La Buonaccorsi, and the young tailor, whose name was Marcuccio[65] and who talked to me so much about his heart's desire that I became curious to know the object of his passion.

The girl he loved was in a sort of convent, which she had charitably been allowed to enter at the age of ten years and which she could not leave except to marry with the permission of the Cardinal who superintended the economy and directed the policy of the pious foundation. When the girls who were kept there left the establishment they were given two hundred Roman scudi, which they brought as their dowry to the men they married. Marcuccio also had his sister in the convent and sometimes went to see her. She came to the grating with the governess who was in charge of her and who saw to her education; even though Marcuccio was her brother, the regulations of the convent did not allow her to go to the grating alone. One day five or six months earlier his sister had come to the grating with a schoolmate, a young girl whom Marcuccio had never seen. It was on that day that he fell in love with her. Having to stay in his shop at work on working days, he went to see his sister every holiday, but she came to the grating with the object of his devotion only when chance decreed it. In five or six months he had had the good fortune to see her no more than eight or ten times. His sister knew that he adored her, and she was more than willing to do anything she could for him; but she had no authority to bring her down to the grating, and she did not dare ask her governess, who could do her the favor, to grant it, for if she had had any suspicion that love entered in she would no longer have allowed her to go down even by chance. So I decided to pay Marcuccio's sister a visit with him.

On the way he told me that the establishment was very poor; that the women who directed it could not properly be called nuns, for they had taken no vows and they did not even wear a regular habit; nevertheless, they were not tempted to leave their prison, for poverty would reduce them to begging for their bread or trying to find positions as servants in some house or other. The girls who had reached the age of puberty would run away if they could; but the house was so well guarded that it was impossible to escape from it.

We arrived at a vast, ill-built house standing near one of the gates of Rome[66] in a square which, because it led nowhere and so had to be sought out purposely, was solitary and deserted. On entering the visiting room, I was surprised to see the structure of the cruel gratings. The square apertures were so small that one could not put one's hand in except at the risk of scraping the skin from the back of it from wrist to knuckles; nor was that enough: the barbaric, tyrannous, and scandalous grating had another of exactly the same construction a foot behind it; but it was not easy to see it, for, though the visiting room was light enough for us who had come to call on the poor recluses, the inner part of it, where they received their callers, was nearly dark. The sight made me shudder.

"Where and how," I asked Marcuccio, "did you see the mistress of your heart, whereas I see nothing inside there but darkness?"

"By means of a candle, which the nun is not allowed to light on pain of excommunication except to receive relatives."

"So she will come with a candle this time?"

"I doubt it, for the portress must have announced that I have someone with me."

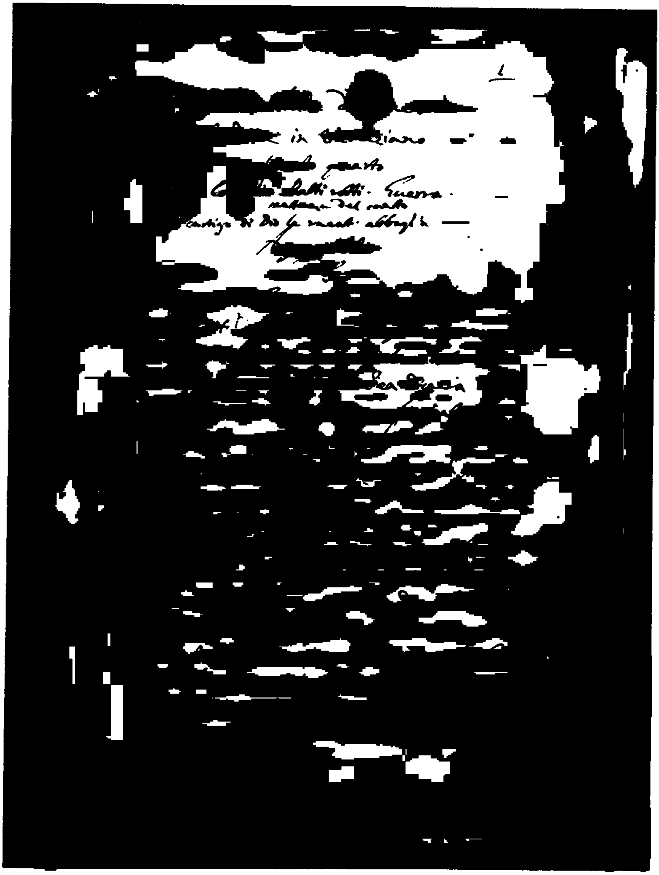
"But how did you have the privilege of seeing your mistress, to whom you are not related?"

"The first time she came down she had slipped away, and my sister's governess, who is goodhearted, said nothing; and the other times she came because my sister begged her governess to let her."

What happened was that they came down without a light and that there were three of them. I could never persuade the governess to go for a candle, not so much for fear of excommunication as for fear of being betrayed by a spy and punished by the Superioress. I saw that it was on my account that poor Marcuccio could not see his idol. I offered to leave, but he would not let me. I spent an infuriating hour, but one not without interest. The voice of my young friend's sister went to my soul; I concluded that it must be by the voice that the blind fall in love, and that their love would become as strong as that which had its origin in sight. The governess in charge of Marcuccio's sister was a young woman still under thirty years of age. She told me that when the girls reached the age of twenty-five they were made governesses of the younger girls, and that at the age of thirty-five they could leave their prison not to return; but that those who took that course were very few, for they feared destitution.

"Then you have many old women?"

"There are a hundred of us, and the number never decreases, for at every death a new recruit is brought in."



Casanova's Translation of the Iliad

"And the girls who leave to marry—how have they managed to fall in love with their husbands?"

"In all the twenty years I have been here, I have seen only four girls leave to marry, and they did not meet their husbands until after they left. Any man who asks our protector the Cardinal for one of us is a desperate fool who needs a hundred zecchini; but the Cardinal will not grant him the favor he asks unless he is sure that he practices a trade which will enable him to live well with his wife."

"And what choice is he given?"

"He states the age the girl must be, and the abilities he expects her to have, and the Cardinal leaves it to the Superioress."

"I suppose you are well fed and comfortably lodged?"

"Neither. Three thousand scudi a year cannot feed a hundred people and supply their clothing and all their needs. The ones who earn by the work of their hands are the most fortunate."

"And who are those who ask permission to put a poor girl in this prison?"

"A poor relative, a devout mother or father, who fears that the girl will succumb to sin. For this reason girls are not accepted here unless they are already very pretty."

"Who pronounces on their prettiness?"

"Relatives, some ecclesiastic, a monk, the priest of the girl's parish, and in the last instance the Cardinal, who, if he does not think the child pretty, sends her away, for an ugly girl is believed to run no risk by remaining in the world. So you can be sure that, unhappy as we are here, we curse all those who declared us pretty."

"I am sorry for you. I am amazed that a man cannot obtain permission to see you openly so as to have a reason for asking for one of you in marriage."

"The Cardinal says that even he cannot give such a permission, since breaking the conditions of the foundation entails excommunication."

"Whoever established this house must be in hell."

"We all think so; and Our Lord the Pope ought to take the thing in hand."

I gave the girl ten scudi, saying that, since it was impossible to see her, I could not promise to come again, and I left with Marcuccio, who was all apologies for having made me waste my time.

"My dear friend," I said, "I foresee that I shall never see either your young mistress or your sister, whose voice greatly interested me."

"I cannot believe that your ten scudi will not work wonders."

"I cannot believe that there is not another visiting room."

"There is; but anyone who is not a priest and dares to enter it is excommunicated, unless he has permission from the Most Holy Father."

I could not understand how the house could be tolerated, for I saw how hard it must be for the recluses to find husbands, and I thought it impossible that it would be allowed to exist once it was known that the regulations of the establishment seemed made on purpose to prevent their marrying. I saw that since each of the recluses was assigned a dowry of two hundred scudi, the founder of the house must have counted on at least two marriages a year, and hence that someone must be stealing all that was saved by the girls not marrying. I communicated my thoughts to Cardinal de Bernis in the presence of the Princess, who, very much concerned for the unfortunate girls, said that the Pope must be presented with a petition signed by them all in which they would ask His Holiness for permission to receive callers in the visiting room under the same honorable and decent conditions which were in force in all the establishments in which women were cloistered. The Cardinal told me to write the petition, get it signed, and bring it to the Princess; in the meanwhile, he said, he would find an opportunity to mention the matter to His Holiness and would think of someone to present the petition to him officially.

Not doubting that most of the recluses would sign, I composed the petition and, the second time I went to the grating with my friend, I left it with the girl, his sister's governess, with whom I had talked on the previous occasion. She assured me that I should have it back, signed by all the recluses, the first time I came to see her. The petition asked His Holiness only to abolish the excommunication affecting the visiting room where it was light enough to see; but I also briefly recounted the whole history of the house.

When the Princess of Santa Croce received the petition she went directly to the Protector, Cardinal Orsini,[67] who had to promise her that he would speak to the Pope, who, informed beforehand by Cardinal de Bernis, at once issued a papal brief abolishing the excommunication. The convent was first informed of it when someone was sent to remove the notice announcing it from the visiting-room door. The chaplain was instructed to inform the Superioress that in future she must permit all the girls who were asked for to receive callers in the light visiting room, though they must always be accompanied by their governesses. It was Marcuccio who brought me the news, which the Princess herself had not heard, and she was delighted to learn it from me. But Pope Ganganelli did not stop there. He ordered that the administration be put on trial at once and forced to account for all the money it had saved in the century and more which had elapsed since the house was founded. He reduced the number of recluses from one hundred to fifty, he set the dowry at four hundred scudi, and he ordered that every girl who had reached the age of twenty-five without having found a husband should be dismissed with the four hundred scudi which would have been given her if she had married, and that twelve mature women of good repute should be engaged at a salary as governesses of the girls in the house, each having four of them, and that twelve other serving women should be paid to do the housework.

CHAPTER II

Supper at an inn with Armellina and Emilia.

INTRODUCING ALL the innovations I have just explained took six months; what was done at once was to abolish the prohibition against entering the visiting room and even the convent itself, which, since the inmates were not cloistered, the Superioress was free to direct as she saw fit. Marcuccio had received the news in a note his sister had written him; he brought it to me joyously, begging me to go with him, as his sister requested, to please her governess. She told him also to ask at the grating for her young friend, who would come down either alone with her or with her own governess; it was I who was to ask for her. Delighted to fall in with this arrangement, I had Marcuccio leave his shop and take me to the convent, which was not far from San Paolo.[1] We asked for the two girls in the light visiting room, which we had no sooner entered than we saw the gratings occupied, one by the Abate Guasco,[2] whom I had known in Paris at Giulietta's[3] in 1751, the other by a Russian nobleman, Count Ivan Ivanovich Shuvalov,[4] and by Father Jacquier,[5] a Minimite friar of the Church of Trinità dei Monti, a famous astronomer. Inside I saw some very pretty girls.

All four of ours having come to the same grating, we began a most interesting conversation, but in whispers, because we could be overheard. We did not feel at our ease until the other visitors left. The object of my young friend's love was very pretty, but his sister was surprising. Fifteen or sixteen years of age, with a figure already voluptuously well developed, she cast a spell on me. I thought I had never seen a whiter complexion or such black eyes and eyebrows and hair; what gave her charms an irresistible power was the sweetness of her look and the ingenuous simplicity of her remarks. Her governess, who was ten or twelve years older than she, was also very likable, and very interesting by reason of a sadness which seemed to be the effect of a quantity of desires which she had to suppress. She amused me greatly by telling me all the particulars of the confusion which the abolition of the excommunication had brought about in the establishment. The Superioress was as pleased with it as the girls were; but the old bigots were scandalized. She told us that the Superioress had already ordered windows made to give light in the dark visiting rooms, even though the bigots insisted that she had no right to go beyond the permission the Father-Director had given her. The Superioress argued, and rightly, that as soon as everyone was allowed to enter the light visiting room the dark ones became ridiculous. She had also decided to have the double grating removed, since there was only a single one in the light visiting room. The Superioress's intelligence made me want to make her acquaintance, and Emilia arranged for me to have that pleasure the next day. Such was the name of Marcuccio's sister Armellina's sad friend. This first visit lasted two hours, which I found passing very quickly while Marcuccio availed himself of the opportunity to go and talk with his beloved at another grating, though she was still accompanied by her governess.

I left, after giving them ten Roman scudi, as I had done at my first visit, and kissing Armellina's hands, at which, though she made no attempt to deny them to me, she blushed scarlet. No man had ever touched her hands, and she was amazed when she saw the sensuous delight with which I covered them with kisses.

I went home in love with Armellina, surrendering to my budding passion, and not at all disheartened by the difficulties I foresaw I should encounter in obtaining her. But Marcuccio, more in love than ever, was in an ecstasy of bliss. He had made his declaration to his beloved, and she had replied that she asked nothing better than to become his wife as soon as he could obtain permission from the Cardinal-Protector. He was sure to obtain it if he could set up shop as a master tailor; he had finished his apprenticeship; he needed only a sum of money to furnish a small house, and the assurance of a sufficient number of customers. I promised him a hundred scudi as soon as he required them, and I congratulated him on his certainty of becoming happy, whereas I, in love with his sister and unable to marry her, was in despair.

"Then you are married?"

"Alas, yes! But you must say nothing, for I mean to go to see her every day, and if it were known that I am married my visits would become suspect."

It was not true, but it was what I had to say.

I was obliged to tell this lie, both to assure myself that I would never commit the folly of marrying and to keep Armellina from flattering herself that I was seeing her with no other intention. I found the Superioress polished, frank, reasonable, and not at all prejudiced. After the first time that she came down to the grating to please me, she sometimes came without being summoned; she knew that I was the prime mover in the happy reformation of the establishment, both the economy and the good order of which were under her direction, and she expressed all her obligation to me, which increased by leaps and bounds every day. In less than six weeks three of her girls had left, all to make good marriages, and she had been allowed an additional fifty scudi a month for the expenses of the house. She confided to me that she was not satisfied with the Dominican confessor, who, unlike the three others, made his penitents go to communion every Sunday and feast day, kept them in the confessional for hours, and condemned them to austerities and abstinences which made them ill and hence lose the time they needed to do their work. Having undertaken to see that her complaint was placed in the Cardinal's hands, I wrote it out for her, and she had the satisfaction of seeing no more of the Dominican and of distributing his penitents among the three other confessors, who were reasonable priests who did not dampen their devotion.

Marcuccio went alone on every feast day to see his fiancée. I went at nine o'clock almost every morning to see his sister with Emilia; I breakfasted with them, and I stayed with them until eleven o'clock in a visiting room in which there was only one grating, so that when I was there I fastened the door; however, it had another door giving access to the interior of the convent. Instead of a window being made, that door had been left open, admitting light enough; this was a great annoyance to me, for I constantly saw some of the recluses, both young and old, passing by the door, and, though they did not stop, they always glanced at the grating, which prevented Armellina from surrendering her hand to my amorous lips.

It was toward the end of December that, the weather having turned very chilly, I asked the Superioress to let me send her a screen, which alone could keep me from catching the cold which the draft from the door was sure to give me. The Superioress saw that, since she could not allow the door to be shut, she could not deny me the protection of the screen; so we were more at our ease, but within such narrow limits so far as the desires Armellina aroused in me were concerned that I could bear it no longer. For New Year's 1771 I gave each of the two girls a fine winter coat, and coffee and sugar to the Superioress, who was infinitely obliged to me. Emilia having often come to the grating half an hour before Armellina, who was not yet ready, so that I should not have to wait alone, Armellina too began often coming alone, waiting for Emilia, who, busy with something else, had not been able to come down with her. It was in the quarter hours of my being alone with her that Armellina's sweetness made me hopelessly in love with her.

Emilia was as fond of Armellina as Armellina was of her; but modesty in respect to everything to do with sensual pleasure was so strong in them that I had not yet succeeded in getting them to consent to listen to licentious talk or to pardon the freedoms which I wanted them to grant to my hands, and theirs too, to say nothing of letting my avid eyes look at what their education had taught them they must hide not only from the sight of all men but from themselves. They were astonished when I once asked them if, to exchange tokens of true friendship, they sometimes went to bed together. They blushed, and Emilia asked me what I could suppose friendship had in common with the discomfort of being two together in a very narrow bed. I took good care not to explain the reason for my question, for I saw that they were both frightened by the thought which must have led me to ask it; they were both made of flesh and blood, but I was convinced that they were sincere; they had never confided their secret mysteries to each other, and they had perhaps not even talked of them to their confessor, whether because of an unconquerable sense of shame or because it never occurred to them that they had sinned in what they might have let their hands do. I brought them white silk stockings lined with plush for winter, which they accepted with signs of the liveliest gratitude; but it was in vain that I asked them to put them on in my presence. It was no use my telling them that there was no essential difference between a girl's legs and a man's, that it could not even be a venial sin, that their confessor would consider them fools if they confessed it to him as a crime; they replied, always blushing and in concert, that it could not be permissible for girls, who, unlike men, had been given skirts for no other reason than to teach them that they must never raise them above the ground. I could have replied that skirts were made for nothing but to be turned up. The embarrassment with which Emilia advanced these arguments, which Armellina seconded, proved to me that it was neither artifice nor coquetry which made her speak as she did, but education and a sense of decency. I thought she believed that if she had done otherwise she would have lowered herself in my judgment and that I would have conceived a very unfavorable opinion of her. Yet she was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, and she was not prejudiced by any excessive devotion. As for Armellina, I saw that she felt ashamed to adhere to her duty less strictly than her friend; it seemed to me that she loved me and that, unlike what I had experienced with several other girls, I should find it easier to bring her to abandon some of her moral strictness in Emilia's absence than in her presence.

I made the experiment one morning when she appeared at the grating, telling me that Emilia would come down soon. I told her that, adoring her, I was the unhappiest of men, for, being married, I could not hope to marry her and thus gain the right to hold her in my arms and cover her all over with my kisses.

"Is it possible," I asked, "that I can live, with no other relief than kissing your beautiful hands?"

At these words, uttered with all the fire of passion, she looked at me steadily with her beautiful eyes and, after thinking for a moment, she began kissing my hand with the same eagerness which I showed when I kissed hers. I begged her to put her mouth to the grating; she blushed, she looked down, and she would not. I complained bitterly, but in vain. Armellina was deaf and dumb until the arrival of Emilia, who at once asked us why we were not gay as usual.

During these days, which were the first of the year 1771, I saw in my room Mariuccia, whom I had married ten years earlier to the worthy youth who had opened a wigmaker's shop. My reader may remember how I had made her acquaintance at the Abate Momolo's, *scopatore*[6] to Pope Rezzonico. All the inquiries I had made to learn something about Mariuccia during the three months I had been in Rome had been fruitless; I saw her before me with the greatest pleasure, the more so because I thought she had scarcely changed. She told me that she had seen me at St. Peter's at mass on Christmas Eve, and that, since she had not dared to approach me because of the company I was with, someone who was with her had undertaken to follow me and to send her word where I lived, and that, he having fulfilled his promise, she had come to see me. She told me that she had been in Frascati[7] for eight years, having a shop and living there very happily with her husband and her children, of which she had four, the eldest being a girl nine years of age. After asking Margherita to keep her company and making sure that she would dine with me, I went, as I did every day, to breakfast with Armellina, then I returned to Mariuccia, with whom I dined, and I spent the whole day delightfully without ever feeling tempted to renew the consequences of our old fondness with her. Our adventures were the subject of our talk, and the interesting news that my valet Costa had returned to Rome three years later with all the trappings of prosperity and had married Momolo's daughter, with whom he had fallen in love when he was in my service.

She said she had guessed that he had robbed me,[8] that he had left his wife two years after he married her, that no one knew where he was, and that she was in Rome in poverty, her father having died. I did not see fit to go to see her, for I could have done nothing but grieve her by telling her that I would have her husband hanged where-ever I found him. This remained my intention until the year 1785, when I found him in Vienna, valet to Count Hardegg.[9] When we come to it fourteen years hence, my reader will learn what I did. I promised Mariuccia that I would pay her a visit in Lent and bring presents to her children, especially her eldest daughter, who, according to Mariuccia, would interest me more than the others.

In love with Armellina, and unhappy, I inspired pity in the Princess of Santa Croce and Cardinal de Bernis, whom I often amused with a detailed account of all my sufferings. The Cardinal told the Princess that she could easily do me the favor of obtaining permission from Cardinal Orsini to take Armellina to the opera or the play and that, being of the party, I could make her less severe by my attentions. He said that she need have no doubt of the Cardinal's consent, since Armellina was neither a nun nor bound by any kind of vow, and that, since she must make her acquaintance before making her the offer, it could quickly be arranged.

"You have only to tell the Cardinal that you are curious to see the inside of the house."

"Will he give me permission?"

"Immediately, for they are cloistered only by the rules of the house. We will go with you."

"You will come too? A charming party!"

"Ask the Cardinal for permission, and we will set the hour afterward."

I thought I was dreaming when I heard this fine plan; I saw that the gallant Cardinal was curious to see the beautiful Armellina, and his curiosity did not alarm me, for I knew that he was not fickle. In addition, if Armellina pleased him, I was sure that both he and the Princess would use their influence to get her a suitable husband by procuring her a charitable stipend, of which there are many to be had in Rome.

Three or four days later the Princess summoned me to her box in the Teatro Aliberti,[10] and she showed me the Cardinal's written permission to visit the house with what company she chose to bring. She said that we would decide the day and hour after dinner the next day. The next morning the Superioress came to the grating to tell me that the Cardinal-Protector had sent her word that the Princess of Santa Croce would come to visit the house with a party, which gave her great pleasure. I told her that I knew it and that she would see me with the Princess. She wanted to know when, but I had no idea; I promised to inform her as soon as I knew. She said playfully that the news had set the whole house topsy-turvy, and turned the heads of all the prudes, for, except for some priests, the doctor, and the surgeon, no one since the house was founded had entered it simply to see it. I told her that there was no longer any question of excommunication, so she must put the idea of reclusion out of her mind, from which it followed that she could receive personal visitors herself without permission from the Cardinal. She replied with a smile that she would not dare.

After dinner we agreed on the hour for the next day, and I informed the Superioress in the morning. The Duchess of Fiano was one of the party, and we drove to the house, arriving there at three o'clock. The Cardinal wore nothing to show his exalted rank. He at once recognized Armellina from the description I had given him of her, and he talked to her of her charms and congratulated her on having made my acquaintance. Poor Armellina blushed again and again, and I thought she would faint when the Princess, after telling her that no one in the house was as pretty as she, gave her fond kisses. Poor Armellina was completely abashed, both because of the

Princess's praise, which all the other girls heard, and because of her kisses, which were forbidden by the regulations anywhere in the house. After caressing the girl, the beautiful Princess began making herself agreeable to the Superioress; she said I had told her she was intelligent, and that she saw it in the order which she maintained throughout the big house; she promised to speak of her to the Cardinal, doing her all the justice she deserved. After seeing all the rooms and the refectories, she complimented Emilia, whom I presented to her. She told her that she knew she was sad, and that she would do her best to find her a husband who would know how to make her gay. The Superioress seconded the compliment with an approving smile; but I saw ten or twelve old bigots who raised their eyes to heaven. Emilia, however, at once kissed her hand, as if to beg her to keep her promise.

What filled me with satisfaction was that none of the inmates could bear away the prize from Armellina; not even my young friend Marcuccio's mistress could cast doubt on her superiority, for she was not tall. When we went down to the visiting room the Princess told Armellina that she would ask the Cardinal's permission to take her with her to three or four of the theaters in Rome during the Carnival, and at that I saw the whole community horror-stricken, except the Superioress, who said that His Eminence was free to end all severities in a house in which the girls were kept only in order to make good marriages. Armellina, blushing with shame and joy, was completely at a loss. She did not know where to find words to thank her. Just as we left, the Princess commended Armellina and Emilia to the Superioress's good graces, and gave her a note of hand so that she could make the two girls presents of what little things they most needed. The Duchess of Fiano told her that she would entrust me with a small present which she, too, wanted to give the two girls.

My reader can imagine all that I said to the Princess as soon as we were in the carriage to show her my feelings. Gratitude almost made me eat her up. Neither she nor the Cardinal had a moment's doubt of Armellina's intelligence, despite the fact that she had been too much taken aback to shine. She could be only what her education had made her. The Princess was impatient to see her at the theater with her, and at supper at an inn, as is the custom in Rome. She at once wrote the two girls' names on her tablets,[11] wanting to obtain all the charitable stipends possible for them. I thought of my poor Marcuccio's mistress, but it was not the moment to recommend her; it was to Cardinal de Bernis that I the next day confided my great interest in the young man, and, after seeing him, he took up his cause to such purpose that before the end of the Carnival he got him married to his fiancée with a dowry of five hundred scudi, which, with the hundred I let him have, gave him enough to furnish a house and set up shop.

But my moment of triumph came the next day after the visit to the grating, when the Superioress came down at once to thank me. The note of hand had been for fifty Roman scudi, with which she was going to provide both Armellina and Emilia with an ample supply of linen. They were astonished when I told them that the fat Abate was the Cardinal de Bernis, for they did not know that a Cardinal was ever permitted to doff the purple. The Duchess of Fiano had sent them a cask of wine; so much bounty led them to hope for more, and, since they considered me the sole cause of their good fortune, I thought I could aspire to everything.

Three or four days later the Princess thanked Cardinal Orsini, and, having told him that she was interested in arranging marriages for some of his girls and wanted first to give them a little knowledge of the world, she asked his permission to take them to the theater with her sometimes, promising to see that they should always return to their house properly accompanied. The Cardinal had replied that the Superioress would receive whatever instructions she might wish in the matter. I told the Princess that I should be able to tell her what orders the Superioress received.

The Superioress herself told me the next day that the Cardinal's auditor had come to tell her that His Eminence left the care of the girls in her house entirely to her discretion and to order her to show the Princess of Santa Croce every consideration, letting her take them out, either coming for them herself or sending trustworthy people whom she knew. She had also been ordered to send him the names of those who, having passed the age of thirty, wanted to leave the place, receiving two hundred scudi. She had not yet made this last order public, but she was certain that she would get rid of at least twenty in this way.

As soon as I informed the Princess of what the Superioress had been ordered to do, she declared that the Cardinal could not have acted more generously. Cardinal de Bernis told her that the first time she wanted to take the girls to a play or the opera she should go to fetch them in person and tell the Superioress that she would never send for them except by sending one of her own carriages with her livery. She acted accordingly, and a few days later she went by herself for Armellina and Emilia and took them to her palace[12] on the Campo di Fiore, where I was waiting for her with the Cardinal, her husband the Prince, and the Duchess of Fiano.

They were made much of, questioned kindly, encouraged to answer, to laugh, to express themselves freely; but it was no use; finding themselves for the first time in a splendid room, and in such company, they did not have the strength to speak, they were overwhelmed with shame and with fear of saying something stupid. Emilia did not dare to answer without rising, and Armellina shone only by her beauty; urged by the Princess to return her kisses of the sort she was giving her, she could never bring herself to do it. Armellina smilingly excused herself, kissed her hand ecstatically, and, when the Princess pressed her lips to hers, Armellina seemed to have no idea of how to give a kiss. The Cardinal and the Prince laughed, the Duchess of Fiano said that so much reserve was unnatural, and I suffered the torments of the damned, for such awkwardness seemed to me to verge on stupidity, for Armellina had only to kiss the Princess's lips as she was kissing her hands. She thought that to kiss her so would be to fail in respect to her, and that she had no right to take such a liberty despite the Princess's permission.

The Cardinal said to me privately that he thought it impossible that in the course of two months I had not initiated the girl; but he had to believe it and recognize the power of education. For this first time the Princess wanted to take them to the comedy at the Tor di nona,[13] where they were sure to laugh, and that made us hope. After the play we went to sup at an inn, and at table, whether because they were hungry or because of my remonstrances, they unbent a little. They let themselves be persuaded to drink wine, and that gave them courage. Emilia shook off her sadness, and Armellina at last gave the beautiful Princess some proper kisses and, when she rose from the table, scores of them, and the acclamations of the company convinced her that she had done nothing wrong.

It was to me that the Princess entrusted the delightful task of escorting them back to the convent. The moment had come for me to take the first step toward the goal which every lover sets himself. The carriage was of the kind which has a seat for two and a folding seat; but scarcely had it set off before I saw that one must never reckon without one's host. When I tried to bestow kisses a head was turned away, when I tried to extend my hands a dress was drawn tight, when I tried to use force I was repulsed, when I complained I was even told that I was in the wrong, when I grew angry I received no reply, and when I threatened never to show my face again I was not believed.

As soon as we arrived at the convent, a maid opened the small door, and, seeing that she did not shut it after the girls had gone in, I went in too, and, seeing that I was not stopped, I went up to the fourth floor with them to the Superioress's room, finding her in bed but apparently not surprised to see me. I told her that I considered it my duty to deliver her young charges to her in person; she thanked me; she asked them if they had had an amusing evening and a good supper, after which she asked me to make as little noise as I could going down the stairs. So I wished them a good night's sleep, and I left, giving the maid a zecchino, and the coachman another when I got out at my inn. I found Margherita asleep in an armchair; she woke and began calling me names, but she changed her tone when my fond caresses gave her reason to conclude that I had not been guilty of any infidelity. I sent her away two hours later after thoroughly convincing her that I loved her alone. I slept until noon and, after dining with her, at three o'clock I went to the Princess's, where I found the Cardinal. They were expecting me to narrate a triumph, and they were surprised to hear the opposite, and especially to find me unperturbed.

I may have appeared to be so, but I was far from being so in reality. It was simply that, having outgrown childishness, I gave a comic turn to my bad luck, ending by saying that, since I had no love for Pamelas,[14] I had decided to abandon the enterprise. The Cardinal said that he would congratulate me on it in three days.

Not seeing me that day, Armellina thought that I had slept late; but when she did not see me on the day after that she sent to her brother to ask if I was ill, for I had never gone two days without seeing her. So Marcuccio, come to tell me that his sister was anxious, was of course delighted that he could go back to tell her that I was in good health.

"Yes, my dear friend, go and tell her that I will continue to ask the Princess's good graces for her, but that she will see no more of me."

"But why?"

"Because I mean to try to get over my unhappy passion. Your sister does not love me, I am only too sure of it. I am no longer young, and I do not feel inclined to become a martyr to virtue. However virtuous a girl may be, love does not permit her to carry virtue so far. She has never granted me even the trifling favor of a kiss."

"I'd never have believed it."

"Believe it. I must end the thing. Your sister is too young, and she does not know what risks she runs by acting as she does toward a man in love at my age. Tell her all that, and refrain from giving her any advice."

"You cannot imagine how this grieves me. Perhaps Emilia's presence embarrasses her."

"No, for I have often urged her when we were alone. In short, I must get over it; if she does not love me, I will not have her yield either to seduction or to gratitude. The practice of virtue costs no effort at all to a girl who is not in love; she may feel that she is ungrateful, but she takes pleasure in sacrificing gratitude to prejudice. How does your fiancée treat you?"

"Very well, ever since she has been sure that I will marry her."

Hearing this, I was sorry that I had begun by saying that I was married, for, in the state to which I had been brought, I would have given her a promise of marriage, without any intention of deceiving her. Marcuccio went away troubled, and I went to the meeting of the Arcadians[15] at the Capitol, where the Marquise d'Aout[16] was to recite her diploma poem upon becoming a member. She was a young Frenchwoman who had been in Rome for six months with a husband as pleasant and likable as herself but very much below her in intelligence. The Marquise even possessed genius; on that day I began an intimate friendship with her, but with no thought of love; I left the coast clear for a French Abbé who was madly in love with her and who gave up his fortune for her.

The Princess of Santa Croce told me every day that she would give me the key to her box whenever I wanted to take the two girls to the opera, even without her; but when she saw that a week had passed without my returning there she began to believe that I had broken off completely. The Cardinal thought I was still in love, and he praised my behavior; he predicted that the Superioress would write to me, and he guessed rightly. At the end of a week she wrote me a short, polite note in which she asked me to come to the visiting room and send for her. I thought I could not avoid going.

Since I asked for her alone, she came down alone at ten o'clock in the morning. She began by asking me why I had so suddenly stopped my visits.

"Because I love Armellina."

"That was the reason which led you to honor her with a visit every day; it is hard to understand how one and the same reason can have an entirely opposite consequence."

"It cannot but have it, Signora; for when one is in love one desires, and when one desires vainly one suffers, and constant suffering makes men unhappy; so you see that I must do everything in my power to cease to be so."

"I am sorry for you, and I see that you are acting wisely; but if matters are as I think them to be, permit me to tell you that you must esteem Armellina and so you must not, by abandoning her, lead all the girls in this house to conclude what is not the truth."

"And what can they conclude?"

"That your feeling was only a whim, and that you left her as soon as you had satisfied it."

"That would be the height of malice; but I do not know what to do about it, for I have no other way to cure myself of my folly. Do you know any other? Be so good as to tell me it."

"I do not know very much about that disease; but it seems to me that little by little love becomes friendship, and then one is at peace."

"That is true; but to become friendship love must not be handled roughly. If the loved object does not treat it tenderly, it becomes contempt or indifference. I do not want either to become desperate myself or to condemn Armellina, who is an angel of beauty and virtue. I want to continue to be useful to her, and not to see her, and I am sure that cannot be displeasing to her, for she must have been aware of my anger. It must not happen again."

"To tell you the truth, I am completely in the dark. They have always assured me that they did not fail in their duty toward you and that they cannot possibly divine the reason which may have induced you to stop coming to see them."

"Whether from shyness, or prudence, or fear of wronging me, they have lied to you; but you deserve to know all. My honor itself demands that I inform you."

"Please do so, and you can be sure of my discretion."

I then told her the whole story in detail, and I saw that she was greatly moved. She said that her principle was never to think evil unless the likelihood of it was very strong, but that, knowing human weakness, she would never have believed that we would have kept ourselves under such severe restraint for almost three months during which we saw each other every day.

"I think," she said, "that there is less harm in a kiss than in the scandal your abandoning her is causing."

"But I am sure that Armellina does not care at all."

"She cries every morning."

"Her tears may spring from vanity, or perhaps from the reason which people give for my inconstancy."

"No, for I have had everyone in the house told that you are ill."

"And what does Emilia say?"

"She does not cry, but she is very sad, and I think that by constantly saying that if you do not come any more it is not her fault she means that it is Armellina's. Do me the favor to come tomorrow; they are dying to go at least once to the opera at the Aliberti and to the *opera buffa* at the Capranica." [17]

"Very well, Signora, I will come to breakfast tomorrow, and tomorrow evening they shall see the opera."

"I am delighted and I thank you. May I tell them the news?"

"I even beg you, Signora, to tell Armellina that I have decided to come to see her again only because what you have said has persuaded me."

How glad the Princess was when I told her the news that afternoon! The Cardinal knew that the thing was bound to turn out as it was doing. She at once gave me the ticket for her box for the next day, and ordered her stableman to put her carriage and liveried servants at my disposition.

The next day when I sent for Armellina Emilia came down first in order to have time to reproach me for my behavior; she said that a man could not act as I had done if he was really in love, and that I had done wrong to tell the Superioress everything.

"I should have told her nothing if I had had anything of consequence to tell her."

"Armellina has become unhappy since she has known you."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Because she does not want to fail in her duty, and she sees that you love her only to turn her from it."

"But her unhappiness will end as soon as I cease to urge her."

"And at the same time cease to see her."

"Exactly. Do you think it does not cost me pain? But my peace of mind demands the effort."

"Then she will be convinced that you did not love her."

"She may think as she pleases. Meanwhile, what I know is that, if she loved me as I love her, we should be of one mind."

"We have duties which you men consider that you do not have."

"Then be faithful to your pretended duties, and do not blame a man of honor for respecting them by avoiding your company."

Armellina appeared, and I found her changed.

"You do not look yourself, you are pale and downcast. Why?"

"Because you have hurt me."

"Then calm yourself, be cheerful again, and let me try to cure myself of a passion which by its very nature tries to turn you from your duty. I will be your friend despite everything, and I will come to see you once a week as long as I remain in Rome."

"Once a week! You shouldn't have begun by coming every day."

"That is true. Your face deceived me into thinking what is not so; but I hope that, at least from gratitude, you will permit me to become reasonable again. To help the remedy to take effect, I must see you as seldom as possible. Consider it a little, and you will conclude that the course on which I have embarked is wise, virtuous, and worthy of your esteem."

"It is a pity that you cannot love me as I love you."

"That is to say calmly. Without desiring anything."

"I don't say that—but practicing the art of checking desires which are contrary to our duty."

"That is an art which at my age I should not want to learn. Will you be so good as to tell me if you suffer very much from suppressing the desires which your love for me arouses in you?"

"I should be very sorry to suppress my desires every time I think of you. On the contrary, I cultivate them, I foster them. I wish you would be made Pope, I sometimes wish you were my father so that I could give you countless caresses in perfect freedom, in my dreams I wish you could become a girl as I am, so that I could live with you every hour of the day."

At that I could not keep from laughing.[18] After telling them that I would come to take them to the Teatro Aliberti, I left them with the joy which a man in love must feel when he is certain that he will succeed, even though with great difficulty, for in all that Armellina had just said to me I found not the least trace of artifice or coquetry. She loved me and she persisted in not admitting it to herself, and consequently she was reluctant to grant me pleasures in which her nature would have forced her to share, whereupon she would have become convinced that she loved me. She reasoned thus unconsciously. Experience had not taught her that she must either flee me or prepare to fall a victim to love.

At the hour for the opera I went to fetch them in the same carriage and with the same footman. When the portress saw the Santa Croce livery, she had them come down, and they found me sitting on the folding seat. They were not surprised to find me alone. Emilia brought me compliments from the Superioress, who asked me to come to speak with her the next day. I took them to the opera, where I never interrupted the attention they should give to a spectacle they were seeing for the first time. Neither gay nor sad, I undertook nothing except to answer all their questions. As Romans, they must have been more or less acquainted with the physical characteristics of castrati; nevertheless, Armellina insisted that the one who was singing the second role was a woman: his bosom proved it to her. I asked her if she would dare to go to bed with him, and she answered that she would not, because a decent girl must always be in bed alone.

So strictly had the girls in the house been brought up. This silence and mystery about everything which could stimulate the pleasure of love could only have led them to attach the greatest importance to everything concerning the senses of sight and touch; that was why Armellina would only surrender her hands to me after defending them for a long time, and would never let me see if the stockings I had given her were a good fit. The prohibition against sleeping with another girl must have made her consider that letting herself be seen naked was a dreadful sin, and if it was a sin with a girl like herself, what could she not but think if it were ever a case of her being with a man? The mere idea must make her shudder. Every time that, seeing them at the grating, I had allowed myself a certain freedom in referring to the pleasures of love, I had found them deaf and dumb. I was furious. I felt no wish to lighten Emilia's gloom, though she was fresh and rather pretty; but I was in despair when I saw Armellina's face lose all its cheerfulness when I asked her if she knew in what the difference between a girl and a man consisted.

After the opera Armellina told me she had a good appetite after a week during which she had eaten next to nothing because of her grief at seeing no more of me. I replied that if I had known it I would have ordered a good supper, whereas we should eat only what the innkeeper had to give us.

"How many shall we be?"

"Just the three of us."

"So much the better. We shall be more at liberty."

"Then you don't like the Princess?"

"I like her, but she wants me to give her kisses which amaze me."

"But you gave her some, and very loving ones."

"I was afraid that if I didn't she would think me a fool."

"Will you be so good as to tell me if you think you sinned by giving her those kisses?"

"Certainly not, for I took no pleasure in them."

"Then why haven't you made the same effort for me?"

She did not answer, and we arrived at the inn, where I had a good fire made and ordered a good supper. The waiter asked me if I wanted oysters and, seeing that the girls were curious to find out what they were, I asked him the price of them. He said that they came from the Arsenal [19] at Venice, and that he could not sell them for less than fifty paoli a hundred, and I assented. I insisted on their being opened in my presence.

Armellina, astonished that her whim was going to cost me five Roman scudi, asked me to countermand the order; but she said no more when I told her that nothing seemed expensive to me when I saw that it enabled me to give her a pleasure. At my reply she took my hand, which I angrily withdrew when she raised it to her lips; but, having done it a little too roughly, I saw that Armellina was hurt. I was seated in front of the fire between her and Emilia; her dismay pained me; I begged her pardon, saying that my hand was not worthy of her kisses; but despite my excuse Armellina could not prevent two small tears from welling from her beautiful eyes. It made me very sad. Armellina was too much the dove to be treated harshly. I could renounce her love, but, if I was not to make her either fear me or hate me, which I did not want, I must either stop seeing her at all or completely change my approach. Made certain by the two tears that I must have wounded her delicacy to the utmost, I rose and went downstairs to order champagne.

Coming up again five or six minutes later, I saw that she had really cried and that she would come to supper in no frame of mind to enjoy it, and it distressed me. I had no time to lose. I repeated my excuses, and I begged her to resume her smiling countenance unless she wanted to mortify me extremely. Emilia backed me up, I took her hand, I kissed it tenderly, and she cheered up. The hundred oysters were brought and opened, filling four large dishes. The poor girls' astonishment would greatly have amused me if I had had reason to be happy; but I was desperate with love. I pined, and Armellina begged me to be as I had been when I first knew her—as if one's state of mind depended on one's will.

We sat down at table, where I taught the two girls to eat oysters by setting them the example. They were swimming in their liquid. Armellina, after swallowing five or six of them, said to Emilia that anything so delicious must be a sin; Emilia replied that it would not be a sin because the taste was exquisite but because with each oyster we swallowed we swallowed half a paoli.

"Half a paoli?" said Armellina. "And Our Lord the Pope does not forbid it? If it isn't a sin of gluttony, I'd like to know what gluttony means. I eat these oysters with pleasure; but I assure you that I will accuse myself of it in confession to see what my confessor will say."

This simplicity rejoiced my soul; but it was in my body that I needed to rejoice. My love which was dying of starvation envied the luck of my mouth. In the course of eating fifty oysters we emptied two bottles of sparkling champagne, which aroused laughter in the two girls who had to commit the indecency of belching. How I regretted that I could not laugh my fill, and devour Armellina with kisses instead of only with my eyes! I told the waiter to serve the supper, keeping the rest of the oysters for dessert. They were surprised to find their appetites keener after eating sixteen such excellent tidbits. Armellina seemed to me to have become amorous; I needed to believe it and to hope. Counting somewhat on Bacchus, I forbade water. We had a supper of the first quality for an inn. My poor heroines let themselves go. Even Emilia was on fire. I ordered up lemons, a bottle of rum, sugar, a big bowl, and hot water, and, after having the other fifty oysters put on the table, I dismissed the waiter. I made a large quantity of punch, which I enlivened by pouring a bottle of champagne into it. After we each swallowed five or six oysters and drank some punch, at which the two girls exclaimed, for they were carried away by so charming a beverage, I took it into my head to ask Emilia to put an oyster into my mouth with her own lips.

"You are too intelligent," I said, "to suppose that there is any harm in it."

Astonished at my proposal, Emilia sank into thought. Armellina watched her attentively, curious to hear what answer she would give me.

"Why," she asked, "don't you propose it to your Armellina?"

"Give him one first," Armellina said to her, "and if you have the courage I will have it too."

"What courage does it take? It's a child's game, there's no harm in it."

After receiving this propitious answer, I thought I could count on victory. I put the shell to her mouth, I told her to suck in the liquid and keep the oyster between her lips. She performed the feat to the letter after laughing heartily, and I took the oyster by pressing my lips to hers with the greatest decency. Armellina applauded her, saying that she had not thought she had it in her to do it, and she imitated her to perfection. She was delighted by the delicacy with which I took the oyster from her lips. She astonished me by saying that it was my turn to pay them back for their gifts, and God knows how much I enjoyed fulfilling the duty.

Playing this pretty game, we ate all the oysters, meanwhile emptying glass after glass of punch. We were sitting in a row with our backs to the fire, I in the middle, our heads were whirling, never was intoxication either gayer or more justified or more complete. But the punch was not finished. We felt the heat. Unable to bear it any longer, I took off my coat, and they had to unlace their dresses, which were lined in front with fur. I told them that there was a water closet near the door of our room to which they could go, and they quickly rose and took hands, delighted that I had guessed their need, which they dared not impart to me. They came back bursting with laughter, for they could not stand straight. I left them for a moment for the same reason, but a little less drunk than they. They were sitting by the fire, doing nothing but laugh at the condition they were in. I served as their fire screen, telling them nothing of the pleasure I took in seeing them in a state of disorder, which, allowing me to gaze at the beauty of their bosoms, enchanted my soul. I thanked them both for the pleasure they gave me by their charming company. I told them we must not leave the inn until we had drunk all the punch. They replied, with shrieks of laughter, that it would be a shame to leave it, and we drank. I made bold to tell them that their legs were so pretty that I could not say which pair deserved the preference, and at that their laughter redoubled, because they had not noticed that their open skirts and short petticoats let me see half of their legs.

After finishing the punch we stayed for another half an hour, talking aimlessly, while I silently congratulated myself on having the firmness not to undertake anything. Just as we left I asked them if they had any cause to complain of me, and Armellina was the first to say that if I wanted her as my soul's daughter she was ready to follow me everywhere.

"Then you no longer fear that I will urge you to fail in your duty?"

"No, I believe I am safe with you."

"And you?" I asked Emilia.

"As for me, I will love you when you do for me what the Superioress will tell you tomorrow."

"I will do everything, but I shall not go to see her until toward evening, for it is now three o'clock."

It was then that they laughed. "What will our mother say, what will our mother say?" I quickly paid for everything on the reckoning, rewarding the waiter generously, and I took them back to their convent, where the portress was very well pleased with the new order of the establishment when she received two zecchini. It being far too late to go upstairs, I at once went home, whence I sent back the Princess's carriage, to the great satisfaction of the coachman and the footman. But the one who was satisfied was Margherita, who would have scratched my eyes out if I had not repeatedly convinced her of my perfect fidelity. I told her, and she had to believe me, that I had been detained playing cards until that hour.

The next day I amused the Princess and the Cardinal with a detailed account of all that I had done. The Princess said that I had missed the moment, but the Cardinal declared that I had laid the foundation for a complete victory another day.

I went to the convent to learn what the Superioress wanted and what I could do for Emilia. The kindly Superioress received me by congratulating me on my having been able to amuse myself in the company of her two charges until three o'clock in the morning without having done anything with them which was not perfectly decent. They had told her how we had eaten fifty oysters, and she declared it a most innocent game. After this preamble, she told me that I could make Emilia happy by persuading the Princess to procure her a dispensation from publishing the banns of her marriage to a merchant who lived in Civitavecchia, and who would long since have married her but for the need to publish the banns, for there was a woman who claimed that he was under an obligation to marry her, though she had no legitimate reason for it. Her opposition would give rise to a suit which would never end.

"Emilia," she said, "would be made happy, and she would owe it entirely to you."

I took the man's name, I promised her I would use my best eloquence on the Princess. She asked me if I was still firm in my resolve to try to cure myself of my love for Armellina, and I said that I was, but that I would not begin to stop seeing her until Lent. She congratulated me on the Carnival being a very long one that year.

The next day I spoke to the Princess about the dispensation from publishing the banns, which of course was not to be asked for without a certificate from the Bishop of Civitavecchia[20] that the man was free. The Cardinal told me to have the man come to Rome, and he would see to the matter, provided he could have two reputable witnesses testify that he was not married. The Superioress wrote to him accordingly, and a few days later I saw the man in another visiting room at a grating with the Superioress and Emilia. Earnestly begging for my good offices, he said that before he could marry he must be sure of having six hundred scudi. He needed to obtain a charitable stipend of two hundred scudi, for the convent gave him four hundred; and I succeeded; but before that I arranged to have a very different supper with Armellina, who every morning at her grating asked me when I would take her to the *opera buffa* which was being given at the Teatro Capranica. I replied that I feared my love would force me to infringe on duties which she cherished more than she did *opera buffa*. They said that experience had taught them they need not fear me. Armellina said with a smile that her confessor had laughed at her when she had told him that she had eaten oysters by taking them from a man's lips with hers. He had told her that it was no more than a piece of nastiness.

CHAPTER III

The Florentine. Emilia married. Scholastica. Armellina at the ball.

IF BEFORE supping with Armellina I was in love with her to the point of being forced not to see her again if she was not to drive me mad, after the supper I found myself absolutely obliged to obtain her if I was not to die. Having seen that she had consented to the small liberties to which I had urged her only by taking them as inconsequential trifling, I decided to pursue my object as far as possible by the same means. I began playing the role of indifference to the best of my ability; I went there only every other day, I did not give her amorous looks, I pretended to forget to kiss her hand, I did the same with Emilia, I talked to her of her engagement, and I told her that if I were sure of obtaining some favor from her I would go to stay in Civitavecchia for a few days after her marriage was celebrated. I made believe I did not notice that this talk hurt Armellina, who could not bear my showing a desire for her friend. Emilia answered me that, once she was married, she would feel less strictly bound by her duties, and Armellina, annoyed that she made bold to let me hope for some favors in her presence, told her that a married woman's duties were more binding than those of a spinster. I reproved her by alleging a false doctrine. I said that a wife's great duty was only not to risk making her husband's progeny illegitimate, that anything else was a trifle, and that I would never demand anything of Emilia but trifles to amuse hands and eyes. I even told Emilia that if I was to act to good purpose in obtaining charitable stipends for her she must not only make me hope that she would be kind when I was in Civitavecchia but must give me some pledge of her future kindness before she was married. On one such occasion she answered that she would give me no pledges except those which Armellina would give me, and that I should think of getting her married too. Despite the troubled state into which this conversation put her, Armellina told me that I was the only man she could say she had seen since the day she was born, and that, not hoping to be married, she would never give me any pledge, though she could not imagine what such a pledge could be. I had the strength to go, leaving her troubled. It was killing me to have to play this role toward an angel whom I adored; but I knew no surer way of overcoming her prejudices.

I engaged a box at the Capranica when I saw some magnificent oysters which were delivered to the Venetian Ambassador's major-domo, who let me have a hundred of them for what they had cost him. Taking them to the inn at which I had supped the first time, I asked the waiter for a room in which there was a bed; but he replied that it was not permitted in Rome; he said that on the fourth floor I could have two rooms in which there were long sofas, which I was free to consider beds, and, finding that it was so, I engaged them. I told him to light fires in both rooms and to serve me with the most delicate fare in Rome.

Entering the third-tier box I had taken with the two girls, in the box next to mine I saw the Marquise d'Aout, and I did not have time to escape her. She at once greeted me, congratulating herself on being my neighbor. She was with her French Abbé, her husband, and a young man as handsome as he was well-mannered, whom I had never seen at her house. She at once asked me who the two girls she saw with me were, and I said that they belonged to the household of the Venetian Ambassador. She praised their beauty, without making any invidious distinction between them; but she began talking a great deal to Armellina, who was on her side and who replied very prettily to all the remarks she addressed to her until the performance began. The young man also began speaking to her, and, after asking my permission, he gave her a large paper of sweetmeats, asking her to share it with her neighbor. Having learned from his accent that he was a Florentine, I asked him if the sweets were from his country, and he replied that they were from Naples, whence he had arrived three days earlier.

After the first act I was surprised to hear him tell me that he had a letter which the Marchesa della C. . .[1] had charged him to deliver to me.

"I have just learned your name," he said, "and I shall have the honor to bring it to you tomorrow, if you will be so good as to tell me where you are staying."

After the usual exchange of politenesses, I feel obliged to tell him. I ask him for news of the Marchese, of his mother-in-law, of Anastasia, saying that I am delighted to receive letters from the Marchesa, from whom I had been awaiting an answer for six months.

"It is precisely the answer to your letter with which that charming lady has charged me."

"I cannot wait to read it."

"I can give it to you now, without prejudice to the pleasure I shall have in seeing you at your lodging tomorrow. I will bring it to you in your box, if I may."

"Pray do so."

He could have handed it to me directly from where he sat, but what of that?

He comes in, I yield him my place next to Armellina, he takes a portfolio from his pocket and gives me the letter. I open it, I see that it is four pages long, I tell him I will read it at home because the box is dark, and I put it in my pocket. He tells me that he intends to stay in Rome until after Easter, since he wants to see everything, though he could not hope to see anything more beautiful than what was before his eyes.

Armellina, who was looking at him very attentively, blushes and turns away her head; as for me, I am annoyed and feel in a manner insulted by his compliment, which was polite, but as insolent as it was unexpected. I make no reply, and I decide that the handsome young man must be a fool and a fop of the first water. Seeing that we have fallen silent, he realizes that he has offended me; and after some disconnected remarks he leaves.

I at once congratulate Armellina on the fine conquest she has made in half an hour, and I ask her what she thinks of the man she has so thoroughly enchanted.

"He seems to me very handsome, but I thought the compliment he paid me showed deplorably bad taste.[2] Please tell me if it is the fashion to make a girl one sees for the first time blush like that."

"No, my dear Armellina, it is neither the fashion nor polite nor behavior permissible to anyone who wants to frequent good society and who has had any experience of the world."

Sunk in silence, I appeared to be doing nothing but listen to the beautiful music, but the truth was that the worm of base jealousy was gnawing at my heart. I examined the feeling of resentment which was upsetting me, and I exerted my mind to find it well founded, for it seemed to me that the Florentine must have supposed me to be in love with Armellina and should not have begun by making the most well-turned of declarations of love to her in my presence without fear of displeasing me, unless he took me for a man who would be in the company of such a pretty girl only as her lap dog. At the end of half an hour of this silence, the ingenuous and sincere Armellina put me in an even worse state by saying with a fond look that I ought to calm myself and be sure that the young man had not given her the slightest pleasure by his flattery. She did not understand that it was to tell me exactly the opposite. I replied that, on the contrary, I wished that he had pleased her. The dear child continued to torment me by saying that he had probably thought I was her father.

What reply could I make to an argument as cruel as it was plausible? None. I could only fume, remain silent, and finally, unable to bear more, ask Armellina and Emilia to leave with me. It was at the end of the second act, and certainly if I had had my wits about me I should never have made the sweet girls a proposal all the tyranny and injustice of which I did not see until the next day. Nevertheless, they looked at each other for a moment, then they were ready. I told them by way of excuse that I had to make sure that the Santa Croce carriage was not recognized, as it would be if we left the theater with the crowd, and that we would go there again on the next day but one. I prevented Armellina from leaning out of the box to greet the Marquise d'Aout. At the door I found the lackey who was serving me talking with one of his fellows, which led me to conclude that the Princess was at the opera. We got out at the inn. I whispered to the lackey to return to the palace and to come back at three o'clock in the morning. The weather was cold, so I had to consider the horses.

We at once sat down in front of the fire, where for half an hour I gave no thought to anything but the excellent oysters, which a deft scullion opened in our presence, taking great care not to lose a single drop of the savory liquid in which they were swimming. We ate them as they were opened, and the laughter of the girls, who were thinking of the game of exchanging them, began to dissipate my ill-humor. In Armellina's sweet gentleness, I thought I saw the innocence of her beautiful soul, and I was angry with myself because, envious of the justice a man more fit to please her than I had done to her charms, I had permitted a hateful feeling to trouble my peace of mind. Armellina, drinking champagne as I had taught her to do, looked at me as if she were begging me to add my gaiety to hers. Emilia talked to me about her future marriage; and, without saying again that I would go to Civitavecchia, I promised her that her fiancé would have the dispensations in a few days, at the same time kissing Armellina's beautiful hands again and again, while she seemed grateful to me for being loving once more.

Put in high spirits by the oysters and the champagne, we supped deliciously. We had sturgeon and exquisite truffles, whose delicacy I savored more by enjoying the voluptuous appetite with which the girls were eating them than by eating myself. A natural and well-founded feeling informs the thinking man that a sure way to make a woman love him is to procure her some new pleasure. When Armellina saw me filled with joy and once again ardent, she could not but recognize her handiwork and delight in the power she had over me. She gave me her hand of her own free will. She kept me from turning my head to the left to look at Emilia, constantly keeping her eyes on mine. Emilia ate and did not care. It seemed to me impossible that Armellina could refuse herself to my love after supper, when we came to the orgy of oysters and punch.

After serving the dessert, the remaining fifty oysters, and bringing me everything I needed to make punch, the waiter left, saying that the water was on the fire in the other room, where there was everything necessary for the young ladies to retire. The room being small, we were too hot; I urged them to go into the other room and get rid of their fur-lined dresses, and come back to eat oysters in perfect freedom. Their dresses were fitted to their figures with whalebone stays, they returned in white corsets and short dimity petticoats which came only halfway down their calves. They returned with their arms around each other, laughing over their state of undress. I had the strength to conceal all the emotion which this enchanting costume aroused in me, and even to refrain from fixing my eyes on their bosoms while they were complaining that they had neither fichus around their necks nor jabots at the top of their shifts. I said nonchalantly that I would not look at them, for the sight of a bosom left me perfectly indifferent. Knowing nature, I had to lie. I was sure that they could no longer set much value on what I valued so little.[3] The two girls, who knew that they had very beautiful bosoms, were astonished by my disdain; they had to suppose that I had never seen beautiful bosoms; and the truth is that in Rome beautiful breasts are scarcer than pretty faces. Despite their good morals, Armellina and Emilia could not but undertake to convince me that I was wrong; it was my part to put them at their ease and in a frame of mind to feel ashamed of nothing. I delighted them by saying that I wanted to see them make the punch themselves. The lemon juice had already been squeezed into a big goblet. They were charmed when I told them that I found the punch better than the one I had made the first time they drank it.

At the game of passing oysters from mouth to mouth I chided Armellina for swallowing the liquid before I took the oyster. I admitted that it was difficult to do otherwise, but I undertook to show them how to go about keeping both the oyster and the liquid in their mouths by raising a rampart behind it with the tongue to stop it from entering the throat. Having to set them the example, I taught each of them to insert the oyster and the liquid into the other's mouth as I did by simultaneously inserting the full length of the tongue. I did not object when they took no offense at my extending mine, nor did Armellina object when I lingered over sucking hers, which she gave me most generously, laughing heartily afterward at the pleasure afforded by the game, than which they agreed with me nothing could be more innocent.

It was by chance that a fine oyster which I gave Emilia, putting the shell to her lips, dropped into her bosom; she made to recover it; but I claimed that it was mine by right, and she had to yield, let me unlace her, and gather it with my lips from the depth to which it had dropped. In the course of this she had to bear with my uncovering her bosom completely; but I retrieved the oyster in such a way that there was no sign of my having felt any pleasure except that of having recovered, chewed, and swallowed it. Armellina watched the whole procedure without smiling, surprised that I appeared to show no interest in what I must have seen. Four or five oysters later I gave one to Armellina, who was sitting on my lap, and I cleverly dropped it into her bosom, which brought a laugh from Emilia, who at bottom was annoyed that Armellina had escaped a test of an intrepidity such as she had shown me. But I saw that Armellina was delighted by the mishap, though she refused to give any sign of it.

"I want my oyster," I said.

"Take it."

I unlace her whole bodice, and, the oyster having dropped as far down as possible, I complain that I shall have to bring it up with my hand. Good God! What torment for a man in love to have to hide the excess of his delight at such a moment! Armellina had not the slightest pretext to accuse me of anything, for I did not touch her beautiful breasts, hard as marble, except in searching for the oyster. After retrieving and swallowing it, I took hold of one of her breasts, demanding the liquid from the oyster which had spilled on it; I seized the rosebud with my avid lips, surrendering to all the voluptuous feelings inspired in me by the imaginary milk which I sucked for a good two or three minutes. I saw that she was surprised and moved; but when I let her go, it was only to recover my soul, which my great pleasure had made to exhale where I did not know if she could suspect it. But when she saw me fix my eyes on hers as if in a stupor, she asked me if I had very much enjoyed imitating the babe at the breast.

"Yes, for it is an innocent game."

"I do not believe so, and I hope you will say nothing about it to our Superioress; what you did is not innocent for me, and we must retrieve no more oysters."

Emilia said that such little weaknesses were wiped out with holy water.

"We can swear," she added, "that we have not given one another a single kiss."

They went into the next room for a moment, and, after I went there myself, we moved the table away and sat down by the fire on a sofa which we pulled up to it, with a stand on which were the bowl of punch and glasses beside us. We had no more oysters

Sitting between them, I spoke of our legs, which were exactly alike yet which women insisted on concealing under their skirts, and, so saying, I touched their legs, adding that it was just as if I were touching my own, and seeing that they had not opposed my examining them up to the knee, I told Emilia that I wanted no reward from her but her permission to judge the thickness of her thighs in comparison with Armellina's.

"Hers," said Armellina, "must be thicker than mine, though I am the taller."

"There's no harm in letting me see."

"I think there is."

"Then I will just measure them with my hands."

"No, for you would look, too."

"No, on my word of honor."

"Let us blindfold you."

"Gladly. But you must let me blindfold you as well."

"Very good. We'll play blindman's-buff."

After drinking, we all three blindfolded one another, and then the great game began and, standing in front of me, they let me measure them several times, falling on me and laughing each time I measured too far up. Having taken off my handkerchief, I saw everything, but they had to pretend they had no idea of it. They must have cheated me in the same way too, to see what it was that they felt between their thighs when they laughed so hard that they fell on me. The charming game did not end until nature, overcome with pleasure, deprived me of the strength to go on. I then restored myself to a state of decency before they took off their blindfolds, which they did when they heard my decision.

"Emilia," I said to Armellina, "has her thighs, her hips, and everything more developed than yours, but you have still to grow."

Speechless and laughing, they sat down beside me again, thinking, I know not how, that they could disavow all they had let me do. It seemed to me, though I said nothing, that Emilia had had a lover, but Armellina was untouched in every way. She seemed more humiliated than Emilia, and there was a look of far greater gentleness in her big black eyes. I wanted to take a kiss from her beautiful lips, and I found it very strange that she turned away her head, though at the same time holding my hands with all her strength.

We had spoken of the ball. They were very curious about it; it had become rather the madness than the passion of all the girls in Rome after Pope Rezzonico had kept them starved for that pleasure during all the ten years of his reign. Though he had permitted the Romans every kind of gambling game, he had forbidden them to dance; his successor Ganganelli, having different views, had forbidden gaming and given unrestricted permission for dancing. He saw no reason to prevent his subjects from hopping about. So I promised I would take them to the ball, after finding one in a quarter as far as possible from the most frequented part of Rome, where they would run no risk of being recognized. I took them back to the convent at three o'clock in the morning, well enough satisfied with all that I had done to calm my desires, though I had thereby increased my passion; I felt more convinced than ever that Armellina was a girl to be adored by any man over whom beauty had the right to exercise absolute dominion. I was one of beauty's subjects, and, to my sorrow, I am so still, destitute, even in my state, for the exhaustion of the incense had made the censer pitiable.

I reflected on the sort of enchantment which forced me again and again to fall in love with an object which, seeming to be new, inspired me with the same desires that had been inspired in me by the last object I had loved, and which I had not ceased to love until it had ceased to inspire them in me. But the object which seemed to be new—was it really so in essence? Not at all—for it was always the same play, with nothing new but its title. But when I succeeded in possessing it, did I know that it was the same object which I had enjoyed so many times before? Did I complain? Did I feel that I had been tricked? Not at all. The reason is that, enjoying the play, I kept my eyes on the playbill, on the charming title given it by the enchanting face with which I had fallen in love. But if the entire illusion comes from the title of the play, would it not be better to go to see it without having read the playbill? Of what consequence is it to know the title of a book one wants to read, the name of a dish one wants to eat, of a city whose beauties one wants to visit?

All this is literally true in the case of a city, a dish, a play; the name means nothing. But every comparison is a sophism. Man, in distinction from all the other animals, cannot fall in love with a woman except through the medium of one of his senses, all of which, except the sense of touch, have their seat in the head. For this reason, if he has eyes, it is the face which casts the all-powerful spell of love on him. The most beautiful of female bodies, offered to his eyes stark naked, but with the head covered, might excite him to lust, but never to what is called love, for if, just as he was surrendering to instinct, the woman uncovered her head, the crown of that beautiful body, and it proved to have one of those really ugly faces which inspire disgust, repugnance to the pleasure of love, and often hatred, he would flee, with a sort of horror for the animality to which he was surrendering. It is the exact opposite which occurs when a face which he finds beautiful has made a man fall in love. If he succeeds in enjoying the possessor of it, no deformity or ugliness in her body repels him; he even manages to find beauty in what, if he examines it, is ugly; but he does not care.

The empire of the face, then, being thus established in the nature of the animal man, the human race, being in intuitive possession of moral calculation in respect to all that it needs, has in every civilized country decided that the whole body must be concealed by clothing except the face, and not only the bodies of women but those of men too, who, however, in the course of the centuries, have in several provinces of Europe adopted the habit of dressing in a manner which makes it very easy for women to imagine them as they must be when they are naked. The advantage accrued to women by the establishment of this rule is incontestable, despite the fact that beautiful faces are scarcer than beautiful bodies, for art can easily give charms to a face which has none, whereas there is no cosmetic to correct the ugliness of a bosom, a belly, and all the other parts of the human body. However, I admit that the Spartan phainomerides[4] were right, like all women whose faces are repulsive though they have very beautiful bodies, for, though the play is beautiful, because of the playbill they find themselves without an audience; but it does not matter, man needs to love, and in order to fall in love he must have a title which arouses his curiosity. Woman bears it on the surface of her face. Fortunate and thrice fortunate the Armellinas, whose play is so beautiful that it surpasses expectation!

Very well satisfied with my conquest and with my certainty that I should achieve perfect happiness, I entered my room, where I found Margherita sound asleep on the sofa. I quickly undressed, and, making no noise, put out the candle, got into bed, and at once surrendered to sleep, of which I was in the greatest need. When I woke at noon Margherita told me that a very handsome gentleman had come to see me about ten o'clock and that, not having dared to wake me, she had entertained him until eleven.

"I made him coffee," she said, "which he found very good; he said he would come back tomorrow, and he would not tell me his name. He is one of the pleasantest men I have ever met. He made me a present of this coin, which I don't recognize; I hope you won't be angry."

It was the Florentine; he had given her a two-once piece.[5] It made me laugh, and, not being in the least jealous of Margherita, I told her that she had done well to entertain him and still better to accept the coin, which was worth forty-eight paoli. She kissed me fondly, and, thanks to the incident, spared me the reproaches with which she would otherwise have assailed me for coming home so late. Curious to know who this Tuscan paragon of generosity was, I read Donna Leonilda's[6] letter. He was Signor XXX,[7] a merchant established in London, who had been recommended to her husband by a Knight of Malta who was in Marseilles, from which he had arrived by sea; he was rich and his own master, amiable, well educated, and generous; she assured me that I should like him. After giving me all the news of her husband, her mother, and the whole family, she ended her letter by saying that she was happy to be six months with child, and that she would be even happier if God (for God does all things) would grant her the boon of bearing a boy. She asked me to congratulate the Marchese on it.

Whether it was due to nature or to education, the news made me shudder. I answered her a few days later, sending my letter unsealed and enclosed in a letter of congratulation which I wrote to her husband, saying that God's bounties never arrive too late and that no news had ever concerned me more. In May Leonilda gave birth to a son, whom I saw in Prague at Prince Rosenberg's[8] when I was there for the coronation of the Emperor Leopold.[9] He is called the Marchese della C. . . , like his father, who lived to the age of eighty years. Though he did not know my name, I arranged to be introduced to him, and I enjoyed his conversation on another occasion at the theater. He was with a very learned Abate who was called his tutor; but he did not need one, for at the age of twenty he had a wisdom which few men possess at sixty. What pleased me most particularly was the youth's resemblance to the late Marchese, his mother's husband. It was this thought which drew tears from me when I reflected on the satisfaction which the resemblance must have caused both that excellent man and the youth's mother. I wrote to her, and I entrusted her son with the letter. She did not receive it until he returned to Naples during the Carnival of the year 1792, and I at once received an answer in which she invited me to come to her son's wedding and to spend the rest of my days in her house. Perhaps I shall go there.

At three o'clock I found the Princess of Santa Croce in bed, with the Cardinal keeping her company. The first thing she asked me was what had made me leave the opera at the end of the second act. I replied that I should have to tell her a story six hours long, the circumstances of which were most interesting, but which I could not tell without being granted *carte blanche* in advance, for there were details which I should have to describe too much after nature. The Cardinal asked me if it was something in the nature of the evenings with M. M.,[10] and, having heard that it was of just that nature, he asked the Princess if she would turn a deaf ear. She replied that I could count on it, and I told them the whole story, more or less in the terms in which I have written it. The recovered oysters and the blindman's-buff made her laugh despite her deafness. At the end she agreed with the Cardinal that I had gone about it the right way, and she was sure that I would crown my labors at the first opportunity. The Cardinal told me that in two or three days I should have a dispensation from the banns for Emilia's fiancé, with which he could marry her wherever he pleased.

The next morning at nine o'clock Signor XXX came to see me, and I found him such as the Marchesa had described him to me; but I had a grudge against him because of the compliment he had paid Armellina, and it grew stronger when he asked me if the young lady who was with me was married or engaged and if she had parents or other relatives who could dispose of her. I asked him with a rather sour smile to excuse me from giving him any information about the young lady, since she had been masked at the theater. He blushed and begged my pardon. Thanking him for the honor he had done Margherita by accepting a cup of coffee from her, I asked him to do me the same favor, assuring him that I would go to breakfast with him the next day. He was staying at Roland's,[11] opposite San Carlo, another of whose guests was the famous singer Gabrielli,[12] known as La Cochetta, who was being assiduously courted by Don Giovanni Battista Borghese.[13]

As soon as the young Florentine left, I flew to San Paolo, where I could not wait to see what reception my vestals, whom I had so well initiated, would accord me. They appeared before me with their faces wearing precisely the opposite expressions to those they had worn during the preceding days. Emilia had become gay, and Armellina sad. I at once told Emilia that in three days I would bring her a full dispensation from publishing the banns, and that in a week at the most the Superioress would have a note from Cardinal Orsini to pay her four hundred scudi and dismiss her, and that on the same day I would bring her an order for a stipend of two hundred scudi, which I would collect as soon as I had her marriage certificate. Beside herself with joy over the news, she left the grating to run and tell it to the Superioress.

I thereupon took my poor Armellina's hands, and, covering them with kisses which came from my soul, I implored her to stop looking sad.

"What shall I do here," she said, "without Emilia? What shall I do here when you have gone? I am wretched. I detest myself."

I thought I should die of grief when I saw her weep after saying those few words. I could not contain myself. I promised her on my honor that I would not leave Rome before I had seen her married and procured her a dowry of a thousand scudi.

"I don't care about the thousand scudi; your promise that you will not leave Rome before you have seen me married brings me back to life, and I ask nothing more; but if you fail me it will kill me. Be sure of that."

"I give you my word, and I will die rather than fail you. Forgive the love, my dear Armellina, which perhaps led me too far astray yesterday."

"Be my faithful friend, and I forgive you everything."

"Let me for the first time kiss your beautiful lips."

After the kiss, which promised me all that I could desire, she dried her tears, and Emilia appeared with the Superioress, who spoke to me in the most flattering way possible. She said that I must prepare to take an interest in another girl whom she intended to give Armellina as a companion as soon as Emilia left. I promised her I would do whatever she bade me, and at the same time I asked her to let them go with me that evening to the play at the Tor di nona.[14]

As soon as they were alone I asked them to forgive me if I had made plans for them without their consent. Emilia replied that they would be absolute monsters if they could refuse me anything after all I had done for them.

"And you, my beautiful Armellina, will you refuse yourself to my love?"

"No, my friend, but within the limits which morality prescribes. No blindman's-buff, for example."

"Oh God, it's such a charming game! You distress me."

"Think of another," said Emilia.

Emilia had become ardent, and I did not like it, for I feared that it would make Armellina jealous. Knowing the human heart, I could entertain that fear without being conceited.

On leaving them, I went to engage a box at the Tor di nona, then to the inn to order supper in the same rooms, not forgetting the oysters, even though I was sure I should not need them again. After that I went to find a fiddler to get me three tickets for a ball where I could hope that no one would recognize me. I told him that I should be alone with two young ladies who would not dance.

Back at my lodging, and intending to dine alone, a note from the Marquise d'Aout, reproaching me for never coming to dine with her, changed my mind; I went, and I found the Florentine there. It was during the dinner that I came to know a good part of his worth; I found him such as Donna Leonilda had described him to me. Toward the end of dinner the Marquise asked me why I had not stayed until the end of the opera.

"Because the young ladies were bored."

"They do not belong to the Venetian Ambassador's household, as you told me they did; I am sure of that."

"You are right, Madame; excuse my little lie."

"It was a subterfuge to avoid telling me who they are; but it is known."

"So much the better for those who are curious."

"The one who talked to me deserves to arouse anyone's curiosity; but in your place I would have her put a little powder on her hair."

"I have no such authority, but God preserve me from imposing my will on her."

The Florentine pleased me by saying nothing. I made him talk at length about England and his business there. He told me that he was on his way to Florence to take possession of his inheritance and at the same time to look for a wife, so that he could return to London married. When I left, I told him that I should not have the honor of calling on him until the next morning but one, because of urgent business which had arisen for me. At that he had sense enough to ask me not to come until noon, so that he could have the pleasure of dining with me.

Full of my happiness, I went to fetch my girls, who enjoyed the whole comedy as I did, without the slightest interruption. On arriving at the inn, I ordered the carriage to come back at two o'clock, and we repaired to the fire, where the scullion worked away at opening oysters, which no longer interested us as they had done the first two times. The girls had each adopted the attitude toward me which was appropriate to the actual state of her affairs. Emilia had the manner of someone who, having sold excellent merchandise on credit, maintains an air of superiority because of the good bargain she has given the buyer. Armellina, tender, smiling, and a little humbled, spoke to me with her eyes and reminded me of the promise I had given her. I replied only with passionate kisses which reassured her but which at the same time made her foresee that I should want greatly to increase my obligation to her. I thought she seemed resigned; and, profoundly content, I sat down at table, confining all my attentions to her. Emilia, on the eve of marriage, had no difficulty in believing that I neglected her only because of a feeling of respect I considered due to the sacrament by which she was to bind herself.

After supper, which was as gay and voluptuous as always, I sat down on the wide sofa with Armellina, where I spent three hours which I could have made delicious if I had not insisted on obtaining the final favor. The girl would never consent to it. Yet neither my caresses nor my words nor my occasional rages could ever perturb her unvarying sweetness. Tender in my arms, now laughing, now amorously sad in the most eloquent silence, she never granted me what I persisted in demanding, yet she never appeared to refuse it to me. This may seem an enigma, but it is not one. Her failure to consent was not a refusal on her part; it was one only in respect to its result. She left my arms a virgin, perhaps sorry not to have had the courage to fail in her duty. Driven by Nature to make an end, still amorous, and little satisfied, asking her to forgive me was my only resource. It was the only way, so Nature told me, to make sure of her consent on another occasion.

We dressed, half sad, half gay, we woke Emilia, who was sleeping as if she were in her own bed; and, after taking them home, I went to recover my strength in mine, laughing at all the reproaches with which Margherita assailed me.

The Florentine gave me a little dinner for two, at which the choice and delicate fare took the smallest part of my attention. What impressed me was his protestations of friendship, his obliging expressions, his generous offers of money if I were in need of it. There must be a reason for all this, and I could not discover it. He had seen Armellina, she had pleased him, I had been short with him once when he had mentioned her to me, he had not mentioned her again, and at the dinner her name never came up. I found myself reduced to believing in sympathy; I even thought I ought to be grateful to him for it, and to do as much for him. I returned his dinner at my lodging, and I included Margherita, with whom, since I was no longer jealous of her, I wished that he might fall in love. He would not have found her making difficulties, for he pleased her, and they would both have found me willing; but nothing of the sort happened. She had praised a small ring which he wore on his watch chain, and he asked me to allow him to make her a present of it; I consented; and that was to give him a free hand; but it went no farther.

In a week everything was arranged for Emilia's marriage. I discounted her stipend, so that I could give her the money in advance, and on the same day that she left the convent she was married and went to Civitavecchia with her husband. Three days later Marcuccio married his mistress, and the next day Armellina came to the grating with the Superioress and a new girl, perhaps three or four years older than she, who was very pretty; but she interested me only a little; still in love with Armellina, and hoping to conquer her completely, I could only be indifferent to any other object. The Superioress told me that the girl, whose name was Scholastica,[15] would thenceforth be Armellina's inseparable companion, and that she was sure she would win my esteem, for she was as good as Emilia; but that in return I must do what I could to forward her in her inclination for a young man who had lucrative employment and who would be ready to marry her if he had the three hundred scudi he needed in order to do so. He was the son of a third cousin of Scholastica's; she called him her nephew, though he was older than she; the stipend could easily be bought; but to obtain it for nothing I should have to find someone who would ask the Holy Father for it. I promised her I would speak on his behalf.

The Carnival was nearing its end, and Scholastica had never seen either an opera or a play. Armellina wanted to see a ball, and I had finally found one at which I thought I could be certain that no one would recognize us; but since being recognized could have consequences, it was necessary to take precautions; I asked them if they were willing to dress as men, which I would arrange for them, and they eagerly consented. I had a box at the Teatro Aliberti for the day after the ball, so I told them to ask the Superioress for permission, and to expect me toward dusk, when I would come to fetch them as usual in one of the Santa Croces' carriages. Though disheartened by Armellina's resistance and by the presence of her new companion, who I thought was neither a girl to be hurried into anything nor one to be left to stare at the wall, I nevertheless had everything we needed to dress the two girls as men taken to the inn to which we always went.

Getting into the carriage, Armellina told me the bad news that Scholastica knew nothing about our relation and that we must not permit ourselves the slightest liberty in her presence. I did not have time to answer her. The other girl got in, and we went to the inn, where we had no sooner entered the room in which there was a good fire than I said in a tone which betrayed ill-humor that if they insisted upon being perfectly free I would go into the other room, though it was cold there. So saying, I showed them the men's clothing. Armellina replied that it would be enough if I would turn my back, adding:

"Isn't that so, Scholastica?"

"I'll do as you do; but I'm very sorry, for I'm sure I'm in your way. You love each other, and it's perfectly clear: I prevent you from giving each other tokens of it. I am not a child. I am your friend, but you do not treat me like a friend."

At this discourse, which proceeded from common sense, but which required a good deal of intelligence to be so well expressed, I breathed again.

"You are right, beautiful Scholastica," I said, "I love Armellina and she is looking for an excuse not to give me tokens of it, for she does not love me."

So saying, I left the room and shut the door. I fell to making a fire. A quarter of an hour later Armellina knocked and asked me to open the door. She was wearing breeches. She said that they absolutely needed me because, the shoes being too small, they could not get them on. I sulked, so she threw herself on my neck, and she had no difficulty in soothing me; I was justifying myself to her, at the same time covering everything I could see with kisses, when Scholastica broke in on us, giving a great laugh.

"I was sure," she said, "that I was in your way; but if you do not trust me completely I warn you that I shall not have the pleasure of going to the opera with you tomorrow."

"Very well," said Armellina, "embrace my friend too."

"Here I am."

I was displeased by such generosity on Armellina's part; but that did not keep me from giving Scholastica the kisses which she deserved, and which I would have given her even if she had been ugly, for so much such kind consideration was not to be scorned. I even gave her amorous kisses, intending to punish Armellina; but I was deceived. I saw that she was delighted, she kissed her friend fondly, as if to thank her for her readiness to help, and at that I went to the other room with them to see what was the matter. I made them sit down, and I saw there was nothing for it but to send out for shoes for them; I sent the waiter on the errand, with orders to come back with a shoemaker who would bring all the shoes he had in his shop. While we waited for the shoemaker, love imperiously commanded me not to confine myself to kisses with Armellina. She did not dare to refuse either me or herself; but as if in exculpation, she insisted that I give Scholastica the same caresses I had given her, and Scholastica, to make her easy, eagerly accepted anything I could have demanded of her if I had been in love with her. The girl was charming, she fell short of Armellina only in sweetness and a delicacy of features which was Armellina's alone. The toying, all in all, was not displeasing to me, but my reflections filled me with bitterness. What I saw made me certain that Armellina did not love me, and that if Scholastica made me no resistance it was only to put her friend at ease and to convince her that she could trust her completely. I saw that, before the shoemaker arrived, I must by hook or crook make myself desire Scholastica. I at once became curious to see if Armellina would not change her attitude when I showed that I was really in love with her friend, and if the latter would continue to grant me what could not but seem to her too much, for until then my hands had never gone beyond the boundaries which the belt of her breeches opposed to their reach.

The shoemaker arrived, and in a few minutes they had shoes which fitted them perfectly. After that I helped them on with their coats, and I saw two very pretty girls dressed as elegant young men and such as to make anyone who saw them with me envy my good fortune. After I ordered that supper should be ready at midnight, we went downstairs and on to the house which was to be the scene of the ball and where it was a safe bet that I would not be recognized, for the fiddler whom I had paid for the three tickets had assured me that the company consisted entirely of shopkeepers.

I enter the ballroom with my two metamorphosed beauties, and the first person who strikes me is the Marquise d'Aout with her husband and the Abbé. The usual exchange of compliments follows, and the expected persiflage on the subject of my two companions, who, having no acquaintance with society, stood there as if stricken dumb; but what annoyed me to death was a tall young lady who, finishing a minuet, came and bowed to Armellina to invite her to dance with her. The young lady was the Florentine, who had taken it into his head to dress as a girl. He made a perfect beauty. Armellina, thinking that she should not let herself be taken for a dupe, said that she recognized him, and he replied with no little quickness that she was no doubt mistaken for he had a brother who looked just like him, just as she must have a sister with the same face as hers to whom his brother had spoken in a box at the Teatro Capranica. This well-sustained riposte by the Florentine set the Marquise laughing, and, though reluctantly, I laughed too. Armellina having declined the honor of dancing with him, the Marquise made her sit down between herself and the Florentine, and the Marquis made off with Scholastica; politeness demanded that I devote all my attention to the Marquise and not even look at Armellina, to whom the Florentine was talking in a way which occupied her completely. Jealous as a tiger, and having to dissimulate, my reader can imagine how much I suffered and how greatly I repented of having come to the ball. But the cruelty of my situation increased when, a quarter of an hour later, I saw Scholastica leave the Marquis d'Aout and stand talking in a corner to a respectable-looking man of indeterminate age who seemed to be treating her to a most interesting discourse.

The minuets over for the time being, lines are formed for a contradance, and I am surprised to see Armellina beside the Florentine, she as a man, he as a girl. I approach them to compliment them, and in the sweetest of tones I ask Armellina if she is sure she knows how to dance a contradance.

"The Signore told me," she replied, "that I cannot go wrong if I will just do whatever he does."

I am left without an answer. I go toward Scholastica, very curious about the man who was speaking to her. She timidly introduces him to me, saying that he is her nephew, the man who wanted to make her happy by obtaining permission to marry her. My surprise was great, but I conceal it perfectly; I say all the polite and encouraging things I can to him, telling him that the Superioress had informed me and that I had already thought of such a way to obtain it from the Holy Father's bounty that permission for them to marry would cost neither him nor her a soldo. He commends himself to my good offices, saying that he is not rich, and I am comforted to see that he feels not even a twinge of jealousy.

I leave Scholastica with him, and I look in amazement at Armellina, who is dancing very well and never at a loss in a figure. The Florentine, who was a master, guided her superbly; they had all the air of a happy couple; I fumed inwardly; but I did not let it keep me from congratulating Armellina after the contradance and praising the Florentine, who played the lady to perfection; he was so skillfully dressed that one would have said he had a bosom. It was Madame d'Aout who had tricked him out so well. Since I could not bring myself not to observe everything that Armellina did, I declined to dance, but managing always to show not a trace of ill-humor. Scholastica, still with her fiancé and occupied in talk of great interest to them both, gave me no uneasiness. She conversed with him for three hours, until the time when I went to ask her if she was willing that we should leave. It was getting on toward midnight, an hour which I could not wait to see arrive, for the anguish I had endured had made me heap a thousand curses on the ball and my kindness in taking the girls to it.

But I was no little embarrassed at half past eleven o'clock. It was a Saturday, and the whole company was waiting for midnight to go to eat meat, either at an inn or wherever each of them had decided to go. The Marquise d'Aout, enchanted by Armellina's ingenuous talk, told me pleasantly, and at the same time commandingly, to come to supper at her house with my two companions.

"Madame, I cannot have that honor, and my two companions know the reason for it."

"This one" (Armellina) "has just told me that it is entirely for you to say."

"It is a subterfuge, believe me."

I turn to Armellina, and I say with a smile and all the sweetness I was able to counterfeit, that she well knew she had to be at home at the latest by half an hour after midnight; and she replies with unfeigned sweetness that it is true, but that nevertheless it is for me to decide. I reply a little sadly that it is not for me to decide to break my word, but that she has the power to decide me to do it. At that the Marquise, and the Marquis, seconded by the Florentine, urge Armellina to use her power and oblige me to break the promise I claimed to have made, and Armellina ventures to urge me accordingly. I was furious, but resolved to do anything rather than give her the slightest reason to think me jealous. I say to Armellina in the most natural manner that I am willing if her friend will consent; and, with a satisfaction which rends my soul, she replies by sending me off to ask her for the favor.

Sure that I am safe, I go to the other end of the room, and, in her fiancé's presence, I tell Scholastica the whole story, at the same time asking her not to consent but without involving me. Her relative praises my prudence; but Scholastica does not need me to ask her to play the role, she tells me clearly that she would never consent to go to sup with anyone. She then comes with me, and, on the way, I tell her that she must speak to Armellina privately. So I take her to the Marquise, complaining that I have not succeeded. Scholastica asks to be excused and tells Armellina to come and hear what she has to say to her. They talked together for some time, then they came back downcast, and Armellina said she was sorry, but it was absolutely impossible. At that the Marquise stopped insisting, and about midnight we left. I urged silence on Scholastica's lover, asking him to come to dine with me on the second day in Lent. He was a man forty years of age, modest, pleasing, who greatly interested me in his favor.

The night being very dark, as it was bound to be at the end of the Carnival, I left the house with the two girls, sure that I should not be followed and going to find the carriage where I knew it would be. Escaping from a hell in which I had suffered like one of the damned for four hours, I arrived at the inn without saying a word to either girl, and not answering the reasonable questions which the too natural Armellina put to me. Scholastica avenged me by reproaching her for having obliged me to appear either rude or jealous or ready to break my word.

When we were in our room Armellina all at once changed my jealous rage to pity; I saw her beautiful eyes showing unmistakable signs of the tears which the truths Scholastica had told her had made her shed in the carriage. Supper being already served, they had time only to take off their shoes. I was sad, and I had reason to be so, but Armellina's sadness distressed me; it was a barrier; I had to dissipate it, though the source of it could not but drive me to despair, for I could find it nowhere but in the liking she had taken to the Florentine. Our supper was exquisite, Scholastica did it justice, but for once Armellina ate scarcely anything. Scholastica gave rein to a natural gaiety, she kissed her friend, she begged her to share in her happiness, for, her lover having become my friend, she was sure that I would use my influence for him and for her, just as I had done for Emilia. She blessed the ball and the chance which had brought him there. She proved to Armellina that she had no reason to be sad, since she was sure that I loved her alone.

But Scholastica was mistaken; and Armellina did not dare to enlighten her friend by telling her the real cause of her sadness. On my side, self-esteem prevented me from telling her, for I knew that I was in the wrong. Armellina was thinking of marriage, I was not the sort of man for her, and the handsome Florentine was. Our supper ended without Armellina's having been able to recover her good humor. She drank only one glass of punch, and, since she had eaten very little, I did not urge her to drink more, for fear it would make her ill. Scholastica, on the contrary, who was tasting the delicious beverage for the first time, helped herself to it freely and thought it amusing that instead of going into her stomach it had risen to her head. In this state of gaiety she thought it was her duty to make perfect peace between us and to assure us that she would be no hindrance even if she were present at all the proofs of love which we could give each other.

She rose from the table and, controlling her legs with difficulty, she carried her friend to the sofa, pressing her to her bosom and giving her countless kisses, which made Armellina laugh despite her sadness. She called me, she made me sit down beside her, and put her into my arms. I gave her amorous caresses, which Armellina did not refuse but to which she did not accord the return which Scholastica hoped to see and for which I did not hope, for she would never have granted me in Scholastica's presence what she had not granted me during the three hours I had had her in my arms while Emilia was sound asleep. Scholastica, who did not want to fail in her mediation, put the blame on me: she reproached me with a coldness which I was far from feeling. I told them to take off their disguises and put their dresses on again. So saying, I helped Scholastica to take off her coat and her vest, whereupon Armellina did the same. I offered them their shifts, and at that Armellina told me to go and stand by the fire; but two minutes later the sound of kisses made me curious. Scholastica, more than gay from the punch, was covering Armellina's bosom with kisses, while Armellina, at last become cheerful, did as much to her ardent friend in my presence. The sight so worked upon Scholastica that she did not object to my doing justice to the beauty of her bosom and becoming a babe at the breast. At that Armellina felt ashamed to be less generous to me than her friend, and Scholastica triumphed when she saw for the first time the use to which I put Armellina's hands, whereupon, fearing for her good repute, Armellina demanded that Scholastica serve me in the same way. She did everything, and her astonishment, for though the girl was twenty years of age she knew nothing about such matters, delighted me.

After the explosion I put on their shifts and with the utmost decency took off their breeches. They went to the water closet with their arms around each other, and when they came back they sat on my lap. Scholastica, far from being annoyed at the preference I at once showed for the secret beauties of Armellina, seemed to be fascinated; she watched my maneuvers, and the way in which Armellina lent herself to my undertaking, with the greatest attention, hoping to see the thing which I should have been very glad to show her, but which Armellina would not grant me. Unable to conclude where I wanted to, I called a halt, remembering that I had duties to Scholastica, whose beauties, which were hidden under a long shift, I also wanted to bare for my eyes. Armellina's obliging friend offered me no resistance. She was too sure that she would leave the question unanswered. It was too hard to decide which of the two was the more beautiful; but Armellina had the advantage of being loved, Scholastica's advantage was the beauty of her face. My hand felt that she was as untouched as Armellina, and from the way in which she held herself I clearly saw that she left me the lord of everything; but I hesitated to take advantage of the moment. It was too fine a triumph to owe it to intoxication. However, I ended by doing everything which a skilled practitioner can do to give all the pleasure possible to the charming object whom he deprives of the final pleasure. Scholastica succumbed, voluptuously overcome, and convinced that I had only failed to fulfill her desires from respect and delicacy.

Armellina, all smiles, ingenuously congratulated us both. I felt ashamed. Scholastica begged her pardon. I took them back to their convent, assuring them that I would call for them the next day to take them to the opera, and I went home to bed, unable to decide whether I had won or lost in the game I had played. It was not until I woke the next morning that I was able to decide the question.

EXTRACT FROM CHAPTERS IV AND V[1]

AFTER THE opera on Shrove Sunday Armellina, urged on by Scholastica's example, yields to my love; and I enjoy their company again for the last time on the last day of the Carnival, after appearing on horseback on the Corso[2] dressed as Pierrot, thinking that no one recognized me. But this is what happened to me. I stop beside a triumphal car, and I am surprised to see a masker disguised as a warrior in the costume of the ancient Romans put his left hand on my horse's reins and with his right hand give a pen and paper to a woman masker dressed as a queen who sat beside him. The queen writes, hands the paper to the warrior, who hands it to me and at the same time lets go of my horse's reins. At the same moment a musical prelude strikes up and all the maskers in the car throw handfuls of sweetmeats at me. After that they fall in with the procession. I read the note, expecting only an ordinary pasquinade, but I am surprised to read the following:

Pierrot audacieux, tremble: voici ton sort,
Je t'ai sauvé du Muran à Venise,
Mais cette nuit, je te condamne à mort,
Tu rendras l'âme en changeant de chemise.

("Audacious Pierrot, tremble: this is your fate. I saved you from Murano, Venice, but tonight I sentence you to death. You shall give up your soul when you change your shirt.")

I instantly guessed that the warrior could be only Cardinal de Bernis and the Queen only his beautiful Princess. There was no one but he who could remind me of what had happened to me seventeen years before.[3] *Only he could be the author of the impromptu. I leave the Corso, I go to the door of a coffeehouse, and I write the following four lines; then I return to the Corso and hand them to the queen.*

Je signe à ta sentence, adorable déesse;
Mais de ma mort laisse-moi donc le choix.
Mon crime, en bon chrétien, au guerrier je confesse.
J'expierai content, mais sur la sainte croix.

("I accept your sentence, adorable goddess; but leave me the choice of my death. As a good Christian, I confess my crime to the warrior. I will gladly expiate it, but on the holy cross."[4])

On the second day in Lent I received from the Superioress all the papers I needed for Scholastica's marriage, and the Princess and the Cardinal exerted themselves to such purpose that she left the convent after Easter and was married.

On the first Sunday in Lent the Marquise d'Aout had me to dinner with the Florentine XXX, who, informing me of his honorable intentions in regard to Armellina, had no difficulty in persuading me to play the leading role in the matter by taking the place of her father. I arranged the whole thing in one week. He provided her *with a dowry of ten thousand scudi, which he deposited in the Spirito Santo Bank,*[5] *and after Easter he married her, then he took her with him to Florence and from there to England, where she now lives happily.*

It was on this occasion that I presented myself to Cardinal Orsini, who, being Prince of the Accademia degli Infecondi,[6] *arranged for me to receive the honor of becoming a member of it. He stipulated that I should recite an ode in honor of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the next meeting, which was to be held on Good Friday. To compose the ode, I decided to spend a few days in the country, and I chose Frascati, where I thought I could live a solitary life. I had promised Mariuccia that I would visit her. She had assured me that I would enjoy making the acquaintance of her family, and I was curious to do so. I left three weeks before Easter; I arrived in Frascati toward nightfall, and the next day, having sent for a wigmaker, I saw before me Mariuccia's husband, who at once recognized me.*

After telling me that he dealt in grain, that he was prospering in his business, and that he practiced the trade of wigmaker only because he enjoyed it, he offered me a room and very modestly invited me to dinner. I was extremely surprised when he told me that he would introduce me to my daughter, to whom he had given the name Giacomina at her baptism. I thought I ought not to admit it, I laughed, I told him the thing was impossible, and he calmly told me that I would admit it when I saw her. This makes me extremely curious; here is yet another intrigue which may have consequences; but in any case the girl can be only a child nine or ten years old, and my being her father must be extremely doubtful, for the wigmaker had married Mariuccia only four weeks after my first amorous interview with her.

But at noon her face struck me. She had my features beautified; and she was much more beautiful than Sophie,

Garters

whom I had had by Teresa Pompeati[7] *whom I had left in London.*

Giacomina was very tall for her age and very well built. I looked at her very little; but I saw that she was examining me attentively, in the silence of concentration. I seized the first opportunity to ask Mariuccia on what grounds her husband could have told me that Giacomina was my daughter, and she replied, as if it were nothing at all, that he was as sure of it as she was, and that it did not prevent him from loving her more than all his other children.

"But the child does not know she is not your husband's daughter."

"Of course not. One does not confide such secrets to children."

I found Mariuccia's house very clean, and the room which her husband, Clemente, offered me having pleased me, I let him have my portmanteau brought there from the inn.

Mariuccia informed me privately that I would dine with an unmarried woman called Signora Veronica,[8] *who kept a drawing school, at which Giacomina was studying and making astonishing progress.*

"The woman," she told me, "will come with her supposed niece, a pretty, very clever girl and a great friend of Giacomina's. She is thirteen years of age. Her aunt knows you; but she knew your brother Zanetto[9] *much better. We have talked about you a great deal, and she will be very pleasantly surprised when she sees you."*

And so she was when she saw me; but not more than I when I saw her niece, who resembled my brother in the most telltale way imaginable. I guessed all. Signora Veronica, seated beside me at the table, after telling me that the girl was the daughter of a sister of hers who was dead, said to me at dessert that I would be her brother-in-law if my brother had been a man of honor. She could *not say more to lead me to suppose that her pretended niece was her daughter and that I was her uncle. At this news, I made up my mind to love the niece; and what I found amusing and extraordinary was that I found that what had decided me to pursue this passing amour was a kind of vengeance. I leave it to physicians who are more learned than I to interpret phenomena of this kind. My pretty niece was named Guglielmina, and throughout the dinner I constantly found her charming. Giacomina said very little, but she seemed to me to be thinking a great deal. After dinner I took a solitary walk at the Villa Ludovisi.*

How many were my reflections when I found myself in the place where precisely twenty-seven years earlier I had been with Donna Lucrezia![10] *I saw the place, and found it more beautiful, whereas I found myself not only not the same but diminished in all my faculties, except experience, which I abused and which made up to me for nothing except when it gave me a better right to reason. Wretched gain! Reasoning led me to melancholy, the pitiless mother of the horrible idea of death, which I had not the strength to face like a Stoic. Strength beyond my strength, which I was never able to acquire, and which I shall never acquire! This weakness has never made me a coward, but, even though abhorring its cause, I have never been able to understand how a thinking man can be indifferent to it.*

As always, I put aside these somber ideas, reflecting that, except for La Corticelli, I had bestowed happiness on every girl I had loved. Lucia from Pasiano had ended in ignominy only because, obeying my finer feelings, I had respected her. She had become the victim of a base courier who could lead her nowhere but to ruin.

Toward dusk I went home, and I remained in my room until suppertime. I spent four hours vainly trying to begin the ode on the Redemption which I had promised Cardinal Orsini. The ode is a kind of composition which *does not depend on the poet's will. It can come neither from his brain nor from his pen, unless Apollo sends it to him. This time, Apollo scorned me, for, as I invoked him, I was thinking of Guglielmina, for whom the god cared nothing. I supped with Clemente and his wife, who was with child; he hoped for a boy. I could not but wish him that satisfaction.*

He left me alone with his wife, which was most considerate; but at that moment I thought her too much the bourgeoise. I spent a very pleasant hour, but only in conversation. Mariuccia was full of her happiness, and, believing that she owed it to me, she could forbid herself to love the bestower of it, but not to adore him. These are natural feelings, which cost nothing; but the greater includes the lesser. I saw Mariuccia at my disposal, but I wanted only Guglielmina. She told me that her aunt had left her with Giacomina.

"They are upstairs," she said, "together in the same bed. I am sure they're sound asleep; would you like us to go up and see them?"

"Let us go, but we must not wake them."

We go up on tiptoe. I see two beds; her two younger daughters were asleep in one of them; in the other I see Guglielmina and my daughter, both asleep on their backs, both pretty and both with the heightened color of those roses which blush on the cheeks of young girls and boys only when they are asleep. The coverlet allowed a view of the two little maids' bosoms. My daughter's was ungarnished; but the other resembled the swellings one sees on the head of a calf which is about to grow its horns. Neither their hands nor their forearms were exposed. What a vision! What enchantment! Mariuccia laughs at my admiration, but she wants to increase it. She takes it upon herself to raise the coverlet slowly and display to my covetous soul two charming images which, to make a perfectly new picture, needed only that I could not expect it. I see the two innocents, each with an arm reaching *down her belly and a hand just curved over the tokens of her puberty, which were beginning to show. The middle finger, still more curved, was held motionless on the little piece of almost imperceptibly rounded flesh. It was the only moment in my life when I knew for a certainty the true temper of my soul, and I was satisfied with it. I felt a delicious horror. This new feeling forced me to cover the two nudities myself; my hands shook. What a betrayal! It was of a kind as new as it was cruel. Mariuccia did not have a mind able to comprehend the greatness of it. She had in all good faith betrayed the greatest secret of two innocent souls at the moment of their greatest confidence. They might well have died of grief if they had waked when I was contemplating their beautiful posture. Only the most invincible ignorance of one thing could have saved them from death, and I could not suppose they were ignorant of it.*

I at once left the room, and Mariuccia followed to show me to mine, where what happened would certainly not have happened save for the picture by which I had just been overwhelmed; but Mariuccia, instead of taking it as a punishment, chose to consider it a recompense for the pleasure she thought she had procured me. I let her believe whatever she pleased, and she went off to bed with her husband. Alas! The thing had not been premeditated. If she had not calmed me, I could not have gone to sleep.

I woke at daybreak, and I laughed as I thought of my ode. I found myself Guglielmina's slave. I could have composed no verses except for her. With his arrows Cupid defied a gloomy Apollo who could only have unstrung his bow with the lugubrious subject of the death of the Creator. Just as Clemente was dressing my hair, the two charming friends entered. Giacomina brought me my chocolate on a tray, the other was carrying a roll of paper. It contained drawings. In both their faces was depicted a gaiety which sprang from innocence, candor, and confi-

dence. If they had known what had happened to them during the night, they would not have dared to appear before me. Guglielmina would have been inconsolable if she had been told that what I had seen had made me fall in love with her.

The earliest sentiment of a girl who has the true seed of intelligence is coquetry; it is the only sentiment she values, for it is the only one which assures her that she can make a lover constant. Guglielmina at her age would have hated me if she had known that, so far as my eyes were concerned, I had already become her lord and master despite her. As for my daughter, at nine years of age she could not have such mature ideas. I asked them to let me see the products of their pencils.

After showing some little reluctance, they handed me the notebook. Nearly all the figures were naked—men, women, statues, groups of children—all were pretty and all copied after excellent studies from the nude. The Apollo Belvedere, Antinoüs, Hercules, and that reclining Venus of Titian's who holds her hand just where I had seen those of the dear girls. The psychological phenomenon which I observed at that moment, and which gave me the greatest pleasure, was a dispute between Guglielmina and my daughter.

My daughter did not want me to linger over the Venus, and Guglielmina laughed at her. She claimed that I should not linger over the Antinoüs or the Apollo, for, being a man, I could find nothing new in the drawings of them; then too, they ought not to let me know that they had ventured to draw them. The pleasure I took in their dispute filled my soul; but I was at a loss when they chose me to decide between their opinions.

"I do not know," I said at last, "which of you is right; but if I consider the pleasure your drawings give me I will say that the Venus interests me more than Antinoüs."

The amusing thing is that each of them thought she *was the victor, and Guglielmina refused to hear any further explanation. I have all my life attributed the greatest importance to these trifles, which served to show me the course I must follow to enter the hearts of those whom I sought to conquer.*

They went off to school, and when I was dressed I went to call on Signora Veronica. There I saw seven or eight girls, all very young. None of them could take my mind from Guglielmina. To have a reason for going to the school often, I asked the mistress of it to paint my portrait in miniature; as she was not rich, she could not but be delighted to earn six zecchini; and the next day I promised Guglielmina six zecchini too to make a crayon portrait of me in my dressing gown and nightcap. To do so, she had to come to my room very early. But when, the next day, she kept me waiting, Giacomina told her she ought to stay and sleep with her, her mother Mariuccia agreed, and her aunt willingly consented. At that I hoped for everything. On the fourth day of my stay in Frascati, Guglielmina came alone to sup with us, and, to banish any notion of jealousy from my dear Giacomina's mind, I bought a gold watch with a clasp from her father and made her a present of it after supper. The child was mad with joy; on the pretext of gratitude, she began giving me countless caresses, which I had some difficulty in receiving as became a father. The whole little town was whispering that I was certainly her father, and Mariuccia and her husband were not sorry to have it believed. Giacomina suspected it; but she did not know what direction to give to the ideas which were floating in her young mind. Boldly accepting my challenge, she began coming into my bed after I had lain down in it, and making fun of the clear-sighted Guglielmina, who was afraid to do likewise. I did no more than give my daughter fond kisses on her beautiful lips and on her eyes in Guglielmina's presence, while Guglielmina laughed at our trifling. I said to her carelessly that four years' difference in age *meant nothing, and that I would treat her as a child too if she were in Giacomina's place. This slighting attitude finally had the effect it was meant to have after three or four days. I gave her six zecchini for her drawing, which her aunt retouched, and that evening she got into bed with me, where my daughter, on my other side, was delighted when she saw that I treated her in the same way —plenty of kisses, but nothing more. When they were tired they went off to their room and to bed; but I was sure that Guglielmina knew from the kisses I gave her that, though I restrained myself, I had expectations of more solid fare. The next morning before leaving for school they told Mariuccia in my presence how they drove me frantic in my bed before they went off to theirs. The worthy woman laughed, knowing already how the thing would end.*

Three or four days later Giacomina fell asleep, or pretended to, and a few minutes afterward Guglielmina did the same and let me do whatever I pleased up to a certain point, at which she thought it best to wake. She saw me looking so content that she thought she would gain most by making no complaint. She wanted to let me believe that, having been asleep, she had not been aware of anything at all; she woke Giacomina and they left together; but the next morning I made her a present of a pretty ring which was worth at least fifty scudi, and which earned me the thanks of her aunt the same evening at supper. The crayon being finished, she proposed to take the girl home with her, and I was in terror. My daughter protested to the point of tears, and Signora Veronica smilingly yielded. She said to me that I had good reason to love her niece, the same reason, she went on, which Giacomina had for loving her. She thought she had propounded an insoluble enigma.

After she had gone, the two girls, left alone with me, let themselves be persuaded to do the honors to another bowl of punch and, after seeing me in bed, came to drive *me frantic, as they put it; but as soon as my daughter really went to sleep, I did not sink to letting my dear Guglielmina employ the same stratagem a second time. I clearly saw that I could count on her affection, and I was not mistaken. I spoke the language of love to her, using its most eloquent terms without waiting for her answers and not coming to the crowning act until I heard her moaning. She gave herself to me heedless of the fact that Giacomina had sat up and was watching our performance with equal attention and astonishment. When the sweet combat ended, Giacomina became the object of all our caresses, and we had no difficulty in assuring ourselves of her silence; but she wanted to be instructed in everything and to see at close range just how the thing was done. During the following days we had to satisfy her curiosity in every respect. I vainly tried to convince her that, because of her age, I could not possibly treat her in the same way; she summoned me to the lists, and she roused me to pity. Guglielmina finally felt obliged to tell her that she was very probably my daughter, and that I must not take the risk of committing a dreadful crime which would make us both unhappy for the rest of our lives. She was horrified at the thought, and so became reasonable, stifling her passion as well as she could. What Nature excited her to do could only increase my voluptuous enjoyment, and Guglielmina could not take exception to a toying of which she became the chief beneficiary. But now for a very fortunate event, not unlike a number of others which have made me superstitious.*

The next day at table Mariuccia reminded me that she had had the good fortune in Rome to give me a number on which I had staked and which, having been drawn, had made the whole company win.[11] *Giacomina said that she had a number she was sure of, and, without waiting to be asked what number it was, she named twenty-seven. Mariuccia cried out, remembering, as I did, that the num-*

ber that she had given me ten years earlier was twenty-seven.

No more was needed; I said that I would stake on it then and there; Clemente said that it was too late to stake in Frascati, and that I must send the number to be staked on in Rome. The drawing for the lottery was to take place on the next day but one. I declare that a trustworthy man must be sent to Rome at once, and Clemente says that he will go himself. I encourage him, and he at once goes to order a horse and to put on riding clothes.

I at once write down the number twenty-seven, on which twenty-five Roman scudi are to be staked unconditionally for the benefit of five partners. The partners were Mariuccia, Clemente, Giacomina, Guglielmina, and Signora Veronica. I then add twenty-five scudi for myself, ordering that it be staked on the twenty-seven at the second drawing. I give the fifty scudi to Clemente, who sets off at once, promising that he will be back by supper-time.

Mariuccia said she was sure she would win, but my daughter looked sad.

"We shall win," she said to me, "and you will not. Why do you insist that the number will be drawn second rather than first, third, fourth, or fifth?"

"Because it pleases me to trust Fortune without reservations. Because this is the second time I have been given the twenty-seven. And because I want to win five times as much as the rest of you."

"But it is five times as difficult. It seems to me that your reasoning is faulty."

"If the twenty-seven comes out at the second drawing, I will take you all to Rome and keep you there through all of Holy Week."

"God grant that it comes out!"

Clemente was back at eleven o'clock and gave me my receipt, keeping the other himself. After supper Mariuc-

cia whispered to me that she had not failed to change my sheets. I thanked her, embracing her fondly and assuring her that we should go to Rome.

Guglielmina had become my angel. On this second night I found her so amorous that I forgave my brother for all follies. I hoped I should find him still in Rome, so that I could express my gratitude to him and thank him for having created such a jewel for my soul's consolation. Guglielmina sighed in my arms, thinking of the cruel day when I should leave her. I thought I could venture to promise that I would marry her, provided that her aunt would consent. She replied that she was sure her aunt would consent; but I was sure of the contrary. The poor child did not know that she was my brother's daughter.

But what joy the next day when the five numbers drawn in the Roman lottery were posted! The second number drawn was twenty-seven. Giacomina fell on my neck, and then all the household. Signora Veronica came and struggled to express her gratitude. She saw that, through me, she had come into possession of a hundred and fifty Roman scudi, as Clemente had of two hundred and twenty-five. I had won eight hundred and seventy-five, a sum of money to which I could not be indifferent, for after the expenses of the Carnival my exchequer was reaching its end.

The Roman scudo is worth half a zecchino. My daughter made the whole company laugh by asking me why I had not staked on twenty-seven at the second drawing for everyone. Clemente came and embraced me and admitted that he had staked on the twenty-seven too—ten scudi that it would be drawn second. He won seven hundred and fifty scudi; I congratulated him most sincerely. I then repeated my promise that I would keep them in Rome for the whole of Holy Week at my expense. Signora Veronica excused herself because of her school, and Clemente because of his shop. The party consisted of Ma-

riuccia, with Giacomina and Guglielmina, and me; and we left at daybreak on Sunday.

What pleasure to find myself adored by three such creatures! These good moments in my life were the ones which made me a hundred times happier than the bad ones made me unhappy. I took them to my lodging, regardless of Margherita, who pouted when I ordered her mother to put two beds for me in the room next to mine, in which Ceruti had lodged. After ordering Margherita's mother to prepare dinner and supper for five until the day after Easter, I took them to St. Peter's in one of Roland's carriages, and everywhere during the course of the week. What calmed Margherita was my granting her the favor of dining with us; and she could not object when I told her I could not let her enter my room after supper during all of that week. I left her to suppose that it would be Signora Mariuccia who would come to sleep with me. Seeing Giacomina, she did not find it hard to guess that she was my daughter and that I must have loved her mother ten years before. I let her suppose what she pleased about Guglielmina. After supper Mariuccia went to bed, and the two girls came to my room as they had done in Frascati. I spent a very happy week, though at great cost, for I spent more than four hundred zecchini for fabrics, linen, and all sorts of jewelry, not forgetting Signora Veronica, to whom Guglielmina took all the presents I bought expressly for her.

It was on the night of Holy Thursday that I composed the ode which I recited the next day at the meeting of the Infecondi, where I saw Cardinal de Bernis and Cardinal Giambattista Rezzonico,[12] *who asked me to give him a copy of my ode, which I recited by heart, shedding a torrent of tears. All the Academicians wept. The only way to draw tears is to shed them oneself; but one must have grief depicted on a face which is able to arouse emotion without making grimaces; I had such a face,* *and the poetry gave me (as poetry still gives me today) the essential nature of the subject treated. Cardinal de Bernis, who knew my cast of mind, told me four days later that he had never believed that I was so great an actor. I swore to him that, at the moment, I had felt that I was sincere, and, after thinking about it for a little, he admitted that it was possible.*

On the day after Easter I went back to Frascati with Mariuccia and her daughter and Guglielmina, whose despair rent my soul.

I dined, supped, and slept there for the last time, and Signora Veronica showed a lively sense of my generosity when Guglielmina gave her all the presents I had chosen for her; but she greatly distressed me the next day when I went to take leave of her an hour before my departure. She took me aside to tell me that, seeing Guglielmina's tears, she could not help concluding that I had made her fall in love with me, and, after presenting a number of very sad considerations for my reflection, she demanded that I tell her on my word of honor if anything too serious had taken place between her and me. I assured her on my word of honor that her tears could derive only from a love born of gratitude, and she seemed to be satisfied.

Can one put a gentleman on his honor to reveal a secret which honor itself forbids him to reveal? God knows what I suffered at that cruel parting. All partings are heartbreaking, and the last one always seems worse than all those which have gone before; I should have died a hundred times if God had not given me a well-tempered soul, which easily comes to terms with the inevitable and in a few days is calm. They who call this forgetting are wrong. Forgetting comes from weakness; to calm oneself by adopting another course comes from a strength which may be reckoned among the virtues. As for Guglielmina, she was fortunate. Four years later she became the wife of a painter who is still distinguished today. It was Clemente who gave me news of her whenever I grew *curious enough to write to him. He became rich and seven or eight years later returned to Rome, where he entered into partnership with a grain merchant who married Giacomina; but the marriage was not happy. She was widowed at the age of twenty years, and she left Rome with a Count from Palermo who married her after the death of his wife.*

When I left Venice in the year 1783 God ought to have sent me to Rome or Naples or Sicily or Parma, and in all likelihood my old age would have been happy. My Genius, which is always right, took me to Paris to save my brother Francesco, whom I found sunk in debt and on the verge of going to the Temple.[13] *That he owes me his restoration is of no moment to me, but I congratulate myself on having accomplished it. If he were grateful to me, I should consider myself repaid; I prefer that he should bear the burden of his debt, which must weigh heavily on him from time to time. He deserves no greater punishment. Today, in the seventy-third year of my life,*[14] *I need only to live in peace and far from anyone who can suppose that he has rights over my moral freedom, for that supposition cannot but be accompanied by a kind of tyranny.*

After my too lively stay in Frascati I spent six weeks in Rome enjoying the society of the Palazzo Santa Croce, frequenting my Academy, and without any new love affair. Margherita, who always made me laugh, was enough for me.

During this time Father Stratico, who is today Bishop of Lesina and who had introduced me to the beautiful Marchesa Chigi in Siena,[15] *came to Rome to pass the examination for* Maestro. *This is the Doctor's degree of the Dominican monks. I had the pleasure of being present at the examination he had to take to be accepted as a theologian-at-large. The four examining theologians and the General of the Order*[16] *were present. The four monks, who are very strict, give the candidate the thorniest ques-*

tions in all theology; they think that they cannot appear very learned in their General's eyes unless they embarrass the candidate, who, if he happens to be more learned than they, must take great care to conceal the fact, for they refuse him, and their decision is without appeal; and my reader knows, I believe, what the science of theology is. Being very curious about this ludicrous doctorate, at which Stratico himself laughed in secret, I called on him in the morning, expecting to find him with St. Thomas in hand, conferring with a pack of friars;[17] but instead I find him with a hand of cards, absorbed in a game of piquet against another monk who was cursing Fortune.

"I thought," I say, "that I should find you deep in study"

He replies:

"Oportet studuisse ['*One has to* have *studied*']."

I left him, assuring him that I should soon be present at his trial, where I was looking forward to hearing the famous Mamachi[18] argue. Oh, how I suffered! The candidate was not on an ordinay stool, but on a stool-of-penitence like a condemned criminal. He had to sum up the arguments in forma ("*formal arguments*") of his four torturers, whose amusement it was to give their syllogisms endless majors. I saw that they were all in the wrong, for they were all absurd; but I congratulated them on my not being allowed to speak. Without being a theologian, I flattered myself that I should have annihilated all of them with common sense; but I was mistaken: common sense has no part at all in theology, and especially in speculative theology; and Stratico proved it to me theologically the same day in a house to which he took me to sup with him.

His brother, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Padua, arrived in Rome at this time, coming from Naples with the young Cavaliere Morosini,[19] whose tutor he was. He had broken a leg on one of the rides his wild pupil made him take; he had come to Rome to finish *curing it. The company of these two brothers, the Counts Stratico, both men of honor, learned, and without prejudices, was my delight until, upon their departure, I too left Rome, where I had greatly enjoyed myself but had spent too much. I went to Florence after taking leave of all my acquaintances and especially of the Cardinal, who still hoped that Louis XV would recall him to Versailles.*[20]

Such is the fate of all men, who, after having been Ministers at a great Court, find themselves in disfavor and compelled to live elsewhere, whether with no official position or with some commission which puts them in dependence upon the Ministers who have succeeded them. There is no wealth, no sort of philosophy, no image of peace, of tranquillity, or of any other happiness which can console them; they languish, they sigh, and they live only to hope that they will still be recalled. Indeed, by comparison we find in history that monarchs who have abdicated the throne are more numerous than Ministers who have voluntarily renounced their ministry. This observation has more often made me wish to be a minister than to be a king; one must believe that being a minister has inconceivable charms; and I am curious about them, for I cannot clearly picture what they may be.

I left Rome at the beginning of June 1771,[21] *all alone in my carriage, with four post horses, well outfitted, in good health, and fully resolved to adopt a manner of life entirely different from the one I had so far pursued. Tired of the pleasures I had enjoyed for thirty years, yet glad that I had had them, I thought not of renouncing them altogether but of confining myself in future to entering into them lightly, forbidding myself any serious entanglements. In pursuit of this plan I was going to Florence without a single letter, determined to see no one and to devote myself entirely to study. Homer's* Iliad, *which since I had left London had delighted me for an hour or two each day in the original language, had made* *me want to translate it into Italian stanzas;*[22] *it seemed to me that its Italian translators had falsified it, except for Salvini,*[23] *who was so dry that no one could read him. I had scholiasts, I knew the merits of Pope;*[24] *but I felt that in his notes he could have said much more. Florence was the city in which I intended to occupy myself with this, living there in retirement from the world.*

Other circumstances urged me to decide on this course.

I thought I had grown old. Forty-six years seemed to me a great age. There were times when I found the pleasures of love less intense, less seductive than I had imagined them before the act, and for eight years already my potency had been diminishing little by little. I found that a long bout was not followed by the soundest of sleep, and that my appetite at table, which before then love had sharpened, became less when I was in love, just as it did when I had enjoyed. In addition, I found that I no longer interested the fair sex at first sight, I had to talk, rivals were preferred to me, I was made to feel that it was already a favor if I was secretly allowed to share with another man; but I could no longer expect that sacrifices would be made for me. Finally, it angered me when I saw some young blockhead take no offense at the eagerness I showed for the object of his love, and when the object herself, to do me a favor, tried to make it appear that I was of no account. When I heard someone say of me, "He's a man getting on in years," I admitted it, but it was a truth which annoyed me. All this, at the times when, being alone, I reflected seriously on myself, convinced me that I must think of a dignified retirement. I even felt that I was forced into it, for I saw that I was on the verge of having nothing left to live on after my exchequer was exhausted. All my friends whose purses were open to me were dead. Signor Barbaro, who had died that year of consumption, had been able to leave me in his will no more than six wretched zecchini a month for life; and Signor Dandolo,[25] *my only remaining* *friend, could give me only six more, and he was twenty years older than I. When I left Rome I had seven or eight hundred Roman scudi and my jewelry in the way of watches, snuffboxes, pretty rings of little value which did me more harm than good, for they made people think me rich, and ambition drove me to spend in a manner which proved that they were not wrong. My knowledge of this truth determined me to take the wise course of always appearing in Florence simply dressed and with no show of luxury. If I do that, I said to myself, when lack of money forces me to sell my possessions no one will be the wiser.*

With this plan I got to Florence in less than two days, stopping nowhere and going to lodge at an inn of no reputation and sending my carriage to the post house, since the innkeeper, whose name was Gian Battista Allegranti, had no place to put it. It was on the next day that I went to have it put in a coach house.

Well enough lodged in a small room, finding the innkeeper modest and reasonable, and seeing only old and ugly women, I thought I could live there very peacefully and without any risk of making seductive acquaintances. The next morning I dressed in black,[26] *and, wearing my sword, went to the Pitti Palace*[27] *to present myself to the Archduke–Grand Duke. He was Leopold,*[28] *who died the Emperor seven years ago. He gave audience to all who presented themselves, I thought I should go to him directly without troubling to go to Count Rosenberg's*[29] *first. Wanting to be left in peace in Tuscany, I thought that to guard myself against the misfortunes which result from the activities of spies and the natural suspiciousness of the police, I should present myself directly to their master. So I went to the anteroom and I wrote down my name after those of the others who were there waiting to be granted an audience. A Marchese Pazzi*[30] *who was one of them, and who had made my acquaintance in Rome at the house of a Marchesa*[31]*—I forget* *whether she was born a Frescobaldi of Florence or was the widow of a Marchese of that name—approached me with polite expressions of the pleasure it gave him to see me again in his country. He told me that he had traveled as far as Bologna with Signor XXX, who was returning to England with a young Roman wife who would eclipse all the beauties in London. He said that he mentioned him because, during the time he spent in Florence, he had talked about me a great deal, hoping to find me on his return to Rome. I thanked him for giving me this good news, since I was very much interested in the handsome couple's happiness.*

I should have been sorry to find Armellina still in Florence, for, still loving her, I could not have seen her again possessed by another except in the greatest bitterness of soul.

My reader must have noticed that in the passage where I mentioned her marriage to the generous and charming Signor XXX, I did not dwell upon any of the circumstances which accompanied it. The reason is that I have never had the strength to write well about something the memory of which is painful to me. The intrigues of the Marquise d'Aout, the tears of Armellina, who was in love with the Florentine, and my word of honor which I had given her to make her his wife when I demanded her final favors on that humiliating condition both for her and for me, were the powerful motives which forced me to act against the interests of my heart. Repenting of my promise, I found myself reduced to offering Armellina my hand in the Superioress's presence, after I had made her perfectly certain that I was not married. Armellina refused my offer not in words but by tears; and one sentence from the Marquise d'Aout crowned my abasement. She asked me if I was in a position to give the excellent girl ten thousand Roman scudi.

This haughty question brought me back to reason, but with the utmost grief in my soul. I then wrote to the

Superioress and to Armellina herself that I recognized how unjust I had been and I hoped that she would forgive me and lay my errors of judgment to the passion which filled my mind, wishing her all possible happiness with Signor XXX, who I admitted was a far better match for her and far worthier of her than I. The only favor I asked of her was to excuse me from being present at her wedding, and she granted me the favor, despite the insistence of the Marquise d'Aout, who, declaring all amorous feelings to be trifles, claimed that men of intelligence should shake off their influence. The Princess of Santa Croce was of the same opinion, but Cardinal de Bernis took my part, for he was more the philosopher than the Frenchman. The wedding was celebrated at the Marquise's, and Marcuccio was present at it with his wife, for Armellina had no other relatives in Rome.

It was with this grief that I went to Frascati, thinking that it would increase my enthusiasm for my ode on the Man-God; but my guardian Genius had prepared an entirely different kind of consolation for me.

Vice is not synonymous with crime, for one can be vicious without being a criminal. Such I was all my life long, and I even venture to say that I was often virtuous in the act of vice; for it is true that every vice cannot but be opposed to virtue, but it does not infringe on the universal harmony. My vices have never burdened anyone but myself, except the cases in which I have seduced; but seduction was never characteristic of me, for I have never seduced except unconsciously, being seduced myself.

The professional seducer, who deliberately sets out to accomplish it, is an abominable creature, inevitably the enemy of the object on which he has designs. He is a true criminal who, if he has the necessary qualities to seduce, renders himself unworthy of them by abusing them to make a woman wretched.

CHAPTER VI

La Denis. Medini. Zanovich. Zen. My enforced departure and my arrival in Bologna. General Albergati.

IN A few words I asked the young Grand Duke[1] for safe asylum so long as I should remain in his domains, and, anticipating the questions which I foresaw, I told him for what reason I could not return to Venice. I told him that for the necessaries of life I needed no one, and that I intended to spend my time in study. He replied that, if my conduct was good, the laws of his country were enough to assure me that I should enjoy all the peace I needed, but that he was glad that I had presented myself to him. He asked me what acquaintances I had in Florence, and I replied that I had frequented several distinguished houses ten years earlier, but that, wanting to live in strict retirement, I was not thinking of renewing my acquaintance with anyone.

This was the entire conversation I had with the sovereign. It was all that I thought I need do to guard me from any misfortunes. What had happened to me ten years before must have been forgotten, or else have no bearing, for the old government[2] had nothing in common with the new. I went to a bookseller's shop, where I bought the books I needed, and where a man with the air of good breeding, seeing that I was concerned with Greek literature, addressed me and interested me. I told him that I was working on a translation of the *Iliad,* and, confidence breeding confidence, he told me that he was compiling an anthology of Greek epigrams,[3] which he wanted to publish translated into Latin and Italian verse. When I expressed my interest in it, he asked me where I was lodging, and I gave him my address and my name, then asked him for his, intending to make the first call. Having gone to see him the next day, I had the honor of a visit from him on the day after that; we showed each other our work, and, exchanging our views, we became friends, and we remained so until my departure from Florence, without ever having to eat or drink together or even to go walking in each other's company. An intimacy between two men who love letters often excludes all the pleasures which they can enjoy only by stealing the time for them from literature. This worthy Florentine gentleman was named (or is named if he is still alive) Averado de' Medici.[4]

At the end of the month I resolved to leave Gian Battista Allegranti's. I was comfortable there, I enjoyed all the solitude and all the quiet I needed to study Homer, but I could bear it no longer. His niece Maddalena,[5] who, though very young, was well developed, pretty, and cleverness itself, drove me to distraction when I saw her, when she wished me good morning, when she sometimes came into my room to ask me if I needed anything. Her presence, her graceful ways seduced me. It was my fear of her seduction which saved her from mine. A few years later the girl became a celebrated musician.

So I left her uncle's inn, taking two rooms in the house of a townsman who had an ugly wife and no nieces. Maddalena Allegranti became the leading actress of all Europe and has always lived virtuously. She and her husband are now in the service of the Elector of Saxony.

In my new lodging I lived very peacefully for only three weeks. Count Stratico arrived in Florence with the Cavaliere Morosini,[6] his pupil, then eighteen years of age. I could not but go to see him. The leg he had broken had not yet regained its strength, he could not go out with his pupil, who, having all the vices of youth, kept him in continual fear of mishaps. He asked me to try to gain his good will and even, if necessary, to become his companion in his pleasures, so that he should not be left to go alone where he might encounter evil and dangerous company.

This interrupted my studies and played havoc with my determination to live quietly; goodheartedness forced me to take part in the young man's debauches. He was a frenzied libertine who cared nothing for learning, good society, or sensible people; riding until he galloped his horse to death without any fear of dying himself, drinking all kinds of wines, never satisfied until he had drunk away his reason, obtaining a brutish pleasure from loose women, whom he often beat, were his only passions. He had a local valet who was obliged by contract to supply him every day with some girl or woman who was not known as a public prostitute in the city of Florence. During the two months he spent in Tuscany I saved his life twenty times; I suffered under it, but my sense of decency forced me not to abandon him; as for the expense, I had to pretend to look the other way, for he always wanted to pay for everything, which often gave rise to violent quarrels between us, for, since he was paying, he insisted that I must drink as much as he did and keep up with him in the work of the flesh, either with the same girl or with another; but in these two respects I only half satisfied him. Even this did not happen until we began going to see the opera in Lucca,[7] where he often had two dancers go out with us, one of whom was of a caliber to please the most refined taste. The Cavaliere, who, as usual, had drunk too much, could do her only small justice; but I avenged her, and since she thought I was the sleeping young man's father, she told me that I ought to bring him up better.

After his departure, which took place when his tutor was entirely cured, I returned to my studies, but going every evening to sup at the dancer La Denis's,[8] who, after leaving the King of Prussia's service, and even the stage, had retired to Florence, where she is perhaps still living. She was about my age, but despite it she still inspired love. She did not look more than thirty, she had a childish charm which became her, the manners of good society, a gentle disposition, and she dressed very well. In addition she had a most comfortable apartment on the Piazza, above the best-known coffeehouse[9] in Florence, with a balcony where on hot nights one enjoyed a coolness which went to the soul. My reader may remember how I had become her lover in Berlin in 1764.[10] Now, meeting again in Florence, our old fires were rekindled.

The leaseholder of the house in which she lived was the Signora Bregonzi[11] whom I had met in Memel that same year, when I was on my way to Petersburg. La Bregonzi, who claimed that I had loved her twenty-five years before, often came up to see her tenant with the Marchese Capponi,[12] her former lover, a most agreeable and well-read man. Seeing that he enjoyed talking with me, I took the first step toward our becoming better acquainted by paying him a visit, which he returned, leaving a note because he had not found me at home. He introduced me to his family, he invited me to dinner, and it was the first day on which I dressed elegantly and appeared with my jewelry. At his house I made the acquaintance of Corilla's[13] famous lover, the Marchese Ginori,[14] who took me to a house in Florence where I could not escape my destiny. I fell in love with Signora XX,[15] a widow, still young, well read, rather well off, and acquainted with the manners of nations from having traveled and spent six months in Paris. This unhappy love made the last three months I spent in Florence a burden to me.

At this same time Count Medini arrived; it was the beginning of October, and, the Count having no money to pay his coachman, the latter had had him arrested. He had gone to lodge at an Irishman's who was poor though he had been a rogue all his life, and Medini wrote me begging me to come at once and deliver him from the constables who surrounded him in his own room and who wanted to take him to prison. He said that I did not need to pay, but only to stand surety for him, assuring me that I ran no risk, since he was certain that he would himself be able to pay what he owed in a few days.

The reader may remember the reasons I had for disliking the man, nevertheless I did not have the strength of mind not to go to his rescue, even resolved to stand surety for him as soon as he showed me that he would be able to pay within a few days. In any case, the amount, I thought, could not be large. I did not understand why the innkeeper himself did not do him the favor. But I saw and understood everything as soon as I entered his apartment.

He received me by running to me with open arms, begging me to forget all and help him out of his scrape. I saw three trunks, empty because all the clothes they contained were scattered about the room, his mistress, whom I knew and who had reasons not to like me, his sister, who was eleven or twelve years old, and his mother, who was cursing and swearing, calling Medini a scoundrel, and saying that she would go to the magistrate to protest, for it was not right that her dresses and her daughter's should be taken from her because of the debt he had incurred to his coachman. I at once asked the innkeeper why he did not stand surety when, having the persons and all their possessions in his house, he ran no risk. The innkeeper replied that everything I saw there was not enough to pay the coachman, and that he would no longer keep the new arrivals in his house. Surprised that all I saw there was not enough to cover the debt, I ask what it came to, and I see an exorbitant sum signed by Medini himself, who said nothing, leaving me to find out whatever I could. The amount came to two hundred and forty Roman scudi; but it no longer surprised me when he told me that the coachman had been in his employ for six weeks, having taken him from Rome to Leghorn, then to Pisa, then through the whole of Tuscany, paying his expenses everywhere. I told Medini that the coachman could not accept me as surety for such a large sum, but that even if he were fool enough to do so, I would never consent to act in that capacity. Medini then told me to go into another room with him, assuring me that he would persuade me. Two constables wanted to go in too, giving me as their reason that the debtor might escape by way of the windows; after I assured them that I would not let him leave they let us go in alone, and just then the coachman arrived and, coming to kiss my hand, said that if I would stand surety for the Count he would release him and would give me three months to pay. The coachman was the same one who had driven me from Siena with the English girl whom the French actor had seduced.[16]

Medini, a great talker, bold as brass, a liar, fertile in schemes, and never despairing of anything, thought he could persuade me by showing me a number of unsealed letters which introduced him in high-flown terms to the leading noble houses of Florence; I read them, but in none of them did I find an order to give him money; he told me that there was play in all these houses, and that, if he dealt, he was sure to win immense sums.

Another resource which he showed me, and which he kept in a large portfolio, was a quantity of notebooks in which he had three quarters of Voltaire's *Henriade,*[17] very well translated into Italian stanzas.[18] His stanzas and his lines were equal to Tasso's. He expected to finish his fine poem in Florence and to present it to the Grand Duke; he was sure he would not only receive a munificent present but would become his favorite. I laughed to myself, for I knew that the Grand Duke only pretended to love literature. An Abate Fontana,[19] a man of some talent, amused him with natural history; for the rest, the sovereign never read anything and preferred bad prose to the most beautiful poetry. What he loved was women and money.

After spending two very wearisome hours with this unfortunate exemplar of great intelligence but poor judgment, and having thoroughly regretted that I had gone to see him, I told him in the fewest possible words that I could not stand surety for him, and I was making for the door, when he had the audacity to take me by the collar.

Despair reduces men to such extremes. Medini, in a blind fury, took me by the collar without having a pistol in his hand, without remembering that I was probably a better man than he, that I had drawn blood from him for the second time in Naples, and that the constables, the innkeeper, and the servants were in the next room; but I was not so cowardly as to call out, I put my two hands around his neck to strangle him, being six inches taller than he, which meant that since I was holding him away he could not do the same to me. He let go of me at once, whereupon I took him by the collar, asking him if he had gone mad; I opened the door, and the constables, of whom there were four, came in. I told the coachman that I would stand surety for nothing, and, just as I was making to leave for good and all, Medini sprang to the door, saying that I must not abandon him. Since I persisted in forcing my way out, the constables tried to lay hands on him; the ensuing struggle held my attention. Medini, unarmed and in a dressing gown, began bestowing buffets, blows, and kicks on the four cowards, though each of them had a sword. This time it was I who, standing at the door, prevented the Irishman from leaving to summon help. The bloodstained Medini, for his nose was bleeding, with his shirt and his dressing gown torn, did not stop fighting the four henchmen until they let him alone. At that moment I inwardly pitied the poor wretch, and I esteemed him. In the silence which fell I asked the two servants in livery who were there why they had not lifted a finger to defend their master. One of them replied that he owed them six months' wages, and the other was base enough to say that he wanted to put him in prison on his own account. The scene touched me. Medini was trying to stanch his bleeding with cold water.

The coachman said quietly that if I did not vouch for the Count he would consider it a warning from me to have him put in prison.

"Give him two weeks' respite," I said, "and I will undertake in writing that if he absconds during that time I will pay you the entire amount."

After thinking for a moment the coachman said that he was satisfied, but that he would not pay a copper of the legal costs; after learning what the costs were, I decided to pay them, laughing at the constables who demanded damages for the beating he had given them. His servants then said that if I would not give them the same guarantee they would have their master arrested, and Medini told me to let them do as they pleased. After I wrote everything necessary to satisfy the coachman and paid the constables four or five scudi to leave, Medini said that he had something more to say to me, but without even answering I turned my back on him and went to dinner. Two hours later one of his two servants came to my lodging to tell me that if I would promise him six zecchini he would come to warn me as soon as he saw signs that his master intended to escape. I told him curtly that I had no need of his services, for I was sure that the Count would pay all his debts before the time ran out.

The next morning I informed the Count of the proposal his lackey had made to me. He replied in a long letter full of gratitude, appealing to my friendship to enable him to honor his obligations; but I did not answer him. His guardian angel sent someone to Florence to get him out of his difficulty. He was Premislas Zanovich,[20] who later became as famous as his brother,[21] who, after swindling the merchants of Amsterdam, took the title of Prince Scanderbeg. I will speak of him in the proper place. Both of these great swindlers came to bad ends.

Premislas Zanovich was then at the flourishing age of twenty-five years, the son of a gentleman who was a native of Budua,[22] the last city in the former Venetian Dalmatia on the border of Albania, now under the rule of the Turks; it is the ancient Epirus.[23] A young man of brilliant intelligence, after being brought up in Venice, completing his studies there, frequenting the best society, and acquiring a taste for the pleasures which one enjoys in that beautiful capital, he could not make up his mind to return to Budua with his father when the supreme guardians of law and order saw fit to order him to return to his native city, there peacefully to enjoy the great fortune he had made at cards in the capital, where he had spent fifteen years. Premislas could not conceive of himself as a citizen of Budua. He would not have known what to do there. He would have found nothing there but its coarse Slavonic inhabitants—dull or ferocious, having no more than the rudiments of reason, neither happy nor unhappy, as insusceptible to pain as to pleasure, with no knowledge of the arts or of letters, and indifferent to all the events which interest Europe and of which they hear only when some ship arrives from the east or the west with news. So Premislas, and his even more talented brother Stepan,[24] made up their minds to become adventurers, in perfect accord and always maintaining a correspondence, one of them going to the north, the other to the south of Europe, which they had determined to lay under contribution by their cleverness, making dupes wherever they could find victims ready to fall into the snares they would spread for them.

Premislas, whom I knew only from having seen him when he was a boy, and who even then had made himself a reputation from having duped the Cavaliere Morosini in Naples by persuading him to put up a surety of six thousand ducati for him, arrived in Florence in a fine carriage, with his mistress, two tall lackeys, and a valet who served as his courier. He took splendid lodgings, he engaged a fine coach, he took a box at the opera, he hired a cook, he gave his beautiful mistress a lady-in-waiting, and he went to the casino of the nobility, all alone, magnificently dressed and bejeweled. Everyone knew that he was Count Premislas Zanovich. The Florentines have what they call a casino of the nobility; any foreigner is free to go there without being introduced by anyone, but so much the worse for him if he does not have at least the outward appearance of belonging there, for the Florentines to the manner born leave him as solitary as if he were not there; he does not dare to come back a second time. The newspapers are there to be read, all kinds of games of chance are played, one can indulge in gallantry if one wishes to, and breakfasts and light refreshments are to be had if one pays for them. The Florentine ladies go there too.

Zanovich, all affability, did not wait to be spoken to before speaking, he bowed to everyone in turn, congratulating himself on having come to see them, talked of Naples, from which he had arrived, made comparisons flattering to those present, cleverly gave the conversation such a turn as to bring out his name, played for high stakes, lost good-humoredly, paid after pretending that it had slipped his mind, and pleased everyone. I learned all this the next morning at La Denis's from the intelligent Marchese Capponi. He told me that he had been asked if he knew me, and he had replied that when I left

Venice he was in school, but that he had often heard his father speak of me with great esteem; the Cavaliere Morosini was his intimate friend, and Count Medini, who had been in Florence for a week and who was mentioned to him, was also an acquaintance of his, and he spoke well of him. Asked by the Marchese if I knew him, I replied in the affirmative, not considering myself obliged to tell what I knew which could be harmful to him. La Denis having expressed a wish to make his acquaintance, the Cavaliere Puzzi[25] promised to present him to her.

This was done three or four days later. I saw a young man whose command of the situation made him certain to succeed in his undertakings. Though not handsome, and arresting attention neither by his face nor his figure, he had polished and easy manners, a talent for conversation, the ability to amuse, a gaiety which was infectious, he never talked about himself, and, asked about his native country, he gave a comic account of it, describing his estate, half of which was within Turkish territory, as a place which would make anyone who tried to live there die of melancholy. As soon as he learned who I was he complimented me in the highest terms, but without ever lapsing into flattery. In short, I saw in the young man a budding adventurer who, with discipline, could hope to achieve greatness; but I thought his luxury would prevent him from practicing it. I thought I saw in him my own portrait when I was fifteen years younger, and I pitied him, for I doubted if he had my resources.

Zanovich came to see me. He told me offhandedly that he had felt sorry for Medini and had paid all his debts. I praised him for doing so, and I thanked him. This piece of generosity led me to suppose that the two adventurers had laid some plots together. I congratulated them, but did not want to have any part in it. The next day I returned his call. I found him at table with his mistress, whom I had known in Naples, and whom I should have pretended not to know if she had not been the first to call me Don Giacomo, saying that she was delighted to see me again. I called her Donna Ippolita rather uncertainly, and she replied that I was not mistaken and that, though she had grown three inches taller, it was she. I had supped with her at the Crocelle[26] with Lord Baltimore. She was extremely pretty. Zanovich invited me to dinner on the next day but one, and I declined; but Donna Ippolita persuaded me to accept, saying that I should find company and that his cook had undertaken to do himself honor.

Somewhat curious to see who would make up the company at this dinner, and wanting to show Zanovich that I was not in a situation to become a drain on his purse, I dressed in my best for the second time in Florence. I found Medini with his mistress, two foreign ladies with their gentlemen, and a very well-dressed and rather handsome Venetian about thirty-five or forty years of age, whom I should never have recognized if Zanovich had not named him to me as Alvise Zen.[27] Since Zen was a patrician family, I thought it my duty to ask him by what titles I should address him, and he replied by those which one gives to an old friend, though I could not remember him for he was then only ten years of age. He said that he was the son of the Captain Zen whom I had known when I was imprisoned in the Fortress of Sant' Andrea.[28]

"That was twenty-eight years ago," I replied, "and I recognize you, Signore, even though you had not had the smallpox then."

I saw that he was annoyed to have to admit it, but it was entirely his own fault, for he had not needed to tell me that he had known me there and that the Adjutant was his father. He was the son of the natural son of a Venetian nobleman. As a boy he had been the greatest scamp in the Fortress, a rascal of the first water. He had just come from Madrid, where he had won a great deal of money, keeping the bank at faro in the house of the Venetian Ambassador, Marco Zen.[29] I was delighted to make his acquaintance. During dinner I perceived that he had neither culture nor the slightest education, he had neither the manners nor the speech of a gentleman, but he would not have given his talent for correcting the vagaries of fortune in exchange for all that. Medini and Zanovich were an entirely different sort. The two foreigners were the victims on whom they had designs; but I was not curious about the performance. When I saw the table made ready for play, and a pile of gold which Zanovich poured from a large purse, I took my leave.

This was the manner of my life during all of the seven months I stayed in Florence. After that dinner, I did not see Zanovich or Medini or Zen again, except by chance in public places. But here is what happened to me about the middle of December.

Lord Lincoln,[30] at the flourishing age of eighteen years, fell in love with a Venetian dancer named La Lamberti.[31] She was the daughter of the innkeeper in the Via del Carro[32] and admired by everyone. At the opera the young Englishman was seen to visit her every day in her dressing room, and all the connoisseurs observed with surprise that he did not go to her lodging, where he was sure to be well received not only as an Englishman but because of his youth and his wealth, for he was, I believe, the only son of the Duke of Newcastle.[33] The observation was not lost on Zanovich. Within a few days he became an intimate friend of La Lamberti's, then he struck up an acquaintance with Lord Lincoln, and took him to call on the beauty as a man of the world takes his friend to see his mistress.

In collusion with the rogue, La Lamberti was not chary of her favors to the young Englishman. She had him to supper every day with Zanovich and Zen, whom Zanovich had brought to her, apparently needing him either to make the bank at faro in visible gold, or to cheat, perhaps not being skillful enough to do it himself. In the beginning they let the young lord win a few hundred zecchini after supper, at which he got drunk, to wake the next morning in ecstasies to find himself as much in favor with Fortune as with Love and with the pleasant gentlemen who were his opponents at La Lamberti's, where he got drunk and nevertheless always won. But he stopped being in ecstasies when they finally cleaned him out. Zen won twelve thousand pounds sterling from him, and it was Zanovich who lent them to the young lord three or four hundred at a time, because he had promised his tutor that he would not play on his word. Zanovich, in luck, won from Zen all that His Lordship lost, and so it went on until they had done their worst to the Englishman and Zanovich reckoned up the amount that he had lent him. The Englishman arranged matters then and there. He promised to pay him three thousand guineas the next day, and he signed three bills of exchange for three thousand each, payable at intervals of two months and drawn on a banker in London. I learned the whole story of the transaction from His Lordship himself three months later in Bologna.

But at Florence his loss became the talk of the town the next day. The banker Sasso Sassi had paid Zanovich six thousand zecchini by His Lordship's order. Medini came to see me, furious that Zanovich had not cut him in, whereas I was congratulating myself on having had no part in the thing. But I was not a little surprised when three days later I saw in my room a man who, after asking my name and having heard me speak it, ordered me on behalf of the Grand Duke to leave Florence within three days and Tuscany within a week. I at once sent for the innkeeper to be a witness to the unjust order I was given.

It was December 28th; on exactly the same day three years before I had been ordered to leave Barcelona[34] within three days. I dress quickly and, since it was raining in torrents, I send for a carriage. I go to see the

Auditor,[35] to obtain some light on my banishment, which seemed to me incomprehensible. The Auditor, being the Chief of Police, must know everything. I go there, I find the same man who had banished me from Florence eleven years before because of the Russian Ivanov's forged bill of exchange.[36] I ask him for what reason he had sent me an order to leave, and he replies coldly that such is the will of His Royal Highness.

"But," I replied, "His Royal Highness cannot so will without a reason, and I think I have a right to ask what it is."

"Then go and ask him, for I do not know it. The sovereign left yesterday for Pisa, and he will remain there three days; you are free to go there."

"And if I go, will he pay for my journey?"

"That I do not know, but you will see if he seems inclined to do you the favor."

"I will not go to Pisa, I will simply write to him, if you will promise to send my letter on to him."

"I will send it to him at once, for that is my duty."

"That is enough, you shall have it before noon, and before daybreak tomorrow I will be in the Pope's dominions."

"There is no need for you to make such haste."

"There is the greatest need, for I could not sleep in a country of despotism and violence where the law of nations is disregarded and where the sovereign breaks his word to me. I shall write him all this."

I leave, and at the foot of the stairs I come upon Medini, who tells me that he is going to ask the Auditor why he had sent him an order to leave. I reply with a laugh that I have just asked him the same question, and that he had told me to ask the reason of the Grand Duke, who was in Pisa.

"Then you have been ordered to leave too? What have you done?"

"Nothing."

"No more have I. We must go to Pisa."

"You may go there if it amuses you. For my part, I shall leave before nightfall."

I go home, and I at once send the innkeeper to the post house to inspect my carriage with a cartwright and to order four post horses to be ready for me at nightfall. After giving a few other little orders, I amused myself writing the Grand Duke this little letter, which I now translate word for word.

"Jupiter, Monseigneur, did not entrust you with the thunderbolt except on condition that you hurl it only at the guilty, and you are disobeying him by hurling it at my head. Seven months ago you promised me that I should enjoy perfect peace in your domains, provided that I did nothing to disturb the social order and would obey the laws; I have scrupulously kept that just condition; and consequently Your Royal Higness has broken your promise to me. I write to you, Monseigneur, only to let you know that I forgive you. In consequence of that forgiveness, I will complain to no one and will not accuse you of injustice either in writing or by word of mouth in any house in Bologna, where I shall be day after tomorrow. Indeed I should wish that I could forget a stain on my honor which is visited on me by your arbitrary will, were it not that I must remember it in order never again in my life to set foot on the soil of which God has made you the master. The Auditor has told me that I could go to speak to Your Royal Highness in Pisa; but I feared that my doing so would seem a piece of temerity to a prince who, according to common justice, must talk to men not after he condemns them but before. I am, etc. . . ."

After sealing my letter, I sent it to the Auditor, then I began packing.

Just as I was about to sit down at table, in comes Medini to inveigh against Zanovich and Zen. He complains that, whereas the misfortune which had befallen him was entirely because of the twelve thousand guineas they had won from the Englishman, they now refused him the mere hundred zecchini without which he could not leave. He told me that they had also received orders to leave, and that they were all going to Pisa, and he said he was surprised that I was not going there too. Laughing at his surprise, I asked him to leave, since I had to pack. As I expected, he thereupon asked me to lend him money; but I refused him so curtly that he left without pressing the matter.

After dinner I went to return some pieces from his anthology to Signor de' Medici and to embrace La Denis, who already knew everything and who could not conceive how the Grand Duke could confuse the innocent with the guilty as he was doing. She told me that La Lamberti the dancer had also been ordered to leave, together with a little hunchbacked Venetian Abate who knew La Lamberti but who had never gone to supper there. In short, the Grand Duke had made a clean sweep of all the Venetians who were then in Florence.

On my way home I met Lord Lincoln's tutor, whom I had known in Lausanne eleven years earlier.[37] I disdainfully told him what had happened to me because of his pupil's having let himself be cleaned out. The worthy Englishman told me that the Grand Duke had told the young Lord not to pay the amount he had lost, and that he had sent the Grand Duke word that not to pay would be dishonorable, and the more so since the money he owed was borrowed money, for he had never played on his word. It was true. It was also true that the lender and the gamester were in collusion, but His Lordship could not be sure of that.

My leaving Florence cured me of a very unhappy love which would have had disastrous consequences if I had stayed there longer. I have spared my reader the sad story of it, because it makes me sad every time I recall it. The widow whom I loved, and to whom I had been weak enough to declare myself, kept me tied to her triumphal chariot only to seize every opportunity to humiliate me; she despised me, and she wanted to convince me of it. I had persisted in continuing to see her, always thinking that I should succeed; but I saw, when forgetfulness had cured me, that I should have been wasting my time.

I left Florence poorer by about a hundred zecchini; I had run into no expense there, in short I had lived there like a wise man. I stopped at the first post house[38] in the Pope's dominions, and on the next to the last day of the year I arrived in Bologna, going to lodge at the "San Marco" inn.[39] I at once went to call on Count Marulli,[40] who was the Florentine Chargé d'Affaires, to beg him to write His Royal Highness that wherever I might be during the rest of my life I would praise his virtues.

He supposed I was not speaking as I thought, for he had received a letter informing him of the whole matter, but I told him that if he knew everything he would see that my obligations to His Royal Highness were vital. He assured me that he would write the Prince how I spoke of him.

On the first day of the year 1772 I went to present myself to Cardinal Branciforte;[41] he was the Legate. I had known him in Paris twenty years earlier when he was sent by Benedict XIV to convey the consecrated swaddling clothes to the newly born Duke of Burgundy. We had been together at Masonic lodges, and had enjoyed choice suppers with Don Francesco Sersale[42] and Count Ranucci[43] in company with pretty girls. The Cardinal was a wit and what is called a *bon vivant.*

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed as soon as he saw me; "I was expecting you."

"How could you have been expecting me, Monsignore, when nothing obliged me to choose Bologna in preference to some other city?"

"Bologna is better than any of them, and then too I was sure that you would think of me; but there is no need to tell people here the life we led when we were young. Count Marulli told me last evening that you pronounced the most flowery eulogy on the Grand Duke, and you are very right to do so. But speak to me in confidence, for nothing will go beyond this room. How many of you shared in the twelve thousand guineas?"

I thereupon told him the whole true story, ending by showing him the copy of the letter I had written the Grand Duke. He replied with a laugh that he was sorry I was innocent. When he learned that I was thinking of staying in Bologna for some months, he said that I could be sure of enjoying the greatest freedom there, and that as soon as the first gossip had died down he would give me proofs of his friendship.

After taking this precaution, I prepared to lead the same kind of life in Bologna as I had led in Florence. There is not a city in Italy in which one can live with greater freedom than in Bologna, where living is not expensive and where one can procure all the pleasures of life at little cost. In addition, the city is beautiful, and nearly all the streets are lined with arcades.[44] As for society, I did not trouble myself about it. I knew the Bolognese: the men of the nobility, ill-natured, proud, and violent; the rabble, the *birichini*[45] as they are called, even worse than the Neapolitan *lazzaroni*;[46] but the citizenry in general are decent people. All that, however, was of no concern to me. My plan was to devote myself to study, and to spend my time with few men of letters, whose acquaintance it is nowhere difficult to make. In Florence people are generally ignorant even of the Italian language, which is spoken well, but to be ignorant of its principles is as much as not to know it at all; and in Bologna everyone has some appreciation of letters. It is a university[47] at which there are three times as many professors as in all the others; but all with very small salaries; some have only fifty scudi a year; but they have many pupils and they live well. Printing is cheap there too, and though the Inquisition[48] exists, it is easy to deceive it.

On the fourth and fifth days of the year all the exiles from Florence arrived. La Lamberti stayed only one day and went on to Venice. Zanovich and Zen stayed five or six days, but apart, because they had quarreled over the division of the stolen money. Zanovich refused to make one of His Lordship's bills payable to Zen because he did not want to run the risk of becoming liable himself if the Englishman did not pay; he wanted to go to England, and he told Zen that he was free to go there too. They left for Milan without having made up their quarrel, the Milanese Government ordered them to leave, and I have never learned how they settled the matter between them; but I did learn that His Lordship's bills were punctually paid.

Medini had come to lodge at the inn in which I was staying, with his mistress, his little sister, his mother, and a servant, but still without money. He told me that the Grand Duke would give no one a hearing, that he had received another order to leave, so he had returned to Florence, where he had had to sell everything. He implored me to help him, but in vain. I never saw the man except in desperate straits for money, yet for all that never bringing himself to spend in moderation, and getting out of his scrapes *per fas et nefas* ("by fair means or foul"). The luck he had in Bologna was to find a Slavonian Franciscan friar named De Dominis[49] who was on his way to Rome to obtain a brief of laicization from the Pope. The friar fell in love with Medini's mistress, who made him pay very dearly, as was only right, for her favors. At the end of three weeks Medini left and went to Germany, where he printed his *Henriade,*[50] having found a good Maecenas in the Elector Palatine.[51] After that he wandered all over Europe for a dozen years, until at last he went to die in the prisons of London in the year 1788. I had always told him that he should avoid England, for he could be sure that if he went there he would die in prison. If he went there to prove the prophet false, he did ill, for the alternative was the cruel one of proving the prophecy true. He was a man who had birth, education, and intelligence, but who, being poor and loving luxury, could maintain himself only by gaming, correcting the vagaries of Fortune or incurring debts which, since he could not pay them, always obliged him to decamp. Yet he lived in this fashion for seventy years, and he might still be alive if he had heeded my advice. Eight years ago Count Tosio[52] told me that Medini, in prison in London, said to him that he would never have gone to England if I had not made him that cruel prophecy. That may be so; however, I shall never abstain from giving good advice to any poor wretch whom I see on the verge of ruin. On the same principle I told Cagliostro, twenty years ago in Venice, when the ignorant scoundrel was calling himself Count Pellegrini, that he should beware of setting foot in Rome. If he had believed me he would not have died in the Fortress of San Leo. The same sort of thing happened to me thirty years ago, when a wise man told me to beware of Spain; I went there nevertheless. And I came very near to perishing there.

A week or so after I arrived in Bologna I was in the shop of the bookseller Taruffi,[53] where I made the acquaintance of a young Abate with a squint whom in a quarter of an hour I found to be possessed of intelligence, learning, and taste. He made me a present of two pamphlets, the recent fruit of the genius of two young professors at the University. He said that reading them would make me laugh, and he was right. One of the pamphlets, which had been published the previous November, undertook to prove that women must be forgiven all the wrongs they did because they were the work of the womb, which made them act despite themselves. The second pamphlet was a critique of the first. The author claimed that the uterus was indeed an animal, but that it had no power over woman's reason, since anatomy had never found the slightest channel of communication between that organ, the matrix of the fetus, and the brain. I took it into my head to print a diatribe against the two pamphlets. I wrote it in three days; I sent it to Signor Dandolo in Venice to have five hundred copies of it printed for me immediately, which I received in Bologna and which I at once gave to a bookseller to sell on my account. The whole thing was done in two weeks; and at the expense of the two witty young doctors I made some thirty zecchini. The first of the two pamphlets was called *L'Utero pensante*[54] ("The Thinking Uterus"); the second, which criticized it, was in French and its title was *La Force vitale*[55] ("The Vital Force)." Mine was called *Lana Caprina*[56] ("Goat's Wool"). I made fun of the authors of the dissertations, and I treated the subject lightly, but by no means superficially. I had given it a preface in French, but using only idioms of the Parisian rabble, which made me unintelligible. The joke gained me many close acquaintances among the young men of the city. The squinting Abate, whose name was Zacchiroli,[57] introduced me to his friend the Abate Severini,[58] who in ten or twelve days became my friend too. He got me out of the inn, making me rent two fine rooms in the apartment of a retired *virtuosa* who was the widow of the tenor Carlani,[59] and had me make an arrangement at so much a month with a pastry cook for dinner and supper, which he sent me at my lodging. For lodging, food, and a servant I had to take, I did not spend as much as ten zecchini a month. The Abate Severini was the cause —and the very agreeable one—of my losing all interest in study and leaving the *Iliad,* to return to it when the fancy took me again.

The first thing he did was to introduce me to his family, and in a few days I became the most intimate of the friends of his household and the favorite of his sister, who, aged thirty years and rather ugly, but intelligent enough, declared herself proud of her spinsterhood and railed at marriage. During Lent the Abate introduced me to the cream of the singers and dancers in Bologna, which is the nursery of the breed, and all these heroines of the stage are very amenable and to be had very cheaply when they are in their native city. Severini introduced me to a new one every week; and, like a true friend, he kept watch over my finances. Being very poor, he never spent anything for the parties which he arranged for me and at which he was always present; but without him everything would have cost me twice as much.

A Bolognese nobleman, the Marchese Albergati Capacelli[60] by name, was getting himself talked about at the time; he had opened his theater to the public, and himself displayed great talent as an actor; he had made himself famous by obtaining the annulment of his marriage to a very noble lady whom he could not bear, in order to marry a dancer by whom he already had two sons. Despite that, he had had his marriage to his first wife annulled on the ground of impotence, and he had brazenly proved it by means of the tribunal whose use is still the barbarous and absurd custom in the greater part of Italy. Four expert, equitable, and uncorrupted judges subjected the naked Marchese to every experiment calculated to show if he was capable of erection, and the worthy Marchese, resisting their utmost diligence, remained perfectly flaccid. The marriage was pronounced null and void on the ground of "conditional" impotence, for he had had bastards.

But why the tribunal if his potency or impotence was to be pronounced "conditional"? He had only to swear that he could not be a man with the Marchesa, and the Marchesa had only to confirm it, and the tribunal would have been seen to be supererogatory, for, even if the stimuli had had power to resuscitate the Marchese, he could have said that he defied the Marchesa to apply them to him and obtain the same result.

So, the thing having made me curious to know the eccentric Marchese, I wrote Signor Dandolo to get me a letter to present to him as soon as I learned that he was back in Bologna, for at the time he was in Venice. A week or ten days later Signor Dandolo sends me a letter addressed to the Bolognese Marchese and written by a Venetian nobleman named Zaguri,[61] and he assures me that this patrician Zaguri was his intimate friend. Reading the letter, which was closed but not sealed, I am enchanted by its style; it was impossible to recommend a person unknown to the recommender more courteously or more ingeniously. I could not help writing Signor Zaguri a letter of thanks in which I told him that from that day I began to hope to be pardoned and to return to Venice for no other reason than to make the acquaintance of the noble patrician who had written such a fine letter in my honor. Signor Zaguri wrote me in reply that he considered my wish so flattering that he would at once set about procuring my return to Venice. After two and a half years of effort, and the help of others, he succeeded; but I shall speak of it when I come to that time.

Signor Albergati arrives in Bologna with his wife and his children; Severini informs me of it, the next day I go to his palace to send my letter in to him, and the porter tells me that His Excellency (for in Bologna they all assume the "Excellency") had gone to his country house,[62] where he would spend the whole of the spring. Two or three days later I have post horses harnessed to my carriage and I go to the gentleman's country house. It was a charming building on a hill. Finding no one at the door, I go upstairs and I enter a drawing room in which I see a gentleman and a pretty lady, about to sit down to dinner at a table to which the dishes had already been brought and which was laid for only two. After politely asking the gentleman if he was the person to whom the letter I had in my hand was addressed, and having heard him reply that he was, I give it to him. He reads the address, then he puts the letter in his pocket, saying that he will read it and thanking me for having taken the trouble to bring it to him. I instantly reply that it had been no trouble at all, but an honor, and that I begged him to do me that of reading the letter with which Signor Zaguri had honored me and for which I had asked because I wished to make myself known to him. At that the Marchese, with an air of smiling affability, told me that he never read letters when he was about to sit down at table, that he would read it after dinner, and that he would obey the orders which his friend Zaguri gave him.

This whole brief exchange having taken place standing, and everything having been said, I turn without bowing to him, I leave the room, I go downstairs, and I arrive still in time to keep the postilion from finishing unharnessing the horses. Promising him a double *mancia* (''tip''), I gaily tell him to take me to some village where, while waiting for his horses to eat their oats, I could eat something too. So saying, I get into my carriage, which was a very pretty and comfortable coupé. Just as the postilion was about to mount, a valet appears at the door and tells me that His Excellency asks me to come up. Silently pronouncing the stupid Marchese a very poor actor, I reach into my pocket, and I give him a card on which was my name and the place where I was lodging. I hand it to the valet, saying that it was what his master wanted. The valet goes upstairs with my card, and I tell the postilion to whip up.

In half an hour we stopped at a place where we refreshed ourselves, and then we went on to Bologna. The same day I informed Signor Zaguri of the incident, giving him all the details in a running narrative, and sending my letter to Signor Dandolo unsealed to convey to him. I ended my letter by asking the Venetian nobleman to write the Bolognese that, considering myself insulted, he must prepare to undergo all that my resentment would prompt me to do in accordance with the laws of honor.

I laughed a little the next day when, on my returning to my lodging to dine, my landlady handed me a card on which I read: "General the Marchese Albergati." She said that he had left it in person after learning that I was not at home.

I was very far from being satisfied; it was nothing but bravado. I awaited the result of the letter I had written Signor Zaguri in order to decide what sort of satisfaction I could demand. Just as I was studying the card which the ill-bred man had left for me, unable to conceive for what reason he assumed the title of General, in comes Severini, who tells me that three years earlier the King of Poland had accorded the Marchese the ribbon of the Order of St. Stanislas and the title of his Chamberlain;[63] Severini could not tell me if he was also a General in that monarch's service, but I instantly understood everything. According to the custom of the Polish Court, a Chamberlain had the title of Adjutant-General. So the Marchese called himself General. He was right, he was so, but General what? The adjective without the noun was used only to deceive readers, for the adjective by itself must seem the noun to all who did not know better. Delighted that I could avenge myself on my man by exposing his absurdity, I wrote a comic dialogue[64] and had it printed the next day. I made a present of it to the bookseller, and in three or four days he sold all the copies of it at a baiocco[65] apiece.

CHAPTER VII

The Dowager Electress of Saxony and Farinelli. La Sclopitz. Nina. The midwife. La Soavi. The Abate Bollini. La Viscioletta. The seamstress. Sad pleasure of a revenge. Severini goes to Naples. My departure. The Marchese Mosca at Pesaro.

ANY WRITER who attacks a proud man by comico-satirical compositions is almost sure to triumph, for the laughers are at once on his side. In my dialogue I asked if a Field Marshal could call himself simply a Marshal, and a Lieutenant-Colonel a Colonel. I asked if a man who preferred to the titles of nobility which birth confers titles of honor bought for cash could be considered wise. The Marchese thought it best to ignore my dialogue, and the thing was over; but from then on the whole city never called him anything but the General. I saw over the door of his palace the arms of the Republic of Poland,[1] which greatly amused Count Mischinski,[2] Ambassador from the King of Poland to the Court of Berlin, who arrived in Bologna at this time, coming from the baths at Pisa. I persuaded him to leave a visiting card showing his title at his door, and Albergati returned the courtesy, but for once I saw no title of General on his card.

The Dowager Electress of Saxony[3] came to Bologna soon afterward, and I paid my court to her. She had come only to see the famous castrato Farinelli,[4] who, after leaving the Court of Madrid a rich man, was living quietly in that city. He gave her a magnificent collation, and an air of his composition which he sang to his own accompaniment on the harpsichord. The princess, who was an enthusiastic musician, embraced Farinelli and told him that now at last she could die content. Farinelli, who was known as the Cavaliere Don Carlo Broschi, had so to speak reigned in Spain. The Parmesan Queen,[5] the wife of Philip V, had fomented intrigues which forced Broschi to leave the Court after the disgrace of the Marquis of La Ensenada.[6] The Electress, looking at the standing portrait of the Queen painted by Amigoni,[7] praised her and spoke to the castrato about something which must have taken place during the reign of Ferdinand VI.[8] In answer the musical hero, shedding tears which he quickly wiped away, said that Queen Barbara[9] was as good as Elizabeth of Parma was bad. When I saw him in Bologna, Broschi might have been seventy years of age. He was extremely rich, and in very good health; despite that, he was unhappy because, having nothing to do, he was bored, and he wept every time he remembered Spain. Ambition is far more powerful than avarice. In addition Farinelli was unhappy for another reason, which was, I have been told, the cause of his death. He had a nephew[10] who was to inherit all his wealth. He had him marry a young lady of a noble Tuscan family,[11] thinking thus to attain the happiness of seeing himself the head of a family which, because of its wealth, would easily be ennobled by the second generation at the latest, and it might well have happened; but this was precisely the cause of his unhappiness. Poor old Farinelli fell in love with his nephew's wife, and, what is worse, became jealous, and, what is still worse, hateful to his niece, who could not imagine how an old animal of his species could flatter himself that she would prefer him to her husband, who was a man like other men and to whom she owed her affection by all human and divine laws. Farinelli, angry with the young woman, who refused him concessions which, after all, amounted to nothing, for they could not have any serious consequences, had sent his nephew traveling, and he kept his niece in his house as if in prison, having taken away the diamonds he had given her, and never going out so that he should never lose sight of her. A eunuch in love with a woman who detests him becomes a tiger.

Lord Lincoln[12] having come to Bologna with a letter of recommendation to the Cardinal-Legate, he gave a dinner for him and invited me to it. He had the pleasure of convincing himself that I had never been with his Lordship, and hence that the Grand Duke had committed a crying injustice in banishing me. It was on that day that I learned from his own lips how the snare had been set for him, but he never told me that he had been cheated. He assured me that it was he himself who had wanted to stop playing. It is easy to cheat an Englishman; but it is very difficult to make him admit that he has been cheated. The young Lord died of debauchery in London three or four years later. At this same time I also saw in Bologna the Englishman Aston, with the beautiful Sclopis, sister of the charming Callimena.[13] La Sclopis was by far the more beautiful. She had two small children with her, fathered by Aston and pretty as angels. Charmed by all that I said to her about her sister, she understood that I had loved her, and she told me she was sure she would go to sing in Florence during the Carnival of the year 1773. I found her in Venice in 1776, and I will speak of her when I come to that time.[14]

La Nina, the fatal Nina Bergonzi,[15] who had made Count Ricla lose his reason and who had been the cause of all the misfortunes which had befallen me in Barcelona, had been in Bologna since the beginning of Lent. She had rented a house, she had an open letter for a banker who was ordered to supply her with all the money for which she should ask; she had carriages, horses, and many servants; and, having declared that she was with child by the Captain-General of the Kingdom of Barcelona, she demanded that the good Bolognese pay her the honors due to a queen who, for her convenience, had come to be brought to bed in their city. She had a particular recommendation to the Cardinal-Legate, who often went in the greatest incognito to visit her, and the time of her lying-in drawing near, a confidential secretary of Count Ricla named Don Martino[16] had arrived from Barcelona with a power of attorney from the Spanish madman who was the vixen's dupe authorizing him to have the infant baptized and recognized as a natural child of the Count's. Nina made a spectacle of her pregnancy. She showed herself at the theater and in the public promenades with an enormously big belly, insisting on being supported on either side by the intrepid Bolognese noblemen who paid her court and to whom she often said that she would always receive them but that they must be on their guard, for she did not answer for the tolerance of her lover, who might have them murdered; and she shamelessly told them what had happened to me in Barcelona, not knowing that I was in Bologna. She expressed great surprise when Count Zini,[17] who knew me, told her that I was there, and it was Count Zini who, having found me at the evening promenade on La Montagnola,[18] saw fit to approach me and learn from my own lips the whole of the unhapppy story.

In my turn I saw fit to tell him that it was a fairy tale, which Nina, whom I did not know, had invented for him, wanting to see if he had the courage to expose his life to a great risk in order to give her a great proof of his love. I did not deny.the fact to the Cardinal-Legate when he told me the same story; I astonished him when I recounted all of the shameless vixen's extravagances to him, and when I told him that she was her sister's daughter; but I could not keep him from laughing when I told him that I did not believe she was with child.

"What possible reason," he said, "can you have for not believing she is with child? Nothing could be easier or more natural. She may not be with child by the Count, but she is with child, and even on the verge of being brought to bed. It cannot be untrue, for if she is with child she needs must lie in. Besides, I do not see what reason she can have had to pretend she is with child."

"Your Eminence does not know the woman's infamous character; she wants to make herself famous by dishonoring Count Ricla, who was a paragon of virtue until he met the monster."

Eight hours later, an hour after midnight, I hear a great noise in the street, I look out of my window, and I see a woman, naked to the waist, mounted astride an ass, followed by the executioner, who was whipping her, surrounded by constables, and followed by all the *birichini* of Bologna, who were enjoying the show and hooting incessantly. Just then Severini comes upstairs and tells me that the woman who was being treated in this fashion is the most celebrated midwife in Bologna, that her punishment was by order of the Cardinal-Archbishop,[19] that the reason for it was not yet known, but that it would be known very soon. It could only be for some great crime. He said that she was the midwife who two days earlier had delivered La Nina, who had given birth to a fine dead boy. Here is the story, exactly as it was known to the whole city the next day.

A poor woman went to complain to the Archbishop that the midwife Teresa, known as Teresaccia, had four or five days earlier led her astray by promising her twenty zecchini. She had persuaded her to sell her a fine boy whom she had borne two weeks earlier. The woman, who had not received the twenty zecchini, and who was in despair over having caused the death of her baby, demanded justice from the Archbishop, undertaking to prove that her son was the dead child whom Nina was said to have borne. The Archbishop ordered his chancellor to proceed at once and in the greatest secrecy to make all the investigations necessary to substantiate the allegation, and as soon as he was sure of the scandalous crime he had the midwife summarily sentenced and punished, in accordance with the Valerian law,[20] *Punire et deinde scribere* ("First punish, then write"). A week later Don Martino left for Barcelona, but the shameless Nina stuck to her guns, even ordering her servants' red cockades[21] made twice as big, and having the gall to tell those who called on her that Spain would avenge her for the calumny by which the Cardinal-Archbishop had dishonored her; and, to play her bad role well, she remained in Bologna for six weeks after her pretended lying-in; but the Cardinal-Legate, who felt ashamed to have protected her, secretly took every step to force her to leave. However, Count Ricla settled a considerable annual income on her, on condition that she never again dare appear in his presence in Barcelona. Some months later he was summoned to the Court, to assume the post of Minister of War, and a year later he died.[22] Nina died two years after him, in poverty and of the pox. Her sister herself told me in Venice the whole wretched story of her last two years, which would sadden my reader and which I spare him.

The infamous midwife did not lack protectors. A pamphlet came out, printed no one knew where, in which the unknown author proved that the Cardinal-Archbishop should be disciplined for having sentenced a citizen to the most harrowing of punishments, in contravention of all established legal procedures. His conclusion was that the midwife was unjustly punished even though she was guilty, and so in her turn she could appeal to Rome, demanding the fullest compensation from the Archbishop.

The Archbishop circulated a reply through Bologna, in which he said that the midwife, whom he had punished only by whipping, would have paid the extreme penalty three times if the honor of three illustrious Bolognese families had not prevented him from publishing her crimes, all attested by official documents preserved in his chancellery. They concerned forced abortions, from which the guilty mothers had died, living children substituted for infants stillborn, and a boy substituted for a girl, the said boy being now unjustly in possession of the family's entire estate. This reply silenced all the infamous creature's protectors, for several young noblemen whose mothers had been attended in childbed by the guilty midwife feared the disclosure of secrets which would have proved them bastards.

During this time I saw the dancer La Marcucci,[23] who had been banished from Spain a little time before I left for the same reason which had brought about the banishment of La Pelliccia.[24] The latter had gone to settle in Rome, La Marcucci went to live in opulence in her native Lucca.

The Bolognese dancer Soavi,[25] whom I had known in Parma when I was living there happily with Henriette, then in Paris, where she was dancing at the Opéra and being kept by a Russian nobleman, then in Venice as the mistress Signor Marcello,[26] came to settle in Bologna at this time with her eleven-year-old daughter, a love-child, whom she had had by Monsieur de Marigni,[27] Musketeer. The girl, whom she had named Adelaide,[28] was a perfect beauty, and to beauty she added all the graces, the sweetness, and the talents which the choicest education can confer. La Soavi came to Bologna, where, finding her husband [29] whom she had not seen for fifteen years, she introduced this perfect treasure to him.

"She is your daughter," she said.

"She is pretty, my dear wife, but she cannot be mine."

"She is yours, you silly, as soon as I give her to you. Let me tell you that she has an income of two thousand scudi, and that I shall be her only cashier until the time comes when I marry her to a dancer, for I want her to learn the whole art of the dance and to shine on the stage. On holidays you shall take her to the promenade."

"And if I am asked who she is?"

"You will say she is your daughter, and that you are sure of it because the person who gave her to you is your own wife."

"I don't understand that."

"Because, my dear friend, having never traveled, you know nothing."

Having been present at this dialogue, which made me laugh heartily, I now amuse myself by writing it. Enchanted to see so rare a jewel, I at once offered my services to increase her talents; but her mother replied that she was afraid I would give her too many. Adelaide had become the wonder of Bologna. A year after my departure Count Du Barry,[30] brother-in-law of the famous Madame Du Barry, the last mistress of the last King of France,[31] now become infamous, passing through Bologna fell so in love with Adelaide that her mother, fearing that he would carry her off, sent her into hiding. Du Barry wanted to give her a hundred thousand écus for her. The mother refused them. Five years later I saw her dance in Venice. When I went to congratulate her, the charming Adelaide found an opportunity to tell me that her mother, who had brought her into the world, also wanted to send her out of it, for she felt that the profession of a dancer was killing her. And in fact she lasted only six or seven years more. All her money coming from an annuity, her mother was left in poverty; she would have lost nothing if she had invested her capital in an annuity with a reversion to her survivor on her death.

At this time I saw in Bologna the famous Affisio,[32] who, having been dismissed from the Imperial service, had turned opera impresario. Going steadily from bad to worse, five or six years later he was guilty of forgeries for which he was sentenced to the galleys, where he died six or seven years ago.

In Bologna I was struck by seeing another man descended from a great family and born to be rich. He was Count Filomarino.[33] I found him destitute and crippled in every limb by venereal disease. I often went to see him, both to leave him a few paoli for food and to study the human heart in the remarks he made to me with his malevolent tongue, the only one of his members of which the pestilential disease had left him the use. I always found him the same scoundrel and slanderer, and angry to have been reduced to a state which prevented him from going to Naples to massacre his relatives, all decent people, but according to him the basest of mortals.

The dancer Sabbatini,[34] having returned to Bologna rich enough to rest on her laurels, gave all her money to the Professor of Anatomy and became his wife. I found her with her sister, who had no talent and was not rich, but who had prepossessing ways. I noticed an Abate whose modesty seemed to me more unusual than his pretty face, who attracted the sister's entire attention; he seemed to respond to it only from gratitude. When I addressed him on I forget what subject, he replied very sensibly, but with the tone of uncertainty which always pleases. Having taken leave of the company at the same time, we walked away together at random, and, merely from politeness, we told each other where we were from and what small concerns we had in Bologna. We parted, promising to call on each other.

Between twenty-four and twenty-six years of age, he had nothing of the Abate except the dress. He was the only son of a noble family of Novara,[35] who were not rich. With his small income, he lived in Bologna more comfortably than in Novara, where living was dearer, and where everything was a burden to him; his parents interfered with him, friendships had no substance, and ignorance was general. He could not bear being there, he seemed not to be free, though, having no decided inclinations, he made almost no use of what a man of strong passions calls freedom. The Abate Bollini (such was his name) was a man of peaceable disposition who loved nothing but quiet; other things he enjoyed, but they were not of great moment to him. He liked men of letters better than letters; he was satisfied not to be thought stupid, not to be set down as ignorant by the learned men he sometimes frequented because he did nothing but listen to them. He was sober by nature, a good Christian by education, not at all a freethinker, for he never reasoned about religion; nothing shocked him; rather kindly than inclined to criticism, which is almost always malevolent, he seldom praised, but he never blamed. To womankind he was almost indifferent. He avoided ugly women and those who tried to dazzle by their wit; those who fell in love with him and made advances, he did not leave to languish; as soon as he found some merit in them he acceded to their wishes from gratitude, never from love, having, in any case, so little temperament that he thought women apt rather to diminish the happiness of life than to increase it.

This last aspect of his character was the one which interested me, and so much so that, after we had been acquainted for two or three weeks, I made bold to ask him how he could reconcile it with his obvious attachment to Signorina Brigitta Sabbatini. He went to sup with her every day, for she did not lodge with her sister, and she came to breakfast with him every morning. I kept seeing her there, for she would arrive while I was there myself. She always looked content, and her behavior was unexceptionable, but I saw love in her eyes and in her every movement. In the Abate I found only the extreme complaisance which is never without a certain constraint, which, for all the Abate's politeness, did not escape me. She was at least ten years older than he, and she treated me in the most obliging manner possible. She did not want to make me fall in love with her, but to convince me that the Abate was happy in the possession of her heart and that she well deserved the most perfect return.

So when, in the state of sincerity which a bottle of good wine after dinner inspires between two friends, I questioned the Abate Bollini about the nature and the quality of his connection with Brigitta, he smiled, he sighed, he blushed, he looked down, and he told me that the connection was the misfortune of his life.

"The misfortune of your life? Does she make you sigh in vain? You must recover your happiness by leaving her."

"I cannot sigh in vain, for I am not in love with her. On the contrary, it is she who, declaring that she is in love with me, and constantly giving me the most convincing proofs of it, is threatening my freedom. She wants me to marry her, I promised her I would from a feeling of pity, and she is in a hurry; she torments me every evening, she urges me, she cries, she demands that I keep a promise which I made her only to calm her despair, and she rends my soul every day by saying that I am deceiving her. You cannot but see all the misery of my situation."

"Have you contracted obligations to her?"

"None at all. She is poor, she has only thirty baiocchi a day, which her sister allows her and which she will no longer allow her after she marries."

"Perhaps you have given her a child."

"I have been very careful not to. She loathes my precautions. She claims they are clear proofs that I am not thinking of marrying her, and at that, not knowing what to say, I say nothing or beat around the bush."

"But you mean to marry her one day or another."

"I feel, my dear friend, that I shall never in my life bring myself to it. The marriage would make me at least four times poorer, and I should make a laughingstock of myself in Novara if I married her and brought her there, for, though she is respectable, not ugly, and has a sufficiently good manner, she is not a woman to be my wife, for she has neither wealth nor birth, and in Novara at least the first is demanded."

"As a man of honor even more than as a man of good sense, you must break it off, you must leave her today rather than tomorrow."

"I see that, and since I can only do it by moral force, I tell you I have not enough of that to do it. If I did not go to sup with her this evening she would instantly come to my lodging to find out what has happened to me. You can understand that I can neither have her turned away from my door nor send her away myself."

"That I see, but you must see too that you cannot live in this state of turmoil. You must come to a decision, you must cut this knot with Alexander's sword.[36] You must say nothing to her, and go to live in some other city, where she will not be fool enough, I imagine, to go looking for you."

"That would be the best solution, but running away is very difficult."

"Difficult? You are laughing at me. Do as I tell you, and I will arrange for you to go as easily as you please. She will not know you are gone until, not seeing you at supper, she will hurry to your lodging and not find you."

"I will do whatever you tell me, and you will be rendering me a service which I will never forget. Her grief will drive her mad."

"Come now! I begin by forbidding you to think of her grief. That is all you need to do; leave everything else to me. Do you want to go tomorrow? Have you debts? Do you need money?"

"I have enough money, and I have no debts; but the thought of leaving tomorrow makes me laugh. I need at least three days. I have to get my letters from the post tomorrow, and I have to write home to say where I will be."

"I will see to getting your letters from the post, and to sending them to you where I send you, which you will know when you are setting off. Trust in me. I will send you where you will be very comfortable. The only preparation you have to make is to leave your trunk with your landlord, ordering him to deliver it to no one but me."

"I will see to that. So you want me to leave without my trunk, and you won't tell me today where I shall be going. It's odd. But I'll do it."

"Don't fail to come to dine with me on all these three days, and above all tell no one that you are leaving."

He had become radiant. I embraced him, thanking him for having confided in me; I thought he had become a different man on the instant.

Congratulating myself on having done this work of charity, and laughing at the fury which poor Brigitta would vent on me after her lover's flight, I wrote Signor Dandolo[37] that in five or six days he would see a Novarese Abate who would give him a letter from me; I asked him to find him a decent room, with board, but at the lowest price possible, for, though a nobleman and well mannered, he was not rich. I wrote the other letter which the Abate would deliver to him personally. The next day the Abate told me that Brigitta was very far from guessing his intention, for she had found him most amorous. She had all of his linen, but he hoped to get the greater part of it back on some pretext.

On the day set for his departure he came to my lodging at the hour I had appointed the previous day, bringing in a night bag whatever he might need during the four days he would be without his trunk. I took him to Modena by post, and, after we had dined, I gave him my letter addressed to Signor Dandolo, to whom I promised him I would send his trunk the next day. He was most agreeably surprised when he learned that he was to stay in Venice, which he very much wanted to see, and when I assured him that the gentleman to whom I was sending him would arrange for him to live as he had been living in Bologna. After seeing him leave for Finale,[38] I returned to Bologna, where I at once obtained the Abate's trunk from his landlord, having it taken to the post addressed to Signor Dandolo in Venice.

The next day, as I expected, I saw before me the poor abandoned Brigitta dissolved in tears. It was the moment to treat her with pity. I should have been cruel if I had pretended not to know the cause of her despair. I preached her a very long sermon intended to persuade her that, so far as she was concerned, I could not but feel sorry for her, but that I could not abandon my friend, who was on the verge of ruining himself by marrying her. She fell on her knees before me at the end of my discourse, begging me to make him come back, promising that she would say no more to him of marriage, and to calm her I said that I would try to persuade him to do so. I told her that he had gone to live in Venice, and, as was to be expected, she did not believe me. There are occasions when a man who is sure he will not be believed should tell the truth. It is a kind of lie which cannot but be approved by the strictest moralists. Twenty-seven months later I saw my dear Abate Bollini in my native city. I shall speak of him when I come to that time.

After my friend's departure I made the acquaintance of the beautiful Viscioletta,[39] and I fell so much in love with her that, not wanting to take the long way round, I had to resolve to buy the enjoyment of her. Try as I would, women no longer fell in love with me; I had to make up my mind to renounce love, or to submit to paying for it, and nature forced me to accept the latter course, which love of life finally makes me reject today. The sad victory I have won obliges me, at the end of my career, to forgive all my successors and to laugh at all those who ask me for advice, for I see beforehand that most of them have no intention of following it. This foresight results in my giving it to them with more pleasure than I should feel if I were sure they would follow it, for man is an animal who can only be taught by cruel experience. Because of this law, humanity will always exist in disorder and ignorance, for wise men make up at most a hundredth part of it.

La Viscioletta, whom I went to see every day, and to whom I had been introduced by the Quaranta Davia,[40] who was reputed to be a little mad, treated me as the Florentine widow had done; but the widow demanded a respect which I did not think I owed to La Viscioletta, who was a professional courtesan under the guise of a *virtuosa.* In three weeks I had obtained nothing, and I was laughingly repulsed when I tried to steal anything more. Her secret lover was Monsignor Buoncompagni,[41] the Vice-Legate. The whole city knew it, despite which he visited her in secret, for his position did not allow him to court her publicly. La Viscioletta herself made no mystery of it.

At this same time I put up my coupé for sale. I needed money, and I preferred selling my carriage to selling some other possession which I liked better. I set the price of it at three hundred and fifty Roman scudi. The proprietor of the stable where it was came to tell me that the Vice-Legate offered me three hundred scudi for it; I took real pleasure in thwarting the wish of a prelate who possessed the object of my vain desires. I replied that I did not care to haggle and that I had already announced the price.

Having gone to the stable at noon to make certain that my carriage was in good condition, I found there the Vice-Legate, who knew me from having seen me at the Cardinal's and who must have known very well that I called on his beauty. He said to me in an insolent tone that my carriage was not worth more than three hundred scudi, that he knew more about it than I did, and that I ought to seize the opportunity to get rid of it, because it was too fine for me.

The originality of these expressions made it necessary for me to be silent, for I feared that too acid a reply might anger him. I left him there, saying that I would not lower the price by a copper.

The next day La Viscioletta wrote me that my giving my carriage to the Vice-Legate at the price he had offered would be doing her a great favor, for she was sure he would make her a present of it. I replied that I would go to speak with her that afternoon, and that it would depend on her to persuade me to do whatever she wanted. I went there, and after a short but forceful conversation, she surrendered to me. I wrote her a note in which I sold her my carriage for the sum of three hundred Roman scudi. She had the carriage the next day, and I the money and the pleasure of having given the prelate good reason to guess that I had found a way to avenge myself for his stupid pride.

About this time Severini, who was unemployed, managed to secure a place as tutor to a young nobleman of an illustrious Neapolitan family, and he left Bologna as soon as he received money for the journey.

After my friend left, I began to think of leaving that beautiful city too. Signor Zaguri, who had maintained an interesting correspondence with me from the time of the affair of the Marchese Albergati, thought of obtaining permission for me to return to my native country by joining with Signor Dandolo, who asked nothing better. He told me that to obtain a pardon I should go to live as near as I could to the Venetian State, to make it easy for the Tribunal of the State Inquisitors to observe my good behavior. Signor Zulian,[42] brother of the Duchess of Fiano,[43] who also wanted to see me back in Venice, was of the same opinion and promised to use all his influence in favor of the plan.

So, determined to change my place of refuge, and having to choose one near the borders of the Republic, I did not care for either Mantua or Ferrara. I decided on

Trieste, where Signor Zaguri told me he had an intimate friend to whom he would recommend me. But since I could not go to Trieste by land without passing through the State of Venice, I thought of going there by sea. I chose Ancona, from which ships left for Trieste every day. Having to pass through Pesaro, I asked for a letter to someone who could introduce me to the Marchese Mosca,[44] a man of letters whose acquaintance I wanted to make, and Signor Zaguri procured one for me himself. The Marchese had just got himself much talked about because of a treatise on almsgiving which he had published and which the Roman Curia had caused to be put on the Index. Both devout and learned, he was imbued with the doctrine of St. Augustine, which, carried to the extreme, is that of the so-called Jansenists.[45]

I left Bologna with regret, for I had spent eight delicious months there. On the next day but one I arrived in Pesaro alone, in perfect health, and reasonably well provided for.

Having sent my letter in to the Marchese, I saw him at my lodging the same day, delighted with the letter I had brought him. He said that his house would always be open to me, and that he would leave me in his wife the Marchesa's hands to be introduced to all the nobility of the city and shown everything worth seeing there. He ended his short visit by inviting me to dine at his house the next day with his whole family, where I should, he said, find myself the only stranger; but that did not prevent him from inviting me to spend the morning in his library, where we would drink a cup of chocolate together. I went there, and I had the pleasure of seeing an immense collection of scholiasts on all the known Latin poets from even before Ennius[46] down to the twelfth century. He had had all their productions carefully and accurately printed, in his house and at his expense, in four large folio volumes; but the edition was not beautiful, and I ventured to tell him so. He admitted it. This want of beauty, which had saved him twenty thousand scudi, had prevented him from gaining fifty thousand. He presented me with a copy of it, which he sent to my inn together with a large folio the title of which was *Marmora Pisaurentia,*[47] and which I did not have time to examine. I should have learned everything about the town of Pesaro.

The great pleasure I had was at table, where I sat next to his wife, in whom I discovered a great deal of merit, and opposite to his five children, three girls and two boys, all pretty and well brought up. They interested me infinitely, yet I can give my readers no account of them. I never inquired what became of them.

The Marchesa Mosca was the perfect pattern of a woman of the world, and her husband cared for nothing but literature; hence they were not in agreement, and the harmony of the household suffered; but a stranger was not aware of it. If I had not been told as much, I should not have known it. "All families," a wise man said to me fifty years ago, "are privately at odds over some comedy which mars the peace of the household. It is the part of the head of the family, in his prudence, to see that the comedy does not become public, for one must not give occasion for laughter and for the malicious comments and catcalls of the public, which is always spiteful and ignorant." Signora Mosca-Barzi devoted her entire attention to me during all the five days I spent in Pesaro. She took me in her carriage to see all the country estates, and in the evening she presented me at all the entertainments of the nobility.

The Marchese Mosca might then have been fifty years of age. Cold by nature, his only passion was study and his morals were pure. He had founded an academy, of which he had reserved the presidency to himself. His device was a fly, in allusion to his family name of *Mosca,* with the two words *deme ce* ("take away c"). Removing the letter *c, Musca* became *Musa.*[48] The worthy nobleman's one fault was what the monks considered his finest quality. He was too much a Christian. This "too much" of religion could not but make him go beyond the bounds where *nequit consistere rectum* ("what is fitting cannot exist").[49] But is there less harm in going beyond than in falling short? That is a question on which I will never pronounce. Horace said: *Nulla est mihi religio* ("I have no religion"),[50] and he began an ode in which he condemns the philosophy which keeps him from worshiping the gods.[51] Every "too much" is bad.

I left Pesaro enchanted by the fine company I had seen there, and sorry not to have met the Marchese's brother,[52] whom everyone praised to me.

CHAPTER VIII

I take a traveling companion in the person of a Jew from Ancona named Mordecai, who persuades me to lodge in his house. I fall in love with his daughter Leah. After a stay of six weeks, I go to Trieste.

I DID not examine the Marchese Mosca-Barzi's collection of all the Latin poets until I was at leisure in Ancona. I found neither the *Priapeia*[1] nor the *Fescennina*[2] nor several other fragments of the ancient poets which exist in manuscript in several libraries. It was a work which showed that the man who had produced it loved literature but not that he was learned in it, for all that he had done himself was to arrange the authors' works in chronological order. I should have liked to find it supplied with notes and often with glosses. In addition, as a product of the printing press it was undistinguished, the type was ugly, the margins scant, the paper poor, and there were too many typographical errors, a fault which is rightly held to be unforgivable. So the work had little success; and, the Marchese not being rich, it was one of the reasons for the couple's lack of harmony.

What showed me the quality of the Marchese's learning, intelligence, and judgment was reading his treatise on almsgiving and, even more, his apology.[3] I saw that all that he had said must have given offense in Rome, and that with his exquisite judgment he should have foreseen it. The Marchese Mosca was right, but in Rome only those are right whom Rome declares to be so, and she does that only of those whose opinions are not at variance with the abuses which she has made customary practice. The Marchese's treatise was full of erudition, and still more so his apology, which must have done him more harm than the treatise. He was a rigorist, and though he leaned toward Jansenism, he often refuted St. Augustine. He absolutely denied that the fixed penalty for sins could be made good by almsgiving; and he accepted as alone meritorious the alms given in accordance with the letter of the Gospel precept: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." [4] In sum, he laid it down that giving alms was a sin unless it was done in the greatest secrecy, for otherwise vanity was bound to enter in.

Wanting to go to Trieste, I ought to have seized the opportunity to cross the Gulf [5] by taking ship at Pesaro on a tartan[6] which was leaving that very day and which, with the wind blowing as it was, would have landed me there in twelve hours. I ought to have gone there, for, aside from my having nothing to do in Ancona, I was making the journey a hundred miles longer; but I had said that I would go to Ancona, and for that reason alone I thought I ought to go there; a strong tincture of superstition was always characteristic of me, and it is clear to me today that it had an influence on all the strange vicissitudes of my life.

Perfectly understanding what it was that Socrates called his "Demon," [7] which seldom prompted him to take some decisive action and very often prevented him from making up his mind to it, I easily thought I had the same Genius, he having chosen to call his Genius his "Demon." Sure that this Genius could only be good and bent on my best welfare, I turned to him every time I was in doubt how to choose because I had no compelling reason. I did what he wanted, without asking him the reason for it, when a secret voice told me to abstain from an act toward which I felt inclined. The secret voice could only be the action of my demon. I have paid him this tribute countless times in my life, and I often inwardly complained of him because he very seldom prompted me to do something which, having consulted my reason, I was determined not to do. Following this course, I have more often had cause to congratulate myself on having laughed at my reason than on having obeyed it. But that has neither humiliated me nor kept me from always and everywhere reasoning to the best of my ability.

At Sinigaglia, three posts before Ancona, just as I was about to go to bed, my coachman comes to ask me if I will let him take a Jew in the carriage who also wanted to go to Ancona. I coldly reply that I want no one, least of all a Jew. The coachman leaves, and I instantly feel that I ought to take the Jew with me, despite the reasonable repugnance which had made me say I did not want him. So I call the coachman back, and I say that I am willing. He then tells me that I must prepare to leave earlier than usual, for, it being Friday, the Jew could travel only until sunset. I reply that I have no intention of putting myself out, and that it is for him to make his horses go faster.

The next morning in the carriage the Jew, who looked not unprepossessing, asked me why I did not like Jews.

"Because," I said, "your religion makes it your duty to be our enemies. You think it your duty to cheat us. You do not consider us your brothers. You set no limit to your usury when, needing money, we borrow it from you. In short, you hate us."

"Signore," he replied, "you are mistaken. Come to our assembly with me this evening, and you will hear us praying together for all Christians, beginning with our master the Pope."

At that I could not but burst out laughing, for it was true; however, I told him that what prayed must be the heart, not the mouth, and I threatened to throw him out of the carriage if he would not admit that the Jews would certainly not pray for Christians if they were the rulers of the countries in which they lived, and he was surprised to hear me quote to him in Hebrew passages from the Old Testament in which they were commanded to seize every opportunity to do all the harm they could to all non-Jews, whom they constantly cursed in their prayers. The poor man did not open his mouth again. At dinnertime I invited him to dine with me, and he replied that his religion forbade it, for which reason he would eat only eggs, fruit, and goose sausage, which he had in his pocket. His superstition made him drink only water because, he said, he was not certain the wine was pure. That afternoon in the carriage he told me that if I would like to lodge in his house, and would be content to eat only food that God has not forbidden, he would feed me more delicately, more substantially, and more cheaply than at an inn, all by myself in a fine room facing the sea.

"So you lodge Christians?" I asked him.

"Never, but I will make an exception this time to enlighten you. You shall give me only six paoli a day, and I will have dinner and supper served you, but without wine."

"But you will have your cook prepare all the kinds of fish I like and want to eat, which of course I will buy on my own account."

"Certainly. I have a Christian maid-of-all-work, and my wife always oversees the cooking."

"You will give me goose liver every day, but on condition that you will eat it with me in my presence."

"I know what you are thinking. But you shall have your wish."

So I put up at the Jew's, thinking it very strange. Not being comfortable there, I should have left the next day. His wife and children were eagerly awaiting him, to celebrate the Sabbath. On that day consecrated to the Lord, all servile labor being forbidden, I see with pleasure the holiday look in their faces, their attire, and the cleanliness of the whole house. I am greeted like a brother, and I respond as well as I can; but a single word spoken by the master (whom I shall call Mordecai)[8] instantly changes the whole nature of their politeness; at first it was genuine, what followed was only policy based on interest. Mordecai shows me two rooms to choose between, and, one being next to the other, I take them both, saying at once that I will pay him an extra paolo. The mistress of the house orders a Christian maid to do everything necessary for me, and to make me supper. In an instant Mordecai has told her everything. While waiting for the maid to arrange all the things the coachman had brought in, I am pleased to go to the synagogue with Mordecai, who, having become my landlord, seemed to me another man, and the more so because I had seen his family and his house, where I had found everything very clean.

After attending the short ceremony, at which the Israelites paid not the least attention either to me or to some other Christians, both men and women, who were present, I went alone to stroll by the Exchange,[9] giving way to gloomy reflections, as they cannot but be when they recall a past time of happiness which one cannot hope will return. It was in this city that I had begun to enjoy life to the full, and I was astounded that it was almost thirty years earlier,[10] an immense length of time, and that I nevertheless felt more young than old. But what a contrast when I took the measure of my moral and physical existence in those days of my youth, and compared them with the present! I found myself a wholly different person, and the more I saw that I was perfectly happy then, the more I had to admit that I had become unhappy, for the whole beautiful prospect of a happier future no longer stretched before my eyes. Despite myself, I knew, and I was forced to admit, that I had wasted all my time, which meant that I had wasted my life; the twenty years I had still before me, and on which I thought I could count, seemed to me gloomy. Being forty-seven, I knew that I was at the age which Fortune scorns, and this in itself was all that I needed to sadden me, for without the Blind Goddess's favor no one on earth can be happy. Working as I was to be able to return to my country a free man, I thought I was limiting my desires to obtaining the favor of retracing my steps, of undoing what I had done for good or for ill. I understood that it was only a matter of making less unpleasant a descent the final term of which was death. It is on his descent that a man who has spent his life in pleasures makes these somber reflections, for which there is no place in his flourishing youth, when he needs to foresee nothing, when the present occupies him completely, and when an ever unchanging and rose-colored horizon makes his life happy, and keeps his mind so happily illuded that he laughs at the philosopher who dares to tell him that, behind the charming horizon, there is old age, wretchedness, repentance, which always comes too late, and death. If such were my reflections twenty-six years ago,[11] my reader can imagine what those must be which today obsess me when I am alone. They would kill me if I did not find ways to kill the cruel time which brings them to birth in my soul, which, fortunately or unfortunately, is still young. I write in order not to be bored; and I am delighted, I congratulate myself, that I enjoy doing it; if I write nonsense, I do not care, it is enough for me to know that I am being amused:

Malo scriptor delirus inersque videri
Dum mea delectent mala me vel denique fallant,
Quam sapere et ringi

> ("I would rather appear to be a scatterbrained and unskillful writer, so long as my faults please me or escape me, than be wise and chafe").[12]

Back at the house, I found Mordecai at table with his family, consisting of eleven or twelve persons, one of them his mother, who was ninety years old and in good health. Another Jew, a middle-aged man, was the husband of his elder daughter, who struck me as not pretty; but I found much to admire in his younger daughter, whom he was going to marry to a Jew from Pesaro, whom she had not yet seen.

"If you haven't seen him," I said to her, "you can't be in love with him."

She replied in a serious tone that being in love was not a necessary condition for marriage. The grandmother praised her answer, and my landlady said that she had not fallen in love with her husband until after she had borne her first child. I will call the pretty Jewess Leah,[13] having reasons for concealing her name; I said things to her to make her laugh; but she did not even look at me.

I found a supper without meat, but exquisite, and with everything perfectly Christian, and I retired to an excellent bed. The next morning Mordecai came and told me that I could give my linen to the maid to wash, and that Leah would see to making it ready for me. I thanked him for the shellfish, and I told him I had a dispensation which permitted me to eat both meat and fish every day, and above all not to forget the goose liver. He said that I should have it the next day, but that no one in his family ate it except Leah.

"Then Leah," I said, "shall eat it with me, and I will give her the purest wine from the Kingdom of Cyprus[14] to drink."

I asked the Venetian Consul[15] for some that same morning, going to his residence to take him a letter from Signor Dandolo. The Consul was a Venetian of the old school. He had heard of me, and he seemed very glad to make my acquaintance. He was a real Pantalone[16] without a mask, lively, full of experience, and an epicure. He took my money and gave me some genuine Scopolo wine[17] and some very old muscat from Cyprus; but he protested loudly when I told him I was lodging at Mordecai's, and what chance had taken me there. He said that he was rich but that, being a great usurer, he would treat me badly if I needed money. After telling him that I did not want to leave until the end of the month, and on a good ship, I went back to my room, where I found myself very comfortable. The next morning I wrote down all the linen and silk stockings which I gave to the maid, as Mordecai had told me to do; but a moment later he came with Leah, for she wanted to know how I wanted her to wash the laces which were attached to my shirts, then he left her with me. Between eighteen and twenty years of age, and appearing before me in perfect candor in a bodice which could not better reveal a firm bosom as white as alabaster, the girl troubled me, and she would have seen it if, having any suspicion of it, she had looked at me. Mastering myself, I told her to take care of my linen as diligently as possible, for I was not a man to pinch pennies. She said that she would attend to it all herself, if I was not in a hurry. I replied that it was in her power to keep me in her house as long as she pleased, to which declaration she paid not the slightest attention. I told her I was satisfied with everything, except the chocolate, which I liked whipped and foamy, and she answered that she would prepare it herself.

"In that case," I said, "I will give you twice the quantity, and we will drink it together."

She said she did not like it.

"But you like goose liver?"

"Very much, and today I am to eat it with you, my father tells me. Am I to take it you are afraid you'll be poisoned?"

"Certainly not. On the contrary, I wish we could die together."

Leah pretended not to understand me, and left me full of desires and resolved to lose no time. I must either make sure of her that same day, or tell her father not to send her to my room any more. The Jewess in Turin[18] had taught me what to think of Jewesses in the matter of love. As I saw it, Leah must prove to be both more beautiful and less difficult, for gallantry in Ancona must be entirely different from gallantry in Turin. Such is the reasoning of a libertine, and he is often wrong.

I was given a meat dinner prepared entirely in the Jewish fashion, and Leah herself came in with the liver and sat down opposite me without any ado, but wearing a fichu over her beautiful bosom. The liver was exquisite, and since it was not large we ate it all, washing it down with Scopolo wine, which Leah declared was even better than the liver; then she got up to leave; but I objected: dinner was only half over. Leah said she would stay, but that her father would not like it. I told the maid to ask him to come up, for I had something to say to him. I told Mordecai that his daughter's appetite doubled mine, and that he would be doing me a favor if he allowed her to eat with me whenever we had goose liver. He replied that her doubling my appetite was precisely what he did not want, for he would lose money on boarding me, but that she should stay if I would pay him double, that is, a testone more. No logic could have pleased me better. I told him that I accepted his condition, and I presented him with a bottle of Scopolo, which Leah assured him was of the purest. So we dined together, and seeing her enlivened by the good wine, which, having diuretic properties because of its taste of tar, perfectly produces the effect which love seeks, I told her that her eyes set me on fire and that she must let me kiss them. She replied that her duty forbade her to permit it.

"No kissing, and no touching," she said; "let us eat and drink together, and I shall enjoy it as much as you do. But that must be all. I am entirely dependent on my father, and can have no will of my own.''

''Must I ask your father to allow you to be kind?''

''I don't think that would be proper, and my father might well take it as an insult and not let me come to your room again.''

''And if he told you that you need not be scrupulous about such trifles?''

''I should despise him, and I should continue to do my duty.''

So clear a declaration showed me that she would not be easy, and that, if I persisted, I might find myself committed, fail, repent, and lose sight of my chief business, which obliged me to make no more than a very short stay in Ancona. So I did not answer her, and, finding the Jewish pastries and compotes excellent at dessert, we drank some Cyprus muscat, which Leah declared superior to all the liqueurs on earth.

Seeing her so carried away by drink, I thought it impossible that Venus should not have as much power over her as Bacchus; but her head was strong; the wine did not go to it; her blood was fired, but her reason remained unaffected. I encouraged her high spirits, and after coffee I took her hand to kiss it, and she resisted; but her refusal was of a kind at which I could not take umbrage. She told me wittily that it was too much for honor and too little for love. I at once felt certain that she was no novice. I put off my design until the next day, and I informed her that I should sup with the Venetian Consul. He had told me that he never dined, but that he would always be very glad to have me come to supper.

I came home at midnight; everyone was asleep, except for the maid, who was waiting for me and whom I tipped well. I got her to talk about Leah, but she told me nothing to the purpose. Leah was a good girl, always working, the whole family loved her, and she had never listened to a suitor. It was just the sort of thing she would have said if Leah had paid her.

But Leah came in the morning to bring me my chocolate, and sat down on my bed, saying that we had an excellent liver and that, since she had not supped, she would dine with a very good appetite. She said that what had kept her from supping was the excellent Cyprus muscat, about which her father had been very curious. I said that we would give him some. Leah was there, as she had been on the evening before. Her breasts drove me to despair, and I thought it impossible that she should not be aware of their power. I asked her if she knew that her bosom was very beautiful. She replied that all girls' bosoms were like hers.

"Do you know," I asked, "that the sight of it gives me extreme pleasure?"

"If that is true, I am very glad of it, for it is a pleasure I can give you without having any reason to reproach myself. In any case a girl does not hide her bosom any more than she does her face, except when she is on parade in company."

As she said this, the minx looked at a small gold heart pierced by an arrow and covered with little diamonds which I used to fasten my jabot.

"Do you think my little heart is pretty?" I asked her.

"Charming. Is it pure gold?"

"Yes. And that is what gives me the courage to present it to you."

With that, I unfasten it to give it to her, but she says, thanking me sweetly, that a girl who intends to give nothing must accept nothing. I beg her to accept it, and I give her my word of honor that I will never ask her for the slightest favor; she replies that, even so, she would consider herself in my debt, and that she would never accept anything.

After this declaration I saw that there was nothing to be done, or too much to do, and that in either case I must come to a decision. I scornfully rejected the idea of employing a violence which might have made her laugh at me or anger her; in the first case it would both have degraded me and made me more in love to no purpose, and in the second case, since the right would be on her side, I should have given her the right to take steps which would have humiliated and offended me. She would have stopped coming to bring me chocolate, and I could not have complained of it. I decided to keep my eyes in check, and not to speak another amorous word to her. We dined in very high spirits. I was served shellfish which her religion forbade her, I urged her to eat some, and I horrified her, but when the maid was gone she ate some with surprising relish, assuring me that it was the first time in her life that she had enjoyed the pleasure.

"This girl," I said to myself, "who breaks the law of her religion so easily, who is passionately fond of pleasure, who does not hide the relish with which she enjoys it, tries to make me think that she is insensible to the pleasure of love, or that she can conquer it by treating it as a trifle. It is impossible. She does not love me, or she loves me only to amuse herself by keeping me in love with her; and to satisfy the needs of her temperament, she apparently has other resources."

I thought of having her to supper, counting on the strength of the Scopolo wine, and she excused herself, assuring me that if she ate in the evening she could not sleep.

She came to bring me chocolate, and the first thing that strikes me is that her too beautiful bosom is covered by a white kerchief. She sat down beside me on the bed, and I reject the stale idea of pretending not to notice it. I say in a melancholy voice that she had come with her bosom covered only because I had told her it gave me pleasure to see it. She replies carelessly that she had not thought about it and had only knotted a kerchief over it because she hadn't had time to put on her bodice. I say with a laugh that she had done well, for it might be that, seeing her whole bosom, I should not think it so beautiful after all. She makes no answer, and I finish my chocolate. I think of the miniatures and engravings of lascivious nudes which I had in my jewel case, and I ask Leah to give it to me, saying that I want to show her pictures of the most beautiful bosoms in the universe. She says they would not interest her; but after bringing me my case she stays where she is.

I take the picture of a woman lying on her back stark naked and masturbating, but I cover it up to the navel with a handkerchief, and I show it to her, holding it in my hand. She says that it is a bosom like any other, and that I can uncover the rest. I hand her the miniature, saying that it disgusts me. Leah laughs, and she says it is well painted, but that it is nothing new to her, for it was all that girls did, though secretly, before they married.

"Then you do it too?"

"Every time I feel like it. Then I go to sleep."

"My dear Leah, your sincerity drives me to distraction, and you are too intelligent not to know it. So either be kind and obliging, or stop coming to see me."

"You must be very weak. So in future we will see each other only at dinner. But show me another miniature."

"I have some engravings which you won't like."

"Let me see."

At that I give her the collection of illustrations for Aretino,[19] and I admire the calm though very attentive way in which she looks at them, going from one to another, and returning to the one she has already examined.

"Do you find it interesting?" I asked her.

"Very much so, and it's only natural; but a decent girl mustn't look long at these things, for you can imagine that they arouse a strong emotion."

"I believe it, my dear Leah, and I feel it as you do. Look."

At that she smiled, and she quickly got up and went to look at the book by the window, turning her back to me and leaving me to call to her as much as I pleased. After calming myself like a schoolboy, I dressed, and, the hairdresser arriving, Leah left, saying that she would return my book to me at dinner.

I then believed I should have her on the next day at the latest. My libertine approach had not offended her, the first step was taken. We dined well, we drank still better, and at dessert Leah drew the collection from her pocket, and she inflamed me by asking for commentaries but at the same time preventing me, on threat of leaving, from proceeding to the demonstration which would have given life to the explanation, which was only for the eyes, and which I perhaps needed more than she did. Out of patience, I took the book away from her, and I went for a walk, counting on the hour when she would bring me my chocolate.

Leah told me that she needed to ask me for explanations, but that if I wanted to please her I must give them to her only in words and with the engraving in my hand. She would not look at any living demonstrations. I said that she must likewise answer all the questions I might ask her in regard to her sex, and she promised she would do so; but on the same condition that our observations should concern only what we saw in the pictures.

Our lesson lasted two hours, during which I cursed Aretino countless times, for the pitiless Leah threatened to leave each time I tried to put one of her arms under my coverlet. But the things she said to me concerning her sex, and which I could pretend not to know, drove me to distraction. She told me the most voluptuous truths, and she put such sincerity and animation into explaining the internal and external movements which must take place during the cohabitations we had before our eyes that it seemed to me impossible that theory alone could lead her to reason so correctly. What seduced me completely was the fact that no shame obscured the clarity of her sublime teaching. She philosophized on the subject far more learnedly than the Genevan Hedwig.[20] Her intellect was in such perfect accord with the rest of her being that it seemed to be detached from it. I would have given her all that I possessed to reward her prodigious talent with the great exploit. She swore to me that she knew nothing from experience, and I thought I must believe her when she confided to me that she could not wait to be married in order to learn all. She grew sad, or she pretended it, when I took it into my head to tell her that the husband her father Mordecai had chosen for her might be a man poorly equipped by Nature, or one of those ill-constituted cacochymics[21] who do their conjugal duty only once a week.

"What!" she answered in alarm. "Then are not all men alike, as we are? Are they not all able to be amorous every day, as they must eat and drink and sleep every day?"

"On the contrary, my dear Leah, men who are amorous every day are very scarce."

So cruelly exasperated every morning, I was furious that there was no decent place in Ancona where a gentleman could have his pleasure by paying for it. I trembled to realize that I was falling in love with Leah; I told the Consul every day that I was in no hurry to leave. I indulged in all the paralogisms[22] of a true lover; I thought Leah was the most virtuous of all girls; she became my model of virtue; it was upon her that I built my definition of it. She was all true, unstained by hypocrisy as by imposture; unable to escape her nature, she satisfied her desires only by herself, and she forbade herself all that was forbidden her by the law to which she was determined to remain obedient despite the fire which burned her from morning to night and from night to morning. It was in her power to make herself happy, and she resisted for two long hours in my company, adding fuel to the fire which devoured her, and being strong enough to refuse ever to do anything to extinguish it. Ah, the virtuous Leah! Every day she risked defeat, and every day she gained the victory, assuring herself of it by the one sovereign remedy of never yielding to the first step. No looking and no touching.

After nine or ten days I began to be violent with the girl, not in action but by the force of eloquence. She was abashed, she admitted that I was right and that she did not know how to answer me, and she ended by saying that it would be a wise resolve on my part to forbid her to enter my room in the morning. At dinner, she insisted, we ran no risk. I decided to ask her to continue to come to my room, but always with her bosom covered and never again talking of the illustrations for Aretino or of anything to do with love. She replied with a laugh that she would not be the first to break those conditions. I did not break them either, but three days later, tired of suffering, I told the Consul that I would leave at the first opportunity. Under our new compact, Leah's gaiety was making me lose my appetite. But this is what happened.

Two hours after midnight I woke, feeling a need to go to the water closet. It was on the ground floor and Mordecai always saw that it was kept very clean. I go downstairs barefoot and in the dark, and, after doing my business, I go back to the stairway to return to my apartment. At the top of the first flight of stairs I see light through a crack in the door of a room which I knew should be unoccupied. I go there to see who could be in the room at such an hour with a light. My curiosity was not inspired by any idea of seeing Leah, for I knew that she slept on the other side of the house; but to my great surprise I see Leah lying stark naked on a bed, practicing postures with a young man in the same state. They were no more than two paces from the door, I saw everything perfectly. They were talking in whispers, and every four or five minutes they presented me with a new tableau. This change of posture showed me Leah's beauties from every angle. The pleasure somewhat soothed my fury, which however was not little when what I saw left me in no doubt that Leah was only imitating the illustrations for Aretino, which she had learned by heart. When they came to the essential act they set themselves limits and, working with their hands, procured the ecstasies of love, which, imperfect though they were, nevertheless tried me cruelly. When the young man assumed the straight tree[23] position, Leah unashamedly played the Lesbian, and he devoured her jewel, and, not seeing her spit at the end of the act, I was sure that she had imbibed the nectar of my fortunate rival. Her lover then laughingly showed her his flaccid instrument, whose death Leah appeared to mourn. She was about to restore it to life; but the base fellow looked at his watch, paid no attention to her protests, and put on his shirt. She did not do likewise until after she had spoken to him in a way from which I guessed that she was reproaching him. When I saw that they were nearly dressed, I went to my room and stationed myself at a window which overlooked the door of the house. Four or five minutes later I saw the fortunate lover come out and leave. I went back to bed, not delighted to have been disabused, but indignant and feeling debased. Since I no longer saw Leah as virtuous, she seemed to me nothing but a wanton who hated me. I went to sleep intending to drive her from my room after reproaching her with all that I had seen.

But when she appeared with my chocolate I suddenly changed my mind. Seeing her gay, I forced my features to assume a corresponding expression, and, after drinking my chocolate, I told her without the slightest show of anger the story of all her exploits which I had been able to see during the last hour of her orgy, dwelling on the straight tree and on the excellent food which, like a true Lesbian, she had taken into her stomach. I ended by saying that I hoped she would give me the next night, not only to satisfy my love but also to oblige me to keep her secret safe.

She replied unabashedly that I could not expect the least favor from her, for she did not love me, and, as for keeping her secret, she defied me to reveal it out of revenge.

"I am sure," she said, "that you are not capable of so base an act."

Having said which, she turned her back on me and left.

And in fact what she had said was the truth. I should have been guilty of a very base act, and I was far from resolved to commit it; I was not even thinking of it. She had made me see reason by a great truth, which, hard as it was to swallow, demanded respect: she did not love me; there was no answer to that, she owed me nothing, I could demand nothing. It was she, on the contrary, who could demand satisfaction from me, for I had no right to spy on her or to insult her by telling her what I should never have known except from an indiscreet and indefensible curiosity. I could only complain of her because she had deceived me So what could I do?

I did what I ought to do. I dressed hastily, I went to the Exchange, where I found that a peota[24] was leaving that day for Fiume. Fiume is on the other side of the Gulf, opposite Ancona. From Fiume to Trieste is only forty miles by land; I decided to go to Fiume, I go to the port, I see the peota, I speak to the captain, who tells me that the wind is astern, and that he is sure that the next morning we shall be at least in the Canal.[25] I engage the best place, I have a folding seat put in it, then I go to take leave of the Consul, who wishes me a good journey. From there I return to the house, where I pay Mordecai all that I owed him, and I go to my room to pack my trunks. I have plenty of time.

Leah comes to tell me that she cannot possibly give me my linen and my stockings that day, but that she could give me everything the next. I reply calmly and quietly that her father need only take whatever belonged to me to the Venetian Consul, who will send it on to me in Trieste. She makes no answer.

A moment before I sat down at table the captain of the peota[26] himself came with a sailor to take my belongings, I give him the trunk I had packed, and I tell him that the rest will go on board with me when he is ready to leave. He says that he will leave an hour before nightfall, and I reply that he will find me ready.

When Mordecai learned that I was going to Fiume, he asked me to take charge of a small box which he wanted conveyed to a friend of his, together with a letter which he would write him; I replied that I should be glad to oblige him.

Leah sat down to dinner with me as if nothing had happened. She spoke to me in her usual way, she asked me if I was satisfied with what I was eating, and my short answers no more put her out of countenance than my determined attempt never to let her look me in the eye. She must have believed that I took her attitude for strength of mind, firmness, noble confidence, whereas it seemed to me nothing short of exaggerated effrontery. I hated her because she had deceived me and had then dared to tell me that she did not love me, and I despised her because she believed I ought to esteem her because she did not blush. She may also have believed that I ought to esteem her because she had avowed that I was incapable of telling her father what I had seen. She could not understand that I owed her nothing for her confidence.

As she drank Scopolo, she said that I still had two flagons of it and two bottles of muscat. I answered that I left them to her as excellent means of increasing her fire during her nocturnal debauches. She replied with a smile that I had enjoyed for nothing a spectacle which she was sure I would have paid gold to see, and that she was so glad of it that she would arrange for me to enjoy it again if I were not going to leave.

This reply made me want to hit her in the face with the bottle which stood before me. I picked it up in a way to show her what just anger was about to make me do, and I should have committed the shameful crime if I had not seen on her face the unmistakable expression of a defiant assurance. I poured wine into my glass, very awkwardly, as if I had picked up the bottle only for that purpose; but when one is going to pour wine one simply picks up the bottle, one does not seize it in one's inverted fist. Leah noticed it.

I rose and went into my bedroom, unable to bear more; but a quarter of an hour later she came to drink coffee with me. This most insulting persistence seemed to me monstrous. I calmed myself a little when I reflected that such a proceeding on her part must spring from a spirit of revenge; but she had avenged herself enough by telling me that she did not love me and proving it to me. She said that she wanted to help me pack, and at that I asked her to leave me alone, taking her by the arm, leading her to the door, and locking it after her.

We were both in the right. Leah had deceived, humiliated, and scorned me. I had every right to loathe her. I had discovered that she was supremely hypocritical, deceitful, and shameless. She had every right to loathe my existence, and she would have wished that I would practice some crime on her which would make me repent of having discovered her secret. I have never been in a state more violent.

Toward evening two sailors came for my belongings, I thanked my landlady, and I calmly told Leah to wrap my linen in waxed cloth and deliver it all to her father, who had already gone ahead to put his box in the peota. He gave me the letter, I embraced him and thanked him, and we sailed at once with a fresh breeze, which dropped two hours later. We had gone twenty miles. After a quarter of an hour of calm, the wind began blowing from the west, and then the little ship, which was almost empty, began pitching and tossing so cruelly that my stomach was upset and I began to vomit. At midnight, the wind having become completely contrary, the captain told me that the best thing for him to do was to go back to Ancona. With a head wind it was impossible to go to Fiume or to any port in Istria. So in less than three hours we were back in Ancona, where the officer on guard, having recognized us as the same persons who had left about nightfall, was kind enough to let me go ashore.[27]

While I was talking to the officer, thanking him for allowing me to go and sleep in a good bed, the sailors picked up my luggage and, instead of waiting for me to tell them where they should take it, the captain told me they had gone with it to the same place from which they had fetched it. I wanted to go to the nearest inn, it made me furious that I must see Leah again, but the thing was done. Mordecai got out of bed and congratulated himself on seeing me again. It was three hours after midnight. I went to bed, exhausted and badly in need of rest. I told him that I was very ill, and that I would dine alone in my bed when I called him. A light dinner, and no liver. I slept for ten unbroken hours, with my whole body aching but feeling that I had an excellent appetite. I rang, and it was the maid who came to tell me that Leah was in bed with a severe headache; I thanked Providence for saving me from the pain of seeing the brazen creature again.

I had found my dinner very scanty, I told the maid to make me a good supper. The weather was dreadful. The Venetian Consul came to spend two hours with me, assuring me that the weather would remain bad for at least a week—a warning which distressed me both because of Leah whom I could not possibly see again, and because I had no more money; but I had articles of value. Not having seen Leah at suppertime, I thought she would not come again; but my hope was vain. She came the next morning and asked me for chocolate so that she could prepare it for me; but the look she wore was neither cheerful nor calm. I told her that I would drink coffee, that I wanted no more goose liver, and so I should eat alone, and to tell her father that in consequence I would pay him only seven paoli a day; and that in future I would drink only Orvieto wine.

"You still have four bottles."

"No, I haven't, for I gave them to you; I beg you to leave and to enter this room as seldom as possible, for your sentiments and the style you are pleased to use to express them are such as to make the most philosophical of men lose all moderation. Add that your presence disgusts me. Your exterior no longer has any power to blind me to the fact that it contains the soul of a monster. You may be sure, too, that the sailors brought my luggage here while I was talking to the officer on guard, otherwise I should not have come here; I should have gone to an inn, where I should not have feared being poisoned."

Leah left without answering me, and I felt certain that I had seen the last of her. Experience had taught me that girls of Leah's sort were not uncommon; I had known her like in Spa, in Geneva, in London, and even in Venice, but this Jewess was the worst of them all. It was a Saturday; on his return from the synagogue Mordecai came to ask me smilingly why I had mortified his daughter, who swore to him that she had not given me the slightest reason to complain of her.

"I had no intention of mortifying her, my dear Mordecai; but, needing to diet, I told her that I wanted no more goose livers; from which it follows that I can eat alone and so save three paoli."

"Leah is prepared to pay them to me, and she wants to dine with you to rid you of any fear of being poisoned. She told me that you feared it."

"Your daughter, my friend, is fooled by her own cleverness. I have no need either for her to pay you three paoli, or not to spend them myself, and to convince you of it I will pay you six, but on condition that you will eat with me too. Her offering to pay the three paoli is an impertinence of a piece with her character. In short: either I will eat alone and pay you seven paoli a day, or I will pay you thirteen and eat with both father and daughter. That is my final word."

He left, saying that he had not the heart to let me eat alone. I got up for dinner; I talked only to Mordecai, never once looking at Leah or laughing at the witty things she said from time to time. I would drink only Orvieto wine. At dessert Leah filled my glass with Scopolo, saying that if I persisted in not drinking it she would not drink it either. I replied that if she knew what was good for her she ought never to drink anything but water, and that I would accept nothing from her. Mordecai, who was fond of wine, laughed heartily, and saying that I was right, drank for the three of us.

The weather being bad, I spent the day writing, and, after being served supper by the maid, I went to bed and at once fell asleep. A little later a slight noise wakes me, I say "Who's there?" and I hear Leah answering in a whisper that she has not come to trouble me but to justify herself in half an hour and then let me sleep. So saying, she lies down beside me, but on top of the coverlet.

This visit, which I did not expect, since I thought it was not in accord with the girl's character, pleases me, for, having no feeling in respect to her but a desire to be revenged, I was sure that I should not succumb to anything she might do to gain the victory. So, far from being curt with her, I tell her mildly that I consider her justified, and I beg her to leave, since I needed to sleep. She replies that she will not let me sleep until I have heard her out.

She followed this by a harangue which I never once interrupted and which went on for a good hour. Whether trumped up, or proceeding from genuine feeling, it was calculated to persuade me, for, after admitting that she had done very wrong, she maintained that at my age and with my experience I ought to forgive everything in a girl of eighteen, weak because of the irresistible dominion over her of a temperament [28] whose instinct for love deprived her of the use of her reason. According to her, I ought to forgive so fatal a weakness for everything, even for crimes, for, if she went so far as to commit them, it would only be because she had no power over herself. She swore to me that she loved me, and that she would have given me the most telling proofs of it if she had not had the misfortune to be in love with the Christian I had seen with her, who was a beggar and a libertine who did not love her and whom she paid. She assured me that, despite her temperament, she had never let him cull her flower. She swore that it had been six months since she had seen him, and that it was I who was the cause of her having summoned him that night, for I had set her soul on fire with my engravings and my wines. The conclusion of her long apology was that I must restore peace to her soul by forgetting everything and granting her my sincere friendship during the few remaining days I should spend in her house.

When she stopped talking I chose not to refute any of the points in her harangue by the slightest objection. I pretended to be convinced that I had wronged her by showing her too lascivious pictures, I condoled with her on her misfortune in having fallen in love with a beggar, and on the irresistible force with which Nature had endowed her senses, which left her with no power over herself, and I ended by assuring her that she would see no more signs of even the slightest resentment in my behavior.

But since this declaration did not end in what the minx wanted, she went on talking to me about the weakness of the senses, the strength of self-esteem, which often bound fond love in fetters and led a heart to act against its dearest wishes, for she wanted to persuade me that she loved me and that she had only confined me to trifles to make my love stronger by conquering my esteem. It was her nature which had driven her to act so, and it was not her fault if she had been unable to act otherwise.

How many answers I could have given her! I could have answered that it was precisely because of her loathsome and accursed nature that I ought to hate her and that I hated her; but I did not want to discourage her completely, for I wanted to see her advance to the assault, so that I could overwhelm her with humiliation; but the minx never went so far. She never held out her arms, she never put her face close to mine. But after the contest, and as soon as she was gone, I was very glad that she had never really engaged me, for she would have been the victor, even though we were without a light. *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures* ("The mind is less strongly affected by what enters through the ears").[29] When she talked to me about the prodigious power which Venus had over her, I remembered what I had seen her do in the straight tree position, and if Leah had attacked me then I should have found it difficult to resist. She left after two hours defeated, but with every appearance of being content. I thought I had to promise her that she could make my chocolate. She came very early for a stick of it, in the most lascivious undress, walking on tiptoe for fear of waking me, whereas if she had ever once looked at my bed she would have seen that I was not asleep. Finding her as false and artful as ever, I congratulated myself on being equal to all her wiles.

She came with my chocolate, and, seeing two cups, I said that it must not be true that she did not like it. She replied that she thought it her duty to relieve me of my fear of being poisoned. What I also thought worth remarking on was that she had come to bring my chocolate with her bosom well covered and wearing a dress, whereas half an hour earlier she had come in only a shift and petticoat. The more I saw that she was bent on catching me by the bait of her attractions, the more I felt resolved to humiliate her by indifference. I considered that the only alternative to my victory was my dishonor and my shame; so I felt ready to meet every contingency.

Nevertheless, my palate began to get the better of me at dinner. Against my orders, Leah had me served a goose liver, saying that it was for her and that, since it was poisoned, she would die alone; Mordecai said that he would die too, and he ate some of it; at that I laughed and ate some, and Leah said that my resolves were not strong enough to stand up in the presence of the enemy. This judgment annoyed me. I said to her that she had given herself away, which showed a lack of intelligence, and that I was strong enough to defy temptation.

"Try," I said, "to get me to drink Scopolo or muscat. Yet I should have drunk some now if you had not reproached me with the weakness of my resolves. I will convince you that they are invincible."

"The agreeable man," she replied, "is the one who often lets himself be conquered."

"But the agreeable girl is the one who does not reproach him with his weaknesses."

I sent to the Consul's for Scopolo and muscat, and Leah, who could not contain herself, annoyed me again by saying with a knowing smile that I was the most agreeable of men.

After dinner I left the house despite the bad weather, and I walked to the coffeehouse. Feeling sure that Leah would come that night to attack me again, I went there to see if I could find someone who could take me somewhere to buy amorous pleasures. A Greek who a week before had taken me to a house which I had found disgusting took me to another where a countrywoman of his, covered with rouge, displeased me even more. I went home, where, after supping alone as usual, I decided that my only course was to bolt my door, which I had done only twice before. But it made no difference. A minute later Leah knocks and calls to me that I have forgotten to give her chocolate. I open the door, and, taking a stick of chocolate, she begs me to leave my door unbolted, for she needed urgently to talk to me and it would be for the last time.

"Tell me now what you want."

"No. It's rather long, I can't come until everyone in the house is asleep. In any case you have nothing to fear, even if you go to bed, for you are your own master, and for you I am no longer a danger."

"Certainly not. You will find the door unbolted."

Still resolved to resist all her artifices, I thought it best not to blow out my candles, for, since I was sure she would come, my putting them out would show her that I was afraid. The light would make my triumph the greater, and allow me to enjoy her humiliation and shame all the more. So I got into bed.

Leah arrives at eleven o'clock in shift and petticoat, she bolts the door, and when I ask her, "Well, what have you to say to me?" she comes to my bedside, she lets her petticoat drop, then her shift, and lies down close to me, throwing the covers aside. Sure of her triumph, she does not hesitate, she says nothing, she clasps me to her bosom, she bestrides me, she deluges me with kisses, and in short in a single instant she deprives me of all my faculties except the one I do not want to have for her. I use my only remaining moment of reflection to tell myself I am a fool, that Leah was nothing if not intelligent and that she knew human nature far better than I did. In no time my caresses become as ardent as hers, she lets me devour her breasts, and she brings me to the point of death on the surface of the tomb, in which to my astonishment she convinces me that she could not bury me except by unlocking it.

"My dear Leah," I said to her after a short silence, "I adore you, how can I have hated you, how can you have wanted me to hate you? Is it possible that you came here into my arms only to humiliate me, to win a vain victory? If that is your idea, I forgive you; but you are wrong, for my enjoyment is far more delicious, believe me, than any pleasure you can feel from your revenge."

"No, my dear friend. I am here neither to triumph, nor to avenge myself, nor to win a shameful victory; I am here to give you the greatest proof of my love, and to make you my true conqueror. Make me happy in an instant: break this barrier which I have preserved unbroken until now despite its weakness and despite Nature; and if the sacrifice I make you allows you still to doubt the sincerity of my affection, it will be you who will become the most wicked, the most unworthy of men."

At that, without losing any more time than was demanded by a small arrangement dear even to an impatient love, I gathered a fruit the greatest novelty of which was its sweetness. On Leah's beautiful face I saw the extraordinary symptom of a delicious pain, and in her first ecstasy I felt her whole person trembling with the excess of pleasure which flooded it. The pleasure I felt seemed to me entirely new; determined not to let it reach its climax until I could not possibly prevent it, I kept Leah inseparable from me until three hours after midnight, and I aroused all her gratitude by making her receive my melting soul in the palm of her beautiful hand. Seeing me dead a moment later, she said that it was only justice, and we parted content, in love, and sure of each other. I slept until noon, and, when I saw her reappear, the thought of my leaving made me sad. I told her so, and she begged me to put it off as long as I possibly could. I told her that we would settle it that night. I got up, and meanwhile she carried away the sheet on which the maid would have seen the signs of our criminal connection. We dined most voluptuously. Mordecai, having become my table companion, prided himself on showing me that he was not miserly. I spent the afternoon at the Consul's, with whom I arranged to leave on a Neapolitan warship which was in quarantine and which, after being released, was to go to Trieste; so I was to spend another month in Ancona, and I adored Providence. I gave the Consul the gold box which I had had from the Elector of Cologne, removing his portrait from it. Three or four days later he gave me forty zecchini for it; it was all I needed. My stay in Ancona cost me a great deal; but when I told Mordecai that I should spend another month in his house he peremptorily declared that he would have no more of my feeding him at my table; so Leah was left to dine with me alone. I have always believed that the Jew knew that his daughter did not refuse me her favors. Jews are not difficult in this respect, for, knowing that a son which one of us might give to one of their women would be a Jew, they think that letting us do so is getting the better of us. But I spared my dear Leah.

What tokens of gratitude and increased affection when I told her that I should stay in her house another month! What blessings on the storm which had kept me from going to Fiume! We went to bed together every night, even on those on which the Jewish law[30] excommunicates the woman who indulges in love. I left Leah the little heart, which might have been worth ten zecchini; but she would accept nothing for having taken care of my linen for six weeks. In addition, she gave me six fine Indian handkerchiefs; I met her again in Pesaro six years later. I will speak of her then. I left Ancona on November 14th, and I arrived at Trieste on the 15th, going to lodge at the Locanda Grande.[31]

CHAPTER IX

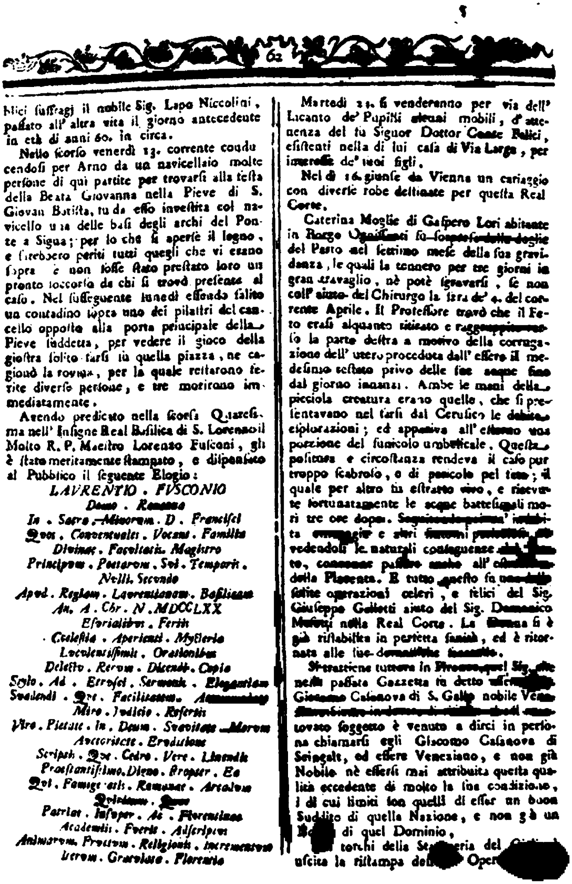
Pittoni. Zaguri. The Procurator Morosini. The Venetian Consul. Görz. The French Consul. Signora Leo. My devotion to the Tribunal of the State Inquisitors. Strasoldo. The Carniolan girl. General Burghausen.

THE INNKEEPER comes to ask my name, I strike my bargain with him, I find I am very well lodged on the third floor, and my bed is good. The next day I go to the post office for my letters, which had been awaiting me for a month. In one from Signor Dandolo I find another, unsealed, from the patrician Marco Donà[1] to Baron Pittoni,[2] the Chief of Police, recommending me in strong terms. I take a conveyance to his house, I present the letter to him, naming myself, and, without reading it, he tells me that Signor Donà had written him about me, and that he would show me every consideration at every opportunity. I then take a letter from Mordecai to the Jew Moses Levi,[3] in which I did not know that he had mentioned me; so I leave it at his office in his house. The Jew Levi, who proved to be sensible, amiable, and very well off, came to my apartment the next morning to offer me his services in every respect. He gave me the letter to read; I was the only subject of it; he told him that if I happened to need a hundred zecchini he would vouch for me, and that any favors he would do me he would consider done to himself.

I felt it incumbent on me to write Mordecai a most cordial letter of thanks and to offer him all my credit in Venice if he needed it. What a difference between Baron Pittoni's cold reception[4] and the Jew Levi's! Baron Pittoni, who was ten or twelve years younger than I, was amiable, amusing, well versed in literature, and without prejudices. At odds with all economy, he disapproved of the law of mine and thine, he left the conduct of his small house to his valet, who robbed him; but he did not protest, for he knew it. He was a bachelor on principle, a great panegyrist of celibacy, gallant with the fair sex, and the friend and protector of all libertines. Lazy and indolent, he was prone to an unforgivable absent-mindedness, which subjected him to the misfortune of often forgetting very important business of the greatest consequence to his official functions. He was said to be given to lying, but it was not true; he did not tell the truth because, having forgotten it, he could not tell it. I have portrayed his character as I learned to know it a month after making his acquaintance. We were good friends, and we are still good friends.

After announcing my arrival in Trieste to my friends in Venice, I spent a week or ten days in my room putting together the notes I had collected in Warsaw on everything that had happened in Poland after the death of Elizabeth Petrovna. I embarked on a history of the troubles[5] down to the partition which was being made at the time I was writing. This event, of which I had published a prediction[6] when, on the election of King Poniatowski, the Polish Diet recognized the Czarina who has just died as Empress of All the Russias, and the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia, inspired me to write the whole history down to the partition; but I published only the first three volumes of it because of the dishonesty of the printer,[7] who did not fulfill the conditions on which we had agreed. The other four volumes will be found in manuscript after my death,[8] and whoever comes into possession of my papers may publish them if he pleases. It has become a matter of indifference to me, like so many other things since my time has shown me stupidity enthroned in absolute supremacy.

Poland, which no longer exists today, would still exist as it was at the death of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony, but for the ambition of the Czartoryski family, which Count Brühl, the King's Prime Minister, humiliated. To avenge himself, Augustus Czartoryski, Palatine of Russia, ruined his native country. Passion so blinded his profound intelligence that he forgot that the power of axioms, and especially in politics, is invincible. Having made up his mind not only to deny the House of Saxony any possibility of succeeding to the throne of Poland but also to dethrone the reigning monarch, and needing the friendship of the Czarina and the Elector of Brandenburg[9] to accomplish his design, he made the Diet recognize them, the former as Empress of All the Russias and the latter as King of Prussia. Failing that, the two sovereigns, who were perfectly in agreement, would not treat with the Republic. The Republic was right in not wanting to give them those titles, for it was the Republic which possessed the principal Russias, and the Republic which was King of Prussia, since the Elector of Brandenburg possessed only the Duchy of Prussia.[10] The Palatine of Russia, Czartoryski, blinded by his desire for revenge, proved to the Diet that the recognition meant nothing if the sovereigns wanted only the honor of the titles and undertook never to exercise their prerogatives. The sovereigns declared that they demanded only the titles; and the Republic acceded and granted them, and the Palatine of Russia had the pleasure of seeing Stanislaus Poniatowski, the son of his sister Constance, on the throne. I told the Palatine at the time that the titles granted gave



blici ſuffragj il nobile Sig. Lapo Niccolini, paſſato all' altra vita il giorno antecedente in età di anni 60. in circa.

Nello ſcorſo venerdì 13. corrente conducendoſi per Arno da un navicellaio molte perſone di qui partite per trovarſi alla feſta della Beata Giovanna nella Pieve di S. Giovan Batiſta, fu da eſſo inveſtita col navicello una delle baſi degli archi del Ponte a Signa; per lo che ſi aperſe il legno, e ſarebbero periti tutti quegli che vi erano ſopra e non foſſe ſtato preſtato loro un pronto ſoccorſo da chi ſi trovò preſente al caſo. Nel ſuſſeguente lunedì eſſendo ſalito un contadino ſopra uno dei pilaſtri del cancello oppoſto alla porta principale della Pieve ſuddetta, per vedere il gioco della gioſtra ſolito farſi in quella piazza, ne cagionò la rovina, per la quale reſtarono ferite diverſe perſone, e tre morirono immediatamente.

Avendo predicato nella ſcorſa Quareſima nell' Inſigne Real Baſilica di S. Lorenzo il Molto R. P. Maeſtro Lorenzo Fuſconi, gli è ſtato meritamente ſtampato, e diſpenſato al Pubblico il ſeguente Elogio:

LAVRENTIO . FVSCONIO
Domo . Romano
In . Sacro . Minorum . D . Franciſci
Quos . Conventuales . Vocant . Familia
Divinae . Facultatis . Magiſtro
Principum . Poetarum . Sui . Temporis .
Nelli . Secundo
Apud . Regiam . Laurentianam . Baſilicam
An . A . Chr . N . MDCCLXX
Eſurialibus . Feriis
Caeleſtia . Aperienti . Myſteria
Luculentiſſimis . Orationibus
Delectu . Rerum . Dicendi . Copia
Stylo . Ad . Etruſci . Sermonis . Elegantiam
Suadendi . Qua . Facilitatem . Admirandam
Miro . Iudicio . Refertis
Viro . Pietate . In . Deum . Suavitate . Morum
Auctoritate . Eruditione
Scriptis . Quae . Cedro . Vere . Linendis
Praeſtantiſſimo . Digno . Propter . Ea
Qui . Famigeratis . Romanae . Arcadum
Quiritium . Quae
Patriae . Inſuper . Ac . Florentinae
Academiis . Fuerit . Adſcriptus
Animarum . Pretium . Religionis . Incrementum
Iterum . Gratulata . Florentia

Martedì 24. ſi venderanno per via dell' Incanto de' Pupilli alcuni mobili, d'attenenza del fu Signor Dottor Conte Felici, eſiſtenti nella di lui caſa di Via Larga, per intereſſe de' ſuoi figli.

Nel dì 16. giunſe da Vienna un cariaggio con diverſe robe deſtinate per queſta Real Corte.

Caterina Moglie di Gaſpero Lori abitante in Borgo Ogniſſanti fu ſorpreſa dalle doglie del Parto nel ſettimo meſe della ſua gravidanza, le quali la tennero per tre giorni in gran travaglio, nè potè ſgravarſi, ſe non coll' aiuto del Chirurgo la ſera de' 4. del corrente Aprile. Il Profeſſore trovò che il Feto eraſi alquanto ritirato e ragg[illegible]ſo la parte deſtra a motivo della corrugazione dell' utero proceduta dall' eſſere il medeſimo reſtato privo delle ſue acque fino dal giorno innanzi. Ambe le mani della picciola creatura erano quelle, che ſi preſentavano nel farſi dal Ceruſico le debite eſplorazioni; ed appariva all' eſterno una porzione del funicolo umbelicale. Queſta poſitura e circoſtanza rendeva il caſo pur troppo ſcabroſo, e di pericolo pel feto; il quale per altro fu eſtratto vivo, e ricevute fortunatamente le acque batteſimali morì tre ore dopo. [illegible] inibita emorragia e altri ſintomi pericoloſi, e vedendoſi le naturali conſeguenze [illegible]to, convenne paſſare anche all' e[illegible] della Placenta. E tutto queſto fu [illegible] ſolite operazioni celeri, e felici del Sig. Giuſeppe Galletti aiuto del Sig. Domenico Meſny nella Real Corte. La Donna ſi è già riſtabilita in perfetta ſanità, ed è ritornata alle ſue domeſtiche incombenze.

Si trattiene tuttora in Firenze quel Sig. che nella paſſata Gazzetta fu detto eſſere il Sig. Giacomo Caſanova di S. Gallo nobile Vene[illegible] lodato ſoggetto è venuto a dirci in perſona chiamarſi egli Giacomo Caſanova di Seingalt, ed eſſere Veneziano, e non già Nobile nè eſſerſi mai attribuita queſta qualità eccedente di molto la ſua condizione, i di cui limiti ſon quelli di eſſer un buon Suddito di quella Nazione, e non già un [illegible] di quel Dominio.

[illegible] torchi della Sta[illegible]ria del [illegible] uſcita la riſtampa del[illegible] Oper[illegible]

Casanova's Denial of His Having Claimed to Be of Noble Birth

them a real right, and that the promise never to make use of them would be meaningless or illusory, and that they would not have demanded them if they had not understood their importance. Though laughingly, for I could not discuss it except in a jesting tone, I told him again and again that, in consequence of the recognition, the whole of Europe must thenceforth regard Poland as no more than the depositary of White, Red, and Black Russia and of the Kingdom of Prussia, and that sooner or later the successors of the recognized sovereigns would relieve the depositary Republic of the burden of the deposit. It was not their successors but the sovereigns themselves who dismembered the Republic, but not on the strength of their titles. Policy, which always maintains a decent exterior, made it unnecessary for them to use them. The same sovereigns who then dismembered it finally divided it between them last year. The second extraordinary blunder which Poland, of which Czartoryski was then the soul, committed was not remembering the fable of the man and the horse[11] and applying it to protection. The Roman Republic became mistress of the entire then known world only by first becoming the protector of the countries which she appropriated. For this reason alone every sovereign asked for protection does not hesitate for an instant before granting it; it is the first step toward becoming the guardian, and from guardian the father, and then the master of his dear ward, if only to look after the latter's inheritance. It was thus that my mistress the Republic of Venice became mistress of the Kingdom of Cyprus, which the Grand Turk later took away from her in order to dispose of the good wine which is made there, despite the fact that the Koran ought to make him hate it.[12] Venice today exists only to her eternal shame.[13]

In short, ambition, revenge, and stupidity were the ruin of Poland, but most of all stupidity. The same stupidity, often the child of kindliness and indolence, began to ruin France on the accession of the too unfortunate Louis XVI.[14] Every king who has been dethroned must have been stupid, for no nation on earth has a king except by force. For this reason a stupid king must have an intelligent prime minister and make him very powerful. The King of France perished because of his stupidity, and France will perish because of the stupidity of that ferocious, mad, ignorant nation, blinded by its very intelligence and always fanatical. The disease which now reigns in France would be curable in any other country, but France it will lead to the tomb, and I have not intelligence enough to guess what she will become. The French *émigrés* may inspire pity in some, but not in me, for I hold that, if they had remained steadfastly in the kingdom, they could have opposed force to force and have spent their money having the firebrands killed without giving them time to kill the nation. History shows us no example of an assembly of imbecile peasants who, blinded by their position, imagine that that is possible which forty centuries prove to be impossible.[15] A headless body can endure only for a time, for reason lies in the brain, whose seat is the head.

On the first day of December Baron Pittoni sent me his valet to ask me to go to his house, where there was someone who had come from Venice expressly to see me. Extremely curious, I hastily dress, and the Baron introduces to me a prepossessing man thirty-five or forty years of age, elegantly clad, with a handsome, smiling face, who looks at me with what appears to be the greatest interest.

"My heart tells me," I said to him, "that Your Excellency is Signor Zaguri, for I see the style of your letters in your handsome countenance."

"Exactly so, my dear Casanova; as soon as my friend Dandolo told me, three days ago, that you are here, I decided to come and embrace you and congratulate you on your return to your country, which will certainly be an accomplished fact if not this year then next year at the latest, when I hope to see installed as State Inquisitors two men whom I have sometimes found not to be deaf and even to speak out. What must give you no slight proof of my friendship is that I have come to see you despite the fact that, being now an Avogador,[16] the law does not allow me to leave the capital. We shall spend all of today and tomorrow together."

After replying appropriately, making a particular point of the great honor his visit did me, I hear Baron Pittoni asking me to excuse him for not having gone to call on me, assuring me that it had slipped his mind, and a handsome old man asking His Excellency to persuade me to come to dinner at his house with him, though he had not the honor of knowing me.

"What!" Signor Zaguri said to him, "Casanova has been in this small city for ten days, and the Venetian Consul does not know him?"

"It is my fault," I said very quickly. "I thought I should insult him by going to make my bow to him, since the Consul might consider me contraband merchandise."

He replied wittily that from then on he would consider me merchandise which was in Trieste only under quarantine before returning to its country, and that his house would always be open to me, as the Venetian Consul's had been in Ancona.

By this answer the Consul intended to inform me that he knew all about me. His name was Marco Monti.[17] He was a man full of intelligence and experience, very amiable in company, making very amusing remarks, very eloquent, graceful in narrative, and always giving his stories a turn which made his listeners laugh, and at the same time having the gift of not laughing himself at what he was narrating and deliberately making ridiculous. Since I had something of the same gift myself, we were instantly on good terms, becoming rivals in the art of anecdote. Though he had the advantage of me by thirty years, I was a not unworthy match for him, and when we were together at gatherings there was no need for play to pass the time. This worthy man's friendship, which I was able to win, was extremely useful to me during the two years I spent there,[18] and I have always believed that he contributed greatly to my obtaining a pardon, the one object of my wishes at that time, for I was attacked by the malady which the Germans call *Heimweh,* "return." The Greeks called it nostalgia.[19] Its power is so great that the Swiss and the Slavonians die of it in a very short time. I might not have died of it if I had treated it with scorn, and I should not have gone to waste nine years in the ungrateful bosom of my stepmother.[20]

So I dined with Signor Zaguri at the Consul's with a numerous company, and the next day at the Governor's, who was a Count Auersperg.[21] This visit from a Venetian Avogador made me a personage entitled to the greatest consideration. I could no longer be regarded as an exile. I was treated as a man whom the Venetian Government itself could not demand, for, having left my country only to escape from an illegal imprisonment, the Government, none of whose laws I had broken, could not consider me guilty.

On the next morning but one I accompanied Signor Zaguri to Görz, where he stayed for three days, since he could not refuse the honors which the very distinguished nobility of that city wanted to accord him. I was included in all their invitations to him, and I saw that a foreigner in Görz could live there in great freedom and enjoy all the pleasures of society. There I made the acquaintance of a Count Cobenzl,[22] who may still be alive, wise, generous, and a man of wide reading without the least pretension; he gave a formal dinner for Signor Zaguri, and it was there that I was introduced to four ladies in every respect worthy of all homage. I made the acquaintance of Count Torres,[23] whose father, a Lieutenant-General in the Imperial service, was Spanish. He had taken a wife at the age of sixty, and, having married a woman as prolific as she was intelligent, he had five children all as ugly as himself. His daughter, who had been very well brought up, was very attractive despite her ugliness, for in intelligence and character she resembled her mother. The eldest son, who squinted, was so intelligent that it made him a fool. A libertine, a swaggerer, an inveterate liar, never mincing his words, malicious, a gossip, his company was sought because he told stories well, he said witty things, and he made people laugh. If he had studied he would have been a great scholar, for his memory was prodigious. It was he who vainly guaranteed the contract[24] I made with the printer Valerio de' Valeri to publish my *History of the Troubles in Poland.* During those two days I also made the acquaintance of a Count Coronini,[25] who had made a name for himself in the *Journal des Savants*[26] by publishing essays on diplomacy which he wrote in Latin. No one read them; people preferred according him the name of scholar for nothing to taking the trouble to read them.

I made the acquaintance of a young gentleman, Morelli,[27] who had written a history of Görz and who was then about to publish the first volume of it. He gave me the manuscript, asking me to read it at my leisure in Trieste and to correct what needed correcting, and I did it for him. I returned it to him after finding nothing to criticize in it, and thus I gained his friendship. He would have liked me less if I had taken the trouble to write critical remarks on it separately. I became a great friend of Count Karl Coronini,[28] who had every talent. He was an only son. Having married in the Netherlands a woman with whom he could not live, he had retired to his estate, where he amused himself pursuing little love affairs, hunting, and reading the political and literary news of the day. He laughed at those who said that there was not a happy man on earth, whereas he was happy and he was sure that he was so because he felt it. He was right; but he died of an apostem[29] of the head at the age of thirty-five years. The pains which killed him will have taught him better. Besides, it is not true either that there is a man in the world who feels happy at every hour, or that there is one who always feels unhappy. Whether happiness or unhappiness is more or less cannot be judged, for each is relative and depends upon character, temperament, and circumstances. Nor is it true that virtue makes a man happy, for there are virtues the practice of which brings suffering, and all suffering excludes happiness.

I accompanied the charming Zaguri as far as the border, together with Baron Pittoni, and I returned to Trieste with him. The Abate Pini,[30] an ecclesiastical advocate well versed in the dissolution of marriages, was with the amiable Venetian whose coming set the tone for all the courtesies which the society of Trieste showed me until I left. In three or four days Pittoni introduced me at every house, and at the Casino, to which no one could go except the select of the city. The Casino was in the inn at which I was staying. The woman who struck me was a Lutheran Venetian, the daughter of a German banker and the wife of David Büchelin,[31] a Swabian man of business established in Trieste. Pittoni was in love with her, and remained so until her death. Like Petrarch his Laura, he loved her for twelve years, always sighing, always hoping, and never obtaining anything. This rare woman, whose baptismal name was Zanetta, and whose husband was not jealous, was pretty, sang very well, accompanying herself on the harpsichord, and did the honors of her house to perfection; but the sweetness of her character and the evenness of her temper distinguished her even more than all the other gifts which Nature and education had bestowed on her. I needed no more than three days to discover that the woman was unconquerable, and, though vainly, I gave due warning of it to poor Baron Pittoni, whom she always distinguished above all her other suitors, though never straying from the conjugal fidelity which she had promised to her husband and, far more inviolably, to herself. She did not enjoy good health, but one would have found it hard to believe it of her if everyone in the city had not known it. She died young, very peacefully.

A few days after Signor Zaguri left, I received a note from the Consul telling me that His Excellency the Procurator Morosini[32] had arrived in Trieste during the night and was lodging at my inn. He was informing me of this, he said, because, if I knew him, I should seize the opportunity to pay my court to him. I was greatly obliged to my dear Consul for giving me this advice, for Signor Morosini was very much of a bigwig, both because of his eminent station as Procurator of San Marco and because it had become his turn to be a Savio Grande.[33] He had known me from my boyhood, and my reader may remember that in the year 1750 he had presented me to the Maréchal de Richelieu at Fontainebleau[34] when the self-styled Signora Querini was there to make a conquest of Louis XV.

So I quickly dressed as if I were to appear before a monarch, and I went to his anteroom to have myself announced, telling him who I was in a note. He came out of his room to receive me, and he expressed his pleasure in seeing me in the most gracious terms. When he learned for what reason I was staying in Trieste, and my desire to return to my country after so many vicissitudes, he assured me that he would do everything in his power to obtain me that favor from the redoubtable Tribunal, from which he thought that a subject like myself could ask it after seventeen years. He thanked me for looking after his nephew in Florence,[35] and he kept me with him all that day, which I spent giving him a detailed account of the principal adventures which had befallen me in my lifetime. Delighted to learn that Signor Zaguri was prepared to do everything for me, he told me to write to him that they should lay plans together, and he most cordially recommended me to the Consul, who, constantly writing to the Secretary of the Tribunal of the State Inquisitors, was delighted to be able to inform him of the marks of esteem which the Procurator had bestowed on me, at the same time letting him know that he himself was under an obligation to treat me with the greatest consideration.

After Signor Morosini left, I began to enjoy life in Trieste as I needed to if I was to stay there for any considerable length of time and in accordance with the economy which I must practice, for my only certain income was fifteen zecchini a month. So I never played cards, and at dinnertime I went every day to take pot luck at the houses of those who had invited me once and for all and who I was sure would enjoy my company. They were the Venetian Consul, the French Consul,[36] who was eccentric but a man of honor and who had a good cook, Pittoni, and a number of others; as for the pleasure of love, I sought out young girls of no consequence, thus spending very little and running no risk to my health.

It was toward the end of the Carnival that, at a ball given in the theater after the play, a masker dressed as Harlequin introduced me to his Harlequiness. They played pranks on me, and, the Harlequiness having interested me, I wanted very much to make her acquaintance. After a great many fruitless inquiries, Monsieur de Saint-Sauveur, the French Consul, told me that the Harlequin was a young lady of rank, and the Harlequiness a handsome youth, and that if I wished he would introduce me to the family of the Harlequin, who, dressed in girl's clothes, would interest me much more than her young male companion. In the course of the pranks they played on me until the end of the ball, I politely and decently convinced myself that the Consul had not deceived me in regard to the false Harlequin, and, curious to see her face, I demanded that he keep his promise on the second day of Lent. Thus it was that I made the acquaintance of Signora Leo,[37] a clever woman who had led a fast life but who was still attractive. She had a husband, an only son, and six daughters, all rather pretty; but the one who particularly pleased me was the Harlequin.[38] I fell in love with her, but, being thirty years older than she, and having begun by showing her only a fatherly fondness, a sense of shame which was something entirely new in my character prevented me from doing anything to convince her that my affection was that of a lover, so I never asked anything of her which went beyond the limits which may be considered the boundary line between the two feelings.

After Easter of the year 1773 the Governor of Trieste, Count Auersperg, was summoned to Vienna, and Count Wagensperg[39] came to take his place. His eldest daughter, Countess Lantieri,[40] who was as beautiful as a star, kindled a fire in my soul which would have made me unhappy if I had not had the strength to hide it under the veil of a great respect. I celebrated the new Governor's arrival in some verses which I published,[41] and, enumerating the virtues of the father, I praised the daughter's rare qualities. My homage pleased them, I began paying assiduous court to them, the Count-Governor took a liking to me, and proved it by confidences which he intended I should use to forward my own affairs. He did not tell me so, but it was easy to guess what he had in mind.

The Consul told me that he had been vainly trying for years to persuade the Government of Trieste to allow the diligence which made the journey between Mestre and that city once a week to lengthen it only one stage[42] by passing through Udine, the capital of Venetian Friuli. Its going through Udine, he said,[43] would be of great advantage to the commerce of the two States,[44] and the Council of Trieste would not agree to it for a reason as specious as it was irrelevant. The members of the Commercial Council of Trieste, all of them profound political schemers, said that if the Republic of Venice was so much in favor of the thing it was the clearest proof that it would be of advantage to it, and that, if that were so, it could not but be disadvantageous to the people of Trieste. The Consul assured me that if I could get the thing done I should so ingratiate myself with the Inquisitors that, if it did not obtain me a pardon, I should at least have earned their consideration, and that I should trust to his friendship for guidance in the matter as well as for his reporting my efforts in terms which would give me all the credit I should deserve from them. I replied that I would think it over.

I let no grass grow under my feet before I broached the matter to the Count-Governor, who, being acquainted with it, assured me that he considered the stubbornness of the Commercial Council scandalous; but he added that there seemed to be nothing he could do about it, for the decision did not lie with him. He told me that Councilor Rizzi[45] was the most pig-headed of them, and indeed was the one whose sophisms led all the others to think as he did. He advised me to submit a memorandum to him, in which, treating the subject from every point of view, I should prove that by going through Udine the diligence would be of much greater advantage to Trieste, which was a free port,[46] than to Udine,[47] whose commerce was very small. He said that he would send my memorandum to the Council without saying who had submitted it to him, and that, asserting that he was convinced himself, he would lay it on the dissenting Councilors to refute my arguments by convincing reasons, and he assured me that he would say in full Council that, if the thing was not done, he would send the memorandum to Vienna with his recommendation.

Seeing that I was on sure ground, I wrote a memorandum to which no one could reply except by tergiversating. The Council decreed that in future the diligence should pass through Udine both going and returning, and it was to me that Count Wagensperg gave the copy of their decree. I at once took it to the Consul, and, following his advice, I wrote the Secretary of the Tribunal that I considered myself fortunate to have succeeded in giving the Tribunal a proof of my eagerness to be useful to my country and worthy to be granted the favor of being allowed to return to it when Their Excellencies should decide that I had finally deserved it.

The Governor did not publish the new decree concerning the diligence until a week later, so the Government of Udine learned from the Tribunal that the thing was done before the city of Trieste was informed of it. It was thought that the Tribunal, which does everything secretly, had accomplished it by dint of money. The Secretary did not answer me, but he wrote the Consul a letter, which he showed me, in which he ordered him to give me an honorarium of a hundred silver ducati, which is equal to four hundred francs in French currency. He told him that it was to encourage me, and that I could hope for everything from the clemency of the Tribunal if I could resolve the great problem of the Armenians,[48] of which the Consul could give me the details.

He set it forth to me in a quarter of an hour, and I at first thought I could not resolve it; but I was not ready to despair; nothing, I told myself, is beyond hope.

Four Armenian monks had deserted [49] from the Monastery of San Lazzaro in Venice, tired of suffering under the tyranny of their Abbot. They had very rich relatives in Constantinople, and, making light of the excommunication which their Abbot had fulminated against them, calling them apostates, they had gone to Vienna to ask for asylum and protection, promising to be useful to the State by setting up a press which would supply books in Armenian to all the monasteries of Armenians established in the vast domains of the Turkish Empire. They undertook to expend the sum of a million florins in whatever place Their Imperial and Royal Majesties of Austria would permit them to settle both to establish their press on a large scale and to buy or build a house in which they proposed to live in community, though they were without a head. The Austrian Government not only acceded to their request at once but also granted them privileges. It was a matter of ousting Venice from her place in this branch of commerce and giving it to Austria. The Cabinet in Vienna hit upon the idea of sending them to Trieste with a strong recommendation to the Governor, and they had been there for six months. The State Inquisitors justifiably wanted to make them return to Venice, and, having failed to accomplish it by direct means, that is, through the action of their Abbot, who had offered them great compensations, they were using all secret means to raise obstacles to them in Trieste which would discourage them from remaining there. The Consul told me sincerely that he had declined to undertake the business because he had thought it impossible, and he predicted that if I undertook it I should waste my time.

It was certain that in a matter of this nature I could not count on the Governor's friendship, and that I must not even mention it to him or give him any reason to suspect that I would try to make the monks abandon their project, for, aside from his duty, his particularly zealous interest in forwarding the commerce of Trieste impelled him to do all that he could to make the monks succeed in their project. Despite all this, I began by striking up an acquaintance with them on the pretext of going to see their Armenian types,[50] which they had already had cast, and a stock of precious stones and minerals which had come to them from Constantinople. In a week or ten days I became intimate with them. One day I said to them that, if only to free themselves from their excommunication, their honor demanded that they return to the obedience they had vowed to their Abbot. The most obstinate of them replied that he was sure that their Patriarch,[51] absolving them from their excommunication, would give them a head, and that a number of monks would come from the Levant to found a new monastery in Trieste. Another day I asked them what conditions they would impose on their former Abbot as the price of returning to Venice; and the most reasonable of them replied that their first condition would be that the Abbot should recover the four hundred thousand ducati which he had entrusted to the Marchese Serpos[52] at four per cent interest.

The four hundred thousand ducati constituted the capital of the Monastery of San Lazzaro, where the Armenian Basilians had been established for three centuries.[53] It was the nation which had raised the capital; the Abbot could not dispose of it even with the consent of the majority of his monks. If the Marchese Serpos went bankrupt, the monastery would be left destitute. Yet it was true that the Abbot had transferred the amount to him on his own authority.

The Marchese Serpos was an Armenian merchant, established in Venice, who dealt entirely in precious stones; he was an intimate friend of the Abbot.

I then asked the monks what their other conditions would be, and they replied that they concerned only discipline and would give rise to no difficulties which could not be settled; but they said that they would put them all in writing when I could assure them that the Marchese Serpos was no longer in possession of their capital.

So began my negotiations; I wrote everything down, I gave the Consul my memorandum, which he sent to the Tribunal, and six weeks later I received the answer that the Abbot would find means to deposit the amount in question in a bank, but that he wanted first to know exactly what the matters of discipline were.

When I read this counterproposal, which was in direct contradiction to what I had written, for the parties were completely at odds, I determined to abandon the business.

But what impelled me to get rid of it very quickly was a few words which Count Wagensperg said to me.[54] He gave me to understand that he knew I was trying to reconcile the monks with their Abbot, and that he regretted it, for I could not succeed except by harming the country in which I was living and which I should treat as a friend, for it treated me as such. At that I immediately told him in all sincerity just where the matter stood, assuring him that I should never have entered into negotiating it if I had not been inwardly certain that I should never succeed, for I had learned directly from Venice that there was absolutely no doubt that the Marchese Serpos could not return the four hundred thousand ducati to the Abbot. He understood my position. The Armenians bought Councilor Rizzi's house for thirty thousand florins and went to live in it; I went to see them from time to time, but never again spoke to them about returning to Venice. But now for the last proof of his friendship which Count Wagensperg gave me, for he died that autumn at the age of fifty years.

One morning he stopped after reading a long memorandum which he had just received from Vienna, and he said he was sorry I did not understand German, for he would give it to me to read.

"Here is the substance of it," he said, "and a way to make you honored in your country at no risk of displeasing those whose official position obliges them to secure every possible advantage to our commerce. I am going to confide something to you which you must never say you learned from me, but which can be of great profit to you whether you succeed or fail in your efforts, for your patriotism will be appreciated, the diligence with which you communicate the matter will earn you thanks, and your cleverness in discovering the thing will be set to your credit. At the same time, there will be no need for you to say how you discovered it. Say no more than that you would not communicate it if you were not certain of it.

"All merchandise," he went on, "which is sent from our country to Lombardy goes through the Venetian State, and through Venice itself, where, after having passed through the customs, it is placed in warehouses as merchandise in transit. This has always been the case, it is so now, and it can be so in the future if the Venetian Government will make up its mind to diminish by at least one half what it makes us pay for storing our goods. The four per cent it makes us pay is too much. A project has been presented to the Court, which has immediately approved it, and here is the order I have received to execute it without even notifying the Venetian Government beforehand, for the operation is not such that we consider it our duty, as a friendly Power, to communicate it before putting it into execution. In the matter of shipment, every State is free; if it ships through, it pays; if it does not ship through, the place it avoids can neither demand anything of it nor complain if it ships through some other place. Such is the present case. In future whatever we send to Lombardy will no longer pass through the Venetian State. Everything will be put on board here, and will be taken to La Messola[55] to be unloaded. That port, which belongs to the Duke of Modena, is opposite to us. The Gulf is crossed in a night, and our merchandise will be stored there in warehouses which we shall build at once. You see that we shorten the voyage by more than half, and that the State of Modena will demand only the usual small toll, which does not come to a quarter of what we pay the Venetians. Add to that the smaller costs for cartage, and also the time we save. I am certain that if the Republic will inform the Minister of Finance or the Council of Commerce in Vienna that she is ready to diminish the amount she demands by a half, the offer will be eagerly accepted, for new things are always attended by difficulties, demand extraordinary expenditures, and are subject to irregularities due to events which are not foreseen. I will not present this matter to the Council for three or four days yet, for there is no hurry; but it is you who should hurry, for as soon as I make the thing public the Venetian Government will immediately be informed of it by your Consul, and the whole corporation of merchants by their correspondents. I should like to have you be the cause of my receiving an order from Vienna to suspend the operation just when I am about to put it into effect."

I at once saw how greatly it would conduce to my credit if I should be the first to convey this news to the State Inquisitors. Their foible is to astonish by knowing everything before anyone else by means which can never be guessed. After returning His Excellency all the thanks I owed him, I told him I would go to write a report on the matter, which I would send to the State Inquisitors by express messenger after giving it to him to read. He said he would be very glad to read it, which greatly pleased me.

I did not dine that day. In five or six hours I got through everything—draft, copy, and second copy—and I took it all to the Governor, who was delighted by my promptness. He declared it excellent. It was then that I took my report to the Consul. Looking at me in astonishment, he asked me if I was sure it was not all a myth, for he thought it impossible that such a piece of news could have escaped his knowledge and that of all Trieste. I thereupon assured him, as I had written at the end of my report, that I staked my life on the truth of it, at the same time asking him not to insist on my telling him how I had come to know of it. After thinking it over carefully, he said that my report, if it was to be sent by him, would have to go to the Magistracy of the five Savi alla Mercanzia,[56] since, as Consul, he was its agent, and that in consequence he could send it to the State Inquisitors only if I expressly demanded that he do so. So he told me to deliver it to him sealed, and to write him a polite note in which I requested him to send my packet to the Tribunal, asking him to excuse me for not sending it to him unsealed.

"Why," I asked him, "do you want me to show this lack of confidence in your good faith?"

"Because otherwise I should have to vouch for the truth of the thing, and, then too, if I were aware that it was true, the five Savi alla Mercanzia would have reason to blame me, for I am here to serve them, rather than Their Excellencies the State Inquisitors, to whom I owe nothing. So permit me to insist on remaining ignorant of the matter until it comes to my ears as public knowledge. It seems to me that, if it is true, His Excellency the President[57] must know of it, and that before the week is out it will no longer be a secret. Thereupon I will make my report to the five Savi alla Mercanzia, and my duty will be done."

"Then I could send my memorandum directly to your Magistracy, without sending it through you?"

"No. For in the first place you would not be believed. In the second place it would injure me, for, when I transmitted the news, I should be accused of negligence. In the third place my dear master the Magistracy would not give you a copper, and perhaps would not even thank you. If you are certain of this strange novelty, you will play a master stroke by sending it to the Tribunal, and you are sure not only to gain great credit but a fresh reward in money, which should assure you of your credit. If the thing is true I congratulate you with all my heart, but if it is an invention you are ruined, for you lead the redoubtable and infallible Tribunal to make a strange blunder, you can be sure that an hour after the Tribunal is informed of the thing the Magistracy of the five Savi alla Mercanzia will have a copy of it."

"Why a copy?"

"Because you name yourself; and no one is allowed to know the names of Their Excellencies' *confidenti.*"[58]

I did everything that my wise friend advised me to do, and I instantly wrote him the note for which he had asked, I sealed my report in a cover, addressing it to Signor Marcantonio Businello,[59] Secretary to the Tribunal, who was the brother of the one under whose reign I had escaped from the Leads, seventeen years earlier.

The President was pleased the next morning when I told him that I had done everything before midnight. He assured me again that the Venetian Consul should know nothing about the matter until Saturday. But my dear Consul's uneasiness during the five days which passed before the thing became known distressed me: his delicacy kept him from saying anything to me, and on my side I was sorry that I could not reassure his noble soul.

On Saturday when the session of the Council ended, it was Councilor Rizzi who told me the news at the Casino, announcing it as most disadvantageous to Venice, which delighted him, for he claimed that the port of Trieste would very soon reduce the port of Venice to nothing.[60] The Consul arrived while we were still discussing the news; he said that the loss to Venice was only a small matter, but that at the first shipwreck in crossing the Gulf all that the tax for storage cost in ten years would be lost. He said further that the German shippers would lose all that the cartage would cost them for goods which would have to travel back again from La Messola to Venetian Lombardy, and to all our fairs. In short the Consul simply made light of it. His office demanded that he do so. In all small commercial cities like Trieste trifles are magnified out of all proportion.

I went to dine with the Consul, who, when he was at last alone with me, unburdened his soul and confessed all his doubts and fears. On my asking him what he thought the Venetians would do to turn away the blow, he said that they would hold great discussions, after which they would decide on nothing, leaving the Austrian Government to send its merchandise by whatever route it pleased.

And in fact the Consul's prediction was verified. He wrote the news to his Magistracy the same day, and the following week he was told in reply that Their Excellencies had learned of the thing some days earlier through private channels, and that he was to continue to inform the Magistracy of the consequences. It was not until three weeks later that he received a letter from the Secretary of the Tribunal in which he ordered him to give me an honorarium of a hundred silver ducati and to allow me ten zecchini a month to encourage me to deserve well of the Tribunal. It was then that I had no more doubt that I should be granted a pardon before the end of the year; but I was mistaken. I did not receive it until the year following, and I shall speak of it when that time comes. My circumstances were now easy. What I had of my own was not enough to live on, for certain pleasures of which I could not deprive myself cost me a great deal. I was not displeased to find myself in the pay of the same Tribunal which had deprived me of my freedom and whose power I had defied; on the contrary, I felt that I was the victor, and my honor demanded that I make myself useful to it in anything which did not infringe the Law of Nature and the Law of Nations.

A little incident which made the city of Trieste laugh will not fail to amuse my readers. It was at the beginning of the summer; I had just eaten some sardines at the seaside, and I returned to my lodging two hours before midnight. I was about to go to bed, when I see a girl enter my room whom I at once recognize as the maidservant of young Count Strasoldo.[61]

The young Count was handsome, poor, like almost all the Strasoldos, fond of expensive pleasures, and hence in debt; his post brought him only six hundred florins a year, and he spent four times as much. He was polite and generous, and I had several times supped at his house with Pittoni. He had in his service a Carniolan[62] girl of the greatest beauty, whom his friends saw but whom none of them dared to approach, for they knew that he was in love with her and jealous. Bowing to the circumstances, I had seen her, admired her, and praised her in her master's presence, congratulating him on possessing such a treasure; but I had never said so much as a word to her.

Count Strasoldo had been summoned to Vienna by Count Auersperg, who was fond of him and who when he left had promised to keep him in mind. He was to be employed in Poland as Captain of a District;[63] he had taken leave of everyone, he had sold his furniture at auction, and he was on the verge of leaving. Everyone in Trieste knew that he was taking his Carniolan beauty with him; that very morning I had gone to wish him a good journey. So the reader can imagine how surprised I must have been to see his maidservant, who had scarcely even looked at me, in my room at such an hour. I ask her what she wants, and she tells me in a few words that, not wanting to leave with Strasoldo, and not knowing where she could go to hide, she had thought that she could nowhere be as safe as in my room. No one, she said, could guess that she was there, and Strasoldo would set off alone. After he was gone she would at once leave Trieste and go home; she hoped that I would not be cruel enough to send her away; she assured me she would leave the next morning, for Strasoldo was to set off at daybreak, as I should be able to see from my window.

"Charming Lenzica" (such was her name), "you are not a girl to be sent away by anyone, least of all by me, who have always thought you adorable. You are safe here, and I give you my word that no one shall enter this room as long as you are in it. I thank my good fortune which made you think of me; but if it is true that, as everyone says, the Count is in love with you, you'll see that he will not leave. He will stay here at least all of tomorrow looking for you."

"He will look for me everywhere except here. Will you promise me that you will not make me leave this room even if the devil tells him I am here?"

"I give you my word of honor for it a hundred times over. You understand, I hope, that you cannot avoid sharing my bed?"

"Alas! If I shall not be a burden to you, I consent to it."

"Be a burden to me, you say? You shall see. So, my charming Lenzica, go and undress. Where are all your belongings?"

"Everything I have is in a small trunk which has already been tied to the carriage, but I don't care about that."

"He must be in a fury at this moment."

"He will not come back until midnight. He is supping with Signora Bissolotti,[64] who is in love with him."

So saying, she got into bed, and, after eight months of abstinence, I spent a delicious night. After Leah I had had only casual pleasures which lasted but a quarter of an hour and on which I did not congratulate myself afterward. Lenzica was so perfect a beauty that, if I had been rich, I would have set myself up in a house in order to keep her in my service. We did not wake until seven o'clock, when she got up and, seeing the carriage at Strasoldo's door, she said to me sadly that I had guessed right. I comforted her, assuring her again that she was free to stay with me as long as she pleased. I was sorry not to have a closet, for I could not hide her from the waiter who would have brought us coffee. We had to go without breakfast. I needed to think of some way to bring her food, but I had plenty of time. But there was a surprise in store for me. At ten o'clock I saw Strasoldo enter the inn with his intimate friend Pittoni. I go out into the hall, and I see them both talking to my landlord.

Then I see them go into the Casino and afterward enter and leave a number of apartments on every floor; I see what must be afoot, and I laughingly tell Lenzica that they are looking for her and that they will certainly come to pay us a visit; she urges me to keep my promise, and I reassure her. I understand very well that I cannot keep them from entering my room without giving them reason to guess the truth.

I hear them coming, and at that I go out and close my door, asking them to excuse me if I could not let them enter, for I had a piece of contraband.

"Only tell me," said Strasoldo in a pitiable voice, "that you haven't got my Carniolan in your room. We are certain that she entered the inn at ten o'clock last night; the guard at the door saw her."

"Very well. She is in my room, and I have given her my word that no one shall use violence on her. And you can be sure that I will keep it"

"I don't want violence used on her either; but I am sure that she will come with me of her own free will if I can talk with her."

"I will see if she is willing. Wait outside here."

She had heard everything. She told me that I could bring them in. She was the first to speak, proudly asking Strasoldo if she had contracted any obligation to him, if he could accuse her of having robbed him, in short if she was not free to leave him. He gently replied that, on the contrary, it was he who owed her a year's wages, and that he had her trunk with her belongings, but that she was wrong to leave him for no reason as she was doing.

"The reason," she replied, "is my will. I do not want to go to Vienna. I have been telling you so for a week. If you are a man of honor you will leave me my trunk, and, as for my wages, if you have no money now you can send them to me at Laibach[65] in care of my aunt."

Strasoldo then put an end to my pitying him, for after descending to the most groveling entreaties, he burst into tears. It disgusted me. But I was very near to losing patience when Pittoni told me I ought to turn the hussy out of my room. I said to him firmly that it was not for him to teach me my duty, and that I did not agree that the girl was a hussy. Changing his tone, he began to laugh and asked me if I could possibly have fallen in love with her in the short space of a night. Strasoldo interrupted him to say he was sure she had not slept with me, and she told him he was mistaken, for there was only one bed.

Toward noon they left, and poor Lenzica could not find words enough to thank me. The need for secrecy being thus ended, I had dinner for two sent up, and, the carriage still being there, I promised that I would stay with her and never go out so long as Strasoldo remained in Trieste.

At three o'clock the Venetian Consul came to tell me that Strasoldo had come to him and implored his good offices to persuade me to give him back Lenzica. I told him that it was to her that he should address himself, and, when he had heard the whole story, he left, saying that we were both in the right. Toward nightfall a porter brought the girl's trunk to my room; at which I saw that she was touched but still firm in her resolve. She supped and slept with me for a second night, and Strasoldo left at daybreak. I then hired a carriage and I escorted my dear Lenzica two stages on the road to Laibach, where, after eating a good dinner with her, I left her in the house of a woman whom she knew. Everyone in Trieste declared that I had acted well, and even Pittoni said that in my place he would have done no differently. But poor Strasoldo came to a bad end. He had a post in Leopol, he got into debt there, and he was sentenced for misappropriation of funds. To save his head he escaped to Turkish territory, where he took the turban.

The Venetian Proveditor General of Palmanova,[66] who was a patrician of the Rota family, came to Trieste at this time to pay a visit to the President-Governor Count

Wagensperg; the Procurator Erizzo[67] was with him. In the afternoon the Governor presented me to Their Excellencies from Venice, who seemed surprised to see me in Trieste. The Procurator asked me if I was managing to enjoy myself as much as I had done in Paris sixteen years earlier;[68] I replied that sixteen years more and a hundred thousand francs less had perforce made me a different man. The Consul came in to tell them that the felucca was ready, and Signora Lantieri, seconded by her father the Count, said that I could be of the party; the three noble Venetians who were there, the third of whom I did not know, said together that I must be of it. After making a bow which meant neither yes nor no, I ask the Consul what this party on a felucca might be. He replied that we were going on board a Venetian warship which was at anchor in the mouth of the harbor, and of which His Excellency, whom I saw there, was the commander. I then told the charming Countess, with a modest smile, that an earlier engagement prevented me from paying my court to her on this pleasant occasion.

"I am forbidden, Signora, to set foot on Venetian territory."

There was a chorus of oh's and ah's.

"You have nothing to fear. You are with us. We are men of honor. Indeed, your suspicion is a trifle insulting."

"That is all to the good," I said to them,[69] "and I will comply, provided that one of Your Excellencies will assure me that the State Inquisitors will not know, and perhaps no later than tomorrow, that I had the boldness to make one of this delightful party, which of course is the greatest honor to me."

At that I saw them all dumb, looking at one another, and no one insisted any longer. The noble commander of the ship, who did not know me, then approached, and they spent five or six minutes talking together in low voices.

The next day the Consul told me that the commander of the ship had thought it extremely prudent on my part to refuse to join the party, for if he had chanced to be told my name and my complaints while I was on board his ship he would not have let me leave. When I repeated what the Consul had told me to the Governor of Trieste he gravely replied that he would not have allowed the vessel to leave. The Procurator Erizzo told me that evening that I had done very well, and that he would see that the Tribunal was informed of it.

During those days in Trieste I saw one of the most beautiful of the Venetian women who were then much talked about. She had come there with a party of her admirers, on pleasure bound. She was by birth a Venetian lady of the Bon family, and she was the wife of Count Romili,[70] of Bergamo, who allowed her complete freedom, at the same time being her intimate friend. She was dragging behind her chariot an old gout-ridden General, Count Burghausen,[71] a famous libertine and spendthrift, who had forsaken Mars ten years earlier in order more freely to devote the remainder of his life to Venus. Very gay and full of experience, he remained in Trieste after the rest of the party had gone; he insisted on making my acquaintance, and ten years later he did me a service, as my reader will see in the next volume, which will perhaps be the last.

CHAPTER X

Adventures in Trieste. I do the Tribunal of the Venetian State Inquisitors good service. My journey to Görz and my return to Trieste. I renew my acquaintance with Irene, become an actress and a skilled gamester.

ABOUT THAT time the ladies of Trieste wanted to see how well they could do in the way of acting French comedy, and they put me in charge of everything, leaving it to me not only to choose both the plays and the actors and actresses but also to distribute the parts. It was a task which cost me a great deal of effort and did not yield me the pleasures for which I had hoped. They were all novices in the art of the theater, I had to train them, go to see them all every day to rehearse them in their parts, which they were to learn by heart; but since they were never able to fix them in their memories properly I had to resign myself to serving them as prompter. I very soon learned all the woes by which that occupation is beset. The prompter is in the most ungrateful of positions, the actors never admit their obligations to him and, when they stumble, always blame him for it. A physician in Spain is treated no better; if his patient gets well it is by the protection of some saint, if he dies it is the physician's remedies which killed him. A Negress who was in the service of the prettiest of my actresses, to whom I showed great attentions, made one of those observations which it is not easy to forget.

"I don't understand," she said to me one day, "how you can be so much in love with my mistress when she is as white as the devil."

I asked her if she had never loved a white man, and she replied that she had, but it was because she had never encountered a Negro, whom she would certainly have preferred. A few months later the African maidservant, yielding to my urging, granted me her favors; on that occasion I learned the falsity of the maxim which says that *sublata lucerna nullum discrimen inter feminas* ("when the lamp is taken away, all women are alike").[1] Even with the lamp taken away, one cannot but know whether a woman is black or white. Negroes are of a different species, there is no doubt of it; they have the peculiarity that their women, if they have been taught, are able not to conceive, or even to conceive males or females as they choose. If my reader does not believe this he is in the right, for in creatures of our nature the thing is incredible, but he would be convinced of it, as I am, if I instructed him in the theory of it.[2]

Count Rosenberg,[3] Grand Chamberlain to the Emperor and later created a Prince, who died last year, came to Trieste at that time on pleasure bent, accompanied by the Abate Casti,[4] whose acquaintance I wanted to make because of two or three little poems, of unexampled impiety, which he had composed. I found him an ignoramus, brazen and shameless, whose only talent was a knack for versification. Count Rosenberg always took him with him because he needed him. He made him laugh, and he procured girls for him. In those days the pox had not yet eaten away his uvula. I have been told that he has now been made poet to the Emperor;[5] his succession to the post dishonors the memory of the great Metastasio, who had no vices and all the virtues; Casti has not one virtue and all the vices. As for his poetical ability, he possesses neither nobility of language nor any knowledge of the theater. Two or three comic operas[6] which he has produced prove it; they contain nothing but buffooneries badly strung together; and one of them is conspicuous only for its calumnies against both King Theodore[7] and the Republic of Venice, which he attempts to ridicule by lies. In another, called *The Grotto of Trophonius*,[8] he made himself the laughingstock of all men of letters, parading a far-fetched erudition which contributes nothing to the humor of his plot.

Among the people of rank who came from Görz to see the French plays, which were given in the house of Baron Königsbrunn,[9] whose charming wife, née Countess Attems, played the leading parts, I made the acquaintance of a Count Luigi Torriano,[10] who was able to persuade me to go to spend the autumn with him in a country house which he had six miles from Görz. If I had heeded my Genius, I would not have gone there. The Count was not yet thirty, and was unmarried. He was not handsome, but he could not be called ugly, despite his having the countenance of a gallows bird. In it one read cruelty, treachery, pride, and brutal sensuality. I also saw hate and jealousy in it. This dreadful mixture made me believe that I was mistaken. A gracious invitation seemed to me incompatible with the horrible characteristics which his face set before my eyes. Making inquiries about him before promising to go there, I heard nothing but good. I was told that he loved the fair sex, and that he became ferocious when he had to avenge himself on someone who had insulted him; but, considering these two qualities not unworthy of a gentleman, I promised him I would go there. He told me he would expect me in Görz on September 1st, and that we would leave the next day for Spessa, which was the name of his estate. So I took leave of everyone for a couple of months, and of Count Wagensperg, who was seriously ill with the disease which is easily cured by mercury when the physician knows how to administer it, but which becomes mortal when the patient falls into incompetent hands. The poor Count suffered that misfortune. He died a month after my departure.

I leave Trieste in the morning, I dine at Prosecco,[11] and I arrive at Count Luigi Torriano's house in Görz in good time; he was not there; but I am allowed to unload my few belongings when I say that the Count had invited me. I go out, I go to call on Count Torres,[12] I stay there until suppertime, then I return to the house of my new host. I am told that he had gone to the country and that he would be back the next day. I am told that my trunk has been taken to the post house inn,[13] where supper and a room had been ordered for me. This surprises me; but I go there, I find myself poorly lodged and poorly fed; but what of that? I conclude that he could not lodge me in his house, and, that being the case, he could not do otherwise. I blame him only for not having told me so. Could I suppose that a nobleman who has a house hasn't a room in it for a friend?

The next morning Count Luigi Torriano comes to see me, thanks me for my promptness, congratulates himself on the pleasure he will take in having me with him at Spessa, and tells me that he is only sorry that we cannot leave until the next day but one, because he is on the eve of the decision which was to be handed down in a suit he had against a rascally old farmer who had served him and who, being in his debt, not only refused to pay him but made claims himself. The case was to be argued the next day in the court of last appeal, which would render justice where it was due. I told the Count that I would go to hear the advocates, which would be an amusement for me. He left, not only without asking me where I should dine but without offering me the least excuse for having been unable to lodge me in his house. I think that perhaps according to his way of thinking I had been wrong simply to appear and expect to be lodged in his house. He had invited me to the country. I decide to overlook it all. It may have been from tact that he had said nothing to me about it, for if I had been in the wrong it would have been my part to ask him to excuse me.

I dine alone. I spend the afternoon making visits, I sup with Count Torres, I speak of the pleasure it will give me to hear the eloquence of the advocates of Görz the next day; and Torres tells me that he will be at the session too, for he is curious to see how Torriano will take it if the peasant wins.

"I am acquainted with the case," he went on, "and everyone knows that Torriano cannot lose unless the account book he has put in evidence, and according to which the peasant appears to be in debt to him, is forged. The peasant, on his side, cannot lose unless the Count's receipts are for the most part forged. The peasant has already lost in the two lower courts; but he has continued to appeal, paying the costs, and note that he is poor. If he loses tomorrow he is not only ruined but risks being sent to the galleys; but if he wins it will be a sad day for Torriano, for then it would be he who would deserve to go to the galleys, together with his advocate, who has already deserved it several times."

Since I knew that Emanuel Torres was a scandalmonger, his discourse had little weight with me, but my curiosity increased. So the next day I went to the courtroom, where I saw the judges, the opposing litigants, and their two advocates. The peasant's was old and looked honest. My host's looked like a bold-faced scoundrel. His client the Count was beside him, and had the scornful look and the sneer of the proud man who is willing for once so far to lower himself as to consolidate his victory over an upstart whom he had already twice defeated. The peasant was there with his wife, a son, and two daughters born to win every suit on earth. I was astonished that such a family could have lost twice. There they were, all four of them, shabbily dressed, keeping their eyes cast down, showing every sign of being the victims of oppression. Each advocate was allowed to speak for two hours.

The appealing advocate spoke on behalf of his peasant for only half an hour. He used it to lay before the judges the book of receipts authenticated by the Count's signatures down to the day when he had dismissed him because he would not let his daughters go to his house; and, continuing to speak with the utmost coolness, he showed the judges the book which the Count had put in evidence and according to which the peasant was in debt to him, and he proved that all the peasant's receipts had been declared forged by experts under oath. In addition he proved that there were anachronisms and parachronisms everywhere, and he ended by saying that his client was in a position, by proceeding in criminal court, to reveal the two forgers whom the Count had paid and who were the authors of the shamelessly fraudulent papers (*scartafacci*) which the opposing advocate had dared to present to the magistrate to deceive his good faith and ruin an honest family, whose only fault was poverty. He ended by demanding reimbursement of all the costs paid and to be paid, and compensation for loss of time and reputation.

The harangue by my dear Count's advocate would have lasted more than two hours if he had not been made to cut it short. There are no insults which he did not spew out against the other advocate, the experts, and the poor peasant, whom he more than once addressed directly, saying that he would go to look at him in the galleys, where no one would pity him. During these exchanges I should have been bored to death if I had been blind, for my only pleasure lay in watching the faces of the litigants and the audience. My dear host's face was always smiling and unafraid.

We all withdrew to an adjoining room to await the verdict. The peasant was in a corner with his family, shunned, distressed, with not a soul to speak a word to him, either in friendship or as a covert enemy. Count Torriano was surrounded by a dozen or more personages of distinction, all telling him that he could not lose; but that if anything so unlikely should happen he would have to pay, but at the same time making the peasant prove the alleged crime of forgery. I listened but said nothing. Torres, who was the sworn enemy of prudence, asked me what I thought. I replied that my dear Count ought to lose even if he were in the right, because of his advocate's shameless harangue.

An hour later the magistrate's clerk came in with two papers, one of which he gave to the peasant's advocate and the other to Count Torriano, who, after reading it, burst out laughing. He read it aloud. The court sentenced him to recognize the peasant as his creditor, to pay all the costs, and to give him a year's wages, all without prejudice to the peasant's right to appeal *ad minimum* on account of any other complaints he could bring before the court. The advocate appeared, looking gloomy, but Torriano consoled him by giving him six zecchini. Everyone left. I remained with him to ask him if he would appeal to Vienna, and he replied that his appeal would be of a different sort. I did not want to know more. We left Görz the next morning. When the innkeeper presented my account he said that Count Torriano had ordered him not to insist if I should decline to pay, for in that case he would pay for me himself. The revelation made me laugh. These three or four samples convinced me that I was going to spend six weeks with a dangerous eccentric.

We arrived at Spessa in less than two hours. It was a large house on a little hill, with nothing about its architecture to distinguish it. We went upstairs to his apartment, which was furnished neither well nor ill, and, after showing me all the others, he escorted me to mine, which was a room on the ground floor, badly furnished, poorly ventilated, and not very light. He told me that it had been the favorite room of his father,[14] who, like me, was fond of study, and that I could be sure that I should enjoy perfect quiet there, for I should never see anyone. We dined very late, so on that day there was no supper. I found the food and the wine tolerable, as was the company of a priest who served as the Count's steward and part of whose duty it was to eat with him when he was at Spessa. A thing which offended me was that, eating very fast, he made bold to tell me, though with a smile, that I ate too slowly. After dinner he said that he had a great deal to do, and that we should see each other the next day.

So I go to my room to put my papers in order. I was working on the second volume of my *Troubles in Poland.* Toward dusk I go out to ask for a light, and a manservant brings me a tallow candle. I think it disgraceful, for I was entitled to wax candles or an oil lamp, but I am discreet enough to say nothing. I only ask the servant if one of them had been ordered to wait on me; he replies that the Count had said nothing to them, but that of course they would be at my orders whenever I summoned them. It would have been a troublesome task, for to find them I should have had to leave the house and go around it by way either of the street or of the courtyard. I ask him who will take care of my room, and he says it will be the duty of the maidservant.

"Then she has another key?"

"There is no key; but to lock yourself in at night you have the bolt."

At that I wanted to laugh, for it was really intolerable; but I have the firmness to say nothing; the manservant leaves, I bolt my door, and I set to work; but after half an hour I have the bad luck to put out my candle in snuffing it; I laugh and curse, and I see that I am reduced to going to bed in the dark. The bed was good; which, as I did not expect it, soothes me a little, and I sleep perfectly well. In the morning I see no one. I dress, I lock up my papers, and, in nightcap and dressing gown, I go to wish my host good morning. I find him having his hair dressed by his second lackey, who served as his valet. After saying that I had slept well, I tell him I have come to breakfast with him. He replies politely enough that he never breakfasts, and not to trouble myself to call on him in the morning, for he was always busy with his peasants, who were all thieves.

"For your breakfast," he said, "since you take breakfast, I will send word to my cook to make coffee for you when you wish it."

"You will also be so good as to order your servant to dress my hair after he has attended to you."

"I am surprised that you have not a manservant of your own "

"If I could have foreseen that my small need of a servant who can dress hair in a village where there is no hairdresser, and in your house, could be an inconvenience to you, I should have procured one."

"It will not inconvenience me; but you may often lose patience waiting for him."

"I will gladly wait. A thing that I must have is a key to the door of my room, for I have papers for which I am responsible, and which I cannot lock up in my trunk every time I need to go out "

"Everything is safe in my house."

"So I suppose, but you must understand that it would be absurd in me to claim that you were responsible for a letter which I might find missing; it could be a great misfortune for me, and I certainly should not tell you about it "

He makes no answer, and after thinking for five or six minutes he tells his hairdresser-lackey to tell the priest to put a lock on the door of my room and give me the key to it. While he was thinking I notice on his night table a wax candle with a snuffer on it, and a book. I go to the table, asking him, of course, if I might see what reading beguiled him to sleep; he replies politely, but asking me not to touch the book. I promptly draw back, and I say with a laugh that I am sure it is a prayer book; but I swear I will tell no one of my suspicion. He replies, laughing too, that I had guessed rightly. I leave, asking him to send me his lackey when he has finished with him, and a cup of coffee or chocolate or broth.

Nettled by behavior such as I had never before experienced, and especially by the tallow candle while he used a wax one, I return to my wretched room, and I fall into serious reflections. My first impulse urged me to leave at once. Though I commanded only forty or fifty zecchini, I had as much courage as when I was rich. But I rejected that expedient, since I thought I could not execute it except by affronting him most signally. The one crying wrong being the tallow candle, I decided to ask the lackey if he had not been ordered to bring me wax ones; I had to do this, for the thing might be nothing but an oversight on the Friulian lackey's part. It was he who an hour later brought me a cup of coffee, poured out into the cup and sugared according to his taste. I burst out laughing, for I had either to laugh or to throw it in his face, I tell him that is not the way to serve coffee, and I leave it untouched, taking off my nightcap so that he could dress my hair. At the end of my patience, I ask him why he had brought me tallow and not wax. He modestly replies that the person who had charge of the wax candles was the priest, and that he had given him only one for his master. I make no answer. I think that the wretched priest may have thought it a sin against economy to give me wax, or had supposed that it would make no difference to me. I decide to question the priest that day.

As soon as I was dressed I go out for a stroll, and I come upon the priest with a locksmith. He tells me that, having no lock ready, he will put a padlock on my door and give me the key to it. I reply that it makes no difference, provided that I can lock my door, and I abandon my stroll and go back with him to watch the work. While the locksmith hammered away, I ask the priest why he had sent me a tallow candle and not one or two of wax. He replies that he would never have dared to do that without an express order from the Count.

"Doesn't that," I asked him, "go without saying?"

"Nothing goes without saying here. It is I who buy the wax candles, and he pays me for them with no fear of being cheated, for the candle is entered in the account each time he needs another one."

"Then you can let me have a pound of wax candles if I pay you what they cost you?"

"That's the least favor I can do you, but I warn you that I cannot avoid telling the Count about it, for you understand——"

"Yes, I understand perfectly, but I do not care."

I paid him for a pound of them; and I went for a walk, after learning from him that dinner was at one o'clock. But I was very much surprised when, returning at half past twelve, I was told that the Count had been at table since noon. Not knowing what could account for this accumulation of impertinences, I control myself again, and I go in, saying that the Abate had told me dinner was at one o'clock; he replies that so it is usually, but that, wanting to pay calls on his neighbors and present me to them, he had decided to dine at twelve; but that I should have time to dine nevertheless, and he orders the dishes which had been taken away brought back to the table. I make no reply, and I eat from what dishes were on the table, affecting good humor and refusing the soup, the boiled beef, and the ragouts which had been brought back. He urges me to help myself to them, he says he will wait; but in vain. I calmly reply that I always punished myself in this way when I committed the fault of arriving late at a nobleman's dinner.

However, concealing all my ill-humor, I get into his carriage with him to accompany him on the calls he wanted to make. He took me to the house of a neighbor who lived only half an hour away. He was Baron del Mestre,[15] who stayed there all year, who kept up a good establishment and had a numerous family, all high-spirited and likable. The Count spent the whole day there, putting off the other visits he meant to make until another day, and we returned to Spessa, where the priest, a half hour later, gave me back the money I had paid him for the pound of wax candles. He said that the Count had forgotten to tell him that I was to be served like himself. For better or worse, the slight was patched up; and I pretended to take his reparation at face value. When supper was served it proved to be as bountiful as if we had not dined, and, eating enough for four while the Count ate almost nothing, I congratulated him on his perspicacity.

The lackey who showed me to my room having asked me at what hour I wanted breakfast, I told him, and he observed it punctually. The coffee was in a coffeepot, and the sugar separate. The other lackey came to dress my hair, the maid came to tidy up my room, everything was changed. I thought I had taught him manners, and that I should have no more unpleasantness; but I was mistaken. Three or four days later the priest came to ask me at what hour I wanted to dine alone in my room.

"Why alone in my room?"

"Because the Count left for Görz yesterday after supper, saying that he did not know when he would return. He ordered me to have dinner served you in your room."

"I will dine at one o'clock."

Freedom is everyone's right, but I thought he ought to have told me that he was going to Görz. He remained there a week. Boredom would have driven me to despair if I had not gone on foot every day to spend two hours with Baron del Mestre. I was without company; the priest was an ignorant rustic; not even a pretty peasant girl; I thought I could not possibly have the stamina to spend four more weeks there.

When he came back I talked to him without mincing my words. I told him that I had gone to Spessa with him to keep him company and that, seeing that he had no need of it, I asked him to take me back to Görz the first time he went there, and to leave me there, for I was as fond of company as he was. He assured me that it would not happen again, and he told me he had gone there because he was in love with an actress in the *opera buffa* named Costa.[16] She had left Trieste expressly to see him, and good manners as well as his feelings had obliged him to spend the whole week she was in Görz with her. In addition he had signed a marriage contract with a young lady,[17] the daughter of a castellan of Venetian Friuli, whom he would marry during the coming Carnival. All these reasons persuaded me to stay on with the eccentric Count.

His entire estate consisted in vineyards of white grapes; the wine he made was excellent; it brought him an income of about a thousand zecchini and, bent on spending two thousand, he was ruining himself. Convinced that all the peasants robbed him, he prowled about everywhere, he entered their cottages, and wherever he found a few bunches of grapes he caned all those who, unable to deny that they had taken them from his vineyards, fell on their knees begging for pardon. After being present several times at these cruel scenes, it fell to my lot one day to witness the blows which two peasants rained on him with broomsticks; he saw fit to withdraw after receiving a sound thrashing. He chided me bitterly for having remained only a spectator of the affray. I proved to him by irrefutable arguments that I had no occasion to interfere in it, first because it was he who, as the aggressor, was in the wrong, and in the second place because I did not know how to fight with sticks, especially against peasants who, better skilled than I in that kind of duel, could have let me have one on the head which would have felled me like an ox. In his fury over a bruise on his face, he told me that I was a great coward and a booby who did not know the law that a man must defend his friend or die with him. To this dictum I replied only by a look whose meaning he must have understood.

The whole village heard of the affray; the peasants who had beaten him abandoned the estate; as soon as it became known that in future he would visit their cabins with pistols in his pockets the community assembled and sent him two speakers who told him that all the peasants would abandon the estate that week if he would not promise not to visit their cabins either alone or in company. In the eloquence of these proud boors I admired a philosophical argument which I thought sublime and which the Count thought ridiculous. They told him that the peasants had a right to eat a bunch of grapes from the vine which would have produced none if they had not cultivated it, just as his cook had the right to taste the stew which he had made in his kitchen for his master before he sent it to his table.

The threat of abandoning the estate, just at the time of harvest, terrified the brutal Count. They left, proud to have made him listen to reason.

One Sunday we went to the chapel to hear mass, and we found the priest at the altar, his *Credo* already said. I saw the Count's eyes flashing with anger. After the mass he went into the sacristy and gave the poor priest, who was still in his surplice, three or four blows with his cane; the priest spat in his face, and four or five people came running at his cries. We left. I told him that the priest would go to Udine[18] at once and would get him into very serious trouble; I soon persuaded him to prevent him from going there, even if he had to use force.

He called his servants, and he ordered them to bring the priest to his room, willingly or by force. The priest, foaming with rage and calling him a contumacious excommunicate, told him the most cutting truths; he ended by saying that neither he nor any other priest would celebrate mass in his chapel again, and that the Archbishop would avenge the crime he had committed. The Count let him talk on, and, preventing him from leaving the room, made him sit down at table, where he was weak enough not only to eat but to let himself get drunk. This disgusting behavior brought peace. The priest forgot everything.

A few days later two Capuchins came to call on him at noon. Seeing that they were not leaving, and not wanting to tell them to go, he had dinner served without ordering two more places set. The bolder of the two, when he saw that there was no intention of giving them food, said that they had not dined. At that the Count sent him a plate of rice; the Capuchin refused it, saying that he was worthy to dine not only with him but with a monarch. The Count, who could hardly keep from laughing, told him that their quidditative[19] epithet being "unworthy," they were worthy of nothing, and that furthermore the humility which they professed forbade them any pretensions. The Capuchin defending himself badly, and the Count being right, I thought I should support him. I told the Capuchin that he ought to be ashamed of breaking the rule of his Order by committing the sin of pride. He replied by insults, and the Count thereupon called for scissors to be brought, so that he could cut off the beards of the two impostors. At this dreadful threat they took to their heels, and we laughed heartily.

It was a joke, and I could easily have forgiven the Count if his vagaries had all been of this sort; but far from it. His intestines produced a chyle which infuriated him, and during the hours of digestion the fury which overcame him made him ferocious, cruel, unjust, bloodthirsty. His appetites became rages, he ate, and because it was from anger, it seemed an act of hatred when he devoured a succulent woodcock, of which I was voluptuously praising the exquisite delicacy. He one day gravely told me in so many words to eat and hold my tongue, for the praise I bestowed on the dishes which were served irritated him. I stopped praising for, after all, I had to submit to his decrees or else leave.

La Costa, with whom he had been in love, told me three months later in Trieste that she had not believed a man of such a character could exist before she knew Torriano. She told me that in amorous intercourse, though he was full of vigor, he was always angry because he could not achieve the pleasure which leads to the crisis which marks its end, and that he threatened to strangle her if she could not keep herself from showing physical signs of the voluptuousness which flooded her soul during the act. She pitied the lot of the woman who was destined to be his wife. But now for what finally exhausted my patience and forced me to part company with the poisonous creature.

In the boredom and idleness of Spessa, where I had not a single pleasure, I found myself attracted by a poor and very young widow, I gave her money, some tokens of the tender feelings she inspired in me, and, after obtaining her consent to minor pleasures, I persuaded her to grant me the principal ones in my room. She came at midnight, unseen by anyone, and she left at daybreak by a small door which opened onto the street. It was my only relief; she was in love, and amenable as a lamb, a very rare thing among the peasant women of Friuli, and I had had her seven or eight times. We were both perfectly unapprehensive in regard to our relationship, for we supposed that it must be unknown to everyone; we had no fear of masters or of jealousy or envy; but we were mistaken.

One fine morning Sgualda (such was her name) left my arms, and, after getting dressed, woke me as usual to go to lock the door by which she went out to return home.

I go; she leaves; but no sooner have I closed the door than I hear her screaming. I open the door, and I see the atrocious Count Torriano holding her by the dress with his left hand and caning her with his right. To see it and to spring on him was the work of an instant. We both fall, he underneath, I on top of him, and Sgualda runs off. In my nightshirt as I was, with one hand I was holding his arm with the stick, while I tried to strangle him with the other. For his part, he held me by the hair with his free hand and struggled to free himself. He did not let go until he felt that I was strangling him, and, instantly seizing his cane and rising, I rained blows at his head which he was lucky to ward off with his hands, taking to his heels and snatching up stones, which I did not wait to have strike me. I go back into the house and I lock myself in my room, not knowing whether we had been seen or not, and I throw myself on the bed out of breath and sorry that my hand had not been strong enough to strangle the barbarian who I thought was determined to murder me.

I take my pistols and I load them on the table, after refilling the pans; then I dress, and after shutting everything up in my trunk I put my pistols in my pocket and I go out, intending to find some peasant with a carriage to take me back to Görz. Without knowing it, I take a road which leads me past poor Sgualda's house; I enter, and I see her sad but calm; she comforted me by saying that she had been hit only on the shoulders by blows which had not hurt her very much; but she said that the thing would become public knowledge, for two peasants had seen the Count beating her, and had seen me, as she herself had seen me from a distance, struggling with him. I gave her two zecchini, I asked her to come to see me in Görz, where I intended to stay for two or three weeks, and to tell me where I could find a peasant who had a carriage, for I wanted to leave immediately. Her sister offered to take me to a farm where I would find a carriage and horses, and on the way she told me that Count Torriano had a grudge against Sgualda because as long ago as when her husband was alive she would never have anything to do with him.

At the farm I found what I wanted. The carriage was a good cart, and the peasant promised to have me in Görz by dinnertime. I gave him half a scudo on account, and I left, saying that I would wait for him. I go to the Count's house, I enter my room, and I put everything which I had left out in a portmanteau. The cart arrives.

One of the Count's servants comes to tell me that he requested me to go up to his room, where he wanted to talk with me. I instantly write him in clear French that after what had taken place between us I could not speak to him again except outside his house. A minute later he comes in, saying that if I would not speak with him in his room he has come to speak with me in mine, and he shuts the door.

He begins by telling me that my leaving his house in such a way would dishonor him, and that he would not let me go.

"I am curious to see how you will set about stopping me, for you will never persuade me to remain here of my own free will."

"I will prevent you from leaving alone, for honor demands that we leave together."

"I understand you. So go for your sword, or a pair of pistols, and we will leave at once, armed alike. In my carriage there is room for two."

"It is you who must leave in mine with me, after we have dined together."

"You are very much mistaken. Everyone would think me a fool to dine with you now, when our ugly meeting is known to the whole village and will be the talk of all Görz tomorrow."

"Then I will dine alone with you here, and people may say what they please. We will leave after dinner. Dismiss your carriage, and so prevent a scandal, for, I tell you again, you shall not leave."

I had to yield. I dismissed the carriage, and the wretched Count remained with me, beating about the bush until noon, trying to convince me that the wrong was all on my side, for I had no right to stop him from beating a peasant woman in the street to whom, after all, I had no possible title. I asked him, laughing at the savagery of his argument, what right he thought he had to beat a free woman in the street, and how he could suppose that the free woman would not find a defender in some man whose heart she had engaged, as had been the case, and how he could have imagined that I would stand patiently by while he killed a girl who had just left my arms, and for that reason alone. I asked him if I should not have been a vile coward, or a monster like himself, if I had remained indifferent to the scene. I ended by asking him if in my place he would not have done as I did without stopping to consult reason, even if he had had to deal with a great prince.

A little before we sat down at table he said that a duel over the matter would do no honor to the one of us who killed the other, for he was determined not to fight except to the death. I replied with a laugh that, so far as I was concerned, I did not agree, and if he thought that the matter stood so on his side he was perfectly free not to engage in the duel, for I considered myself satisfied already. As for fighting to the death, I said that I hoped to leave him among the living despite his rage, driving him to the wall, and that on his side he might do as he saw fit. He said that we would go to a wood, and that he would order his coachman to take me wherever I pleased if I came back to the carriage alone, and that he would bring no servant with him. After praising his noble attitude, I asked him if he wanted to fight with swords or pistols, and he said that swords would suffice. I then promised him that I would get rid of the pistols I had in my pocket when we were ready to leave.

It seemed to me impossible to see this savage creature become polite and reasonable, when the idea of an imminent duel ought to have troubled him to the soul, for I was certain that a man of his character could not be brave. Finding myself perfectly cool, I felt sure that I would lay him low instantly by my infallible right lunge, and then cripple him by pinking him in the knee if he wanted to go on. I thought I could take refuge in the Venetian State, from which, not being known, I could easily make my escape; but I thought I foresaw that nothing would come of it, and that the duel would dissolve into thin air like so many others when one of the heroes is a coward. I set the Count down as such.

After dining well, we left. He without anything, and I with all my small stock of possessions securely tied to the back of the carriage. In his presence I had emptied my pistols, and he had shown me that he had none. I had heard him order his coachman to take the road to Görz; but I kept expecting an order to turn left or right, for we were to fight in a wood. On the way I was careful not to ask him the slightest question. I understood what was afoot when I saw Görz, and I laughed heartily when we arrived there. The Count ordered the coachman to drive to the post house inn, and as soon as we got there he told me that I had been right, that we must remain good friends, and that we must promise each other not to mention the matter to anyone, only to laugh at those who should mention it to us, and not to take the trouble of relating it correctly to those who, when they told the story, changed its details. I gave him my promise, we embraced, and his carriage went to fetch him after the innkeeper Bailon[20] had had my luggage taken down from it.

The next day I went to lodge in a very quiet street to finish the second volume of my *Troubles in Poland,* but the time I spent on it did not prevent me from enjoying life until the time when I resolved to return to Trieste and there await the pardon of the new State Inquisitors. Remaining in Görz, I could give them no proof of my zeal, and it was my duty to pursue their interests, for they paid me for nothing else. I stayed in Görz until the end of the year 1773. During the six weeks I spent there I enjoyed all the comforts and pleasures I could wish for.

My adventure at Spessa being known to the whole town, everyone talked to me about it during the first days; but seeing that I only laughed at it as a thing of no consequence finally put an end to the questioning, and Luigi Torriano made much of his friendship for me wherever we met. However, I politely declined each time he invited me to dinner; he was a dangerous man, to be avoided at all costs. During the Carnival he married the young lady[21] I mentioned above; he made her unhappy for thirteen or fourteen years, until he died insane[22] and in poverty. What delighted me during those six weeks was Count Franz Karl Coronini,[23] of whom I believe I have spoken. He died three or four years later of an abscess in the head. A month before he died he sent me his will in Italian verses of eight syllables, which I still preserve as a specimen of his philosophical mind and the gaiety of his soul. Everything in it is comic and enlivened by the most subtle wit. If he had known that he was to die four weeks later he could not have written it, for the thought of death can inspire gaiety only in a madman.

A Monsieur Richard,[24] of Lorraine, came to settle in Görz at that time. He was a bachelor forty years of age who, after serving the Court of Vienna well in financial matters, had received permission to retire with a very good pension. He was handsome, he had the manner of the best society, some literary accomplishment, though without the least pretension, and he was received and made much of in all the houses in Görz. I met him in the house of Count Torres, which he frequented more than any of the others because of the intelligence of the young Countess, whom he married some time afterward.

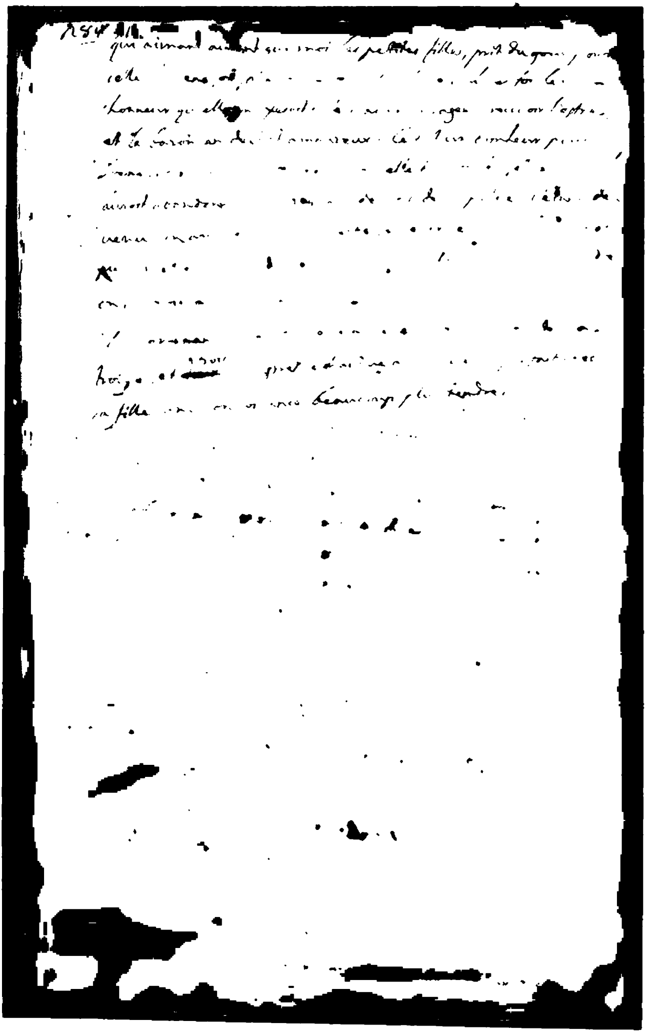
At the beginning of October, as was customary, the new Council of Ten[25] had assumed its functions in my illustrious country; hence the new State Inquisitors had replaced the three who had reigned during the preceding twelve months. My protectors—that is, the Procurator Morosini, Senator Zaguri, and my loving friend Dandolo—wrote me that if they did not succeed in obtaining my pardon during the twelve months during which they were to sit they must give up hope of ever attaining it in their lives, for, aside from the virtues of the new Inquisitors, as chance would have it they honored them with their esteem and friendship. The State Inquisitor Sagredo[26] was a friend of the Procurator Morosini, the second Inquisitor, Grimani,[27] loved my faithful friend Dandolo, and Signor Zaguri assured me that he would personally persuade the third,[28] who by law had to be one of the six Councilors who are members of the Council of Ten. Though called "of Ten," that powerful Council was made up of seventeen personages, for the Doge was at liberty to sit with it whenever he pleased. So I went back to Trieste, thoroughly resolved to make every effort to serve the Tribunal well and thus deserve to obtain from its justice the pardon for which I longed after nineteen years which I had spent traveling all over Europe. At the age of forty-nine years which I had then reached, it seemed to me that I had nothing more to hope from Fortune, who loves only youth and is the declared enemy of ripe years. It seemed to me that in Venice I could not but live happily, without needing the blind Goddess's favors. I counted on being self-sufficient, profiting by my talents, feeling sure that I should succumb to no more misfortunes, armed as I was with immense experience, and cured, furthermore, of all the vanities which had led me to the verge of ruin. I thought I could be certain too that the State Inquisitors would find me some post in

Venice itself, the emoluments from which would amply suffice for me to live in perfect comfort, being alone, with no family, and prepared to content myself with having what I decently needed, gladly resigning all superfluity. I was writing my *History of the Troubles in Poland*; the first volume was already printed; I was at work on the second, and I had enough material to present the whole history to the public divided into seven volumes.[29] After finishing this task I was thinking of publishing a translation of Homer's *Iliad*[30] in rhymed stanzas, and I had no doubt that after finishing these I should not find it difficult to produce other works. In short I did not fear that I could risk starving to death in a city where a hundred resources kept alive people who could live nowhere else except by begging. So I left Görz on the last day of the year 1773, and I put up at the principal inn on the Piazza in Trieste on the first day of 1774.

I could not have hoped to be better received. Baron Pittoni, the Venetian Consul, all the Councilors, the men of business, the ladies, and all the members of the Casino of the city saw me again with the greatest show of their pleasure in seeing me again. I spent the Carnival there in the utmost gaiety, enjoying perfect health, without interrupting my *History of the Troubles in Poland,* the second volume of which I published at the beginning of the Carnival.

The first thing which interested me in Trieste was the second actress of the troupe of comedians which was playing there.[31] I was surprised to see in her the Irene, daughter of the self-styled Count Rinaldi,[32] whom my reader doubtless remembers. I had loved her in Milan, I had neglected her in Genoa on account of her father, and I had been of use to her in Avignon, where I had come to her rescue with Marcolina's approval.[33] Eleven years had gone by during which I had never learned what had become of her. I was surprised to see her, and at the same time sorry, for, seeing her still pretty, I saw that she

The Doge's Palace, Venice



The Last Manuscript Page of Casanova's Memoirs might please me again, whereas, not being in a position to be of use to her, I ought to be on my guard. Thinking that I could not avoid paying her a visit, and in any case very curious to learn her story, I appeared before her the the next day an hour before noon.

She received me with a cry, saying that she had seen me in the parterre and that she was sure I would come to see her. She at once introduced her husband, who always played the role of Scapino,[34] and her daughter, who was nine years of age and showed talent for dancing. Her story was not long. The same year that I had seen her in Avignon she had gone to Turin with her father and, having fallen in love with the man she had introduced to me, she had left her parents to become his wife, and she had turned actress to join him on the stage. She knew that her father was dead, and she did not know what had become of her mother. She told me that she remained faithful to her duty as a wife, but without being so absurdly strict as to let her coldness discourage a man who declared that he loved her and who was worth listening to. At Trieste, however, she assured me that she had no one, and that her only pleasure was to give a little supper for some friends, which was not a drain on her resources, for she made more than enough by holding a small bank at faro. It was she who dealt, and she asked me to join in the game from time to time. On leaving, I assured her that she would see me that same day after the play and that, since the bank was small, gaming being forbidden in Trieste,[35] I would play like the others, for small stakes.

I went there, I supped with a company of coxcombs, young merchants, all in love with her. After supper she made a small bank, and we all began punting. But my surprise was not small when I saw, beyond the possibility of doubt, that she was cheating very skillfully, and always at just the right juncture. I felt like laughing when I saw her exercising her talent against me. It was a trifle, but I did not want Irene to suppose me a dupe. I saw her the next day at a rehearsal at the theater, and I congratulated her on her skill; at first she pretended not to understand me, and when I told her what I meant she had the impudence to say that I was mistaken; but when, turning my back on her, I said that she would repent of not having admitted it, she laughed and said it was true and that if I would tell her how much I had lost she was ready to give me back my money and even to let me have a share in her bank without anyone's knowing it except her husband. I said that I wanted neither, and even that I would no longer make one at her game, but to be very careful not to clean out any of her friends, for it would become known, and then she would be fined, for gaming was strictly forbidden. She said that she knew it, that she never carried anyone on his word, and that all the young men had promised her they would keep the secret. I told her that I would no longer go to sup with her, but that I should be pleased if she would come to breakfast with me when she had time. She came a few days later, with her daughter, who pleased me and who did not refuse me some caresses. One fine morning she made the acquaintance of Baron Pittoni, who, being as fond of young girls as I was, took a liking to Irene's daughter and asked her mother to do him the same honor sometimes that she granted me. I encouraged her to accept his offer, and the Baron fell in love with her. It was fortunate for Irene, because toward the end of the Carnival she was accused, and the Baron would have abandoned her to the rigor of the law and the police if, having become her friend, he had not warned her to stop gaming. She could not be fined, for when the police went to surprise her no one was to be found there.

At the beginning of Lent she left with the whole troupe, and three years later I saw her in Padua, where I resumed my acquaintance with her daughter on far more tender terms.[86]

Giovanni Battista Manuzzi's Report to the Inquisitors Concerning Casanova's Activities, July 17, 1755.*

Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lords:

Having succeeded in learning from D[on] Gio[vanni] Batt[ist]a Zini, of the parish of San Samuel[e], concerning Giacomo Casanova that, in addition to the many friendships which he has with Noble Patricians, he believes that he has an understanding with some of them and brings them foreigners to gamble, to win their money, knowing from Casanova's own mouth that he has the art of cheating at cards, that Casanova makes [people] believe that they will not die but that they will be gently carried away by Fra Bernardo, who comes to raise them up and take them by the Milky Way to the Land of the Adepts, where Leggismarco lives; and with these damnable impostures of Rosicrucians and Angels of Light he bewitches people, as he did N. H. [the Nobleman] Ser Zuanne [Giovanni] Bragadin and other Noble Patricians to get money out of them. That the said Casanova professes the maxims of Picurec [Epicurus]. That with his impostures and chatter he entices people into a complete libertinism in all kinds of pleasure. That he is again cultivating N. H. Bragadin hoping to inherit from him and eat up all the rest; that many Noble Patricians, admiring his talents, lend him their support. That he is amazed [or: it is amazing] that nothing evil has happened to him in his so intimate association with Noble Patricians into whom he inculcates [?] certain maxims; that there is open war if one of them speaks ill of him.

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* *The first page of the original report in Manuzzi's handwriting is reproduced facing page 209.*

Having all these things in mind, I brought Casanova to talk with me on similar subjects; he confided to me that he has managed to ingratiate himself with Duke Grillo who frequents the Al Buso drinkshop; that he made him several discourses on numbers with the idea of gradually bringing him to Chemistry [Alchemy] and deceiving him into believing that he knows how to compound the universal powder, and then persuade him that he will not die but pass gently over to the adepts; that from the answers he received from Grillo on the subject of the powder he saw that it would be a difficult undertaking since he had refuted his principles but that even so he could make him spend a treasure, which would almost all go into his own purse, without Grillo's being aware of it; that he had succeeded in bewitching others, especially Ser Zuanne Bragadin; that in view of the intimate friendship between them about seven years ago it had been bruited throughout the Country that both N. H. Bragadin and he talked with the spirits, that Bragadin having been warned that Masonry had been laid before This Most High Tribunal, in order not to be imprisoned or exiled he had left Venice. The said Casanova boasts that he is a cheater at cards, a freethinker, and believes in nothing in matters of Religion, that he has all the suppleness necessary to ingratiate himself with people and deceive them, that in the past he was often on the verge of ruin from lack of consideration, but that now he operates with the greatest caution, because this is a Country in which it is impossible to talk of Government or Religion without great danger, protesting that he believes nothing of our Religion, just as certain Noble Patricians of his acquaintance do not believe. That his frequentations are with Ser Zuanne Bragadin, Ser M[ar]co Ant[oni]o Zorzi, Ser Alvise Grimani, Ser Marco Donado, Ser Bernardo Mem[m]o, Ser Pro[curatore] Alvise Barbaro and very many other Noble Patricians who love him; that in the case of some of them he goes to their houses to dinner, since they all ask him, with others he goes to coffeehouses, to the wineshop called "da Lissandro" in Frezzaria, where he tells me that sometimes, but not often, they gamble. That he has many acquaintances among foreigners and among the noblest youths, that he frequents the houses of very many unmarried and married ladies and of women of another sort, that he tries to amuse himself in every way, and is always attempting great coups to improve his fortune; that he does not lack money to satisfy his desires, that some days ago he lost more than sixty zecchini in Padua. This loss I learned from Giacomo Canal, and I also heard of it from a certain Cesarino, a faro player who frequents the Mondo d'Oro; in the presence of *the said Cesarino* on Monday night in the drinkshop Al Rinaldo Trionfante Casanova read aloud an impious piece in verse, in the Venetian language, which he is now composing. I do not know if anything can be more monstrous than his thoughts and his talk on the subject of Religion, since Casanova holds that those who believe in Jesus Christ are feeble-minded. Conversing with and becoming intimate with the said Casanova one sees truly united in him misbelief, imposture, lasciviousness, voluptuousness in a manner to inspire horror. N. H. Ser Benedetto Pisano has knowledge of the imposture practiced on N. H. Ser Zuanne Bragadin by Casanova and that he made him believe that the Angel of Light would come to him, which made Casanova the ruin of the said N. H. Bragadin.

Giacomo Canal, who also knows N. H. Ser Bernardo Mem[m]o, tells me that Casanova is highly intelligent, that he is on intimate terms with Noble Patricians, that he believes that on occasion he serves them as a pimp, that Ser Bernardo Mem[m]o, though he is often with Casanova, sometimes loves him and sometimes despises him.

From Giacomo Berti I learn that one of the boys at the wineshop in Frezzaria told him that Casanova frequents it in the evening and that he retired to an inner room to talk with Ser Bernardo Mem[m]o and with Barbaro, and that some of them have seen Casanova in the past few days with a purse full of gold and that he always has money.

Venice, June 17, 1755.

[Your] most devoted, most humble,
and most obedient Servant.
Gio[vanni] Batt[ist]a Manuzzi

Bernard de Muralt's Letter to Albrecht von Haller*

Most honored sir and my very dear friend,

We have had staying here at the Crown for a couple of months a foreigner named Chevalier de Seingalt who was well recommended to me by the Marquis de Gentil on the strength of recommendations in his favor which he received from a lady of consequence in Paris. He left here day before yesterday for Lausanne, where he will stay for some time, and whence he proposes to visit you, being curious (1) to see you and (2) [to see] the saltworks. He asked me for a letter of recommendation to you, dear sir and friend, which I was prevented from writing before he left and which, in any case, I preferred to send you by post. This foreigner is worth your seeing and you will find him a really curious and interesting specimen. He is an enigma which we have not been able to decipher here, nor could we make out what manner of man he is. He does not know as much as you do, but he knows a great deal. He talks on all subjects with great spirit, and appears to have seen and read a prodigious amount. He is said to know all the oriental languages, of which I am not competent to judge. He had no direct letter of recommendation to anyone here. It appears that he did not wish to be known. He received a great many letters by post every day, wrote all morning, and told me that his correspondence was entirely concerned with matters of general interest, a system of accounting and a well-known formula for saltpeter.

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* *The first page of the original letter is reproduced facing page 195.*

He speaks French like an Italian, having been brought up in Italy. He told me the story of his life, too long for me to repeat it to you. He will tell it to you whenever you wish. He told me that he is a free man, a citizen of the world, that he obeyed the laws of all the sovereigns under whom he lived. He led an extremely well-regulated life here. His predominant interest, from what he told me, is natural history and chemistry. My cousin De Muralt, the adept, who was greatly attached to him and who has also given him a letter to you, supposes that he is the Count of Saint-Germain. He gave me proofs of his knowledge of the cabala which are astonishing if they are genuine and which would make him almost a sorcerer, but here I cite you my author; in short, he is a most singular personage. His clothes and appointments are of the best. After you, he intends to go and politely point out to Monsieur de Voltaire a large number of errors in his books. I do not know if so charitable a man will be to Voltaire's taste. When you have seen him do me the favor of telling me what you think of him. But, what will interest me more, please give me news of your doings and your health. . . .

B. de Muralt

Bern, June 21, 1760

1st July 1786.

"After a silence of a year and a half, I received from you yesterday a good letter which has consoled me in informing me that you are in perfect health. But, on the other hand, I was much pained to see that in your letter you did not call me Friend, but Madame. . . You have reason to chide me and to reproach me for having rented a house without surety or means of paying the rent. As to the advice you give me that if some honest person would pay me my rent, or at least a part of it, I should have no

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scruples about taking it because a little more, or a little less, would be of little importance. . . I declare to you that I have been desolated at receiving from you such a reproach which is absolutely unjustified. . . You tell me that you have near you a young girl who merits all your solicitations and your love, she and her family of six persons who adore you and give you every attention; that she costs you all you have, so that you cannot send me even a sou. . . I am pained to hear you say that you will never return to Venice, and yet I hope to see you again. . ."

The "young girl" referred to in Francesca's letter was Anna-Dorothea Kleer, daughter of the porter of the chateau. This young girl became pregnant in 1786 and Casanova was accused of seducing her. The guilty one, however, was a painter named Schottner who married the unfortunate girl in January 1787.

9th August 1786.

"My only true friend,

"It is two days since I received your dear letter; I was very happy to see your writing. . . You have reason to mortify me and

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reproach me in recalling all the troubles I caused you, and especially that which you call treachery, the sale of your books, of which in part I was not guilty. . . Forgive me, my dear friend, me and my foolish mother who, despite all my objections, absolutely insisted on selling them. Regarding that which you write me that you know that my mother, last year, told about that you had been my ruin, this may unhappily be true, since you already know the evil thoughts of my mother, who even says that you are still at Venice. . . When have I not been always sincere with you, and when have I not at least listened to your good advices and offers? I am in a desperate situation, abandoned by all, almost in the streets, almost about to be homeless. . . Where are all the pleasures which formerly you procured me? Where are the theaters, the comedies which we once saw together! . . ."

5th January 1787.

"The first of the year I received your dear letter with the bill of exchange for one hundred and twenty-five lires which you sent me so generously. . . You say you have for-

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given me for all the troubles I have caused you. Forget all, then, and do not accuse me any more of things which are but too true and of which the remembrance alone cuts me to the heart . . . You write me that you have been forgotten by a person of whom you were very fond, that she is married and that you have not seen her for more than a month."

The "person" referred to was Anna Kleer.

5th October 1787.

"Until the other day, I had been waiting for your arrival, hoping that you would come to assist at the entry of the Procurator Memmo . . . I see by your good letter that you were not able to get away, since your presence is nearly always necessary in the great chateau . . . I learn of the visit you have received from the Emperor who wished to see your library of forty-thousand volumes! . . . You say that you detest the chase and that you are unhappy when politeness obliges you to go . . . I am pleased to know that you are in good health, that you are stout and that you have a good appetite and sleep well . . . I hope that the printing of your

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book (*Histoire de ma fuite*) is going according to your wishes. If you go to Dresden for the marriage of your niece, enjoy yourself for me . . . Forget not to write to me; this gives me such pleasure! Remember me. Full of confidence in your friendship, I am, and always will be, your true and sincere friend,

Francesca Buschini."

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LETTERS WRITTEN TO MASTER FAULKIRCHER BY HIS BEST FRIEND JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT, 10th January 1792.[1]

Est hoc pro certo, quoties cum stercore certo vinco seu vincor, semper ego maculor.

(You cannot touch pitch without being defiled.—ENGLISH PROVERB.)

FIRST LETTER.

IN the ordinary course of events there could be nothing in common between you and me, Mr. Faulkircher, excepting our joint presence in this Château of Dux, where I am employed as librarian and you as house steward, but in these days it is not the ordinary that happens, but the extraordinary. You stand accused of three crimes committed against my honour, and I want you to be tried according to judicial form. I must inform the public of the nature and circumstances of these crimes, and the public is an impartial judge whom you cannot bribe; there is not enough wine in all the cellars of Count Waldstein for that. The public shall decide whether you are or not a worthless man and a coward, and whether you know or not what honour and the laws of honour mean.

Pluck up courage, Faulkircher, and answer these letters, but be honest enough to send the replies in French, Latin, Italian, or if needs be Spanish. I have been at the pains to address you in German. I have had to pay a translator, you must do the same; let us not be ashamed to publish our ignorance, you, of all the languages of Europe, and I, of German. Another charge I bring against you, is of having exposed me in effigy, in the most vulgar and insulting manner, and for this I appeal to the laws of decency to punish, I do not exactly know how.

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[1] There is no evidence to show that these letters were ever sent to Faulkircher, and there is no hint in Casanova's papers of his having received a reply. They were written, probably, to relieve the bitterness and acrimony of the author's heart, and show, more than anything else, how age, and the humiliation of his subordinate position, had weakened his mind.

In the meantime I remain yours to command, with all the ceremonious phrases one puts at the end of letters, and which mean nothing at all.

SECOND LETTER.

Although we have never been able to reason together, because you can only jabber in bad German, we might nevertheless have been on very good terms, if you had any education, either from books or good company, in which latter a man may at least learn morality and the laws of honour. You were obliged to become a soldier, at the age when I was learning to read, and you cannot be expected to have learned refinement of expression or sentiment in the guard-room, or barracks. You have not gained polish by the frequentation of educated people, or been able to enlarge your mind by reading instructive books, as I, poor and humble by birth as I am, have done. For this I should pity you, as sincerely as I congratulate myself. For the rest you have followed your military career so faithfully, and have known so well how to employ your talents, that in less than fifty years you have reached the high rank of sub-lieutenant! Having attained this noble grade, you had the courage to check your ambition, to repose on your laurels, and to simply ask for your discharge and a pension, both of which you obtained. You asked for your discharge on the score of infirmity, but laziness is the proper name for your disease. Fortunately for you this was not known, or you would have been deprived of your pension of the hundred florins, and the right to wear a uniform; this latter right puts you on a footing with other gallant sons of Mars, who do not live in the private domestic service of a *grand superior.* It is true that you are very generous with your master's wine, and distribute it freely, not only to the officers quartered at Dux, but to all who come, either on business or pleasure. You may be sure these officers know you have no business to be so lavish, but they consider that it is not for them to teach you honesty. If your proceedings reached the ears of Jupiter, or his councillors, you would be sent packing, without your uniform, and without your pension. Count Waldstein would, I am sure, give you a pension of four hundred ducats as compensation, but you would no longer be called lieutenant, and this little matter gratifies your vanity.

THIRD LETTER.

When you first came to Dux, Master Faulkircher, and saw me and learned what my position and employment were, you began to rack your brains in vain to understand what need Count Waldstein had of a librarian, at a salary of a thousand florins a year.

In your zeal for his interests you advised him to get rid of me, and as you could not persuade him to do this, you formed the project of plaguing me to such an extent, and of making things so disagreeable to me that I should of my own accord throw up my situation. During the first two years it was not easy for you to succeed—the Count was not at Dux, I took my meals alone in my room, and paid for them myself, so I had nothing to do with you; but since then I have had the misfortune to be cheated by the bookseller Hilscher, at Leipsic, through whom I lost four thousand florins, to make up which I have to lay aside half my salary, and this has obliged me to accept the Count's offer to eat in the servants' hall, when he is absent. It is an advantage, but a fatal one, for it obliges me to sit opposite a creature like you. This circumstance has put it in your power to inflict on me all the petty miseries your fine mind delights in, either directly or indirectly, for, ass that you are, you like to put on a lion's skin. Unfortunately for you the ears always stick out, the mask falls, and you are shown in your natural ugliness. Though I always knew just what you were, false, ignorant and pretentious, I made an effort to treat you with an appearance of consideration, and you imagined that I had some esteem for you. Pray undeceive yourself. If we had been in a country where duels were permitted, and I had provoked you to fight, either with sword or pistol, I am sure fear would have rendered you paralytic, and you would probably have got your friend Viderol to assassinate me. The things which you have done, since the month of September 1790, confirm me in my knowledge and judgment of your character.

FOURTH LETTER.

The Count had hardly left Dux when you managed to put the inspector at my heels, and he, at your instigation, insulted me deeply. I will write the story down.

One day the worthy inspector, Stelzl, told me, no doubt with the best intentions in the world, that if I had not published my

Icosameron, I should not now be in want of money, and that if in future I wished to live at my ease I ought never to touch a pen again, the more so as I had enough to live on without writing. I repeated this to Count Waldstein, and made fun of the counsel, but not of the counsellors, for Stelzl does not understand that the only thing which makes life bearable to me is the liberty to write, and publish my writings. I know that literary work may appear hard labour to Monsieur Stelzl, who, though very clever in his trade, only exercises it as a means of livelihood, and not to express his own ideas; writing must be to him what chopping wood is to a woodcutter. He was right in his way, and I was right in mine, when I made fun of his point of view to the Count, who, laughing himself, repeated what I had said to you, and you in turn had nothing better to do than to hurry off and tell the inspector, whose vanity, of course, was hurt, and who reproached me for the way in which I spoke of his intelligence, declaring he would give me no more advice. I tried to justify myself as well as I could, but he would not listen to my excuses. He remained angry with me, and the following day when he met me did not return my salutation. The day after it was still worse, for when I went to his wife's reception she did not admit me into the circle, or offer me a seat. You were there, Faulkircher, by the side of your friend Viderol, and you laughed. I swallowed the affront as well as I could, and for four months I have not left my room, except to dine with you in the servants' hall. You hated to see me go to the inspector's house, for when I was there I spoke Latin with him, or French with his wife, and you could not put in any of your stupid observations, as you did not understand us.

On New Year's day 1791, I took upon myself to go and wish him the compliments of the season; the inspector offered me a chair, which I did not accept. An hour afterwards he returned my visit, and did not accept the seat I offered him. I showed you the same mark of politeness, but as you know nothing of the ways of polite society you did not come to see me. So much the worse for you!

Fifth Letter.

There is, at the Château at Dux, an oratory, where only the Count, his family, his principal officers, and the officers of the garrison are allowed to attend divine service. I go there to hear Mass, because the Count told me it was my right place, and you go for the same reason. Viderol took to attending the services there; I spoke to the Count about it, and he was forbidden to do so. In spite of this, he reappeared about ten months ago, in company with your Caroline, who, when she takes the trouble to think of such things, says she is a Lutheran. When I saw this pretty couple, I turned on my heel and went to make my devotions in the parish church, in the midst of my brethren, the honest Catholic peasants. Viderol continued to parade about near the altar with a missal in his hand, to make people think he could read. As a reward, you applauded him more loudly than ever, when he indulged in his usual sarcasm at my expense. I suppose you hoped that, teased beyond endurance, I should fling my plate at his head, and that he would fling his back at mine, while you preserved a dignified neutrality, sure that in the end he would batter me senseless. My patience knew how to resist, however, so you consulted with him as to a new insult, and one which it would be impossible for me to support. You, the house steward of the Count of Waldstein, you ordered him to do, what as a soldier I am sure you would have refused to do, had one of your officers commanded you—you ordered your vile satellite to put my portrait in an unmentionable place—and to write across it an epithet which you taught him. When I complained, you laughed, and said it was not a criminal affair; when I begged you at least to have my meals sent to my room, you refused, and by this I knew that you were the instigator of the plot.

SIXTH LETTER.

I resolved to punish your infamous flunky, so I consulted a lawyer, and wrote a complaint in German; but when you heard of this you came and begged me not to mention your name, as it might do you harm with the military authorities if they learned you were in the Count's service, as they supposed you only stayed with him as a friend. I tore up the first complaint, and wrote a second in Latin, and sent it to a magistrate at Dux. In it I simply asked to be guaranteed against further insult till the return of the Count. Monsieur Luser, the town magistrate of Dux, summoned Viderol before him, and made him swear, on pain of punishment, to cease his ill conduct to me. On leaving the magistrate, Viderol went straight to you, and you immediately intimated to the magistrate that the law had no jurisdiction in the Count's house, and during his absence. At the same time, you put Viderol up to stealing another of my portraits, out of one of my books, and exposing it for the second time, and in a still more infamous manner. I informed the magistrate of how his orders were obeyed. Viderol was summoned a second time, and denied everything. I should have addressed myself to a higher tribunal had not the Dowager Countess advised me to wait till her son returned. You know that I told the whole story to every one who came to the Château, and I even conducted several people to the door of the place, where for six weeks your *chef-d'œuvre* was exposed. Every one said that as you did not order this abomination to be removed, it was because it pleased you to see it there, and that consequently you deserved the same punishment as your delightful favourite.

SEVENTH LETTER.

Six weeks went by; Prince d'Anhalt-Koethen was coming to pass two days at the Château, and you knew that my first care would be to show the picture to this worthy personage, so you had it removed the very day of his arrival. This did not prevent me telling him the whole story, and explaining to his highness why I refused the dish your infamous menial offered me at table. The prince was indignant at your having allowed the scoundrel to wait upon him, and said that had he known his conduct, and yours, he would not have allowed him to stand behind his chair; he added that full justice would be done me when the Count returned. I was less surprised, however, when you made the wretched scoundrel wait on the Princesse de Clary and the Princess Jablonowska, when these illustrious ladies came some time after, for they knew your history, and you were too much ashamed to show yourself. You were warned of the arrival of the ladies, and I think that you, master of the magnificent Waldstein cellars, might have treated them better, and not served them such a miserable repast; you should surely have given them Tokay, and not the poor miserable wine of the country.

EIGHTH LETTER.

Your character is written on your face with such distinctness, that any one can read it at a glance. In the network of wrinkles which cover your old physiognomy can be seen spite, meanness, malice, and ambitious ignorance. You only care about the society of your inferiors, so as to be made much off. When by chance you find yourself among your superiors, you look like a spy, and behave like one. Your jokes, which make people laugh because you laugh at them first, are always satirical and calumnious, the fruit of your hateful mind. It is on this account that fools say you are witty, and that all the inmates of the Château are afraid of you, except the oldest of all, the porter, Frederick, who is surly and ill-mannered, but faithful; a miserly peasant, but an honest one; he does his duty, and despises you openly. I saw him in my own room throw a volume of Bayle's dictionary at your head; since then you have managed to make him die of grief. Your Caroline thought the old man had committed an unheard-of crime; naturally, for she cringes to you like a slave, and interlards her every sentence with *Monsieur le lieutenant,* therefore you are very good to her. You have given her an apartment where she can receive any friends she chooses, and they do say your unworthy behaviour has made the Château of Dux a scandal to the neighbourhood, and respectable people avoid it, for one is robbed and assassinated with impunity in the Château and the adjacent streets. You have brought shame on the noble dwelling of your master, and have changed a table which, though only a servants' table, was decent and supportable, into one of bad repute. It ought not to be so, for Caroline observes the decorum of an honest woman, and the cook and his wife are decent creatures, and you, if you behaved differently, could take the head of it with dignity. I should have been well enough satisfied if you had known how to maintain order, and should not have considered that Count Waldstein had conferred a doubtful benefit on me. As it is, I am like a noble horse whose misfortunes oblige him to herd with asses; he is forced to suffer their kicks and hustlings, as he feeds at the same rack with them. If I had been young, instead of old, I should have laid about me with a stick, for I own the old porter's courage made me blush for my own cowardice. The brave fellow never thought of his eighty years when he threw the book at your head, or of how you, being the stronger, might crush him. I am jealous of his bravery, but it is sword in hand that I should like to send you into another world, and you, old soldier as you are, dare not stand up at twelve paces from me!

Then I have to reproach you for saying that I was wrong in accusing Viderol of having written that if I succeeded in having him punished he would kill me. Who else could have written this anonymous letter but he? Do you suppose I invented it to make him appear worse? Monster that you are, do you think I need invent grievances against you when you both deserve the gallows?

NINTH LETTER.

Poor old Frederick is dead of grief and sorrow. He told me twenty times that since you accused him of stealing the wine by means of false keys, he had not had a moment's rest. O heartless, soulless man, you ought to pine away with remorse for having distressed the good old fellow! What if he did take a few bottles, do you suppose the Count would grudge them to him at his age? You hastened the end of an honest man, who after fifty years' faithful service deserved better treatment. After his death I put a padlock on the library door, and you dared to take it off, saying I had no right to put it there. Rest assured, if so much as one book is missing I shall accuse you of having abstracted it, during the few hours in which the padlock was removed, for in spite of your almighty power it was put back. Every one is scandalised at your behaviour, and if it came to the ears of the authorities, you would lose the two hundred florins pension which the Emperor allows you in your quality of disabled soldier, but——.

TENTH LETTER.

Well, Master Faulkircher, you did a master stroke when you ordered your favourite to attack me and beat me in the streets of Dux, at ten o'clock of a Sunday morning, the 11th of December 1791. Nothing indeed could be easier. I am old, I was unarmed, I had not even my cane, I could offer no resistance, and I had to take refuge in the magistrate's house; he, by the bye, was away from home.

After this noble deed, the executioner of it informed the magistrate that he only laid hands on me in obedience to your orders, and the magistrate, to whom I complained, assures me that in future the rogue will leave me in peace.

'And you will not imprison him?' I said.

'You see he is in the Count's service,' he answered.

And you think that you can behave thus, you vile and cowardly souls, under laws sanctioned by Leopold II.

It is you, Faulkircher, who have caused the ruin of the poor magistrate, who, more stupid even than you are, allowed himself to be influenced by you. I ought to denounce him, but I am sorry for his family.

You have conquered, Faulkircher, you have done everything in your power to oblige me to leave Dux,[1] and you have succeeded; but your triumph is a small one, and I shall obtain justice elsewhere. A magistrate such as Luser is only to be found at Dux. I shall find one who will resist your seductions, and prefers honours to all the riches of the earth.

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[1] As he did not leave Dux, this was probably one of his many threatened departures of which the Prince de Ligne speaks.

ELEVENTH LETTER.

Young Luser, the magistrate at Dux, who you have been clever enough to bribe, writes to me all the impertinence which you dictate to him in bad Latin. He says you say you only know two facts about me: one is that in 1767 I was driven out of Paris (which is a lie); the other is an infamous anecdote which you read in a libel which was printed about me at Töplitz in 1790. But if you quote an infamous libel you become infamous yourself, according to the code of Justinian, which you probably never heard of, and which Luser probably never read.

As for my being expelled from Paris, I deny it formally, though I will own that I had the honour to receive from the King of France a letter signed by his own hand, a letter which I still possess, and which I show to my friends. In it his majesty orders me, for reasons known to himself, to leave his kingdom. The bearer of the letter was a chevalier of the Order of Saint Louis, who told me I could leave at my own convenience, only it must be understood that I was not to go to the Hôtel d'Elbœuf, where I had had the foolhardiness to challenge the Marquis de Lille, who was not then twenty years old. I obeyed, and after having diverted myself for a year and a half in Spain, I returned to Paris, where I supped with the same Marquis de Lille at Monsieur d'Aiguebelle's. In 1783 I spent another three months in Paris, and what is more, a week at Fontainebleau, where I went with my brother, and provided with a passport from Monsieur de Vergennes. If you do not believe me you have only to go to Vienna, and ask my brother, whom you will find every day at the Prince de Kaunitz's table. You will perhaps sit next to him, for of course you will not be sent to the servants' hall. Such ways are peculiar to Dux. I can assure you I consider that a *lettre de cachet* does me more honour than your brevet of sub-lieutenant from His Imperial, Royal, and Apostolic Majesty.

A major-general who knows you by reputation tells me, and I believe him, that you are an officer; it is true, but not in the same way that the others are!

TWELFTH LETTER.

As the good man Luser says you only know two things about me, I will tell you a few facts, by which you may know me in future.

But as I wish to avoid the accusation of fatuity, I will confine myself to negative indications, as theologians do when they wish to make some one understand what the devil is like.

1. I was not brought up in barracks.
2. I have never been beaten with a stick, till by your orders at Dux.
3. I have never held a military position by virtue of which I had to go from Peter to Paul at my superior's orders.
4. I have never been a drunkard.
5. I have never been seen in low company, or eating with such, until you obliged me to do so at Dux.
6. I never forged certificates to keep a pension which otherwise I should have lost.
7. I never allowed any one to be wanting in respect to a man with whom I was at table.
8. I have never refused to fight a duel with any one who demanded satisfaction from me.
9. I have never in my life forgiven a deliberate insult until I had the rogue who propounded it under my heel.
10. I have never calumniated any one.
11. I have never believed a defamatory libel.
12. I have never been wanting in the respect due to old age. I have never forgotten that due to a man who, without being born a gentleman, has made himself one by study and literature.
13. I have never been an habitual adulterer.
14. I have never made, or caused to be made, an effigy of any one.
15. I have never allowed any of my companions to kiss my hand before leaving the table.
16. I have never been driven to pass my time in low company in pot-houses for want of employment, my love of literature having always preserved me from this.
17. I have never broken open doors or locks, of which I was not the master, so as to cast suspicion on the probity of others.
18. I have never ordered a defenceless old man to be assassinated in the street.
19. I have never intercepted letters.
20. Finally, I have never exhausted myself by trying to find means of injuring and wounding my neighbours.

These twenty negative qualities may assist you in deducing some positive ones by which you will know me, but it may be impossible for you to do so, as to deduce one fact from another, one principle from another, implies a certain amount of reason, method, judgment, and study in all of which you are wanting. How can I make you understand me? Poor sub-lieutenant! You must ask Viderol; *he is witty,* he has a *prodigious talent.* This is what you said yourself one day, when you stupidly and spitefully allowed him to take off your master and his, the Count von Waldstein, at table. For shame! you should blush, Faulkircher, and hide yourself from every eye

AVENTUROS

PORTRAIT OF CASANOVA BY THE PRINCE DE LIGNE[1]

He would be a very fine man if he was not ugly. He is tall, built like a Hercules, but with an almost African complexion; his eyes are bright, truthful-looking, and intelligent, but they indicate an uneasy susceptibility and a revengeful ferocity; it would seem easier to make him angry than to make him laugh. He seldom laughs, though he makes others do so. He has a way of saying things which reminds one of Harlequin and Figaro.

He knows everything, excepting the things which he prides himself on knowing—such as dancing, the rules of the French language, good taste, and the ways of high society. In the same way, it is only his comedies which are not comic, his philosophical works in which there is no philosophy, all the others are full of it, and of depth, character, piquancy, and originality. He is a mine of science and learning, but wearies one with quotations from Homer and Horace.

His witty sallies have a flavour of Attic salt. He is sensitive and grateful; but when he is displeased, is grumbling, bitter, and altogether detestable. No sum which one could give him would atone for a little joke at his expense. His style is like that of old prefaces—long, diffuse, and heavy—but if he has anything to tell—his adventures, for instance—he tells them so amusingly and dramatically that one is quite carried away. He beats *Gil Blas* or the *Diable Boiteux* in interest. He believes in nothing except what [illegible] least worthy of credence, being superstitious on many points. Fortunately, he is high-minded and delicate, for when he says, 'I have sworn to God,' or 'God so wills it,' there is nothing can stop him. He wants everything, and covets everything, and after having possessed everything, he knows how to do without everything.

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[1] See de Ligne's *Mémoires et Mélanges historiques et littéraires*, Paris, 1828, vol. iv. [illegible] 291.

His head is always running on women and little girls, and in his head they have to remain, which makes him furious. He rages against the fair sex, against himself, against Heaven, against Nature, but, above all, against the year 1725. He makes up for this failure of power, as well as he can, by eating, and drinking enormously. As he can no longer be a god in the gardens or a satyr in the forests, he will be a wolf at table: he lets nothing pass him, begins gaily and finishes sadly, grieving that he cannot begin all over again.

If he sometimes uses his superior intelligence to get the better of foolish men or women, it is, he says, to make those around him happy. In the midst of the disorders of a stormy youth, and a most adventurous and somewhat equivocal career, he could show a strong sense of delicacy, honour, and courage. He is proud because he is nothing. If he had been a landowner, a financier, or a great nobleman, he would have been more easy-going; as it is, no one must contradict him, and no one must laugh at him; every one must read his books and listen to his stories. You must never tell him that you have heard an anecdote before; listen to it as though for the first time. Do not forget to salute him respectfully, or you will make an enemy for life. His prodigious imagination, the vivacity which is his birthright, his travels, the many parts he has played, his courage in the absence of all moral and physical support, make up an extraordinary personality, good to know, and worthy of the consideration and friendship of the small number of people of whom he condescends to ask it.

EXTRACTS FROM THE 'MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE'

FRAGMENTS RELATING TO CASANOVA

CASANOVA was a man of high character, intelligence, and knowledge, who had seen the world. In his *Memoirs* he writes himself down an adventurer, the son of an unknown father, and a third-rate Venetian actress. I have drawn his portrait in my works, and called him *Aventuros.*

The merit of his *Memoirs* lies precisely in their cynicism, but it is this very cynicism which will prevent their ever being given to the world, though they are full of dramatic turns, of comedy, vivacity, philosophy, of original, sublime, and inimitable things.

I will try and set down here what I remember of the things he told me.

When he returned from his ridiculous expedition to Constantinople, he met his two brothers, likewise come back from travelling in foreign lands.

'What have you learned?' he asked them.

'Directly they opened their mouths,' he said to me afterwards, 'I saw that one would turn out a fool and the other a maniac: the fool, however, developed a genius for painting, and became the most celebrated painter of battlepieces of his time, and took the place of Lebrun, van der Meulen, and Bourguignon. His prophecy as regards the other, who died at Dresden, was more accurate.

One day he saw his mother on the boards, and made up his mind that she was a detestably bad actress. He went up to her dressing-room, embraced her (he had not seen her for years, and she did not know what had become of him), and there and then persuaded her to abandon the theatre.

'You will get along very well,' he told her, 'for one of the little women I loved when I was fifteen has married a procurator, and I share his wealth and his pleasures; the child has not forgotten her first sweetheart.'

Epigrams, ballads, sarcasms, indiscretions, criticisms of the direction of his beloved republic of Venice, Casanova treats us to them all—love, jealousy, imprudence, rope-ladders, bribed boatmen, adventures of every sort. He plays the great lord in a grey lustrine coat embroidered with flowers, with a large Spanish lace collar, and a hat with a feather, a yellow waistcoat, and crimson silk breeches, as he is represented on the frontispiece of his work on his escape from 'The Leads.'

This book is worth reading. The style is odd, and somewhat barbarous, but lively and interesting, and bearing the stamp of truth on every word. A great number of Venetians have assured me of the truth of the story.

Some time after his flight from prison the fancy seized him to add the name of *Seingalt* to his own; it would give him, he said, more the appearance of a gentleman, and he would be beholden to no sovereign in Europe for it.

After having wandered about the world for seventeen years, he determined to try his fortune in Russia. 'Who knows,' said he, 'I shall perhaps obtain some situation at the Court of the Great Catherine—librarian, secretary, diplomatic agent, tutor to some young nobleman, or lover to the Empress! There are two or three French hairdressers and an Italian pastry-cook filling such employment at Petersburg. I am worth as much, or more, than they.'

At the close of one of the long Northern days that have no night, Catherine was walking with some of her ladies in the summer gardens, when she saw an extraordinary-looking man examining the statuary with a mocking air. She guessed at once that it was the man whose name had been made known to her through the reports of her police.

'That statue does not please you, sir?'

'No, madame; it [illegible] out of proportion.'

'It is a nymph.'

'It does not look like one, madame! Where are the usual attributes?'

'Are you not the brother of the painter?'

'Yes, madame; how does your Majesty know that? and how comes she to be familiar with a wretched dauber like my brother?'

'He is a genius, sir, and I think a great deal of him.'

'He has a good eye for colour, madame, and a fair sense of composition, but drawing is not his strong point, and his pictures are unfinished.'

'Have you seen the little wooden house Peter the Great built—the first in Petersburg?'

'Yes, madame; he ought to have gone to Italy instead of to France for his architect.'

His criticisms on his brother were literally just. I have often reproached Francis with the cannon or pistol fired off in the middle of his pictures, so that the smoke might cover their imperfections.

By these means one could take his Turks' turbans to mean anything or nothing. All his horses had Roman noses; but this was from principle, as his model was made that way.

This Casanova, the painter I mean, was a most singular man. One day when I was speaking of his pictures in the Palais Bourbon, I said laughingly, 'Why did you represent my great-grandfather as running away at full speed on a big grey horse after the battle of Lens, when every one knows that he was made prisoner at the head of the infantry, after having done marvels in leading the cavalry?' He did not answer.

Thirty years after he painted a large picture which was sent to the Russian empress. It was the portrait of the Emperor Joseph, surrounded by his generals, Lacy, Laudon, Haddik, who all had a right to be there, but imagine my astonishment when I recognised myself among them! All my comrades were jealous. 'Why did you put me there?' I asked.

'To make amends for a wrong,' said Casanova, 'which I did to a Prince de Ligne in 1648.'

Marshal Pellegrini said, in a droll voice, 'My comrade, my countryman, for I come from Verona, put me in too, I implore you, if you only squeeze me into a little corner!'

'There is no more room, your excellency.'

'My friend, if I am hidden by the frame, if only the end of my nose shows, I should be happy. I beg you put me in.'

And he got in by sheer importunity.

I cannot remember all the places where Jacques Casanova went in his double character of knight-errant and wandering Jew, but after many years of this existence he began to find the gates of cities, courts, and castles closed to him. I remember, however, that he went to Vienna, where his brother was established, and profited by the complaisance of the Emperor Joseph, who received all sorts of people.[1]

'It seems to me,' said Joseph, who never forgot a detail, 'that you were the friend of Signor Zaguri.'

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[1] From this point the *Memoirs* of de Ligne deal with a time posterior to the *Memoirs* of Casanova, which finish in 1774. The prince was writing what he remembered from reading Casanova's manuscripts, which [illegible] a further proof that the original *Memoirs* were carried much further than those we possess.

'Yes,' answered Casanova, 'he was a Venetian nobleman.'

'I don't think much of his nobility. I do not care for people who buy titles.'

'And how about those who sell them, sire?'

Joseph changed the conversation; it was easy to see he was displeased at this bold reply, which was, nevertheless, just. I think it was soon after this that Casanova went to Paris for the last time. My nephew, Waldstein, met him at the Venetian ambassador's, and took a great liking to him. Waldstein pretended to believe in magic, and to practise it: he began to talk about the clavicula of Solomon, and of Agrippa.

'How strange that you should speak to *me* of these things,' cried Casanova; '*O! che bella cosa, cospetto!*—how familiar all these things are to me!'

'If that is so,' said Waldstein, 'come to Bohemia with me, I am leaving to-morrow.'

Casanova, who had come to an end of his money, his travels, and his adventures, took Waldstein at his word, and became his librarian. In this quality he passed the last fourteen years of his life at the Château of Dux, near Toeplitz, where for six succeeding summers he was a constant joy to me, because of his enthusiastic liking for me, and his useful and agreeable knowledge.

It must not be supposed, however, that he was content to live quietly in the haven of refuge that the kindness of Waldstein had provided for him. It was not in his nature. Not a day passed without a storm: something was sure to be wrong with his coffee, his milk, his dish of macaroni, which he insisted on having served to him daily. There were constant quarrels in the house. The *chef* had spoilt his polenta; the coachman had given him a bad driver to bring him over to see me; the dogs had barked all night; there had been more guests than usual, and he had been obliged to eat at a side table; a hunting-horn had tortured his ear with discordant sounds; the *curé* had been trying to convert him; Count Waldstein had not said good morning to him first; the soup, out of *malice prepense*, had been served to him too hot, or too cold; a servant had kept him waiting for his wine; he had not been introduced to some distinguished person who had come to see the lance which pierced the side of the great Waldstein; the count had lent some one a book without telling him; a groom had not touched his hat to him; he had spoken in German and not been understood; he had got angry and people laughed at him. The fact of the matter was, that people laughed at him for many reasons. When he showed his French verses they laughed. When he declaimed Italian verses with much gesticulation, they laughed; when he came into the salon and bowed in the style which Marcel, the famous dancing-master, had taught him sixty years before, they laughed. When at all the balls he danced a minuet in a grave and stately manner, they laughed. When he put on his befeathered hat, his cloth of gold coat, his black velvet vest, his buckles with paste diamonds, worn over rolled silk stockings, they laughed.

'*Cospetto!*' said he; 'low scoundrels that you are! You are all Jacobins, you are wanting in respect to the count, and the count is wanting in respect to me when he fails to punish you.'

'Sir,' he said one day to the count, 'I wounded a great Polish general in the belly. I may not be a gentleman by birth, but I have raised myself to the position of one.'

The count laughed, which was another grievance.

One morning the count went into his room with a pair of pistols in his hand, and looked at him seriously, though he was inwardly dying with laughter. Casanova burst into tears, and fell on his shoulder. 'What!' he said, 'should I kill my benefactor—*O che bella cosa!*'

Then, thinking that he would be suspected of cowardice, he took up the pistols and returned them gracefully to the count, holding his hand at the level of his eyebrow, as one does in a minuet; then he wept a little more and fell to talking of magic and macaroni.

All the mothers in the village complained of his talking nonsense to their little girls!

He managed to involve the count in a quarrel with the monks at the Abbey of Ossegg, which he called, for some reason known only to himself, *Calvados*. When he got indigestion from overeating, he declared he was poisoned by the Jacobins! He bought a quantity of cloth on credit from the count's factory at Oberleitersdorf, and flew in a rage when asked for the money.

He could not endure so much persecution! God ordered him to leave Dux! By the way, he always pretended that everything he did was by God's order. God ordered him to ask me for letters of introduction to the Duke of Weimar, who is very fond of me, for the Duchess of Gotha, who does not know me, and for the Jews in Berlin.

He went off secretly, leaving a tender, proud, honest, and irate letter behind for Waldstein, who laughed and said he would be sure to come back some day.

Poor fellow, they did not offer him a place as tutor, or librarian, or chamberlain, but kept him cooling his heels in the anterooms, and he revenged himself by proclaiming loudly that all Germans are stupid. The excellent and amiable Duke of Weimar received him marvellously well, but he instantly became jealous of Goethe and Wieland, and declaimed against them and the literature of the country of which he knew nothing! At Berlin he launched his diatribes against the ignorance, superstition, and dishonesty of the Hebrews I had sent him to, which did not prevent him from borrowing money from them and giving them bills drawn on Waldstein in exchange. My nephew laughed, paid them, and embraced him when he returned. As for Casanova, he laughed and wept at the same time, and said that God had told him to take a six weeks' voyage, to go off without saying a word, and then come quietly back to his room at Dux. He told us all that had happened to him, including these little contrarieties, which he dignified with the name of humiliations.

A week after he returned there were fresh disturbances. The strawberries were handed to every one before him at table, and none left for him; and worse still, a portrait of himself which had disappeared from his room, and which he flattered himself had been taken by an admirer, suddenly reappeared, hung up in an inferior and degrading position. Thus he went on, agitating himself, grieving, groaning over the conquest of his ungrateful country; talking to us of the League of Cambray and the glories of the ancient and superb city of Venice, which had hitherto resisted all Europe. His appetite began to diminish, he ceased to regret life, and he ended nobly enough, at peace with God and man.

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ERRATA

VOLUME 1

Page 10, lines 15, 16, 19: *for* Angiolini *read* Angioloni; see Vol. 10, p. 370, n. 5

Page 47, line 35: *for* the physician *read* the physician Zambelli

Page 51, line 20: *for* Moncenigo *read* Mocenigo

VOLUME 2

Page 34, line 23: *for* to do here in *read* to do in

Page 100, line 22 and *passim*: *for* Marshal *read* Marischal

Page 233, line 23: *for* Moscynski *read* Moczynski

VOLUME 3

Page 17, line 11: *for* posthouse inn *read* Albergo della Posta

Page 62, lines 14, 17: *for* professor *read* violoncellist

Page 144, lines 14-15: *for* Sarrazin, his wife Grandval *read* Sarrazin, Grandval, his wife

Page 148, line 21: *for* we *read* me

Page 290, line 29: *for* Parma *read* Padua

VOLUME 5

Page 110, line 19: *for* "*patina*" *read* "*platina*"

Page 235, line 13, *for* Lieutenant *read* Magistrate

Pages 253-4, *passim*: *for* earrings *read* buckles (see Vol. 9, p. 404, n. 40)

Page 265, line 15, *for* Moerdick *read* Moerdijk

VOLUME 6

Page 119, line 23: *for* friend of mine. *read* friend of mine.[30]
Line 25: *for* brother.[30] *read* brother

Page 158, line 34, and page 305, n. 5, *for* Smerdis *read* Smerdies

Page 245, line 2: *for* cursed *read* crushed

Page 253, lines 9-10, *for* lisbonini *read* lisbonines (Portuguese, lisbonina; another designation for the dobra, the Portuguese gold coins minted from 1722 and worth 4 escudos or 4000 reis)

VOLUME 7

Page 46, line 5: *for* Breyden *read* Treyden

Page 126, line 22: *for* with Marchese *read* with the Marchese

Page 141, line 21: *for* Derici *read* Lerici

Page 194, line 11, *for* Smerdias *read* Smerdies

VOLUME 8

Page 58, line 14: *for* Lescaris *read* Lascaris

Page 232, line 4, and page 234, line 10: *for* Teresa *read* Theresa

VOLUME 9

Page 25, line 2: *for* Bressa *read* Brescia

Page 36, line 18: *for* Coralline *read* Corallina

Page 70, line 18, *for* Teresa *read* Theresa

Page 100, line 21: *for* providing *read* proving

Page 197, line 11, and *passim*: *for* Malignan *read* Malingan

VOLUME 10

Page 23, line 4: *for* Lavallette *read* Lavaletta

Page 25, line 25: *for* longed *read* longer

Page 35, lines 7 and 20: *for* Theresa *read* Thérèse

Page 179, line 24: *for* 1776 *read* 1766

Page 316, line 17: *for* Frederick I *read* Frederick II

APPENDIX

THUS abruptly end the *Memoirs of Giacome Casanova,* Chevalier de Seingalt, Knight of the Golden Spur, Prothonotary Apostolic, and Scoundrel Cosmopolitic.

Whether the author died before the work was complete, whether the concluding volumes were destroyed by himself or his literary executors, or whether the MS. fell into bad hands, seems a matter of uncertainty, and the materials available towards a continuation of the Memoirs are extremely fragmentary. We know, however, that Casanova at last succeeded in obtaining his pardon from the authorities of the Republic, and he returned to Venice, where he exercised the honourable office of secret agent of the State Inquisitors—in plain language, he became a spy. It seems that the Knight of the Golden Spur made a rather indifferent "agent;" not surely, as a French writer suggests, because the dirty work was too dirty for his fingers, but probably because he was getting old and stupid and out-of-date, and failed to keep in touch with new forms of turpitude. He left Venice again and paid a visit to Vienna, saw beloved Paris once more, and there met Count Wallenstein, or Waldstein. The conversation turned on magic and the occult sciences, in which Casanova was an adept, as the reader of the Memoirs will remember, and the count took a fancy to the charlatan. In short Casanova became librarian at the count's Castle of Dux, near Teplitz, and there he spent the fourteen remaining years of his life.

As the Prince de Ligne (from whose Memoirs we learn these particulars) remarks, Casanova's life had been a stormy and adventurous one, and it might have been expected that he would have found his patron's library a pleasant refuge after so many toils and travels. But the man carried rough weather and storm in his own heart, and found daily opportunities of mortification and resentment. The coffee was ill made, the maccaroni not cooked in the true Italian style, the dogs had bayed during the night, he had been made to dine at a small table, the parish priest had tried to convert him, the soup had been served too hot on purpose to annoy him, he had not been introduced to a distinguished guest, the count had lent a book without telling him, a groom had not taken off his hat; such were his complaints. The fact is Casanova felt his dependent position and his utter poverty, and was all the more determined to stand to his dignity as a man who had talked with all the crowned heads of Europe, and had fought a duel with the Polish general. And he had another reason for finding life bitter—he had lived beyond his time. Louis XV. was dead, and Louis XVI. had been guillotined; the Revolution had come; and Casanova, his dress, and his manners, appeared as odd and antique as some "blood of the Regency" would appear to us of these days. Sixty years before, Marcel, the famous dancing-master, had taught young Casanova how to enter a room with a lowly and ceremonious bow; and still, though the eighteenth century is drawning to a close, old Casanova enters the rooms of Dux with the same stately bow, but now everyone laughs. Old Casanova treads the grave measures of the minuet; they applauded his dancing once, but now everyone laughs. Young Casanova was always dressed in the height of the fashion; but the age of powder, wigs, velvets, and silks has departed, and old Casanova's attempts at elegance ("Strass" diamonds have replaced the genuine stones with him) are likewise greeted with laughter. No wonder the old adventurer denounces the whole house of Jacobins and *canaille;* the world, he feels, is permanently out of joint for him; everything is cross, and everyone is in a conspiracy to drive the iron into his soul.

At last these persecutions, real or imaginary, drive him away from Dux; he considers his genius bids him go, and, as before, he obeys. Casanova has but little pleasure or profit out of this his last journey; he has to dance attendance in ante-chambers; no one will give him any office, whether as tutor, librarian, or chamberlain. In one quarter only is he well received—namely, by the famous Duke of Weimar; but in a few days he becomes madly jealous of the duke's more famous *protégés,* Goethe and Wieland, and goes off declaiming against them and German literature generally—with which literature he was wholly unacquainted. From Weimar to Berlin; where there are Jews to whom he has introductions. Casanova thinks them ignorant, superstitious, and knavish; but they lend him money, and he gives bills on Count Wallenstein, which are paid. In six weeks the wanderer returns to Dux, and is welcomed with open arms; his journeys are over at last.

But not his troubles. A week after his return there are strawberries at dessert; everyone is served before himself, and when the plate comes round to him it is empty. Worse still: his portrait is missing from his room, and is discovered *salement placardé à la porte des lieux d'aisance!*

Five more years of life remained to him. They were passed in such petty mortifications as we have narrated, in grieving over his *affreuse vieillesse,* and in laments over the conquest of his native land Venice, once so splendid and powerful. His appetite began to fail, and with it failed his last source of pleasure, so death came to him somewhat as a release. He received the sacraments with devotion, exclaimed,——

'*Grand Dieu, et vous tous témoins de ma mort, j'ai vécu en philosophe, et je meurs en Chrétien,*" and so died.

It was a quiet ending to a wonderfully brilliant and entirely useless career. It has been suggested that if the age in which Casanova lived had been less corrupt, he himself might have used his all but universal talents to some advantage, but to our mind Casanova would always have remained Casanova. He came of a family of adventurers, and the reader of his Memoirs will remark how he continually ruined his prospects by his ineradicable love for disreputable company. His "Bohemianism" was in his blood, and in his old age he regrets—not his past follies, but his inability to commit folly any longer. Now and again we are inclined to pronounce Casanova to be an amiable man; and if to his generosity and good nature he had added some elementary knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong, he might certainly have laid some claim to the character. The Prince de Ligne draws the following portrait of him under the name of Aventuros:

"He would be a handsome man if he were not ugly; he is tall and strongly built, but his dark complexion and his glittering eyes give him a fierce expression. He is easier to annoy than amuse; he laughs little but makes others laugh by the peculiar turn he gives to his conversation. He knows everything except those matters on the knowledge of which he chiefly prides himself, namely, dancing, the French language, good taste, and knowledge of the world. Everything about him is comic, except his comedies; and all his writings are philosophical, saving those which treat of philosophy. He is a perfect well of knowledge, but he quotes Homer and Horace *ad nauseam*."

The Life of
CASANOVA
from 1774 to 1798

A Supplement to the Memoirs

Drawn from the work of J. F. H. Adnesse
and other Sources

by

MITCHELL S. BUCK
and

Arthur Symons

Containing an Outline of Casanova's career from the year 1774, when his own Memoirs abruptly end, until his death in 1798

New York
NICHOLAS L. BROWN
1924

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PART THE FIRST

VENICE

1774—1782

I

CASANOVA'S RETURN TO VENICE

Thus *Casanova* ended his *Memoirs,* concluding his narrative with his sojourn at *Trieste,* in January 1774, where he had remained, except for a few excursions, since the 15th November 1772. He was forty-nine years of age. Since his unfortunate experiences in *England,* the loss of his fortune and the failure of his efforts to obtain congenial and remunerative employment in *Germany* or *Russia,* he had come to concentrate his efforts on a return to his native city.

Of his faithful friends, the nobles *Bragadin, Barbaro* and *Dandolo,* the first had died in 1767, having gone into debt "that I might have enough," sending *Casanova,* from his death-bed, a last gift of a thousand crowns. *Barbaro* who had died also, in 1771, left *Casanova* a life-income of six sequins a month. The survivor, *Dandolo,* was poor, but until his death, he also gave *Casanova* a monthly provision of six sequins.

However, *Casanova* was not without influential friends who might not only obtain a pardon from the *State Inquisitors* but also assist him to employment; and, in fact, it was through such influence as that wielded by the *Avogador Zaguri* and the *Procurator Morosini,* that *Casanova* received his pardon, and later, a position as *"Confidant,"* or Secret Agent, to the *Inquisitors* at *Venice.*

Casanova re-entered *Venice* the 14th September 1774 and, presenting himself, on the 18th, to *Marc-Antoine Businello,* Secretary of the *Tribunal of the Inquisitors of State,* was advised that mercy had been accorded him by reason of his refutation of the *History of the Venetian Government* by *Amelot de la Houssaie* which he had written during his forty-two day imprisonment at *Barcelona* in 1768. The three Inquisitors, *Francesco Grimani, Francesco Sagredo* and *Paolo Bembo,* invited him to dinner to hear his story of his escape from *The Leads.*

In 1772, *Bandiera,* the Republic's resident at *Ancona,* drew this portrait of *Casanova:*

"One sees everywhere this unhappy rebel against the justice of the *August Council,* presenting himself boldly, his head carried high, and well equipped. He is received in many houses and announces his intention of going to *Trieste* and, from there, of returning to *Germany.* He is a man of forty years or more," [in reality, forty-seven] "of high stature and excellent appearance, vigorous, of a very brown color, the eye bright, the wig short and chestnut-brown. He is said to be haughty and disdainful; he speaks at length, with spirit and erudition." [*Letter of information to the Very Illustrious Giovanni Zon, Secretary of the August Council of Ten at Venice. 2 October 1772.*]

Returning to *Venice* after an absence of eighteen years, *Casanova* renewed his acquaintance with many old friends, among whom were:

The Christine of the *Memoirs. Charles,* who married *Christine,* the marriage being arranged by *Casanova* while in *Venice* in 1747, was of financial assistance to *Casanova,* who "found him a true friend." *Charles* died "a few months before my last departure from *Venice,*" in 1783.

Mlle. X . . . C . . . V . . ., really *Giustina de Wynne,* widow of the *Count Rosenberg,* Austrian Ambassador at *Venice.* "Fifteen years afterwards, I saw her again and she was a widow, happy enough, apparently, and enjoying a great reputation on account of her rank, wit and social qualities, but our connection was never renewed."

Callimena, who was kind to him "for love's sake alone" at *Sorrento* in 1770.

Marcoline, the girl he took away from his younger brother, the *Abbé Casanova,* at *Geneva* in 1763.

Father Balbi, the companion of his flight from *The Leads.*

Doctor Gozzi, his former teacher at *Padua,* now become *Arch-Priest* of *St. George of the Valley,* and his sister *Bettina.* "When I went to pay him a visit . . . she breathed her last in my arms, in 1776, twenty-four hours after my arrival. I will speak of her death in due time."

Angela Toselli, his first passion. In 1758 this girl married the advocate *Francesco Barnaba Rizzotti,* and in the following year she gave birth to a daughter, *Maria Rizzotti* (later married to a *M. Kaiser*) who lived at *Vienna* and whose letters to *Casanova* were preserved at *Dux.*

C . . . C . . ., the young girl whose love affair with *Casanova* became involved with that of the nun *M . . . M . . . Casanova* found her in *Venice* "a widow and poorly off."

The dancing girl *Binetti,* who assisted *Casanova* in his flight from *Stuttgart* in 1760, whom he met again in *London* in 1763, and who was the cause of his duel with *Count Branicki* at *Warsaw* in 1766. She danced frequently at *Venice* between 1769 and 1780.

The good and indulgent *Mme. Manzoni,* "of whom I shall have to speak very often."

The patricians *Andrea Memmo* and his brother *Bernardo* who, with *P. Zaguri* were personages of considerable standing in the *Republic* and who remained his constant friends. *Andrea Memmo* was the cause of the embarrassment in which *Mlle. X . . . C . . . V . . .* found herself in *Paris* and which *Casanova* vainly endeavored to remove by applications of his astonishing specific, the *aroph of Paracelsus.*

It was at the house of these friends that *Casanova* became acquainted with the poet, *Lorenzo Da Ponte.* "I made his acquaintance," says the latter, in his own Memoirs, "at the house of *Zaguri* and the house of *Memmo,* who both sought after his always interesting conversation, accepting from this man all he had of good, and closing their eyes, on account of his genius, upon the perverse parts of his nature."

Lorenzo Da Ponte, known above all as *Mozart's* librettist, and whose youth much resembled that of *Casanova,* was accused of having eaten ham on Friday and was obliged to flee from *Venice* in 1777, to escape the punishment of the *Tribunal of Blasphemies.* In his Memoirs, he speaks unsparingly of his compatriot and yet, as *M. Rava* notes, in the numerous letters he wrote *Casanova,* and which were preserved at *Dux,* he proclaims his friendship and admiration.

Irene Rinaldi, whom he met again at *Padua* in 1777, with her daughter who "had become a charming girl; and our acquaintance was renewed in the tenderest manner."

The ballet-girl *Adelaide,* daughter of *Mme. Soavi,* who was also a dancer, and of a *M. de Marigny.*

Barbara, who attracted *Casanova's* attention at

Trieste, in 1773, while he was frequenting a family named *Leo,* but toward whom he had maintained an attitude of respect. This girl, on meeting him again in 1777, declared that "she had guessed my real feelings and had been amused by my foolish restraint."

At *Pesaro,* the Jewess *Leah,* with whom he had the most singular experiences at *Ancona* in 1772.

II

RELATIONS WITH THE INQUISITORS

Soon after reaching *Venice, Casanova* learned that the *Landgrave of Hesse Cassel,* following the example of other German princes, wished a Venetian correspondent for his private affairs. Through some influence he believed he might obtain this small employment; but before applying for the position he applied to the Secretary of the *Tribunal* for permission. Apparently nothing came of this, and *Casanova* obtained no definite employment until 1776.

Early in 1776, *Casanova* entered the service of the *Tribunal of Inquisitors* as an *"occasional Confidant,"* under the fictitious name of *Antonio Pratiloni,* giving his address as *"at the Casino of S. E. Marco Dandolo."*

In October 1780, his appointment was more definitely established and he was given a salary of fifteen ducats a month. This, with the six sequins of life-income left by *Barbaro* and the six given by *Dandolo,* gave him a monthly income of three hundred and eighty-four lires—about seventy-four U. S. dollars—from 1780 until his break with the *Tribunal* at the end of 1781.

In the Archives of *Venice* are preserved forty-eight letters from *Casanova,* including the *Reports* he wrote as a "Confidant," all in the same handwriting as the manuscript of the *Memoirs*. The *Reports* may be divided into two classes: those referring to commercial or industrial matters, and those referring to the public morals.

Among those of the first class, we find:

A *Report* relating to *Casanova's* success in having a change made in the route of the weekly diligence running from *Trieste* to *Mestre,* for which service, rendered during *Casanova's* residence at *Trieste* in 1773, he received encouragement and the sum of one hundred ducats from the *Tribunal.*

A *Report,* the 8th September 1776, with information concerning the rumored project of the future *Emperor of Austria* to invade *Dalmatia* after the death of *Maria Theresa. Casanova* stated he had received this information from a Frenchman, *M. Salz de Chalabre,* whom he had known in *Paris* twenty years before. This *M. Chalabre* [printed *Calabre*] was the pretended nephew of *Mme. Amelin.* "This young man was as like her as two drops of water, but she did not find that a sufficient reason for avowing herself his mother." The boy was, in fact, the son of *Mme. Amelin* and of *M. de Chalabre,* who had lived together for a long time.

A *Report,* the 12th of December 1776, of a secret mission to *Trieste,* in regard to a project of the court of *Vienna* for making *Fiume* a *French* port; the object being to facilitate communications between this port and the interior of *Hungary.* For this inquiry, *Casanova* received sixteen hundred lires, his expenditures amounting to seven hundred and sixty-six lires.

A *Report,* May-July 1779, of an excursion in the market of *Ancona* for information concerning the commercial relations of the *Pontifical States* with the *Republic* *of Venice.* At *Forli,* in the course of this excursion, *Casanova* visited the dancing-girl *Binetti.* For this mission *Casanova* received forty-eight sequins.

A *Report,* January 1780, remarking a clandestine recruiting carried out by a certain *Marrazzani* for the [Prussian] regiment of *Zarembal.*

A *Report,* the 11th October 1781, regarding a so-called *Baldassare Rossetti,* a Venetian subject living at *Trieste,* whose activities and projects were of a nature to prejudice the commerce and industry of the *Republic.*

Among the *Reports* relating to public morals may be noted:

December 1776. A *Report* on the seditious character of a ballet called *"Coriolanus."* The back of this report is inscribed: "The impressario of *S. Benedetto, Michel de l'Agata,* shall be summoned immediately; it has been ordered that he cease, under penalty of his life, from giving the ballet *Coriolanus* at the theater. Further, he is to collect and deposit all the printed programmes of this ballet."

December 1780. A *Report* calling to the attention of the *Tribunal* the scandalous disorders produced in the theaters when the lights were extinguished.

3rd May 1781. A *Report* remarking that the *Abbé Carlo Grimani* believed himself exempt, in his position as a priest, from the interdiction laid on patricians against frequenting foreign ministers and their suites. On the back of this *Report* is written: *"Ser Jean Carlo, Abbé Grimani,* to be gently reminded, by the Secretary, of the injunction to abstain from all commerce with foreign ministers and their adherents."

Venetian nobles were forbidden under penalty of death from holding any communication with foreign ambassadors or their households. This was intended as a precaution to preserve the secrets of the Senate.

26th November 1781. A *Report* concerning a painting academy where nude studies were made, from models of both sexes, while scholars only twelve or thirteen years of age were admitted, and where *dilettantes* who were neither painters nor designers, attended the sessions.

22nd December 1781. By order, *Casanova* reported to the *Tribunal* a list of the principal licentious or anti-religious books to be found in the libraries and private collections at *Venice*: *la Pucelle; la Philosophie de l'Histoire; l'Esprit d'Helvétius; la Sainte Chandelle d'Arras; les Bijoux indiscrets; le Portier des Chârtreux; les Poésies de Baffo; Ode à Priape; de Piron; etc., etc.*

In considering this *Report,* which has been the subject of violent criticism, we should bear in mind three points: *first*—the *Inquisitors* required this information; *second*—no one in their employ could have been in a better position to give it than *Casanova; third—Casanova* was morally and economically bound, as an employee of the *Tribunal,* to furnish the information ordered, whatever his personal distaste for the undertaking may have been. We may even assume that he permitted himself to express his feelings in some indiscreet way, and his break with the *Tribunal* followed, for, at the end of 1781, his commission was withdrawn. Certainly, *Casanova's* almost absolute dependence on his salary, influenced the letter he wrote the *Inquisitors* at this time.

"To the Illustrious and Most Excellent Lords, the Inquisitors of State:

"Filled with confusion, overwhelmed with sorrow and repentance, recognizing myself absolutely unworthy of

addressing my vile letter to Your Excellencies, confessing that I have failed in my duty in the opportunities which presented themselves, I, Jacques Casanova, invoke, on my knees, the mercy of the Prince; I beg that, in compassion and grace, there may be accorded me that which, in all justice and on reflection, may be refused me.

"I ask the Sovereign Munificence to come to my aid, so that, with the means of subsistence, I may apply myself vigorously, in the future, to the service to which I have been privileged.

"After this respectful supplication, the wisdom of Your Excellencies may judge the disposition of my spirit and of my intentions.

The *Inquisitors* decided to award *Casanova* one month's pay, but specified that thereafter he would receive salary only when he rendered important services.

In 1782 *Casanova* made a few more *Reports* to the *Tribunal,* for one of which, regarding the failure of an insurance and commercial house at *Trieste,* he received six sequins. But the part of a guardian of the public morals, even through necessity, was undoubtedly unpleasant to him; and, in spite of the financial loss, it may be that his release was a relief.

III

FRANCESCA BUSCHINI

Intimately connected with *Casanova's* life at this period was a girl named *Francesca Buschini.* This name does not appear in any of the literary, artistic or theatrical records of the period, and, of the girl, nothing is known other than that which she herself tells us in her letters to *Casanova*. From these very human letters, however, we may obtain, not only certain facts, but also, a very excellent idea of her character. Thirty-two of her letters, dated between July 1779 and October 1787, written in the Venetian dialect, were preserved in the library at *Dux*.

She was a seamstress, although often without work, and had a brother, a younger sister and also a mother living with her. The probabilities are that she was a girl of the most usual sort, but greatly attached to *Casanova* who, even in his poverty, must have dazzled her as a being from another world. She was his last Venetian love, and remained a faithful correspondent until 1787; and it is chiefly from her letters, in which she comments on news contained in *Casanova's* letters to her, that light is thrown on the *Vienna-Paris* period, particularly, of *Casanova's* life. For this, *Francesca* has placed us greatly in her debt.

With this girl, at least between 1779 and 1782, *Casanova* rented a small house at *Barbaria delle Tole,* near *S. Giustina,* from the noble *Pesaro* at *S. Stae*. *Casanova,* always in demand for his wit and learning, often took dinner in the city. He knew that a place always awaited him at the house of *Memmo* and at that of *Zaguri* and that, at the table of these patricians, who were distinguished by their intellectual superiority, he would meet men notable in science and letters. Being so long and so closely connected with theatrical circles, he was often seen at the theater, with *Francesca*. Thus, the 9th August 1786, the poor girl, in an excess of chagrin writes: *"Where are all the pleasures which formerly you procured me? Where are the theatres, the comedies which we once saw together?"*

On the 28th July 1779, *Francesca* wrote:

"Dearest and best beloved,

" . . . In the way of novelties, I find nothing except that S. E. Pietro Zaguri has arrived at Venice; his servant has been twice to ask for you, and I have said you were still at the Baths of Abano . . ."

The *Casanova-Buschini* establishment kept up relations, more or less frequent and intimate, with a few persons, most of whom are mentioned in *Francesca's* letters; the *Signora Anzoletta Rizzotti;* the *Signora Elisabeth Catrolli,* an ancient *comédienne;* the *Signora Bepa Pezzana;* the *Signora Zenobia de Monti,* possibly the mother of that *Carlo de Monti,* Venetian Consul at *Trieste,* who was a friend to *Casanova* and certainly contributed toward obtaining his pardon from the *Inquisitors;* a *M. Lunel,* master of languages, and his wife.

IV

PUBLICATIONS

Casanova's principal writings during this period were:

His translation of the *Iliad,* the first volume of which was issued in 1775, the second in 1777 and the third in 1778.

During his stay at *Abano* in 1779, he wrote the *Scrutinio del libro,* eulogies of *M. de Voltaire* "by various hands." In the dedication of this book, to the *Doge Renier,* he wrote, *"This little book has recently come from my inexperienced pen, in the hours of leisure which are frequent at Abano for those who do not come only for the baths."*

From January until July 1780, he published, anonymously, a series of miscellaneous small works, seven pamphlets of about one hundred pages each, distributed at irregular intervals to subscribers.

From the 7th October to the end of December, 1780, on the occasions of the representations given by a troupe of French comedians at the *San Angelo* theater, *Casanova* wrote a little paper called *The Messenger* of *Thalia.* In one of the numbers, he wrote:

> *"French is not my tongue; I make no pretentions and, wrong or astray, I place on the paper what heaven sends from my pen. I give birth to phrases turned to Italian, either to see what they look like or to produce a style, and often, also, to draw, into a purist's snare, some critical doctor who does not know my humor or how my offense amuses me."*

The "little romance" referred to in the following letter to *"Mlle. X . . . C . . . V . . . ,"* appeared in 1782, with the title; *Di anecdoti vinizani militari e amorosi del secolo decimo quarto sotto i dogati di Giovanni Gradenigoe di Giovanni Dolfin.* Venezia, 1782.

V

MLLE. X . . . C . . . V . . .

In 1782, a letter written by this lady, *Giustina de Wynne,* referring to a visit to *Venice of Paul I, Grand Duke,* afterward *Emperor of Russia,* and his wife, was published under the title of *Du sejour des Comptes du Nord à Venise en janvier mdcclxxxii.* If he had not previously done so, *Casanova* took this occasion to recall himself to the memory of this lady to whom he had once been of such great service. And two very polite letters were exchanged:

"Madam,

"The fine epistle which V. E. has allowed to be printed upon the sojourn of C. and of the C. du Nord in this city, exposes you, in the position of an author, to endure the compliments of all those who trouble themselves to write. But I flatter myself, Madam, that V. E. will not disdain mine.

"The little romance, Madam, a translation from my dull and rigid pen, is not a gift but a very paltry offering which I dare make to the superiority of your merit.

"I have found, Madam, in your letter, the simple, flowing style of gentility, the one which alone a woman of condition who writes to her friend may use with dignity. Your digressions and your thoughts are flowers which . . . (forgive an author who pilfers from you the delicious nonchalance of an amiable writer) or . . . a will-o'-the-wisp which, from time to time, issues from the work, in spite of the author, and burns the paper.

"I aspire, Madam, to render myself favorable to the deity to which reason advises me to make homage. Accept then the offering and render happy he who makes it with your indulgence.

"I have the honor to sign myself, if you will kindly permit me, with very profound respect.

Giacomo Casanova."

"Monsieur:

"I am very sensible, Monsieur, of the distinction which comes to me from your approbation of my little pamphlet. The interest of the moment, its references and the exaltation of spirits have gained for it the tolerance and favorable welcome of the good Venetians. It is to your politeness in particular, Monsieur, that I believe is due the marked success which my work has had

with you. I thank you for the book which you sent me and I will risk thanking you in advance for the pleasure it will give me. Be persuaded of my esteem for yourself and for your talents. And I have the honor to be, Monsieur.

Your very humble servant
de Wynne de Rosemberg."

Among *Casanova's* papers at *Dux* was a page headed "Souvenir," dated the 2d September 1791, and beginning: "While descending the staircase, the *Prince de Rosemberg* told me that *Madame de Rosemberg* was dead. . . . This *Prince de Rosemberg* was the nephew of *Giustina."*

Giustina died, after a long illness, at *Padua,* the 21st August 1791, at the age of fifty-four years and seven months.

VI

LAST DAYS AT VENICE

Toward the end of 1782, doubtless convinced that he could expect nothing more from the *Tribunal, Casanova* entered the service of the *Marquis Spinola* as a secretary. Some years before, a certain *Carletti,* an officer in the service of the court of *Turin,* had won from the *Marquis* a wager of two hundred and fifty sequins. The existence of this debt seemed to have completely disappeared from the memory of the loser. By means of the firm promise of a pecuniary recompense, *Casanova* intervened to obtain from his patron a written acknowledgment of the debt owing to *Carletti.* His effort was successful; but instead of clinking cash, *Carletti* contented himself with remitting to the negotiator an assignment on the amount of the credit. *Casanova's* anger caused a violent dispute, in the course of which *Carlo Grimani,* at whose house the scene took place, placed him in the wrong and imposed silence.

The irascible *Giacomo* conceived a quick resentment. To discharge his bile, he found nothing less than to publish in the course of the month of August, under the title of: *Ne amori ne donne ovvero la Stalla d'Angia repulita,* a libel in which *Jean Carlo Grimani, Carletti,* and other notable persons were outraged under transparent mythological pseudonyms.

This writing embroiled the author with the entire body of the Venetian nobility.

To allow the indignation against him to quiet down, *Casanova* went to pass some days at *Trieste,* then returned to *Venice* to put his affairs in order. The idea of recommencing his wandering life alarmed him. "I have lived fifty-eight years," he wrote, "I could not go on foot with winter at hand, and when I think of starting on the road to resume my adventurous life, I laugh at myself in the mirror."

VENICE
1774-82
I. Casanova's Return to Venice

THE Memoirs end with the beginning of January 1774, with Casanova at Trieste where he had remained, except for a few excursions, since the 15th Nov. 1772. He was forty-nine years of age. Since his unfortunate experiences in England, the loss of his fortune and the failure of his efforts to obtain congenial and renumerative employment in Germany or Russia, he had come to concentrate his efforts on a return to his native city.

Of his faithful friends, the nobles Bragadin, Barbaro and Dandolo, the first had died in 1787, having gone into debt "that I might have enough", sending Casanova, from his death-bed, a last gift of a thousand crowns. (XI, 2) Barbaro had died also in 1771, leaving Casanova a life-income of six sequins a month. The survivor, Dandolo, was poor but, until his death, he also gave Casanova a monthly provision of six sequins.

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"One sees everywhere this unhappy rebel against the justice of the August Council, presenting himself boldly, his head carried

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high, and well equipped. He is received in many houses and announces his intention of going to Trieste and, from there, of returning to Germany. He is a man of forty years or more" (in reality, forty-seven), "of high stature and excellent appearance, vigorous, of a very brown color, the eye bright, the wig short and chestnut-brown. He is said to be haughty and disdainful; he speaks at length, with spirit and erudition." (Letter of information to the Very Illustrious Giovanni Zon, Secretary of the August Council of Ten at Venice. 2 October 1772.)

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Mlle X . . C . . V . . (V, 6-8), really Giustina de Wynne, widow of the Count Rosemberg, Austrian Ambassador at Venice.

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"Fifteen years afterwards, I saw her again and she was a widow, happy enough, apparently, and enjoying a great reputation on account of her rank, wit and social qualities, but our connection was never renewed." (V, 9).

Callimena, who was kind to him "for love's sake alone" at Sorrento in 1770. (XII, 3).

Marcoline, the girl he took away from his younger brother, the Abbè Casanova, at Geneva in 1763 (IX, 2).

Father Balbi, the companion of his flight from The Leads. (IV, 9 etc.).

Doctor Gozzi, his former teacher at Padua, now become Arch-Priest of St. George of the Valley, and his sister Bettina. "When I went to pay him a visit . . she breathed her last in my arms, in 1776, twenty-four hours after my arrival. I will speak of her death in due time." (I, 3).

Angela Toselli, his first passion (I, 4 etc.). In 1758 this girl married the advocate Francesco Barnaba Rizzotti. And in the following year she gave birth to a daughter, Maria Rizzotti (later married to an M.

Kaiser) who lived at Vienna and whose letters to Casanova were preserved at Dux.

C . . C . . , the young girl whose love affair with Casanova became involved with that of the nun M . . M . . . Casanova found her in Venice "a widow and poorly off." (IV, 8).

The dancing girl Binetti, who assisted Casanova in his flight from Stuttgart in 1760 (IV, 2), whom he met again in London in 1763 (IX, 8) and who was the cause of his duel with Count Branicki at Warsaw in 1766 (X, 11). She danced frequently at Venice between 1769 and 1780.

The good and indulgent Mme. Manzoni, "of whom I shall have to speak very often" (I, 4).

The patricians Andrea Memmo (IX, 5) and his brother Bernardo who, with P. Zaguri (XII, 9) were personages of considerable standing in the Republic and who remained his constant friends. Andrea Memmo was the cause of the embarrassment in which Mlle. X . . C . . V . . found herself in Paris and which Casanova vainly endeavored to remove by applications of his

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astonishing specific, the *aroph* of Paracelsus (V, 7 etc.).

* * *

It was at the house of these friends that Casanova became acquainted with the Poet, Lorenzo Da Ponte. "I made his acquaintance", says the latter, in his own Memoirs, "at the house of Zaguri and the house of Memmo, who both sought after his always interesting conversation, accepting from this man all he had of good, and closing their eyes, on account of his genius, upon the perverse parts of his nature."

Lorenzo Da Ponte, known above all as Mozart's librettist, and whose youth much resembled that of Casanova, was accused of having eaten ham on Friday and was obliged to flee from Venice in 1777, to escape the punishment of the Tribunal of Blasphemies. In his Memoirs, he speaks unsparingly of his compatriot and yet, as M. Rava notes, in the numerous letters he wrote Casanova, and which were preserved at Dux, he proclaims his friendship and admiration.

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Irene Rinaldi (VIII, 7. IX, 4), whom he met again at Padua in 1777, with her daughter who "had become a charming girl; and our acquaintance was renewed in the tenderest manner." (XII, 13).

The ballet-girl Adelaide (XII, 10), daughter of Mme. Soavi, who was also a dancer, and of a M. de Marigny.

Barbara, who attracted Casanova's attention at Trieste in 1773, while he was frequenting a family named Leo, but toward whom he had maintained an attitude of respect. This girl, on meeting him again in 1777, declared that "she had guessed my real feelings and had been amused by my foolish restraint." (XII, 12).

At Pesaro, the jewess Leah, with whom he had the most singular experiences at Ancona in 1772. (XII, 11).

II. Relations With the Inquisitors.

Soon after reaching Venice, Casanova learned that the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel,

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following the example of other German princes, wished a Venetian correspondent for his private affairs. Through some influence he believed he might obtain this small employment; but before applying for the position he applied to the Secretary of the Tribunal for permission. Apparently nothing came of this, and Casanova obtained no definite employment until 1776.

Early in 1776, Casanova entered the service of the Tribunal of Inquisitors as an "occasional Confidant", under the fictitious name of Antonio Pratiloni, giving his address as "at the Casino of S. E. Marco Dandolo."

In October 1780, his appointment was more definitely established and he was given a salary of fifteen ducats a month. This, with the six sequins of life income left by Barbaro and the six given by Dandolo, gave him a monthly income of three hundred and eighty-four lires—about seventy-four U. S. dollars—from 1780 until his break with the Tribunal at the end of 1781.

In the Archives of Venice are preserved forty-eight letters from Casanova, including the reports he wrote as a "Confidant", all in the same hand-writing as the MS. of the Memoirs. The reports may be divided into two classes: those referring to commercial or industrial matters, and those referring to the public morals.

Among those of the first class, we find:

A report relating to Casanova's success in having a change made in the route of the weekly diligence running from Trieste to Mestre (XII, 12), for which service, rendered during Casanova's residence at Trieste in 1773, he received encouragement and the sum of one hundred ducats from the Tribunal.

A report, the 8th Sept. 1776, with information concerning the rumored project of the future Emperor of Austria to invade Dalmatia after the death of Maria Theresa. Casanova stated he had received this information from a Frenchman, M. Salz de Chalabre, whom he had known in Paris twenty years before. This M. Chalabre (printed Calabre) was the pretended nephew of Mme. Amelin (V, 1). "This young man was as like her as two drops of water, but she did not find that a sufficient reason for avowing herself his mother." The boy was,

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in fact, the son of Mme. Amelin and of M. de Chalabre, who had lived together for a long time.

A report, the 12th of December 1776, of a secret mission to Trieste, in regard to a project of the court of Vienna for making Fiume a French port; the object being to facilitate communications between this port and the interior of Hungary. For this inquiry, Casanova received sixteen hundred lires, his expenditures amounting to seven hundred and sixty-six lires.

A report, May-July 1779, of an excursion in the market of Ancona for information concerning the commercial relations of the Pontifical States with the Republic of Venice. At Forli, in the course of this excursion, Casanova visited the dancing-girl Binetti. For this mission Casanova received forty-eight sequins.

A report, Jan. 1780, remarking a clandestine recruiting carried out by a certain Marrazzani for the (Prussian) regiment of Zarembal.

A report the 11th Oct. 1781 regarding a so-called Baldassare Rossetti, a Venetian subject living at Trieste, whose activities and

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projects were of a nature to prejudice the commerce and industry of the Republic.

Among the reports relating to public morals may be noted:

December 1776. A report on the seditious character of a ballet called "Coriolanus". The back of this report is inscribed: "The impressario of S. Benedetto, Michel de l'Agata, shall be summoned immediately; it has been ordered that he cease, under penalty of his life, from giving the ballet Coriolanus at the theater. Further, he is to collect and deposit all the printed programmes of this ballet."

December 1780. A report calling to the attention of the Tribunal the scandalous disorders produced in the theaters when the lights were extinguished.

3d May 1781. A report remarking that the Abbè Carlo Grimani believed himself exempt, in his position as a priest, from the interdiction laid on patricians against frequenting foreign ministers and their suites. On the back of this report is written: "Ser Jean Carlo, Abbè Grimani, to be gently reminded, by the Secretary, of the injunction

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to abstain from all commerce with foreign ministers and their adherents."

Venetian nobles were forbidden under penalty of death from holding any communication with foreign ambassadors or their households. This was intended as a precaution to preserve the secrets of the Senate.

26 November 1781. A report concerning a painting academy where nude studies were made, from models of both sexes, while scholars only twelve or thirteen years of age were admitted, and where *dilettantes* who were neither painters nor designers, attended the sessions.

22 December 1781. By order, Casanova reported to the Tribunal a list of the principal licentious or anti-religious books to be found in the libraries and private collections at Venice: *la Pucelle, la Philosophie de l'Histoire, l'Esprit d'Helvétius, la Sainte Chandelle d'Arras, les Bijous indiscrets, le Portier des Chartreux, les Poésies de Baffo, Ode à Priape, de Piron, etc., etc.*

In considering this report, which has been the subject of violent criticism we should bear in mind three points. 1) The Inquisitors required this information. 2) No one

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in their employ could have been in a better position to give it than Casanova. 3) Casanova was morally and economically bound, as an employee of the Tribunal, to furnish the information ordered, whatever his personal distaste for the undertaking may have been. We may even assume that he permitted himself to express his feelings in some indiscreet way, and his break with the Tribunal followed. For, at the end of 1781, his commission was withdrawn. Certainly, Casanova's almost absolute dependence on his salary, influenced the letter he wrote the Inquisitors at this time.

"To the Illustrious and Most Excellent Lords, the Inquisitors of State:

"Filled with confusion, overwhelmed with sorrow and repentance, recognizing myself absolutely unworthy of addressing my vile letter to Your Excellencies, confessing that I have failed in my duty in the opportunities which presented themselves, I, Jacques Casanova, invoke, on my knees, the mercy of the Prince; I beg that, in compassion and grace, there may be accorded me that which, in all justice and on reflection, may be refused me.

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"I ask the Sovereign Munificience to come to my aid, so that, with the means of subsistence, I may apply myself vigorously, in the future, to the service to which I have been privileged.

"After this respectful supplication, the wisdom of Your Excellencies may judge the disposition of my spirit and of my intentions."

The Inquisitors decided to award Casanova one month's pay, but specified that thereafter he would receive salary only when he rendered important services.

In 1782 Casanova made a few more reports to the Tribunal, for one of which, regarding the failure of an insurance and commercial house at Trieste, he received six sequins. But the part of a guardian of the public morals, even through necessity, was undoubtedly unpleasant to him; and, in spite of the financial loss, it may be that his release was a relief.

III. Francesca Buschini.

Intimately connected with Casanova's life

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at this period was a girl named Francesca Buschini. This name does not appear in any of the literary, artistic or theatrical records of the period, and, of the girl, nothing is known other than that which she herself tells us in her letters to Casanova. From these very human letters, however, we may obtain, not only certain facts, but also, a very excellent idea of her character. Thirty-two of her letters, dated between July 1779 and October 1787, written in the Venetian dialect, were preserved in the library at Dux.

She was a seamstress, although often without work, and had a brother, a younger sister and also a mother living with her. The probabilities are that she was a girl of the most usual sort, but greatly attached to Casanova who, even in his poverty, must have dazzled her as a being from another world. She was his last Venetian love, and remained a faithful correspondent until 1787; and it is chiefly from her letters, in which she comments on news contained in Casanova's letters to her, that light is thrown on the Vienna-Paris period, particularly, of Casanova's life. For this, Francesca has placed us greatly in her debt.

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With this girl, at least between 1779 and 1782, Casanova rented a small house at *Barbaria delle Tole,* near S. Giustina, from the noble Pesaro at S. Stae. Casanova, always in demand for his wit and learning, often took dinner in the city. He knew that a place always awaited him at the house of Memmo and at that of Zaguri and that, at the table of these patricians, who were distinguished by their intellectual superiority, he would meet men notable in science and letters. Being so long and so closely connected with theatrical circles, he was often seen at the theater, with Francesca. Thus, the 9th Aug. 1786, the poor girl, in an excess of chagrin writes: "Where are all the pleasures which formerly you procured me? Where are the theatres, the comedies which we once saw together?"

On the 28th July 1779, Francesca wrote:

"Dearest and best beloved,

" . . . In the way of novelties, I find nothing except that S. E. Pietro Zaguri has arrived at Venice; his servant has been twice to ask for you, and I have said you were still at the Baths of Abano . . ."

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The Casanova-Buschini establishment kept up relations, more or less frequent and intimate, with a few persons, most of whom are mentioned in Francesca's letters; the signora Anzoletta Rizotti; the signora Elisabeth Catrolli, an ancient *comedienne*; the signora Bepa Pezzana; the signora Zenobia de Monti, possibly the mother of that Carlo de Monti, Venetian Consul at Trieste, who was a friend to Casanova and certainly contributed toward obtaining his pardon from the Inquisitors (XII, 12); an M. Lunel, master of languages, and his wife.

IV. Publications.

Casanova's principal writings during this period were:

His translation of the Iliad, the first volume of which was issued in 1775, the second in 1777 and the third in 1778.

During his stay at Abano in 1779, he wrote the *"Scrutinio del libro,"* eulogies of M. de Voltaire "by various hands." In the dedi-

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cation of this book, to the Doge Renier, he wrote, "This little book has recently come from my inexperienced pen, in the hours of leisure which are frequent at Abano for those who do not come only for the baths."

From January until July 1780, he published, anonymously, a series of miscellaneous small works, seven pamphlets of about one hundred pages each, distributed at irregular intervals to subscribers.

From the 7th October to the end of December, 1780, on the occasions of the representations given by a troupe of French comedians at the San Angelo theater, Casanova wrote a little paper called "The Messenger of Thalia". In one of the numbers, he wrote:

"French is not my tongue; I make no pretentions and, wrong or astray, I place on the paper what heaven sends from my pen. I give birth to phrases turned to Italian, either to see what they look like or to produce a style, and often, also, to draw, into a purists snare, some critical doctor who does not know my humor or how my offense amuses me."

The "little romance" referred to in the

following letter to "Mlle. X . . C . . V . .", appeared in 1782, with the title: *"Di anecdoti vinizani militari e amorosi del secolo decimo quarto sotto i dogati di Giovanni Gradenigoe di Giovanni Dolfin."* Venezia, 1782.

V. Mlle. X . . C . . V . .

In 1782, a letter written to this lady, Giustina de Wynne, referring to a visit to Venice of Paul I, Grand Duke, afterward Emperor of Russia, and his wife, was published under the title of *"Du sejour des Comptes du Nord á Venise en janvier m. d. cc. lxxxii.* If he had not previously done so, Casanova took this occasion to recall himself to the memory of this lady to whom he had once been of such great service. And two very polite letters were exchanged.

"Madam,

"The fine epistle which V. E. has allowed to be printed upon the soujourn of C. and of the C. du Nord in this city, exposes you, in the position of an author, to endure the compliments of all those who trouble themselves to write. But I flatter myself, Madam, that V. E. will not disdain mine.

"The little romance, Madam, a translation from my dull and rigid pen, is not a gift but a very paltry offering which I dare make to the superiority of your merit.

"I have found, Madam, in your letter, the simple, flowing style of gentility, the one which alone a woman of condition who writes to her friend may use with dignity. Your digressions and your thoughts are flowers which. . . (forgive an author who pilfers from you the delicious nonchalance of an amiable writer) or. . . a will-o'-the-wisp which, from time to time, issues from the work, in spite of the author, and burns the paper.

"I aspire, Madam, to render myself favorable to the deity to which reason advises me to make homage. Accept then the offering and render happy he who makes it with your indulgence.

"I have the honor to sign myself, if you

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will kindly permit me, with very profound respect.

Giacomo Casanova."

"Monsieur:

"I am very sensible, Monsieur, of the distinction which comes to me from your approbation of my little pamphlet. The interest of the moment, its references and the exaltation of spirits have gained for it the tolerance and favorable welcome of the good Venetians. It is to your politeness in particular, Monsieur, that I believe is due the marked success which my work has had with you. I thank you for the book which you sent me and I will risk thanking you in advance for the pleasure it will give me. Be persuaded of my esteem for yourself and for your talents. And I have the honor to be, Monsieur,

Your very humble servant
de Wynne de Rosemberg."

Among Casanova's papers at Dux was a page headed "Souvenir", dated the 2nd September 1791, and beginning: "While descending the staircase, the Prince Rosemberg told me that Mme. Rosemberg was dead. . . This Prince Rosemberg was the nephew of Giustina."

Giustina died, after a long illness, at Padua, the 21st August 1791, at the age of fifty-four years and seven months.

VI. Last Days at Venice.

Toward the end of 1782, doubtless convinced that he could expect nothing more from the Tribunal, Casanova entered the service of the Marquis Spinola as a secretary. Some years before, a certain Carletti, an officer in the service of the court of Turin, had won from the Marquis a wager of two hundred and fifty sequins. The existence of this debt seemed to have completely disappeared from the memory of the loser. By means of the firm promise of a pecuniary recompense, Casanova intervened to obtain from his patron a written acknowledgement of the debt owing to Carletti. His effort was successful; but instead of clinking cash, Carletti contented himself with remit-

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ting to the negotiator an assignment on the amount of the credit. Casanova's anger caused a violent dispute, in the course of which Carlo Grimani, at whose house the scene took place, placed him in the wrong and imposed silence.

The irascible Giacomo conceived a quick resentment. To discharge his bile, he found nothing less than to publish in the course of the month of August, under the title of: *Ne amori ne donne ovvero la Stalla d'Angia repulita*, a libel in which Jean Carlo Grimani, Carletti, and other notable persons were outraged under transparent mythological pseudonyms.

This writing embroiled the author with the entire body of the Venetian nobility.

To allow the indignation against him to quiet down, Casanova went to pass some days at Trieste, then returned to Venice to put his affairs in order. The idea of recommencing his wandering life alarmed him. "I have lived fifty-eight years," he wrote, "I could not go on foot with winter at hand, and when I think of starting on the road to resume my adventurous life, I laugh at myself in the mirror."

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PART THE SECOND

VIENNA—PARIS

1783—1785

I

Travels in 1783

Casanova left *Venice* in January 1783, and went to *Vienna.*

On the 16th April *Elisabeth Catrolli* wrote to him at *Vienna:*

"Dearest of friends,

"Your letter has given me great pleasure. Be assured, I infinitely regret your departure. I have but two sincere friends, yourself and Camerani. I do not hope for more. I could be happy if I could have at least one of you near me to whom I could confide my cruel anxieties.

"To-day, I received from Camerani a letter informing me that, in a former one, he had sent me a bill of exchange: I did not receive it, and I fear it has been lost.

"Dear friend, when you reach Paris, clasp him to your heart for me. .In regard to Chechina [Francesca Buschini] *I would say that I have not seen her since the day I took her your letter. Her mother is the ruin of that poor girl; let that suffice; I will say no more. . . ."*

After leaving *Venice, Casanova* apparently took an opportunity to pay his last disrespects to the *Tribunal.* At least, in May 1783, *M. Schlick,* French Secretary at *Venice,* wrote to *Count Vergennes: "Last week there reached the State Inquisitors an anonymous letter stating that, on the 25th of this month, an earthquake, more* *terrible than that of Messina, would raze Venice to the ground. This letter has caused a panic here. Many patricians have left the capital and others will follow their example. The author of the anonymous letter . . . is a certain Casanova, who wrote from Vienna and found means to slip it into the Ambassador's own mails."*

In about four months, *Casanova* was again on the way to *Italy.* He paused for a week at *Udine* and arrived at *Venice* on the 16th June. Without leaving his barge, he paused at his house just long enough to salute *Francesca.* He left *Mestre* on Tuesday the 24th June and on the same day dined at the house of *F. Zanuzzi* at *Bassano.* On the 25th he left *Bassano* by post and arrived in the evening at *Borgo di Valsugano.*

On the 29th, he wrote to *Francesca* from the *Augsbourg.* He had stopped at *Innsbruck* to attend the theater and was in perfect health. He had reached *Frankfort* in forty-eight hours, traveling eighteen posts without stopping.

From *Aix-la-Chapelle,* on the 16th July, he wrote *Francesca* that he had met, in that city, *Cattina,* the wife of *Pocchini. Pocchini* was sick and in deep misery. *Casanova,* recalling all the abominable tricks this rogue had played on him refused *Cattina* the assistance she begged for in tears, laughed in her face, and said: "Farewell, I wish you a pleasant death."

At *Mayence, Casanova* embarked on the *Rhine* in company with the *Marquis Durazzo,* former *Austrian* Ambassador at *Venice.* The voyage was excellent and in two days he arrived at *Cologne,* in rugged health, sleeping well and eating like a wolf.

On the 30th July he wrote to *Francesca* from *Spa* and in this letter enclosed a good coin. Everything was dear at *Spa*; his room cost eight lires a day with everything else in proportion.

On the 6th September he wrote from *Antwerp* to one of his good friends, the *Abbé Eusebio della Lena,* telling him that at *Spa* an English woman who had a passion for speaking Latin wished to submit him to trials which he judged it unnecessary to state precisely. He refused all her proposals, saying, however, that he would not reveal them to anyone; but that he did not feel he should refuse also *"an order on her banker for twenty-five guineas."*

On the 9th he wrote to *Francesca* from *Brussels,* and on the 12th he sent her a bill of exchange on the banker *Corrado* for one hundred and fifty lires. He said he had been intoxicated *"because his reputation had required it." "This greatly astonishes me,"* Francesca responded, *"for I have never seen you intoxicated nor even illuminated. . . . I am very happy that the wine drove away the inflammation in your teeth."*

Practically all information of *Casanova's* movements in 1783 and 1784 is obtained from *Francesca's* letters which were in the library at *Dux.*

In her letters of the 27th June and 11th July, *Francesca* wrote *Casanova* that she had directed the Jew *Abraham* to sell *Casanova's* satin habit and velvet breeches, but could not hope for more than fifty lires because they were patched. *Abraham* had observed that at one time the habit had been placed in pledge with him by *Casanova* for three sequins.

On the 6th September, she wrote:

"With great pleasure, I reply to the three dear letters which you wrote me from Spa: the first of the 6th August, from which I learned that your departure had

been delayed for some days to wait for someone who was to arrive in that city. I was happy that your appetite had returned, because good cheer is your greatest pleasure. . . .

"In your second letter which you wrote me from Spa on the 16th August, I noted with sorrow that your affairs were not going as you wished. But console yourself, dear friend, for happiness will come after trouble; at least, I wish it so, also, for you yourself can imagine in what need I find myself, I and all my family. . . . I have no work, because I have not the courage to ask it of anyone. My mother has not earned even enough to pay for the gold thread with the little cross which you know I love. Necessity made me sell it.

"I received your last letter of the 20th August from Spa with another letter for S. E. the Procurator Morosini. You directed me to take it to him myself, and on Sunday the last day of August, I did not fail to go there exactly at three o'clock. At once on my arrival, I spoke to a servant who admitted me without delay; but, my dear friend, I regret having to send you an unpleasant message. As soon as I handed him the letter, and before he even opened it, he said to me, 'I always know Casanova's affairs which trouble me.' After having read hardly more than a page, he said: 'I know not what to do!' I told him that, on the 6th of this month, I was to write you at Paris and that, if he would do me the honor of giving me his reply, I would put it in my letter. Imagine what answer he gave me! I was much surprised! He told me that I should wish you happiness but that he would not write to you again. He said no more. I kissed his hands and left. He did not give me even a sou. That is all he said to me. . . .

"S. E. Pietro Zaguri sent to me to ask if I knew where

you were, because he had written two letters to Spa and had received no reply. . . .

II

Paris

On the night of the 18th or 19th September 1783, *Casanova* arrived at *Paris.*

On the 30th he wrote *Francesca* that he had been well received by his sister-in-law and by his brother, *Francesco Casanova,* the painter. Nearly all his friends had departed for the other world, and he would now have to make new ones, which would be difficult as he was no longer pleasing to the women.

On the 14th October he wrote again, saying that he was in good health and that *Paris* was a paradise which made him feel twenty years old. Four letters followed; in the first, dated from *Paris* on *S. Martin's Day,* he told *Francesco* not to reply for he did not know whether he would prolong his visit nor where he might go. Finding no fortune in *Paris,* he said he would go and search elsewhere. On the 23rd, he sent one hundred and fifty lires; "a true blessing," to the poor girl who was always short of money.

Between times, *Casanova* passed eight days at *Fontainebleau,* where he met "a charming young man of twenty-five," the son of "the young and lovely *O'Morphi*" who indirectly owed to him her position, in 1752, as the mistress of *Louis XV.* "I wrote my name on his tablets and begged him to present my compliments to his mother."

He also met, in the same place, his own son by *Mme. Dubois,* his former housekeeper at *Soleure* who had married the good *M. Lebel.* "We shall hear of the young gentleman in twenty-one years at *Fontainebleau.*"

"When I paid my third visit to *Paris,* with the intention of ending my days in that capital, I reckoned on the friendship of *M. d'Alembert,* but he died, like, *Fontenelle,* a fortnight after my arrival, toward the end of 1783."

It is interesting to know that, at this time, *Casanova* met his famous contemporary, *Benjamin Franklin.* "A few days after the death of the illustrious *d'Alembert,*" *Casanova* assisted, at the old *Louvre,* in a session of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.* "*Seated beside the learned Franklin, I was a little surprised to hear Condorcet ask him if he believed that one could give various directions to an air balloon.* This was the response: *'The matter is still in its infancy, so we must wait.'* I was surprised. It is not believable that the great philosopher could ignore the fact that it would be impossible to give the machine any other direction than that governed by the air which fills it, but these people *nil tam verentur, quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videantur.*"

On the 13th November, *Casanova* left *Paris* in company with his brother, *Francesco,* whose wife did not accompany him. "His new wife drove him away from *Paris.*"

"Now [1797 or 1798] I feel that I have seen *Paris* and *France* for the last time. That popular effervescence [the French Revolution] has disgusted me and I am too old to hope to see the end of it."

III

VIENNA

On the 29th November, *Casanova* wrote from *Frankfort* that a drunken *postillon* had upset him and in the fall he had dislocated his left shoulder, but that a good bone-setter had restored it to place. On the 1st December he wrote that he was healed, having taken medicine and having been blooded. He promised to send *Francesca* eight sequins to pay her rent. He reached *Vienna* about the 7th of December and on the 15th sent *Francesca* a bill of exchange for eight sequins and two lires.

On the last day of 1783, *Francesca* wrote to him at *Vienna:*

> *"I see by your good letter that you will go to Dresden and then to Berlin and that you will return to Vienna the 10th January. . . . I am astonished, my dear friend, at the great journeys you make in this cold weather, but, still, you are a great man, big-hearted, full of spirit and courage; you travel in this terrible cold as though it were nothing. . . ."*

On the 9th January, *Casanova* wrote from *Dessau* to his brother *Giovanni,* proposing to make peace with him, but without results. On the 27th, he was at *Prague.* By the 16th February, he was again in *Vienna,* after a trip lasting sixty-two days. His health was perfect, and he had gained flesh due, as he wrote *Francesca,* to his contented mind which was no longer tormented.

In February, he entered the service of *M. Foscarini,* Venetian Ambassador, "to write dispatches."

On the 10th March, *Francesca* wrote:

"Dearest of Friends, I reply at once to your good letter of the 28th February which I received Sunday. . . . I thank you for your kindness which makes you say that you love me and that when you have money you will send me some . . . but that at the moment you are dry as a salamander. I do not know what sort of animal that is. But as for me I am certainly dry of money and I am consumed with the hope of having some. . . . I see that you were amused at the Carnival and that you were four times at the masked ball, where there were two hundred women, and that you danced minuets and quadrilles to the great astonishment of the ambassador Foscarini who told everyone that you were sixty years old, although in reality you have not yet reached your sixtieth year. You might well laugh at that and say that he must be blind to have such an idea.

"I see that you assisted, with your brother, at a grand dinner at the Ambassador's. . . .

"You say that you have read my letters to your brother and that he salutes me. Make him my best compliments and thank him. You ask me to advise you whether, if he should happen to return to Venice with you, he could lodge with you in your house. Tell him yes, because the chickens are always in the loft and make no dirt; and, as for the dogs, one watches to see that they do not make dirt. The furniture of the apartment is already in place; it lacks only a wardrobe and the little bed which you bought for your nephew and the mirror; as for the rest, everything is as you left it. . . ."

It is possible that, at the "grand dinner," *Casanova* was presented to *Count Waldstein,* without whose kindness to *Casanova* the *Memoirs* probably would never have been written. The *Lord of Dux, Joseph Charles Emmanuel Waldstein-Wartenberg,* Chamberlain to *Her Imperial Majesty,* descendant of the *great Wallenstein,* was the elder of the eleven children of *Emmanuel Philibert, Count Waldstein,* and *Maria Theresa, Princess Liechtenstein.* Very egotistic and willful in his youth, careless of his affairs, and an imprudent gambler, at thirty years of age he had not yet settled down. His mother was disconsolated that her son could not separate himself from occupations "so little suited to his spirit and his birth."

On the 13th March 1784, *Count Lamberg* wrote *Casanova: "I know M. le C. de Waldstein through having heard him praised by judges worthy of appreciating the transcendent qualities of more than one kind peculiar to the Count. I congratulate you on having such a Mœcenas, and I congratulate him in his turn on having chosen such a man as yourself."* Which last remark certainly foreshadows the library at *Dux.*

Later, on the 12th March, 1785, *Zaguri* wrote: *"In two months at the latest, all will be settled. I am very happy."* Referring further, it is conjectured, to *Casanova's* hopes of placing himself with the *Count.*

IV

LETTERS FROM FRANCESCA

20th March 1784. *"I see that you will print one of your books; you say that you will send me two hundred copies which I can sell at thirty sous each; that you will tell Zaguri and that he will advise those who wish copies to apply to me . . ."*

This book was the *Lettre historico-critique sur un* *fait connu dépendant d'une cause peu connue, adressee au duc de * * **, 1784.

3rd April 1784. *"I see with pleasure that you have gone to amuse yourself in company with two ladies and that you have traveled five posts to see the Emperor* [Joseph II]. . . . *You say that your fortune consists of one sequin. . . . I hope that you obtained permission to print your book, that you will send me the two hundred copies, and that I may be able to sell them. . . ."*

14th April 1784. *"You say that a man without money is the image of death, that he is a very wretched animal. I learn with regret that I am unlikely to see you at the approaching Festival of the Ascension . . . that you hope to see me once more before dying. . . . You make me laugh, telling me that at Vienna a balloon was made which arose in the air with six persons and that it might be that you would go up also."*

28th April 1784. *"I see, to my lively regret, that you have been in bed with your usual ailment* [hemorrhoids]. *But I am pleased to know that you are better. You certainly should go to the baths. . . . I have been discouraged in seeing that you have not come to Venice because you have no money. . . . P. S. Just at this moment I have received a good letter, enclosing a bill of exchange, which I will go and have paid. . . ."*

5th May 1784. *"I went to the house of M. Francesco Manenti, at S. Polo di Campo, with my bill of exchange, and he gave me at once eighteen pieces of ten lires each. . . . I figure that you made fun of me saying seriously that you will go up in a balloon and that, if the wind is favorable, you will go in the air to Trieste and then from Trieste to Venice."*

19th May 1784. *"I see, to my great regret, that you are in poor health and still short of money. . . . You say that you need twenty sequins and that you have only twenty trari. . . . I hope that your book is printed. . . ."*

29th May 1784. *"I note with pleasure that you are going to take the baths; but I regret that this treatment enfeebles and depresses you. It reassures me that you do not fail in your appetite nor your sleep. . . . I hope I will not hear you say again that you are disgusted with everything, and no longer in love with life. . . . I see that for you, at this moment, fortune sleeps. . . . I am not surprised that everything is so dear in the city where you are, for at Venice also one pays dearly and everything is priced beyond reach."*

Zaguri wrote *Casanova* the 11th May, that he had met *Francesca* in the *Mongolfieri* casino. And on the 2nd June *Casanova*, doubtless feeling his helplessness in the matter of money, and the insufficiency of his occasional remittances, and suspicious of *Francesca's* loyalty, wrote her a letter of renunciation. Then came her news of the sale of his books; and eighteen months passed before he wrote to her again.

On the 12th June 1784, *Francesca* replied: *"I could not expect to convey to you, nor could you figure, the sorrow that tries me in seeing that you will not occupy yourself any more with me. . . . I hid from you that I had been with that woman who lived with us, with her companion, the cashier of the Académie des Mongolfieristes. Although I went to this Academy with prudence and dignity, I did not want to write you for fear you would scold me. That is the only reason, and hereafter you may be certain of my sincerity and frankness. . . . I beg you to forgive me this time, if I write you* *something I have never written for fear that you would be angry with me because I had not told you. Know then that four months ago, your books which were on the mezzanine were sold to a library for the sum of fifty lires, when we were in urgent need. It was my mother who did it. . . ."*

26th June 1784. "*. . . Mme. Zenobia* [*de Monti*] *has asked me if I would enjoy her company. Certain that you would consent I have allowed her to come and live with me. She has sympathy for me and has always loved me."*

7th July 1784. "*Your silence greatly disturbs me! To receive no more of your letters! By good post I have sent you three letters, with this one, and you have not replied to any of them. Certainly, you have reason for being offended at me, because I hid from you something which you learned from another. . . . But you might have seen, from my last letter, that I have written you all the truth about my fault and that I have asked your pardon for not writing it before. . . . Without you and your help, God knows what will become of us. . . . For the rent of your chamber Mme. Zenobia will give us eight lires a month and five lires for preparing her meals. But what can one do with thirteen lires! . . . I am afflicted and mortified. . . . Do not abandon me."*

V

LAST DAYS AT VIENNA

In 1785, at *Vienna, Casanova* ran across *Costa,* his former secretary who, in 1761, had fled from him taking "diamonds, watches, snuffbox, linen, rich suits and a hundred louis." "In 1785, I found this runagate at *Vienna.* He was then *Count Erdich's* man, and when we come to that period, the reader shall hear what I did."

Casanova did not reach this period, in writing his *Memoirs,* but an account of this meeting is given by *Da Ponte,* who was present at it, in his Memoirs. *Costa* had met with many misfortunes, as he told *Casanova,* and had himself been defrauded. *Casanova* threatened to have him hanged, but according to *Da Ponte,* was dissuaded from this by counter accusations made by *Costa.*

Da Ponte's narration of the incident is brilliant and amusing, in spite of our feeling that it is maliciously exaggerated: "Strolling one morning in the *Graben* with *Casanova,* I suddenly saw him knit his brows, squawk, grind his teeth, twist himself, raise his hands skyward, and, snatching himself away from me, throw himself on a man whom I seemed to know, shouting with a very loud voice:—'Murderer, I have caught thee.' A crowd having gathered as a result of this strange act and yell, I approached them with some disgust; nevertheless, I caught *Casanova's* hand and almost by force I separated him from the fray. He then told me the story, with desperate motions and gestures, and said that his antagonist was *Gioachino Costa,* by whom he had been betrayed. This *Gioachino Costa,* although he had been forced to become a servant by his vices and bad practices, and was at that very time servant to a Viennese gentleman, was more or less of a poet. He was, in fact, one of those who had honored me with their satire, when the *Emperor Joseph* selected me as poet of his theater. *Costa* entered a cafe, and while I continued to walk with *Casanova,* wrote and send him by a messenger, the following verses:

'Casanova, make no outcry;
You stole, indeed, as well as I;
You were the one who first taught me;
Your art I mastered thoroughly.
Silence your wisest course will be.'

"These verses had the desired effect. After a brief silence, *Casanova* laughed and then said softly in my ear:—'The rogue is right.' He went into the cafe and motioned to *Costa* to come out; they began to walk together calmly, as if nothing had happened, and they parted shaking hands repeatedly and seemingly calm and friendly. *Casanova* returned to me with a cameo on his little finger, which by a strange coincidence, represented *Mercury,* the god-protector of thieves. This was his greatest valuable, and it was all that was left of the immense booty, but represented the character of the two restored friends, perfectly."

Da Ponte precedes this account with a libellous narrative of *Casanova's* relations with the *Marquise d'Urfé,* even stating that *Casanova* stole from her the jewels stolen in turn by *Costa,* but, as *M. Maynial* remarks, we may attribute this perverted account "solely to the rancour and antipathy of the narrator." It is more likely that *Casanova* frightened *Costa* almost out of his wits, was grimly amused at his misfortunes, and let him go, since there was no remedy to *Casanova's* benefit, for his former rascality. *Casanova's* own brief, anticipatory account is given in his *Memoirs.*

In 1797, correcting and revising his *Memoirs, Casanova* wrote: "Twelve years ago, if it had not been for my guardian angel, I would have foolishly married, at *Vienna,* a young, thoughtless girl, with whom I had fallen in love." In which connection, his remark is interesting: "I have loved women even to madness, but

I have always loved liberty better; and whenever I have been in danger of losing it, fate has come to my rescue."

While an identification of the "young, thoughtless girl" has been impossible, *M. Rava* believes her to be *"C. M.,"* the subject of a poem found at *Dux,* written in duplicate, in Italian and French, and headed *"Giacomo Casanova, in love, to C. M."*

"When, Catton, to your sight is shown the love
Which all my tenderest caresses prove,
Feeling all pleasure's sharpest joys and fears,
Burning one moment, shivering the next,
Caressing you while showering you with tears,
Giving each charm a thousand eager kisses,
Wishing to touch at once a thousand blisses
And, at the ones beyond my power, vexed,
Abandoned in a furious desire,
Leaving these charms for other charms that fire,
Possessing all and yet desiring
Until, destroyed by excesses of pleasure,
Finding no words of love nor anything
To express my fires overflowing measure
Than deepening sighs and obscure murmuring:
Ah! Then you think to read my inmost heart
To find the love that can these signs impart
. . . Be not deceived. These transports, amorous cries,
These kisses, tears, desires and heavy sighs,
Of all the fire which devours me
Could less than even the lightest tokens be."

Evidently this same girl is the authoress of the two following letters written by *"Caton M. . . ."* to *Casanova* in 1786.

12th April 1786.

"You will infinitely oblige me if you will tell me to whom you wrote such pretty things about me; apparently it is the Abbé Da Ponte; but I would go to his house and, either he would prove that you had written it or I would have the honor of telling him that he is the most infamous traducer in the world. I think that the lovely picture which you make of my future has not as much excuse as you may think, and, in spite of your

science, you deceive yourself. . . . But just now I will inform you of all my wooers and you can judge for yourself by this whether I deserve all the reproaches you made me in your last letter. It is two years since I came to know the Count de K. . . .; I could have loved him but I was too honest to be willing to satisfy his desires. . . . Some months afterward, I came to know the Count de M. . . .; he was not so handsome as K. . . . but he possessed every possible art for seducing a girl; I did everything for him, but I never loved him as much as his friend. In fine, to tell you all my giddinesses in a few words, I set everything right again with K. . . . and got myself into a quarrel with M. . . ., then I left K. . . . and returned to M. . . ., but at the house of the latter there was always an officer who pleased me more than both the two others and who sometimes conducted me to the house; then we found ourselves at the house of a friend, and it is of this same officer that I am ill. So, my dear friend, that is all. I do not seek to justify my past conduct; on the contrary, I know well that I have acted badly. . . . I am much afflicted at being the cause of your remaining away from Venice during the Carnival. . . . I hope to see you soon again and am, with much love,

Monsieur, your sincere
Caton M. . . ."

16th July 1786.

"*I have spoken with the Abbé Da Ponte. He invited me to come to his house because, he said, he had something to tell me for you. I went there, but was received so coldly that I am resolved not to go there again. Also, Mlle. Nanette affected an air of reserve and took it on herself to read me lessons on what she was pleased* *to call my libertinism. . . . I beg that you will write nothing more about me to these two very dangerous personages. . . . Just now I will tell you of a little trick which I played on you, which without doubt deserves some punishment. The young, little Kasper, whom you formerly loved, came to ask me for the address of her dear Monsieur de Casanova, so that she could write a very tender letter full of recollections. I had too much politeness to wish to refuse a pretty girl, who was once the favorite of my lover, so just a request, so I gave her the address she wished; but I addressed the letter to a city far from you. Is it not, my dear friend, that you would like well to know the name of the city, so that you could secure the letter by post? But you can depend on my word that you will not know it until you have written me a very long letter begging me very humbly to indicate the place where the divine letter of the adorable object of your vows has gone. You might well make this sacrifice for a girl in whom the Emperor* [Joseph II] *interests himself, for it is known that, since your departure from Vienna, it is he who is teaching her French and music; and apparently he takes the trouble of instructing her himself, for she often goes to his house to thank him for his kindnesses to her, but I know not in what way she expresses herself.*

"Farewell, my dear friend. Think sometimes of me and believe that I am your sincere friend,

C. M."

On the 23rd April 1785, the ambassador *Foscarini* died, depriving *Casanova* of a protector, probably leaving him without much money, and not in the best of health. He applied for the position of secretary to *Count Fabris,* his former friend, whose name had been changed from *Tognolo,* but without success. *Casanova* then determined to go to *Berlin* in the hope of a place in the *Academy.* On the 30th July he arrived at *Bruen* in *Moravia,* where his friend *Maximilian-Joseph, Count Lamberg* gave him, among other letters of recommendation, a letter addressed to *Jean-Ferdinand Opiz,* Inspector of Finances and Banks at *Czaslau,* in which he wrote:

"A celebrated man, M. Casanova, will deliver to you, my dear friend, the visiting card with which he is charged for Mme. Opiz and yourself. Knowing this amiable and remarkable man, will mark an epoch in your life, be polite and friendly to him, quod ipsi facies in mei memoriam faciatis. Keep yourself well, write to me, and if you can direct him to some honest man at Carlsbad, fail not to do so. . . ."

On the 15th August 1785, *M. Opiz* wrote *Count Lamberg* about *Casanova's* visit:

"Your letter of the 30th, including your cards for my wife and myself, was delivered the first of this month by M. Casanova. He was very anxious to meet the Princess Lubomirski again at Carlsbad. But as something about his carriage was broken, he was obliged to stop in Czaslau for two hours which he passed in my company. He has left Czaslau with the promise of giving me a day on his return. I am already delighted. Even in the short space of time in which I enjoyed his company, I found in him a man worthy of our highest consideration and of our love, a benevolent philosopher whose homeland is the great expanse of our planet (and not Venice alone) and who values only the men in the kings. . . . I know absolutely no one at Carlsbad, so I

sincerely regret being unable to recommend him to anyone there, according to your desire. He did not wish, on account of his haste, to pause even at Prague and, consequently, to deliver, at this time, your letter to Prince Furstemberg."

VIENNA-PARIS
1783-5
I. Travels in 1783.

Casanova left Venice in January 1783, and went to Vienna.

On the 16th April Elisabeth Catrolli wrote to him at Vienna:

"Dearest of friends,

"Your letter has given me great pleasure. Be assured, I infinitely regret your departure. I have but two sincere friends, yourself and Camerani. I do not hope for more. I could be happy if I could have at least one of you near me to whom I could confide my cruel anxieties.

"Today, I received from Camerani a letter informing me that, in a former one, he had sent me a bill of exchange: I did not receive it, and I fear it has been lost.

"Dear friend, when you reach Paris, clasp him to your heart for me. In regard to Chechina (Francesca Buschini) I would say that I have not seen her since the day I took her your letter. Her mother is the

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ruin of that poor girl: let that suffice; I will say no more. . ."

After leaving Venice, Casanova apparently took an opportunity to pay his last disrespects to the Tribunal. At least, in May 1783, M. Schlick, French Secretary at Venice, wrote to Count Vergennes: "Last week there reached the State Inquisitors an anonymous letter stating that, on the 25th of this month, an earthquake, more terrible than that of Messina, would raze Venice to the ground. This letter has caused a panic here. Many patricians have left the capital and others will follow their example. The author of the anonymous letter. . . is a certain Casanova, who wrote from Vienna and found means to slip it into the Ambassador's own mails."

In about four months, Casanova was again on the way to Italy. He paused for a week at Udine and arrived at Venice on the 16th June. Without leaving his barge, he paused at his house just long enough to salute Francesca. He left Mestre on Tuesday the 24th June and on the same day dined at the house of F. Zanuzzi at Bassano. On the

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25th he left Bassano by post and arrived in the evening at Borgo di Valsugano.

On the 29th, he wrote to Francesca from Augsbourg. He had stopped at Innsbruck to attend the theater and was in perfect health. He had reached Frankfort in forty-eight hours, traveling eighteen posts without stopping.

From Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 16th July, he wrote Francesca that he had met, in that city, Cattina, the wife of Pocchini (X, 3, 12, etc.). Pocchini was sick and in deep misery. Casanova, recalling all the abominable tricks this rogue had played on him refused Cattina the assistance she begged for in tears, laughed in her face, and said: "Farewell, I wish you a pleasant death."

At Mayence, Casanova embarked on the Rhine in company with the Marquis Durazzo, former Austrian Ambassador at Venice. The voyage was excellent and in two days he arrived at Cologne, in rugged health, sleeping well and eating like a wolf.

On the 30th July he wrote to Francesca from Spa and in this letter enclosed a gold coin. Everything was dear at Spa; his room

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cost eight lires a day with everything else in proportion.

On the 6th September he wrote from Antwerp to one of his good friends, the Abbé Eusebio della Lena, telling him that at Spa an English woman who had a passion for speaking Latin wished to submit him to trials which he judged it unnecessary to state precisely. He refused all her proposals, saying however that he would not reveal them to anyone; but that he did not feel he should refuse also "an order on her banker for twenty-five guineas."

On the 9th he wrote to Francesca from Brussels, and on the 12th he sent her a bill of exchange on the banker Corrado for one hundred and fifty lires. He said he had been intoxicated "because his reputation had required it." "This greatly astonishes me", Francesca responded, "for I have never seen you intoxicated nor even illuminated. . . I am very happy that the wine drove away the inflammation in your teeth."

Practically all information of Casanova's movements in 1783 and 1784 is obtained from Francesca's letters which were in the library at Dux.

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In her letters of the 27th June and 11th July, Francesca wrote Casanova that she had directed the jew Abraham to sell Casanova's satin habit and velvet breeches, but could not hope for more than fifty lires because they were patched. Abraham had observed that at one time the habit had been placed in pledge with him by Casanova for three sequins.

On the 6th September, she wrote:

"With great pleasure, I reply to the three dear letters which you wrote me from Spa: the first of the 6th August, from which I learned that your departure had been delayed for some days to wait for someone who was to arrive in that city. I was happy that your appetite had returned, because good cheer is your greatest pleasure. . .

"In your second letter which you wrote me from Spa on the 16th August, I noted with sorrow that your affairs were not going as you wished. But console yourself, dear friend, for happiness will come after trouble; at least, I wish it so, also, for you yourself can imagine in what need I find myself, I and all my family. . . I have no work, because I have not the courage to ask it of anyone. My mother has not earned even enough to pay for the gold thread with the little red cross which you know I love. Necessity made me sell it.

"I received your last letter of the 20th August from Spa with another letter for S. E. the Procurator Morosini. You directed me to take it to him myself, and on Sunday the last day of August, I did not fail to go there exactly at three o'clock. At once on my arrival, I spoke to a servant who admitted me without delay; but, my dear friend, I regret having to send you an unpleasant message. As soon as I handed him the letter, and before he even opened it, he said to me, "I always know Casanova's affairs which trouble me." After having read hardly more than a page, he said: "I know not what to do!" I told him that, on the 6th of this month, I was to write you at Paris and that, if he would do me the honor of giving me his reply, I would put it in my letter. Imagine what answer he gave me! I was much surprised! He told me that I should wish you happiness but that he would not write to you again. He said no more. I kissed his hands and left. He did

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not give me even a sou. That is all he said to me. . .

"S. E. Pietro Zaguri sent to me to ask if I knew where you were, because he had written two letters to Spa and had received no reply. . ."

II. Paris.

On the night of the 18th or 19th September 1783, Casanova arrived at Paris.

On the 30th he wrote Francesca that he had been well received by his sister-in-law and by his brother, Francesco Casanova, the painter. Nearly all his friends had departed for the other world, and he would now have to make new ones, which would be difficult as he was no longer pleasing to the women.

On the 14th October he wrote again, saying that he was in good health and that Paris was a paradise which made him feel twenty years old. Four letters followed; in the first, dated from Paris on S. Martin's Day, he told Francesca not to reply for he did not know whether he would prolong his visit nor where he might go. Finding no fortune in Paris, he said he would go and search elsewhere. On the 23d, he sent one hundred and fifty lires; "a true blessing," to the poor girl who was always short of money.

Between times, Casanova passed eight days at Fontainebleau, where he met "a charming young man of twenty-five", the son of "the young and lovely O'Morphi" who indirectly owed to him her position, in 1752, as the mistress of Louis XV. "I wrote my name on his tablets and begged him to present my compliments to his mother." (III, 9).

He also met, in the same place, his own son by Mme. Dubois, his former housekeeper at Soleure (VI, 5, etc.) who had married the good M. Lebel. "We shall hear of the young gentleman in twenty-one years at Fontainebleau." (VIII, 4).

"When I paid my third visit to Paris, with the intention of ending my days in that capital, I reckoned on the friendship of M. d'Alembert, but he died, like Fontenelle, a fortnight after my arrival, toward the end of 1783." (III, 8).

It is interesting to know that, at this time,

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Casanova met his famous contemporary, Benjamin Franklin. "A few days after the death of the illustrious d'Alembert", Casanova assisted, at the old Louvre, in a session of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.* "Seated beside the learned Franklin, I was a little surprised to hear Condorcet ask him if he believed that one could give various directions to an air balloon. This was the response: 'The matter is still in its infancy, so we must wait.' I was surprised. It is not believable that the great philosopher could ignore the fact that it would be impossible to give the machine any other direction than that governed by the air which fills it, but these people *nil tam verentur, quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videantur.*"

On the 13th November, Casanova left Paris in company with his brother, Francesco, whose wife did not accompany him. "His new wife drove him away from Paris". (IX, 6).

"Now (1797 or 1798) I feel that I have seen Paris and France for the last time. That popular effervescence (the French Revolution) has disgusted me and I am too old to hope to see the end of it." (III, 8).

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III. Vienna.

On the 29th November, Casanova wrote from Frankfort that a drunken postillon had upset him and in the fall he had dislocated his left shoulder, but that a good bone-setter had restored it to place. On the 1st December he wrote that he was healed, having taken medicine and having been blooded. He promised to send Francesca eight sequins to pay her rent. He reached Vienna about the 7th of December and on the 15th sent Francesca a bill of exchange for eight sequins and two lires.

On the last day of 1783, Francesca wrote to him at Vienna.

"I see by your good letter that you will go to Dresden and then to Berlin and that you will return to Vienna the 10th January. . . I am astonished, my dear friend, at the great journeys you make in this cold weather, but, still, you are a great man, big-hearted, full of spirit and courage; you travel in this terrible cold as though it were nothing. . ."

On the 9th January, Casanova wrote from

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Dessan to his brother Giovanni, proposing to make peace with him, but without results. On the 27th, he was at Prague. By the 16th February, he was again in Vienna, after a trip lasting sixty-two days. His health was perfect, and he had gained flesh due, as he wrote Francesca, to his contented mind which was no longer tormented.

In February, he entered the service of M. Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador, "to write dispatches."

On the 10th March, Francesca wrote:

"Dearest of Friends, I reply at once to your good letter of the 28th February which I received Sunday. . . I thank you for your kindness which makes you say that you love me and that when you have money you will send me some. . . but that at the moment you are dry as a salamander. I do not know what sort of animal that is. But as for me I am certainly dry of money and I am consumed with the hope of having some. . . I see that you were amused at the Carnival and that you were four times at the masked ball, where there were two hundred women, and that you danced minuets and quadrilles to the great astonishment of the ambassador

Foscarini who told everyone that you were sixty years old, although in reality you have not yet reached your sixtieth year. You might well laugh at that and say that he must be blind to have such an idea.

"I see that you assisted, with your brother, at a grand dinner at the Ambassador's. . .

"You say that you have read my letters to your brother and that he salutes me. Make him my best compliments and thank him. You ask me to advise you whether, if he should happen to return to Venice with you, he could lodge with you in your house. Tell him yes, because the chickens are always in the loft and make no dirt; and, as for the dogs, one watches to see that they do not make dirt. The furniture of the apartment is already in place; it lacks only a wardrobe and the little bed which you bought for your nephew and the mirror; as for the rest, everything is as you left it. . ."

It is possible that, at the "grand dinner", Casanova was presented to Count Waldstein, without whose kindness to Casanova the Memoirs probably would never have been written. The Lord of Dux, Joseph Charles Emmanuel Waldstein-Wart-

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enberg, Chamberlain to Her Imperial Majesty, descendant of the great Wallenstein, was the elder of the eleven children of Emmanuel Philibert, Count Waldstein, and Maria Theresa, Princess Liechtenstein. Very egotistic and wilful in his youth, careless of his affairs, and an imprudent gambler, at thirty years of age he had not yet settled down. His mother was desolated that her son could not separate himself from occupations "so little suited to his spirit and his birth."

On the 13th March 1773, Count Lamberg wrote Casanova: "I know M. le C. de Waldstein through having heard him praised by judges worthy of appreciating the transcendent qualities of more than one kind particular to the Count. I congratulate you on having such a Mecaenas, and I congratulate him in his turn on having chosen such a man as yourself." Which last remark certainly forshadows the library at Dux.

Later, on the 12th March 1785, Zaguri wrote: "In two months at the latest, all will be settled. I am very happy." Referring further, it is conjectured, to Casanova's hopes of placing himself with the Count.

IV. Letters From Francesca

20th March 1784. "I see that you will print one of your books; you say that you will send me two hundred copies which I can sell at thirty sous each; that you will tell Zaguri and that he will advise those who wish copies to apply to me . . ."

This book was the *Lettre historico-critique sur un fait connu dépendant d'une cause peu connue adressee au duc de* ***, 1784.

3d April 1784. "I see with pleasure that you have gone to amuse yourself in company with two ladies and that you have traveled five posts to see the Emperor (Joseph II) . . You say that your fortune consists of one sequin . . . I hope that you obtained permission to print your book, that you will send me the two hundred copies, and that I may be able to sell them . . ."

14th April 1784. "You say that a man without money is the image of death, that he is a very wretched animal. I learn with regret that I am unlikely to see you at the approaching Festival of the Ascension. . . that you hope to see me once more before

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dying. . . You make me laugh, telling me that at Vienna a balloon was made which arose in the air with six persons and that it might be that you would go up also."

28th April 1784. "I see, to my lively regret, that you have been in bed with your usual ailment (hemorrhoids). But I am pleased to know that you are better. You certainly should go to the baths. . . I have been discouraged in seeing that you have not come to Venice because you have no money. . . P. S. Just at this moment I have received a good letter, enclosing a bill of exchange, which I will go and have paid. . ."

5th May 1784. "I went to the house of M. Francesco Manenti, at S. Polo di Campo, with my bill of exchange, and he gave me at once eighteen pieces of ten lires each. . . I figure that you made fun of me saying seriously that you will go up in a balloon and that, if the wind is favorable, you will go in the air to Trieste and then from Trieste to Venice."

19th May, 1784. "I see, to my great regret, that you are in poor health and still short of money. . . You say that you need twenty sequins and that you have only twenty *trari*. . . I hope that your book is printed. . ."

29th May, 1784. "I note with pleasure that you are going to take the baths; but I regret that this treatment enfeebles and depresses you. It reassures me that you do not fail in your appetite nor your sleep. . . I hope I will not hear you say again that you are disgusted with everything, and no longer in love with life. . . I see that for you, at this moment, fortune sleeps. . . I am not surprised that everything is so dear in the city where you are, for at Venice also one pays dearly and everything is priced beyond reach."

Zaguri wrote Casanova the 11th May, that he had met Francesca in the *Mongolfieri* casino. And on the 2d June Casanova, doubtless feeling his helplessness in the matter of money, and the insufficiency of his occasional remittances, and suspicious of Francesca's loyalty, wrote her a letter of renunciation. Then came her news of the sale of his books; and eighteen months passed before he wrote to her again.

On the 12th June 1784, Francesca re-

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plied. "I could not expect to convey to you, nor could you figure, the sorrow that tries me in seeing that you will not occupy yourself any more with me. . . I hid from you that I had been with that woman who lived with us, with her companion, the cashier of the *Academie des Mongolfieristes.* Although I went to this Academy with prudence and dignity, I did not want to write you for fear you would scold me. That is the only reason, and hereafter you may be certain of my sincerity and frankness. . . I beg you to forgive me this time, if I write you something I have never written for fear that you would be angry with me because I had not told you. Know then that four months ago, your books which were on the mezzanine were sold to a library for the sum of fifty lires, when we were in urgent need. It was my mother who did it. . ."

26th June 1784. ". . . Mme. Zenobia (de Monti) has asked me if I would enjoy her company. Certain that you would consent I have allowed her to come and live with me. She has sympathy for me and has always loved me."

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7 July 1784. "Your silence greatly disturbs me! To receive no more of your letters! By good post I have sent you three letters, with this one, and you have not replied to any of them. Certainly, you have reason for being offended at me, because I hid from you something which you learned from another. . . But you might have seen, from my last letter, that I have written you all the truth about my fault and that I have asked your pardon for not writing it before. . . Without you and your help, God knows what will become of us. . . For the rent of your chamber Mme. Zenobia will give us eight lires a month and five lires for preparing her meals. But what can one do with thirteen lires! . . . I am afflicted and mortified. . . Do not abandon me."

V. Last Days at Vienna.

In 1785, at Vienna, Casanova ran across Costa, his former secretary who, in 1761, had fled from him taking "diamonds,

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watches, snuffbox, linen, rich suits and a hundred louis." (VIII, 1). "In 1785, I found this rungate at Vienna. He was then Count Erdich's man, and when we come to that period, the reader shall hear what I did." (XII, 5).

Casanova did not reach this period, in writing his Memoirs, but an account of this meeting is given by Da Ponte, who was present at it, in his own Memoirs. Costa had met with many misfortunes, as he told Casanova, and had himself been defrauded. Casanova threatened to have him hanged, but according to Da Ponte, was dissuaded from this by counter accusations made by Costa.

Da Ponte's narration of the incident is brilliant and amusing, in spite of our feeling that it is maliciously exaggerated: "Strolling one morning in the Graben with Casanova, I suddenly saw him knit his brows, squawk, grind his teeth, twist himself, raise his hands skyward, and, snatching himself away from me, throw himself on a man whom I seemed to know, shouting with a very loud voice:— 'Murderer, I have caught thee.' A crowd having gathered as a re-

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sult of this strange act and yell, I approached them with some disgust; nevertheless, I caught Casanova's hand and almost by force I separated him from the fray. He then told me the story, with desperate motions and gestures, and said that his antagonist was Gioachino Costa, by whom he had been betrayed. This Gioachino Costa, although he had been forced to become a servant by his vices and bad practices, and was at that very time servant to a Viennese gentleman, was more or less of a poet. He was, in fact, one of those who had honored me with their satire, when the Emperor Joseph selected me as poet of his theater. Costa entered a cafe, and while I continued to walk with Casanova, wrote and sent him by a Messenger, the following verses:

'Casanova, make no outcry;
You stole, indeed, as well as I;
You were the one who first taught me;
Your art I mastered thoroughly.
Silence your wisest course will be.'

"These verses had the desired effect. After a brief silence, Casanova laughed and

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then said softly in my ear:— 'The rogue is right.' He went into the cafe and motioned to Costa to come out; they began to walk together calmly, as if nothing had happened, and they parted shaking hands repeatedly and seemingly calm and friendly. Casanova returned to me with a cameo on his little finger, which by a strange coincidence, represented Mercury, the god-protector of thieves. This was his greatest valuable, and it was all that was left of the immense booty, but represented the character of the two restored friends, perfectly."

Da Ponte precedes this account with a libellous narrative of Casanova's relations with the Marquise d'Urfé, even stating that Casanova stole from her the jewels stolen in turn by Costa, but, as M. Maynial remarks, we may attribute this perverted account "solely to the rancour and antipathy of the narrator." It is more likely that Casanova frightened Costa almost out of his wits, was grimly amused at his misfortunes, and let him go, since there was no remedy to Casanova's benefit, for his former rascality. Casanova's own brief, anticipatory account is given in Volume VII, (VII, 11).

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In 1797, correcting and revising his Memoirs, Casanova wrote. "Twelve years ago, if it had not been for my guardian angel, I would have foolishly married, at Vienna, a young, thoughtless girl, with whom I had fallen in love." (I, 3). In which connection, his remark (III, 8) is interesting: "I have loved women even to madness, but I have always loved liberty better; and whenever I have been in danger of losing it, fate has come to my rescue."

While an identification of the "young, thoughtless girl" has been impossible, M. Rava believes her to be "C. M.", the subject of a poem found at Dux, written in duplicate, in Italian and French, and headed "Giacomo Casanova, in love, to "C. M."

"When, Catton, to your sight is shown
the love
Which all my tenderest carresses prove,
Feeling all pleasure's sharpest joys and
fears,
Burning one moment, shivering the next,
Caressing you while showering you
with tears,

Giving each charm a thousand eager kisses,
Wishing to touch at once a thousand blisses
And, at the ones beyond my power, vexed,
Abandoned in a furious desire,
Leaving these charms for other charms that fire,
Possessing all and yet desiring
Until, destroyed by excesses of pleasure,
Finding no words of love nor anything
To express my fires overflowing measure
Than deepening sighs and obscure murmuring:
Ah! Then you think to read my inmost heart
To find the love that can these signs impart
. . . Be not deceived. These transports, amorous cries,
These kisses, tears, desires and heavy sighs,
Of all the fire which devours me
Could less than even the lightest tokens be."

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Evidently this same girl is the author of of two following letters written by "Caton M . . ." to Casanova in 1786.

12th April 1786.

"You will infinitely oblige me if you will tell me to whom you wrote such pretty things about me; apparently it is the Abbé Da Ponte; but I would go to his house and, either he would prove that you had written it or I would have the honor of telling him that he is the most infamous traducer in the world. I think that the lovely picture which you make of my future has not as much excuse as you may think, and, in spite of your science, you deceive yourself. . . But just now I will inform you of all my wooers and you can judge for yourself by this whether I deserve all the reproaches you made me in your last letter. It is two years since I came to know the Count de K . . .; I could have loved him but I was too honest to be willing to satisfy his desires. . . Some months afterward, I came to know the Count de M . . . ; he was not so handsome as K . . . but he possessed every possible art

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for seducing a girl; I did everything for him, but I never loved him as much as his friend. In fine, to tell you all my giddinesses in a few words, I set everything right again with K . . . and got myself into a quarrel with M . . . , then I left K . . . and returned to M . . . , but at the house of the latter there was always an officer who pleased me more than both the two others and who sometimes conducted me to the house; then we found ourselves at the house of a friend, and it is of this same officer that I am ill. So, my dear friend, that is all. I do not seek to justify my past conduct; on the contrary, I know well that I have acted badly. . . I am much afflicted at being the cause of your remaining away from Venice during the Carnival . . I hope to see you soon again and am, with much love,

Monsieur, your sincere
Caton M . . ."

16th July 1786.

"I have spoken with the Abbé Da Ponte. He invited me to come to his house because, he said, he had something to tell me for you. I went there, but was received so coldly that I am resolved not to go there again. Also, Mlle. Nanette affected an air of reserve and took it on herself to read me lessons on what she was pleased to call my libertinism . . I beg that you will write nothing more about me to these two very dangerous personages . . Just now I will tell you of a little trick which I played on you, which without doubt deserves some punishment. The young, little Kasper, whom you formerly loved, came to ask me for the address of her dear Monsieur de Casanova, so that she could write a very tender letter full of recollections. I had too much politeness to wish to refuse a pretty girl, who was once the favorite of my lover, so just a request, so I gave her the address she wished; but I addressed the letter to a city far from you. Is it not, my dear friend, that you would like well to know the name of the city, so that you could secure the letter by post? But you can depend on my word that you will not know it until you have written me a very long letter begging me very humbly to indicate the place where the divine letter of

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the adorable object of your vows has gone. You might well make this sacrifice for a girl in whom the Emperor (Joseph II) interests himself, for it is known that, since your departure from Vienna, it is he who is teaching her French and music; and apparently he takes the trouble of instructing her himself, for she often goes to his house to thank him for his kindnesses to her, but I know not in what way she expresses herself.

"Farewell, my dear friend. Think sometimes of me and believe that I am your sincere friend,

C. M."

On the 23d April 1785, the ambassador Foscarini died, depriving Casanova of a protector, probably leaving him without much money, and not in the best of health. He applied for the position of secretary to Count Fabris, his former friend whose name had been changed from Tognolo (II, 7), but without success. Casanova then determined to go to Berlin in the hope of a place in the Academy. On the 30th July, he arrived at Bruen in Moravia, where his friend Maximilian-Joseph, Count Lamberg gave him, among other letters of recommendation, a letter addressed to Jean-Ferdinand Opiz, Inspector of Finances and Banks at Czaslau, in which he wrote:

"A celebrated man, M. Casanova, will deliver to you, my dear friend, the visiting card with which he is charged for Mme. Opiz and yourself. Knowing this amiable and remarkable man, will mark an epoch in your life. Be polite and friendly to him, *quod ipsi facies in mei memoriam faciatis.* Keep yourself well, write to me, and if you can direct him to some honest man at Carlsbad, fail not to do so . . ."

On the 15th August 1785, M. Opiz wrote Count Lamberg about Casanova's visit:

"Your letter of the 30th, including your cards for my wife and myself, was delivered the first of this month by M. Casanova. He was very anxious to meet the Princess Lubomirski again at Carlsbad. But as something about his carriage was broken, he was obliged to stop in Czaslau for two hours which he passed in my company. He has left Czaslau with the promise of giving me a day on his return. I am already

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delighted. Even in the short space of time in which I enjoyed his company, I found in him a man worthy of our highest consideration and of our love, a benevolent philosopher whose home-land is the great expanse of our planet (and not Venice alone) and who values only the men in the kings. . . I know absolutely no one at Carlsbad, so I sincerely regret being unable to recommend him to anyone there, according to your desire. He did not wish, on account of his haste, to pause even at Prague and, consequently, to deliver, at this time, your letter to Prince Furstemberg."

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PART THE THIRD

DUX

1786—1798

I

THE CASTLE AT DUX

It is uncertain how long *Casanova* remained at *Carlsbad.* While there, however, he met again the Polish nobleman *Zawoiski,* with whom he had gambled in *Venice* in 1746. "As to *Zawoiski,* I did not tell him the story until I met him in *Carlsbad* old and deaf, forty years later." He did not return to *Czaslau,* but in September 1785 he was at *Teplitz* where he found *Count Waldstein* whom he accompanied to his castle at *Dux.*

From this time onward he remained almost constantly at the castle where he was placed in charge of the Count's library and given a pension of one thousand florins annually.

Describing his visit to the castle in 1899, *Arthur Symons* writes: "I had the sensation of an enormous building: all Bohemian castles are big, but this one was like a royal palace. Set there in the midst of the town, after the Bohemian fashion, it opens at the back upon great gardens, as if it were in the midst of the country. I walked through room after room, corridor after corridor; everywhere there were pictures, everywhere portraits of *Wallenstein,* and battle scenes in which he led on his troops. The library, which was formed, or at least arranged, by *Casanova,* and which remains as he left it, contains some twenty-five thousand volumes, some of them of considerable value. . . . The library forms part of the Museum, which occupies a ground-floor wing of the castle. The first room is an armoury, in which all kinds of arms are arranged, in a decorative way, covering the ceiling and the walls with strange patterns. The second room contains pottery, collected by Casanova's *Waldstein* on his Eastern travels. The third room is full of curious mechanical toys, and cabinets, and carvings in ivory. Finally, we come to the library, contained in the two innermost rooms. The book shelves are painted white and reach to the low vaulted ceilings, which are whitewashed. At the end of a bookcase, in the corner of one of the windows, hangs a fine engraved portrait of *Casanova*."

In this elaborate setting, *Casanova* found the refuge he so sadly needed for his last years. The evil days of *Venice* and *Vienna*, and the problems and makeshifts of mere existence, were left behind. And for this refuge he paid the world with his *Memoirs*.

II

LETTERS FROM FRANCESCA

In 1786, *Casanova* renewed his correspondence with *Francesca*, who wrote:

1st July 1786.

"*After a silence of a year and a half, I received from you yesterday a good letter which has consoled me in informing me that you are in perfect health. But, on the other hand, I was much pained to see that in your letter you did not call me Friend, but Madame. . . . You have reason to chide me and to reproach me for having rented a house without surety or means of paying the rent. As to the advice you give me that if some honest person would pay me my rent, or at least a part of it,* *I should have no scruples about taking it because a little more, or a little less, would be of little importance. . . . I declare to you that I have been disconsolated at receiving from you such a reproach which is absolutely unjustified. . . . You tell me that you have near you a young girl who merits all your solicitations and your love, she and her family of six persons who adore you and give you every attention; that she costs you all you have, so that you cannot send me even a sou. . . . I am pained to hear you say that you will never return to Venice, and yet I hope to see you again. . . ."*

The "young girl" referred to in *Francesca's* letter was *Anna-Dorothea Kleer,* daughter of the porter of the castle. This young girl became pregnant in 1786 and *Casanova* was accused of seducing her. The guilty one, however, was a painter named *Schottner* who married the unfortunate girl in January 1787.

9th August 1786.

"My only true friend,

"It is two days since I received your dear letter; I was very happy to see you writing. . . . You have reason to mortify me and reproach me in recalling all the troubles I caused you, and especially that which you call treachery, the sale of your books, of which in part I was not guilty. . . . Forgive me, my dear friend, me and my foolish mother who, despite all my objections, absolutely insisted on selling them. Regarding that which you write me that you know that my mother, last year, told about that you had been my ruin, this may unhappily be true, since you already know the evil thoughts of my mother, who even says that you are still at Venice. . . . When have I not been always sincere with you, and when have I not at least listened to your

good advices and offers? I am in a desperate situation, abandoned by all, almost in the streets, almost about to be homeless. . . . Where are all the pleasures which formerly you procured me? Where are the theatres, the comedies which we once saw together! . . ."

5th January 1787.

"The first of the year I received your dear letter with the bill of exchange for one hundred and twenty-five lires which you sent me so generously. . . . You say you have forgiven me for all the troubles I have caused you. Forget all, then, and do not accuse me any more of things which are but too true and of which the remembrance alone cuts me to the heart. . . . You write me that you have been forgotten by a person of whom you were very fond, that she is married and that you have not seen her for more than a month."

The "person" referred to was *Anna Kleer.*

5th October 1787.

. .*"Until the other day, I had been waiting for your arrival, hoping that you would come to assist at the entry of the Procurator Memmo. . . . I see by your good letter that you were not able to get away, since your presence is nearly always necessary in the great castle. . . . I learn of the visit you have received from the Emperor who wished to see your library of forty-thousand volumes! . . . You say that you detest the chase and that you are unhappy when politeness obliges you to go. . . . I am pleased to know that you are in good health, that you are stout and that you have a good appetite and sleep well. . . . I hope that the printing of your book* [Histoire de ma fuite] *is going according to your wishes. If you go to Dresden for the marriage of* *your niece, enjoy yourself for me. . . . Forget not to write to me; this gives me such pleasure! Remember me. Full of confidence in your friendship, I am, and always will be, your true and sincere friend,*

Francesca Buschini."

III

Correspondence and Activities

In 1787, a book was published under the title of *Dreissig Brief uber Galizien* by *Traunpaur,* which included this passage: "The most famous adventurers of two sorts (there are two, in fact: honest adventurers and adventurers of doubtful reputation) have appeared on the scene of the kingdom of Poland. The best known on the shores of the *Vistula* are: the miraculous *Cagliostro: Boisson de Quency,* grand charlatan, soldier of fortune, decorated with many orders, member of numerous Academies: the Venetian *Casanova* of *Saint-Gall,* a true savant, who fought a duel with *Count Branicki*: the *Baron de Poellnitz* . . . the lucky *Count Tomatis,* who knew so well how to correct fortune, and many others."

In June 1789, *Casanova* received a letter from *Teresa Boisson de Quency,* the wife of the adventurer above referred to:

"Much honored Monsieur Giacomo:

"For a long time I have felt a very particular desire to evidence to you the estimation due your spirit and your eminent qualities: the superb sonnet augmented my wish. But the inconveniences of childbirth and the cares required by a little girl whom I adore, made me defer this pleasure. During my husband's absence, your

last and much honored letter came to my hands. Your amiable compliments to me, engage me to take the pen to give you renewed assurance that you have in me a sincere admirer of your great talent. . . . When I wish to point out a person who writes and thinks with excellence, I name Monsieur Casanova. . . ."

In 1793, *Teresa de Quency* wished to return to *Venice* at which time *Zaguri* wrote *Casanova:* "*The Bassani has received letters from her husband which tell her nothing more than that he is alive.*"

Casanova passed the months of May, June and July 1788 at *Prague,* supervising the printing of the *Histoire de ma fuite.*

"I remember laughing very heartily at *Prague,* six years ago, on learning that some thin-skinned ladies, on reading my flight from *The Leads,* which was published at that date, took great offense at the above account, which they thought I should have done well to leave out."

In May he was troubled with an attack of the *grippe.* In October, he was in *Dresden,* apparently with his brother. Around this time "*The Magdalene,*" a painting by *Correggio,* was stolen from the Museum of the *Elector.*

On the 30th October 1788, *Casanova* wrote to the *Prince Belozelski,* Russian Minister to the Court of Dresden: "*Tuesday morning, after having embraced my dear brother, I got into a carriage to return here. At the barrier on the outskirts of Dresden, I was obliged to descend, and six men carried the two chests of my carriage, my two night-bags and my capelière into a little chamber on the ground level, demanded my keys, and examined everything. . . . The youngest of these in-*

famous executors of such an order told me they were searching for 'The Magdalene.' . . . The oldest had the impudence to put his hands on my waistcoat. . . . At last they let me go.

"This, my prince, delayed me so that I could not reach Petervalden by daylight. I stopped at an evil tavern where, dying of famine and rage, I ate everything I saw; and, wishing to drink and not liking beer, I gulped down some beverage which my host told me was good and which did not seem unpleasant. He told me that it was Pilnitz Moste. This beverage aroused a rebellion in my guts. I passed the night tormented by a continual diarrhœa. I arrived here the day before yesterday (the 28th), where I found an unpleasant duty awaiting me. Two months ago, I brought a woman here to cook, needing her while the Count is away; as soon as she arrived, I gave her a room and I went to Leipzig. On returning here, I found three servants in the hands of surgeons and all three blame my cook for putting them in such a state. The Count's courier had already told me, at Leipzig, that she had crippled him. Yesterday the Count arrived and would do nothing but laugh, but I have sent her back and exhorted her to imitate the Magdalene. The amusing part is that she is old, ugly and ill-smelling."

In 1789, 1791 and 1792, *Casanova* received three letters from *Maddalena Allegranti,* the niece of *J. B. Allegranti* the innkeeper with whom *Casanova* lodged at *Florence* in 1771. *"This young person, still a child, was so pretty, so gracious, with such spirit and such charms, that she incessantly distracted me. Sometimes she would come into my chamber to wish me good-morning. . . . Her appearance, her grace, the sound of her voice . . .*

were more than I could resist; and, fearing the seduction would excuse mine, I could find no other expedient than to take flight. . . . Some years later, Maddalena became a celebrated musician. . . ."

At this period of *Casanova's* life, we hear again of the hussy who so upset *Casanova* during his visit to *London* that he was actually on the point of committing suicide through sheer desperation. On the 20th September 1789, he wrote to the *Princess Clari,* sister of the *Prince de Ligne: "I am struck by a woman at first sight, she completely ravishes me, and I am perhaps lost, for she may be a Charpillon."*

There were, among the papers at *Dux,* two letters from *Marianne Charpillon,* and a manuscript outlining the story of *Casanova's* relations with her and her family, as detailed in the *Memoirs.* With the story in mind, the letters from this girl, "the mistress, now of one, now of another," are of interest:

"I know not, Monsieur, whether you forgot the engagement Saturday last; as for me, I remember that you consented to give us the pleasure of having you at dinner to-day, Monday, the 12th of the month. I would greatly like to know whether your ill-humor has left you; this would please me. Farewell, in awaiting the honor of seeing you.

Marianne de Charpillon."

"Monsieur,

"As I have a part in all which concerns you, I am greatly put out to know of the new illness which incommodes you; I hope that this will be so trifling that we will have the pleasure of seeing you well and at our house, to-day or to-morrow.

"And, in truth, the gift which you sent me is so pretty

that I know not how to express to you the pleasure it has given me and how much I value it; and I cannot see why you must always provoke me by telling me that it is my fault that you are filled with bile, while I am as innocent as a new-born babe and would wish you so gentle and patient that your blood would become a true clarified syrup; this will come to you if you follow my advice. I am, Monsieur,

Your very humble servant,
[Marianne Charpillon]
Wednesday at six o'clock."

On the 8th April, 1790, *Zaguri* wrote in reference to vertigo of which *Casanova* complained: *"Have you tried riding horseback? Do you not think that is an excellent preservative? I tried it this last summer and I find myself very well."*

In 1790, *Casanova* had a conversation with the *Emperor Joseph II* at *Luxemburg,* on the subject of purchased nobility, which he reports in the *Memoirs.*

This same year, attending the coronation of *Leopold* at *Prague, Casanova* met his grandson (and, probably, as he himself believed, his own son), the son of *Leonilda,* who was the daughter of *Casanova* and *Donna Lucrezia,* and who was married to the *Marquis C. . . .* In 1792, *Leonilda* wrote, inviting *Casanova* to "spend the remainder of my days with her."

In February 1791, *Casanova* wrote to *Countess Lamberg: "I have in my capitularies more than four hundred sentences which pass for aphorisms and which include all the tricks which place one word for another. One can read in Livy that Hannibal overcame the Alps by means of vinegar. No elephant ever uttered such a stupidity. Livy? Not at all. Livy was not a beast; it* *is you who are, foolish instructor of credulous youth! Livy did not say* aceto *which means vinegar, but* aceta *which means axe."*

In April 1791, *Casanova* wrote to *Carlo Grimani* at *Venice,* stating that he felt he had committed a great fault in publishing his libel, *Ne amori ne donne,* and very humbly begging his pardon. Also that his *Memoirs* would be composed of six volumes in octavo with a seventh supplementary volume containing codicils.

In June, *Casanova* composed for the theater of *Princess Clari,* at *Teplitz,* a piece entitled: *Le Polémoscope ou la Calomnie démasquée par la présence d'esprit, tragicomédie en trois actes.* The manuscript was preserved at *Dux,* together with another form of the same, having the sub-title of *La Lorgnette Menteuse ou la Calomnie démasquée.* It may be assumed that the staging of this piece was an occasion of pleasant activity for *Casanova.*

In January 1792, during *Count Waldstein's* absence in *London* or *Paris, Casanova* was embroiled with *M. Faulkircher, maitre d'hôtel,* over the unpleasant matter indicated in two of *Casanova's* letters to this functionary:

"Your rascally Vidierol . . . tore my portrait out of one of my books, scrawled my name on it, with the epithet which you taught him and then stuck it on the door of the privy. . . .

"Determined to make sure of the punishment of your infamous valet, and wishing at the same time to give proof of my respect for Count Waldstein, not forgetting that, as a last resort, I have the right to invade his jurisdiction, I took an advocate, wrote my complaint and had it translated into German. . . . Having heard of this at Teplitz, and having known that I would not save your name, you came to my chamber to beg me to write

whatever I wished but not to name you because it would place you wrong before the War Council and expose you to the loss of your pension. . . . I have torn up my first complaint and have written a second in Latin, which an advocate of Bilin has translated for me and which I have deposited at the office of the judiciary at Dux. . . ."

Following this matter, *Casanova* attended the Carnival at *Oberleutensdorf*, and left at *Dux* a manuscript headed *Passe temps de Jacques Casanova de Seingalt pour le carnaval de l'an 1792 dans le bourg d'Oberleutensdorf.* While in that city, meditating on the *Faulkircher* incident, he wrote also *Les quinze pardons, monologue nocturne du bibliothécaire,* also preserved in manuscript at *Dux,* in which we read:

"*Gerron,* having served twenty years as a simple soldier, acquired a great knowledge of military discipline. This man was not yet seventy years old. He had come to believe, partly from practice, partly from theory, that twenty blows with a *bâton* on the rump are not dishonoring. When the honest soldier was unfortunate enough to deserve them, he accepted them with resignation. The pain was sharp, but not lasting; it did not deprive him of either appetite nor honor. . . . *Gerron,* becoming a corporal, had obtained no idea of any kind of sorrow other than that coming from the blows of a *bâton* on the rump. . . . On this idea, he thought that the soul of an honest man was no different than a soldier's breech. If *Gerron* caused trouble to the spirit of a man of honor, he thought that this spirit, like his own, had only a rump, and that any trouble he caused would pass likewise. He deceived himself. The breech of the spirit of an honest man is different than the breech of the spirit of a *Gerron* who rendered compatible the rank of a military officer with the vile employments of a domestic and the stable-master of some particular lord. Since *Gerron* deceived himself, we must pardon him all his faults . . ." etc.

Casanova complained of the *Faulkircher* incident to the mother of *Count Waldstein,* who wrote: *"I pity you, Monsieur, for being obliged to live among such people and in such evil company, but my son will not forget that which he owes to himself and I am sure he will give you all the satisfaction you wish."* Also to his friend *Zaguri,* who wrote, the 16th March: *"I hope that the gout in your hand will not torment you any more. . . . You have told me the story I asked about and which begins: 'Two months have passed since an officer, who is at Vienna, insulted me!' I cannot understand whether he who wrote you an insulting letter is at Vienna or whether he is at Dux. When will the Count return? . . . You should await his return because you would have, among other reasons to present to him, that of not wishing to have recourse to other jurisdiction than his. . . . You say your letters have been intercepted? Someone has put your portrait in the privy? The devil! It is a miracle that you have not killed someone. Positively, I am curious to know the results and I hope that you make no mistakes in this affair which appears to me very delicate."*

In August 1792, or thereabouts, *Da Ponte* on his way to *Dresden,* visited *Casanova* at *Dux,* in the hope of collecting an old debt, but gave up this hope on realizing *Casanova's* limited resources. In the winter of 1792-3, *Da Ponte* found himself in great distress in *Holland.* *"Casanova was the only man to whom I could apply,"* he writes in his Memoirs. *"To better dispose him, I* *thought to write him in verse, depicting my troubles and begging him to send me some money on account of that which he still owed me. Far from considering my request, he contented himself with replying, in vulgar prose, by a laconic billet which I transcribe: 'When Cicero wrote to his friends, he avoided telling them of his affairs.'"*

In May 1793, *Da Ponte* wrote from *London: "Count Waldstein has lived a very obscure life in London, badly lodged, badly dressed, badly served, always in cabarets, cafes, with porters, with rascals, with . . . we will leave out the rest. He has the heart of an angel and an excellent character, but not so good a head as ours. . . ."*

Toward the end of 1792, *Casanova* wrote a letter to *Robespierre,* which, as he advises *M. Opiz,* the 13th January 1793, occupied one hundred and twenty folio pages. This letter was not to be found at *Dux* and it may possibly have been sent, or may have been destroyed by *Casanova* on the advice of *Abbé O'Kelly. Casanova's* feelings were very bitter over the trial of *Louis XVI.,* and in his letters to *M. Opiz* he complained bitterly of the *Jacobins* and predicted the ruin of *France.* Certainly, to *Casanova,* the *French Revolution* represented the complete overthrow of many of his cherished illusions.

On the 1st August 1793, *Wilhelmina Rietz,* Countess Lichtenau (called the Pompadour of *Frederic-William II.,* King of Prussia) wrote to the librarian at *Dux:*

"Monsieur:

"It seems impossible to know where Count Valstaine [Waldstein] *is staying, whether he is in Europe, Africa, America, or possibly the* Megamiques. *If he is there,*

you are the only one who could insure his receiving the enclosed letter.

"For my part, I have not yet had time to read their history, but the first reading I do will assuredly be that.

"Mademoiselle Chappuis has the honor of recalling herself to your memory, and I have that of being your very humble servant,

Wilhelmina Rietz."

The allusions to a "history" and to the *Megamiques* in this letter refer to *Casanova's* romance, *Icosameron.*

About this time, *Count Waldstein* returned to *Dux* after having been, at *Paris,* according to *Da Ponte,* concerned in planning the flight of *Louis XVI.,* and in attempting to save the *Princess Lamballe.* On the 17th August, *Casanova* replied to the above letter:

"Madame,

"I handed the Count your letter two minutes after having received it, finding him easily. I told him that he should respond at once, for the post was ready to go; but, as he begged to wait for the following ordinary, I did not insist. The day before yesterday, he begged me to wait again, but he did not find me so complaisant. I respond to you, Madame, for his carelessness in replying to letters is extreme; he is so shameful that he is in despair when he is obliged to it. Although he may not respond, be sure of seeing him at your house at Berlin after the Leipzig Fair, with a hundred bad excuses which you will laugh at and pretend to believe good ones. . . . This last month, my wish to see Berlin again has become immeasurable, and I will do my best to have Count Waldstein take me there in the month of October or at least to permit me to go. . . . You have given me an

idea of Berlin far different than that the city left with me when I passed four months there twenty-nine years ago. . . . If my Icosameron *interests you, I offer you its Spirit. I wrote it here two years ago and I would not have published it if I had not dared hope that the Theological Censor would permit it. At Berlin no one raised the least difficulty. . . . If circumstances do not permit me to pay you my respects at Berlin, I hope for the happiness of seeing you here next year. . . ."*

Sometime after this and following his quarrel with *M. Opiz, Casanova* evidently passed through a period of depression, as indicated by a manuscript at *Dux,* headed *"Short reflection of a philosopher who finds himself thinking of procuring his own death,"* and dated *"the 13th December 1793, the day dedicated to S. Lucie, remarkable in my too long life."*

"Life is a burden to me. What is the metaphysical being who prevents me from slaying myself? It is Nature. What is the other being who enjoins me to lighten the burdens of that life which brings me only feeble pleasures and heavy pains? It is Reason. Nature is a coward which, demanding only conservation, orders me to sacrifice all to its existence. Reason is a being which gives me resemblance to *God,* which treads instinct under foot and which teaches me to choose the best way after having well considered the reasons. It demonstrates to me that I am a man in imposing silence on the Nature which opposes that action which alone could remedy all my ills.

"Reason convinces me that the power I have of slaying myself is a privilege given me by *God,* by which I perceive that I am superior to all animals created in the world; for there is no animal who can slay itself nor think of slaying itself, except the scorpion, which poisons itself, but only when the fire which surrounds it convinces it that it cannot save itself from being burned. This animal slays itself because it fears fire more than death. Reason tells me imperiously that I have the right to slay myself, with the divine oracle of *Cen: 'Qui non potest vivere bene non vivat male.'* These eight words have such power that it is impossible that a man to whom life is a burden could do other than slay himself on first hearing them."

Certainly, however, *Casanova* did not deceive himself with these sophisms, and Nature, who for many years had unquestionably lavished her gifts on him, had her way.

Over the end of the year, the two mathematicians, *Casanova* and *Opiz,* at the request of *Count Waldstein,* made a scientific examination of the reform of the calendar as decreed the 5th October 1793 by the *National Convention.*

In January 1795, *Casanova* wrote to the *Princess Lobkowitz* to thank her for her gift of a little dog. On the 16th the Princess wrote from *Vienna:*

"Monsieur,

"I am enchanted at the charming reception you accorded the dog which I sent you when I learned of the death of your well-loved greyhound, knowing that she would nowhere be better cared for than with you, Monsieur. I hope with all my heart that she has all the qualities which may, in some fashion, help you to forget the deceased. . . ."

In the autumn of 1795, *Casanova* left *Dux.* The *Prince de Ligne* writes in his Memoirs: "*God* directed him to leave *Dux.* Scarcely believing in more than his death, which he no longer doubted, he pretended that each thing he had done was by the direction of *God* and this was his guide. *God* directed him to ask me for letters of recommendation to the *Duke of Weimar,* who was my good friend, to the *Duchess of Gotha,* who did not know me, and to the Jews of *Berlin.* And he departed secretly, leaving for *Count Waldstein* a letter at once tender, proud, honest and irritating. .*Waldstein* laughed and said he would return. *Casanova* waited in ante-chambers; no one would place him either as governor, librarian or chamberlain. He said everywhere that the Germans were thorough beasts. The excellent and very amiable *Duke of Weimer* welcomed him wonderfully; but in an instant he became jealous of *Goethe* and *Wieland,* who were under the *Duke's* protection. He declaimed against them and against the literature of the country which he did not, and could not, know. At *Berlin,* he declaimed against the ignorance, the superstition and the knavery of the *Hebrews* to whom I had addressed him, drawing meanwhile, for the money they claimed of him, bills of exchange on the *Count* who laughed, paid, and embraced him when he returned. *Casanova* laughed, wept, and told him that *God* had ordered him to make this trip of six weeks, to leave without speaking of it, and to return to his chamber at *Dux.* Enchanted at seeing us again, he agreeably related to us all the misfortunes which had tried him and to which his susceptibility gave the name of humiliations. *'I am proud,'* he said, *'because I am nothing. . . .'* Eight days after his return, what new troubles! Everyone had been served strawberries before him, and none remained for him."

The *Prince de Ligne,* although he was *Casanova's* sincere friend and admirer, gives a rather somber picture of *Casanova's* life at *Dux:* "It must not be imagined that he was satisfied to live quietly in the refuge provided him through the kindness of *Waldstein.* That was not within his nature. Not a day passed without trouble; something was certain to be wrong with the coffee, the milk, the dish of macaroni, which he required each day. There were always quarrels in the house. The cook had ruined his *polenta*; the coachman had given him a bad driver to bring him to see me; the dogs had barked all night; there had been more guests than usual and he had found it necessary to eat at a side table. Some hunting-horn had tormented his ear with its blasts; the priest had been trying to convert him; *Count Waldstein* had not anticipated his morning greeting; the servant had delayed with his wine; he had not been introduced to some distinguished personage who had come to see the lance which had pierced the side of the great *Wallenstein*; the *Count* had lent a book without telling him; a groom had not touched his hat to him; his German speech had been misunderstood; he had become angry and people had laughed at him."

Like *Count Waldstein,* however, the *Prince de Ligne* made the widest allowances, understanding the chafing of *Casanova's* restless spirit. "*Casanova* has a mind without an equal, from which each word is extraordinary and each thought a book."

On the 16th December, he wrote *Casanova: "One is never old with your heart, your genius and your stomach."*

Casanova's own comment on his trip away from *Dux* will be found in the *Memoirs.* "Two years ago, I set out for *Hamburg,* but my good genius made me return to *Dux.* What had I to do at *Hamburg?*"

On the 10th December, *Casanova's* brother *Giovanni* [Jean] died. He was the *Director of the Academy of Painting at Dresden.* Apparently the two brothers could not remain friends.

Giovanni left two daughters, *Teresa* and *Augusta,* and two sons, *Carlo* and *Lorenzo.* While he was unable to remain friendly with his brother, *Casanova* apparently wished to be of assistance to his nieces, who were not in the best of circumstances, and he exchanged a number of letters with *Teresa* after her father's death.

On the occasion of *Teresa Casanova's* visit to *Vienna* in 1792, *Princess Clari,* oldest sister of the *Prince de Ligne,* wrote of her: *"She is charming in every way, pretty as love, always amiable; she has had great success. Prince Kaunitz loves her to the point of madness."*

In a letter of the 25th April 1796, *Teresa* assured her *"very amiable and very dear uncle"* that the cautions, which occupied three-fourths of his letter, were unnecessary; and compared him with his brother *François,* to the injury of the latter. On the 5th May, *Teresa* wrote: *"Before thanking you for your charming letter, my very kind uncle, I should announce the issue of our pension of one hundred and sixty crowns a year, which is to say, eighty crowns apiece; I am well satisfied for I did not hope to receive so much."* In the same letter, *Teresa* spoke of seeing much of a "charming man," *Don Antonio,* who was no other than the rascally adventurer *Don Antonio della Croce* with whom *Casanova* had been acquainted since 1753, who assisted *Casanova* in losing a thousand sequins at *Milan* in 1763; who in 1767, at *Spa,* following financial reverses, abandoned his pregnant mistress to the charge of *Casanova;* and who in August 1795, wrote to *Casanova: "Your letter gave me great* *pleasure as the sweet souvenir of our old friendship, unique and faithful over a period of fifty years."*

It is probable that, at this time, *Casanova* visited *Dresden* and *Berlin* also. In his letter "To *Leonard Snetlage*," he writes: "*'That which proves that revolution should arrive,' a profound thinker said to me in Berlin, last year, 'is that it has arrived.'*"

On the 1st March, 1798, *Carlo Angiolini,* the son of *Maria Maddalena, Casanova's* sister, wrote to *Casanova: "This evening, Teresa will marry M. le Chambellan de Veisnicht* [Von Wessenig] *whom you know well."* This desirable marriage received the approval of *Francesco* also. *Teresa,* as the *Baroness Wessenig,* occupied a prominent social position at *Dresden.* She died in 1842.

Between the 13th February and the 6th December 1796, *Casanova* engaged in a correspondence with *Mlle. Henriette de Schuckmann* who was visiting at *Bayreuth.* This *Henriette* (unfortunately not the *Henriette* of the *Memoirs* whose "forty letters" to *Casanova* apparently have not been located), had visited the library at *Dux* in the summer of 1786. *"I was with the Chamberlain Freiberg, and I was greatly moved, as much by your conversation as by your kindness which provided me with a beautiful edition of Metastasio, elegantly bound in red morocco."* Finding herself at *Bayreuth* in an enforced idleness and wishing a stimulant, wishing also to borrow some books, she wrote *Casanova,* under the auspices of *Count Koenig,* a mutual friend, the 13th February 1796, recalling herself to his memory. *Casanova* responded to her overtures and five of her letters were preserved at *Dux.* On the 28th May *Henriette* wrote:

"But certainly, my good friend, your letters have given

me the greatest pleasure, and it is with a rising satisfaction that I pore over all you say to me. I love, I esteem, I cherish your frankness. . . . I understand you perfectly and I love to distraction the lively and energetic manner with which you express yourself."

On the 30th September, she wrote: "*You will read to-day, if you please, a weary letter; for your silence, Monsieur, has given me humors. A promise is a debt, and in your last letter you promised to write me at least a dozen pages. I have every right to call you a bad debtor; I could summon you before a court of justice; but all these acts of vengeance would not repair the loss which I have endured through my hope and my fruitless waiting. . . . It is your punishment to read this trivial page; but although my head is empty, my heart is not so, and it holds for you a very living friendship."*

In March 1797, this *Henriette* went to *Lausanne* and in May from there to her father's home at *Mecklenburg*.

IV

CORRESPONDENCE WITH JEAN-FERDINAND OPIZ

On the 27th July 1792, *Casanova* wrote *M. Opiz* that he had finished the twelfth volume of his *Memoirs*, with his age at forty-seven years [1772]. "*Our late friend, the worthy Count Max Josef Lamberg,*" he added, "*could not bear the idea of my burning my Memoirs, and expecting to survive me, had persuaded me to send him the first four volumes. But now there is no longer any question that his good soul has left his organs. Three weeks ago I wept for his death, all the more so as he would still be living if he had listened to me. I am,* *perhaps, the only one who knows the truth. He who slew him was the surgeon Feuchter at Cremsir, who applied thirty-six mercurial plasters on a gland in his left groin which was swollen but not by the pox, as I am sure by the description he gave me of the cause of the swelling. The mercury mounted to his esophagus and, being able to swallow neither solids nor fluids, he died the 23rd June of positive famine. . . . The interest of the bungling surgeon is to say that he died of the pox. This is not true, I beg you to give the lie to anyone you hear saying it. I have before my eyes four hundred and sixty of his letters over which I weep and which I will burn. I have asked Count Leopold to burn mine, which he had saved, and I hope that he will please me by doing it. I have survived all my true friends.* 'Tempus abire mihi est' *Horace says to me.*

"Returning to my Memoirs . . . I am a detestable man; but I do not care about having it known, and I do not aspire to the honor of the detestation of posterity. My work is full of excellent moral instructions. But to what good, if the charming descriptions of my offences excite the readers more to action than to repentance? Furthermore, knowing readers would divine the names of all the women and of the men which I have masked, whose transgressions are unknown to the world, my indiscretion would injure them, they would cry out against my perfidy, even though every word of my history were true. . . . Tell me yourself whether or not I should burn my work? I am curious to have your advice."

On the 6th May 1793, *Casanova* wrote *Opiz: "The letter of recommendation you ask of me to the professor my brother for your younger son, honors me; and there* *is no doubt that, having for you all the estimation your qualities merit, I should send it to you immediately. But this cannot be. And here is the reason. My brother is my enemy; he has given me sure indications of it and it appears that his hate will not cease until I no longer exist. I hope that he may long survive me and be happy. This desire is my only apology."*

"The epigraph of the little work which I would give to the public," Casanova wrote the 23rd August 1793, *"is* In pondere et mensura. *It is concerned with gravity and measure. I would demonstrate not only that the course of the stars is irregular but also that it is susceptible only to approximate measures and that consequently we must join physical and moral calculations in establishing celestial movements. For I prove that all fixed axes must have a necessarily irregular movement of oscillation, from which comes a variation in all the necessary curves of the planets which compose their eccentricities and their orbits. I demonstrate that light has neither body nor spirit; I demonstrate that it comes in an instant from its respective star; I demonstrate the impossibility of many parallaxes and the uselessness of many others. I criticize not only* Tiko-Brahi, *but also* Kepler *and* Newton. . . .

"I wish to send you my manuscript and give you the trouble of publishing it with my name at Prague or elsewhere. . . . I will sell it to the printer or to yourself for fifty florins and twenty-five copies on fine paper when it is printed."

But *Opiz* replied:

"As the father of a family, I do not feel myself authorized to dispose of my revenues on the impulse of my

fancy or as my heart suggests . . . and no offer of yours could make me a book-seller."

This shows plainly enough that *Opiz,* for all his interest in *Casanova,* had not the qualities of true friendship.

On the 6th September 1793, *Casanova* wrote:

"I will have my Reveries *printed at Dresden, and I will be pleased to send you a copy. I laughed a little at your fear that I would take offense because you did not want my manuscript by sending me the ridiculous sum I named to you. This refusal, my dear friend, did not offend me. On the contrary it was useful as an aid in knowing character. Add to this that in making the offer I thought to make you a gift. Fear nothing from the event. Your system of economy will never interfere with either my proceedings or my doctrines; and I am in no need of begging you, for I think that your action followed only your inclination and consequently your greatest pleasure."*

On the insistence of *Opiz, Casanova* continued his correspondence, but he passed over nothing more, neither in exact quotations from Latin authors, nor solecisms, nor lame reasonings. He even reproached him for his poor writing and did not cease joking at the philanthropic and amiable sentiments *Opiz* loved to parade while at the same time keeping his purse-strings tight. A number of quarreling letters followed, after which the correspondence came to an end. One of *Casanova's* last letters, that of the 2nd February 1794, concludes: *"One day M. de Bragadin said to me: 'Jacques, be careful never to convince a quibbler, for he will become your enemy.' After this wise advice I avoided syllogism, which tended* *toward conviction. But in spite of this you have become my enemy. . . .*"

Among the *Casanova* manuscripts at *Dux* was one giving his final comment on his relations with *Opiz.* Accusing *Opiz* of bringing about a quarrel, *Casanova* nevertheless admits that he himself may not be blameless, but lays this to his carelessness. "*I have a bad habit,*" he writes, "*of not reading over my letters. If, in re-reading those I wrote to M. Opiz, I had found them bitter, I would have burned them.*" Probably *Casanova* struck the root of the matter in his remark, "*Perfect accord is the first charm of a reciprocal friendship.*" The two men were primarily of so different a temperament, that they apparently could not long agree even on subjects on which they were most in accord.

The complete correspondence is of very considerable interest.

V

PUBLICATIONS

In 1786, *Casanova* published *Le soliloque d'un penseur,* in which he speaks of *Saint-Germain* and of *Cagliostro.* On the 23rd December 1792, *Zaguri* wrote *Casanova* that *Cagliostro* was in prison at *San Leo.* "*Twenty years ago, I told Cagliostro not to set his foot in Rome, and if he had followed this advice he would not have died miserably in a Roman prison.*"

In January 1788, appeared *Icosameron* a romance in five volumes, dedicated to *Count Waldstein,* which he describes as "*translated from the English.*" This fanciful romance, which included philosophic and theological discussions, was the original work of *Casanova* and not a translation. It was criticized in 1789 by a literary journal at *Jena*. Preserved at *Dux* were several manuscripts with variants of *Icosameron* and also an unpublished reply to the criticism.

In 1788 *Casanova* published the history of his famous flight from *The Leads*. An article on this book appeared in the German *Litteratur-Zeitung*, 29th June 1789: "As soon as the history was published and while it was exciting much interest among us and among our neighbors, it was seen that other attempts at flight from prisons would make their appearance. The subject in itself is captivating; all prisoners awake our compassion, particularly when they are enclosed in a severe prison and are possibly innocent. . . . The history with which we are concerned has all the appearances of truth; many Venetians have testified to it, and the principal character, *M. Casanova*, brother of the celebrated painter, actually lives at *Dux* in *Bohemia* where the *Count Waldstein* has established him as guardian of his important library."

In July 1789 there was discovered, among the papers of the *Bastille*, the letter which *Casanova* wrote from *Augsburg* in May 1767 to *Prince Charles of Courlande* on the subject of fabricating gold. *Carra* published this letter at once in the third volume of his *Mémoirs authentiques et historiques sur la Bastille*. *Casanova* kept a copy of this letter and includes it in the *Memoirs*.

In October 1789, *Casanova* wrote *M. Opiz* that he was writing to a professor of mathematics [M. Lagrange] at Paris, a long letter in Italian, on the duplication of the cube, which he wished to publish. In August 1790, *Casanova* published his *Solution du Problème Déliaque démontrée* and *Deux corollaires à la duplication de hexaèdre*. On the subject of his pretended solution of this problem in speculative mathematics, *Casanova* engaged with *M. Opiz* in a heated technical discussion between the 16th September and 1st November 1790. *Casanova* sought vainly to convince *Opiz* of the correctness of his solution. Finally, *M. Opiz,* tired of the polemics, announced that he was leaving on a six-weeks tour of inspection and that he would not be able to occupy himself with the duplication of the cube for some time to come. On the 1st November, *Casanova* wished him a pleasant journey and advised him to guard against the cold because "health is the soul of life."

In 1797, appeared the last book published during *Casanova's* lifetime, a small work entitled: *A Leonard Snetlage, docteur en droit de l'Université de Gœttingue, Jacques Casanova, docteur en droit de l'Université de Padoue.* This was a careful criticism of the neologisms introduced into French by the *Revolution.* In reference to *Casanova's* title of "Doctor," researches by *M. Favoro* at the University of Padua had failed to establish this claim, although, in the *Memoirs Casanova* had written: "I remained at Padua long enough to prepare myself for the Doctor's degree, which I intended to take the following year." With this devil of a man, it is always prudent to look twice before peremptorily questioning the truth of his statement. And in fact, the record of *Casanova's* matriculation was discovered by *Signor Bruno Brunelli* and announced in the *Literary Supplement* of *Figaro,* the 1st September 1923.

VI

SUMMARY OF MY LIFE

The 2nd November, 1797, *Cecilia Roggendorff* wrote to *Casanova: "By the way, how do you call yourself, by your baptismal name? On what day and in what year were you born? You may laugh, if you wish, at my questions, but I command you to satisfy me . . ."* To this request, *Casanova* responded with:

"Summary of My Life:—My mother brought me into the world at *Venice* on the 2nd April, Easter day of the year 1725. She had, the night before, a strong desire for crawfish. I am very fond of them.

"At baptism, I was named *Jacques-Jerome.* I was an idiot until I was eight-and-a-half years old. After having had a hemorrhage for three months, I was taken to *Padua,* where, cured of my imbecility, I applied myself to study and, at the age of sixteen years I was made a doctor and given the habit of a priest so that I might go seek my fortune at *Rome.*

"At *Rome,* the daughter of my French instructor was the cause of my being dismissed by my patron, *Cardinal Aquaviva.*

"At the age of eighteen years, I entered the military service of my country, and I went to *Constantinople.* Two years afterward, having returned to *Venice,* I left the profession of honor and, taking the bit in my teeth, embraced the wretched profession of a violinist. I horrified my friends, but this did not last for very long.

"At the age of twenty-one years, one of the highest nobles of *Venice* adopted me as his son, and, having become rich, I went to see *Italy, France, Germany* and *Vienna* where I knew *Count Roggendorff.* I returned to *Venice,* where, two years later, the *State Inquisitors* of *Venice,* for just and wise reasons, imprisoned me under *The Leads.*

"This was the state prison, from which no one had ever escaped, but, with the aid of *God,* I took flight at the end of fifteen months and went to *Paris.* In two years, my affairs prospered so well that I became worth a million, but, all the same, I went bankrupt. I made money in *Holland;* suffered misfortune in *Stuttgart;* was received with honors in *Switzerland;* visited *M. de Voltaire;* adventured in *Genoa, Marseilles, Florence* and in *Rome* where the *Pope Rezzonico,* a Venetian, made me a *Chevalier of Saint-Jean-Latran* and an apostolic protonotary. This was in the year 1760.

"In the same year I found good fortune at *Naples;* at *Florence* I carried off a girl; and, the following year, I was to attend the *Congress* at *Augsburg,* charged with a commission from the *King of Portugal.* The *Congress* did not meet there and, after the publication of peace, I passed on into *England,* which great misfortunes caused me to leave in the following year, 1764. I avoided the gibbet which, however, should not have dishonored me as I should only have been hung. In the same year I searched in vain for fortune at *Berlin* and at *Petersburg,* but I found it at *Warsaw* in the following year. Nine months afterwards, I lost it through being embroiled in a pistol duel with *General Branicki;* I pierced his abdomen but in eight months he was well again and I was very much pleased. He was a brave man. Obliged to leave *Poland,* I returned to *Paris* in 1767, but a *lettre de cachet* obliged me to leave and I went to *Spain* where I met with great misfortunes. I committed the crime of making nocturnal visits to the mistress of the *vice-roi,* who was a great scoundrel.

"At the frontiers of *Spain,* I escaped from assassins only to suffer, at *Aix,* in *Provence,* an illness which took me to the edge of the grave, after spitting blood for eighteen months.

"In the year 1769, I published my *Defense of the Government of Venice,* in three large volumes, written against *Amelot de la Houssaie.*

"In the following year the English Minister at the Court of *Turin* sent me, well recommended, to *Leghorn.* I wished to go to *Constantinople* with the *Russian* fleet, but as *Admiral Orlof,* would not meet my conditions, I retraced my steps and went to *Rome* under the *pontificate* of *Ganganelli.*

"A happy love affair made me leave *Rome* and go to *Naples* and, three months later, an unhappy love made me return to *Rome.* I had measured swords for the third time with *Count Medini* who died four years ago at *London,* in prison for his debts.

"Having considerable money, I went to *Florence,* where, during the Christmas Festival, the *Archduke Leopold,* the Emperor who died four or five years ago, ordered me to leave his dominions within three days. I had a mistress who, by my advice, became *Marquise de* * * * at *Bologna.*

"Weary of running about *Europe,* I determined to solicit mercy from the *Venetian State Inquisitors.* For this purpose, I established myself at *Trieste* where, two years later, I obtained it. This was the 14th September 1774. My return to *Venice* after nineteen years was the most pleasant moment of my life.

"In 1782, I became embroiled with the entire body of the Venetian nobility. At the beginning of 1783, I voluntarily left the ungrateful country and went to *Vienna.* Six months later I went to *Paris* with the intention of establishing myself there, but my brother, who had lived there for twenty-six years, made me forget my interests in favor of his. I rescued him from the hands of his wife and took him to *Vienna* where *Prince Kaunitz* engaged him to establish himself. He is still there, older than I am by two years.

"I placed myself in the service of *M. Foscarini,* Venetian Ambassador, to write dispatches. Two years later, he died in my arms, killed by the gout which mounted into his chest. I then set out for Berlin in the hope of securing a position with the *Academy,* but, half way there, *Count Waldstein* stopped me at *Teplitz* and led me to *Dux* where I still am and where, according to all appearances, I shall die.

"This is the only summary of my life that I have written, and I permit any use of it which may be desired.

"Non erubesco evangelium.

"This 17th November 1797.

Jacques Casanova."

In reference to *Casanova's* ironic remark about his escape from *England,* see his conversation, on the subject of "dishonor," with *Sir Augustus Hervey* at *London* in 1763, which is given in the *Memoirs.*

VII

LAST DAYS AT DUX

Scattered through the *Memoirs* are many of *Casanova's* thoughts about his old age. Some were possibly incorporated in the original text, others possibly added when he revised the text in 1797. These vary from resignation to bitterness, doubtless depending on *Casanova's* state of mind at the moment he wrote them:

"Now that I am seventy-two years old, I believe myself no longer susceptible of such follies. But alas! that is the very thing which causes me to be miserable."

"I hate old age which offers only what I already know, unless I should take up a gazette."

"Age has calmed my passions by rendering them powerless, but my heart has not grown old and my memory has kept all the freshness of youth."

"No, I have not forgotten her [Henriette]; *for even now, when my head is covered with white hair, the recollection of her is still a source of happiness for my heart."*

"A scene which, even now, excites my mirth."

"Age, that cruel and unavoidable disease, compels me to be in good health, in spite of myself."

"Now that I am but the shadow of the once brilliant Casanova, *I love to chatter."*

"Now that age has whitened my hair and deadened the ardor of my senses, my imagination does not take such a high flight and I think differently."

"What embitters my old age is that, having a heart as warm as ever, I have no longer the strength necessary to secure a single day as blissful as those which I owed to this charming girl."

"When I recall these events, I grow young again and feel once more the delights of youth, despite the long years which separate me from that happy time."

"Now that I am getting into my dotage, I look on the dark side of everything. I am invited to a wedding and

see naught but gloom; and, witnessing the coronation of Leopold II, *at* Prague, *I say to myself,* Nolo coronari. *Cursed old age, thou art only worthy of dwelling in hell."*

"The longer I live, the more interest I take in my papers. They are the treasure which attaches me to life and makes death more hateful still."

And so on, through the *Memoirs, Casanova* supplies his own picture, knowing very well that the end, even of his cherished memories, is not far distant.

In 1797, *Casanova* relates an amusing, but irritating incident, which resulted in the loss of the first three chapters of the second volume of the *Memoirs* through the carelessness of a servant girl at *Dux* who took the papers "old, written upon, covered with scribbling and erasures," for *"her own purposes,"* thus necessitating a re-writing, "which I must now abridge," of these chapters. Thirty years before, *Casanova* would doubtless have made love to the girl and all would have been forgiven. But, alas for the "hateful old age" permitting no relief except irritation and impotent anger!

On the 1st August, 1797, *Cecilia Roggendorff,* the daughter of the *Count Roggendorff* [printed Roquendorf] whom *Casanova* had met at *Vienna* in 1753, wrote: *"You tell me in one of your letters that, at your death, you will leave me, by your will, your* Memoirs *which occupy twelve volumes."*

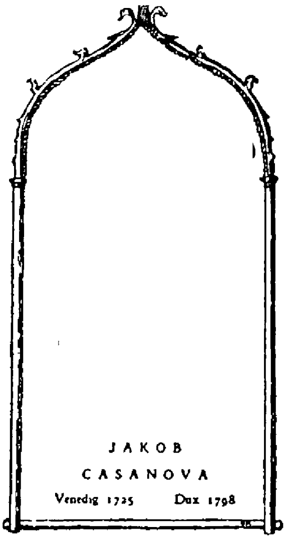
At this time, *Casanova* was revising, or had completed his revision of, the twelve volumes. In July 1792, as mentioned above, *Casanova* wrote *Opiz* that he had arrived at the twelfth volume. In the *Memoirs* themselves we read, ". . . *the various adventures which, at the age* *of seventy-two years, impel me to write these* Memoirs . . .," written probably during a revision in 1797.

At the beginning of one of the two chapters of the last volume, which were missing until discovered by *Arthur Symons* at *Dux* in 1899, we read: *"When I left Venice in the year 1783,* God *ought to have sent me to* Rome, *or to* Naples, *or to* Sicily, *or to* Parma, *where my old age, according to all appearances, might have been happy. My genius, who is always right, led me to* Paris, *so that I might see my brother* François, *who had run into debt and who was just then going to the* Temple. *I do not care whether or not he owes me his regeneration, but I am glad to have effected it. If he had been grateful to me, I should have felt myself paid; it seems to me much better that he should carry the burden of his debt on his shoulders, which from time to time he ought to find heavy. He does not deserve a worse punishment. To-day, in the seventy-third year of my life, my only desire is to live in peace and to be far from any person who might imagine that he has rights over my moral liberty, for it is impossible that any kind of tyranny should not coincide with this imagination."*

Early in February, 1798, *Casanova* was taken sick with a very grave bladder trouble of which he died after suffering for three-and-a-half months. On the 16th February *Zaguri* wrote: *"I note with the greatest sorrow the blow which has afflicted you."* On the 31st March, after having consulted with a Prussian doctor, *Zaguri* sent a box of medicines and he wrote frequently until the end.

On the 20th April *Elisa von der Recke,* whom *Casanova* had met, some years before, at the château of the *Prince de Ligne* at *Teplitz,* having returned to *Teplitz,* wrote: *"Your letter, my friend, has deeply affected me. Although myself ill, the first fair day which permits me to go out will find me at your side."* On the 27th, *Elisa,* still bedridden, wrote that the *Count de Montboisier* and his wife were looking forward to visiting *Casanova.* On the 6th May she wrote, regretting that she was unable to send some crawfish soup, but that the rivers were too high for the peasants to secure the crawfish. *"The Montboisier family, Milady Clark, my children and myself have all made vows for your recovery."* On the 8th, she sent bouillon and madeira.

On the 4th June, 1798, *Casanova* died. His nephew, *Carlo Angiolini* was with him at the time. He was buried in the churchyard of *Santa Barbara* at *Dux.* The exact location of his grave is uncertain, but a tablet, placed against the outside wall of the church reads:



DUX

1786-98

I. The Chateau at Dux.

It is uncertain how long Casanova remained at Carlsbad. While there, however, he met again the Polish nobleman Zawoiski, with whom he had gambled in Venice in 1746. "As to Zawoiski, I did not tell him the story until I met him in Carlsbad old and deaf, forty years later." (II, 5). He did not return to Czaslau, but in September 1785 he was at Teplitz where he found Count Waldstein whom he accompanied to his chateau at Dux.

From this time onward he remained almost constantly at the chateau where he was placed in charge of the Count's library and given a pension of one thousand florins annually.

Describing his visit to the chateau in 1899, Arthur Symons writes: "I had the sensation of an enormous building: all Bohemian castles are big, but this one was like a royal palace. Set there in the midst

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of the town, after the Bohemian fashion, it opens at the back upon great gardens, as if it were in the midst of the country. I walked through room after room, corridor after corridor; everywhere there were pictures, everywhere portraits of Wallenstein, and battle scenes in which he led on his troops, The library, which was formed, or at least arranged, by Casanova, and which remains as he left it, contains some twenty-five thousand volumes, some of them of considerable value. . . The library forms part of the Museum, which occupies a ground-floor wing of the castle. The first room is an armory, in which all kinds of arms are arranged, in a decorative way, covering the ceiling and the walls with strange patterns. The second rooms contains pottery, collected by Casanova's Waldstein on his Eastern travels. The third room is full of curious mechanical toys, and cabinets, and carvings in ivory. Finally, we come to the library, contained in the two innermost rooms. The book shelves are painted white and reach to the low vaulted ceilings, which are whitewashed. At the end of a bookcase, in the corner of one of the windows, hangs a fine engraved portrait of Casanova."

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In this elaborate setting, Casanova found the refuge he so sadly needed for his last years. The evil days of Venice and Vienna, and the problems and makeshifts of mere existence, were left behind. And for this refuge he paid the world with his Memoirs.

II. Letters From Francesca.

In 1786, Casanova renewed his correspondence with Francesca, who wrote:

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III. Correspondence and Activities.

In 1787, a book was published under the title of *Dreissig Brief uber Galizien* by Traunpaur, which included this passage: "The most famous adventurers of two sorts (there are two, in fact: honest adventurers and adventurers of doubtful reputation) have appeared on the scene of the kingdom of Poland. The best known on the shores of the Vistula are: the miraculous Cagliostro: Boisson de Quency, grand charlatan, soldier of fortune, decorated with many orders, member of numerous Academies: the Venetian Casanova of Saint-Gall, a true

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savant, who fought a duel with Count Braniki: the Baron de Poellnitz . . . the lucky Count Tomatis, who knew so well how to correct fortune, and many others."

In June 1789, Casanova received a letter from Teresa Boisson de Quency, the wife of the adventurer above referred to.

"Much honored Monsieur Giacomo:

"For a long time I have felt a very particular desire to evidence to you the estimation due your spirit and your eminent qualities: the superb sonnet augmented my wish. But the inconveniences of childbirth and the cares required by a little girl whom I adore, made me defer this pleasure. During my husband's absence, your last and much honored letter came to my hands. Your amiable compliments to me, engage me to take the pen to give you renewed assurance that you have in me a sincere admirer of your great talent. . . When I wish to point out a person who writes and thinks with excellence, I name Monsieur Casanova. . ."

In 1793, Teresa de Quency wished to return to Venice at which time Zaguri wrote Casanova: "The Bassani has received let-

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ters from her husband which tell her nothing more than that he is alive."

Casanova passed the months of May, June and July 1788 at Prague, supervising the printing of the *"Histoire de ma fuite."*

"I remember laughing very heartily at Prague, six years ago, on learning that some thin-skinned ladies, on reading my flight from The Leads, which was published at that date, took great offense at the above account, which they thought I should have done well to leave out." (IV, 9).

In May he was troubled with an attack of the grippe. In October, he was in Dresden, apparently with his brother. Around this time "The Magdalene" a painting by Correggio was stolen from the Museum of the Elector.

On the 30th October 1788, Casanova wrote to the Prince Belozelski, Russian Minister to the Court of Dresden: "Tuesday morning, after having embraced my dear brother, I got into a carriage to return here. At the barrier on the outskirts of Dresden, I was obliged to descend, and six men carried the two chests of my carriage, my two night-bags and my *capelière* into a little chamber

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on the ground level, demanded my keys, and examined everything. . . The youngest of these infamous executors of such an order told me they were searching for the Magdalene. . . The oldest had the impudence to put his hands on my waistcoat. . . At last they let me go.

"This, my prince, delayed me so that I could not reach Petervalden by daylight. I stopped at an evil tavern where, dying of famine and rage, I ate everything I saw; and, wishing to drink and not liking beer, I gulped down some beverage which my host told me was good and which did not seem unpleasant. He told me that it was Pilnitz *Moste.* This beverage aroused a rebellion in my guts. I passed the night tormented by a continual diarrhoea. I arrived here the day before yesterday (the 28th), where I found an unpleasant duty awaiting me. Two months ago, I brought a woman here to cook, needing her while the Count is away; as soon as she arrived, I gave her a room and I went to Leipzig. On returning here, I found three servants in the hands of surgeons and all three blame my cook for putting them in such a state. The Count's courier

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had already told me, at Leipzig, that she had crippled him. Yesterday the Count arrived and would do nothing but laugh, but I have sent her back and exhorted her to imitate the Magdalene. The amusing part is that she is old, ugly and ill-smelling."

In 1789, 1791 and 1792, Casanova received three letters from Maddalena Allegranti, the niece of J. B. Allegranti the innkeeper with whom Casanova lodged at Florence in 1771. "This young person, still a child, was so pretty, so gracious, with such spirit and such charms, that she incessantly distracted me. Sometimes she would come into my chamber to wish me good-morning. . . Her appearance, her grace, the sound of her voice. . . were more than I could resist; and, fearing the seduction would excuse mine, I could find no other expedient than to take flight. . . Some years later, Maddalena became a celebrated musician. . ." (XII, 9).

At this period of Casanova's life, we hear again of the hussy who so upset Casanova during his visit to London that he was actually on the point of committing suicide through sheer desperation. (X, 2). On the

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20th September 1789, he wrote to the Princess Clari, daughter of the Prince de Ligne: "I am struck by a woman at first sight, she completely ravishes me, and I am perhaps lost, for she may be a Charpillon."

There were, among the papers at Dux, two letters from Marianne Charpillon, and a manuscript outlining the story of Casanova's relations with her and her family, as detailed in the Memoirs. (IX, 11, etc). With the story in mind, the letters from this girl, "the mistress, now of one, now of another", are of interest.

"I know not, Monsieur, whether you forgot the engagement Saturday last; as for me, I remember that you consented to give us the pleasure of having you at dinner today, Monday, the 12th of the month. I would greatly like to know whether your ill-humor has left you; this would please me. Farewell, in awaiting the honor of seeing you.

Marianne de Charpillon"

"Monsieur,

As I have a part in all which concerns you, I am greatly put out to know of the

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new illness which incommodes you; I hope that this will be so trifling that we will have the pleasure of seeing you well and at our house, today or tomorrow.

"And, in truth, the gift which you sent me is so pretty that I know not how to express to you the pleasure it has given me and how much I value it; and I cannot see why you must always provoke me by telling me that it is my fault that you are filled with bile, while I am as innocent as a new-born babe and would wish you so gentle and patient that your blood would become a true clarified syrup; this will come to you if you follow my advice. I am, Monsieur,

Your very humble servant,
(Marianne Charpillon)
Wednesday at six o'clock."

On the 8th April, 1790, Zaguri wrote in reference to vertigo of which Casanova complained:: "Have you tried riding horseback? Do you not think that is an excellent preservative? I tried it this last summer and I find myself very well."

In 1790, Casanova had a conversation with the Emperor Joseph II at Luxemburg, on

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the subject of purchased nobility, which he reports in the Memoirs. (III, 10).

This same year, attending the coronation of Leopold at Prague, Casanova met his grandson (and, probably, as he himself believed, his own son), the son of Leonilda, who was the daughter of Casanova and Donna Lucrezia, and who was married to the Marquis C . . . (XII, 6). In 1792, Leonilda wrote, inviting Casanova to "spend the remainder of my days with her."

In February 1791, Casanova wrote to Countess Lamberg: "I have in my capitularies more than four hundred sentences which pass for aphorisms and which include all the tricks which place one word for another. One can read in Livy that Hannibal overcame the Alps by means of vinegar. No elephant ever uttered such a stupidity. Livy? Not at all. Livy was not a beast; it is you who are, foolish instructor of credulous youth! Livy did not say *aceto* which means vinegar, but *aceta* which means axe."

In April 1791, Casanova wrote to Carlo Grimani at Venice, stating that he felt he had committed a great fault in publishing his libel, *Ne amori ne donne*, and very

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humbly begging his pardon. Also that his Memoirs would be composed of six volumes in octavio with a seventh, supplementary volume containing codicils.

In June, Casanova composed for the theater of Princess Clari, at Teplitz, a piece entitled: *Le Polémoscope ou la Calomnie démasquée par la présence d'esprit, tragi-comédie en trois actes.* The manuscript was preserved at Dux, together with another form of the same, having the sub-title of *La-Lorgnette Menteuse ou la Calomnie demasquée.* It may be assumed that the staging of this piece was an occasion of pleasant activity for Casanova.

In January 1792, during Count Waldstein's absence in London or Paris, Casanova was embroiled with M. Faulkircher, *maitre d'hotel,* over the unpleasant matter indicated in two of Casanova's letter's to this functionary:

"Your rascally Viderol. . . tore my portrait out of one of my books, scrawled my name on it, with the epithet which you taught him and then stuck it on the door of the privy. . ."

"Determined to make sure of the punish-

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ment of your infamous valet, and wishing at the same time to give proof of my respect for Count Waldstein, not forgetting that, as a last resort, I have the right to invade his jurisdiction, I took an advocate, wrote my complaint and had it translated into German. . . Having heard of this at Teplitz, and having known that I would not save your name, you came to my chamber to beg me to write whatever I wished but not to name you because it would place you wrong before the War Council and expose you to the loss of your pension. . . I have torn up my first complaint and have written a second in Latin, which an advocate of Bilin has translated for me and which I have deposited at the office of the judiciary at Dux. . ."

Following this matter, Casanova attended the Carnival at Oberleutensdorf, and left at Dux a manuscript headed *Passe temps de Jacques Casanova de Seingalt pour le carnaval de l'an* 1792 *dans le bourg d'Oberleutensdorf*. While in that city, meditating on the Faulkircher incident, he wrote also *Les quinze pardons, monologue nocturne du bib-*

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liothécaire, also preserved in manuscript at Dux, in which we read:

"Gerron, having served twenty years as a simple soldier, acquired a great knowledge of military discipline. This man was not yet seventy years old. He had come to believe, partly from practice, partly from theory, that twenty blows with a baton on the rump are not dishonoring. When the honest soldier was unfortunate enough to deserve them, he accepted them with resignation. The pain was sharp, but not lasting; it did not deprive him of either appetite nor honor. . . Gerron, becoming a corporal, had obtained no idea of any kind of sorrow other than that coming from the blows of a baton on the rump. . . On this idea, he thought that the soul of an honest man was no different than a soldier's breech. If Gerron caused trouble to the spirit of a man of honor, he thought that this spirit, like his own, had only a rump, and that any trouble he caused would pass likewise. He deceived himself. The breech of the spirit of an honest man is different than the breech of the spirit of a Gerron who rendered compatible the rank of a military officer with the vile employ-

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ments of a domestic and the stable-master of some particular lord. Since Gerron deceived himself, we must pardon him all his faults. . ." etc.

Casanova complained of the Faulkircher incident to the mother of Count Waldstein, who wrote: "I pity you, Monsieur, for being obliged to live among such people and in such evil company, but my son will not forget that which he owes to himself and I am sure he will give you all the satisfaction you wish." Also to his friend Zaguri, who wrote, the 16th March: "I hope that the gout in your hand will not torment you any more. . . You have told me the story I asked about and which begins: 'Two months have passed since an officer, who is at Vienna, insulted me!' I cannot understand whether he who wrote you an insulting letter is at Vienna or whether he is at Dux. When will the Count return? . . . You should await his return because you would have, among other reasons to present to him, that of not wishing to have recourse to other jurisdiction than his. . . You say your letters have been intercepted? Someone has put your portrait in the privy? The devil! It is a miracle that you have not killed someone. Positively, I am curious to know the results and I hope that you make no mistakes in this affair which appears to me very delicate."

In August 1792, or thereabouts, Da Ponte on his way to Dresden, visited Casanova at Dux, in the hope of collecting an old debt, but gave up this hope on realizing Casanava's limited resources. In the winter of 1792-3, Da Ponte found himself in great distress in Holland. "Casanova was the only man to whom I could apply", he writes in his Memoirs. "To better dispose him, I thought to write him in verse, depicting my troubles and begging him to send me some money on account of that which he still owed me. Far from considering my request, he contented himself with replying, in vulgar prose, by a laconic billet which I transcribe: 'When Cicero wrote to his friends, he avoided telling them of his affairs.' "

In May 1793, Da Ponte wrote from London: "Count Waldstein has lived a very obscure life in London, badly lodged, badly dressed, badly served, always in cabarets, cafes, with porters, with rascals, with . . .

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we will leave out the rest. He has the heart of an angel and an excellent character, but not so good a head as ours. . ."

Toward the end of 1792, Casanova wrote a letter to Robespierre, which, as he advises M. Opiz the 13th January 1793, occupied one hundred and twenty folio pages. This letter was not to be found at Dux and it may possibly have been sent, or may have been destroyed by Casanova on the advice of the Abbé O'Kelly. Casanova's feelings were very bitter over the trial of Louis XVI, and in his letters to M. Opiz he complained bitterly of the Jacobins and predicted the ruin of France. Certainly, to Casanova, the French Revolution represented the complete overthrow of many of his cherished illusions.

On the 1st August 1793, Wilhelmina Rietz, Countess Lichtenau (called the Pompadour of Frederic-William II, King of Prussia) wrote to the librarian at Dux:

"Monsieur:

"It seems impossible to know where Count Valstaine (Waldstein) is staying, whether he is in Europe, Africa, America, or possibly the *Megamiques*. If he is there, you

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are the only one who could insure his receiving the enclosed letter.

"For my part, I have not yet had time to read their history, but the first reading I do will assuredly be that.

"Mademoiselle Chappuis has the honor of recalling herself to your memory, and I have that of being your very humble servant,

Wilhelmina Rietz"

The illusions to a "history" and to the *Megamiques* in this letter refer to Casanova's romance, *Icosameron.*

About this time, Count Waldstein returned to Dux after having been, at Paris, according to Da Ponte, concerned in planning the flight of Louis XVI and in attempting to save the Princess Lamballe. On the 17th August, Casanova replied to the above letter:

"Madame,

"I handed the Count your letter two minutes after having received it, finding him easily. I told him that he should respond at once, for the post was ready to go; but, as he begged to wait for the following ordinary, I did not insist. The day before

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yesterday, he begged me to wait again, but he did not find me so complaisant. I respond to you, Madame, for his carelessness in replying to letters is extreme; he is so shameful that he is in despair when he is obliged to it. Although he may not respond, be sure of seeing him at your house at Berlin after the Leipzig Fair, with a hundred bad excuses which you will laugh at and pretend to believe good ones . . . This last month, my wish to see Berlin again has become immeasurable, and I will do my best to have Count Waldstein take me there in the month of October or at least to permit me to go. . . You have given me an idea of Berlin far different than that the city left with me when I passed four months there twenty-nine years ago (X, 7). . . If my *Icosameron* interests you, I offer you its Spirit. I wrote it here two years ago and I would not have published it if I had not dared hope that the Theological Censor would permit it. At Berlin no one raised the least difficulty. . . If circumstances do not permit me to pay you my respects at Berlin, I hope for the happiness of seeing you here next year. . ."

Sometime after this and following his

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quarrel with M. Opiz, Casanova evidently passed through a period of depression, as indicated by a manuscript at Dux, headed "Short reflection of a philosopher who finds himself thinking of procuring his own death", and dated "the 13th December 1793, the day dedicated to S. Lucie, remarkable in my too long life."

"Life is a burden to me. What is the metaphysical being who prevents me from slaying myself? It is Nature. What is the other being who enjoins me to lighten the burdens of that life which brings me only feeble pleasures and heavy pains? It is Reason. Nature is a coward which, demanding only conservation, orders me to sacrifice all to its existence. Reason is a being which gives me resemblance to God, which treads instinct under foot and which teaches me to choose the best way after having well considered the reasons. It demonstrates to me that I am a man in imposing silence on the Nature which opposes that action which alone could remedy all my ills.

"Reason convinces me that the power I have of slaying myself is a privilege given me by God, by which I perceive that I am

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superior to all animals created in the world; for there is no animal who can slay itself nor think of slaying itself, except the scorpion, which poisons itself, but only when the fire which surrounds it convinces it that it cannot save itself from being burned. This animal slays itself because it fears fire more than death. Reason tells me imperiously that I have the right to slay myself, with the divine oracle of Cen: *'Qui non potest vivere bene non vivat male.'* These eight words have such power that it is impossible that a man to whom life is a burden could do other than slay himself on first hearing them."

Certainly, however, Casanova did not deceive himself with these sophisms and Nature who for many years had unquestionably lavished her gifts on him, had her way.

Over the end of the year, the two mathematicians, Casanova and Opiz, at the request of Count Waldstein, made a scientific examination of the reform of the calendar as decreed the 5th October 1793 by the National Convention.

In January 1795, Casanova wrote to the Princess Lobkowitz to thank her for her

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gift of a little dog. On the 16th, the Princess wrote from Vienna:

"Monsieur,

"I am enchanted at the charming reception you accorded the dog which I sent you when I learned of the death of your well-loved greyhound, knowing that she would nowhere be better cared for than with you, Monsieur. I hope with all my heart that she has all the qualities which may, in some fashion, help you to forget the deceased. . ."

In the autumn of 1795, Casanova left Dux. The Prince de Ligne writes in his own Memoirs: "God directed him to leave Dux. Scarcely believing in more than his death, which he no longer doubted, he pretended that each thing he had done was by the direction of God and this was his guide. God directed him to ask me for letters of recommendation to the Duke of Weimar, who was my good friend, to the Duchess of Gotha, who did not know me, and to the jews of Berlin. And he departed secretly, leaving for Count Waldstein a letter at once tender, proud, honest and irritating. Waldstein laughed and said he would return. Casanova waited in ante-chambers; no one would place him either as governor, librarian or chamberlain. He said everywhere that the Germans were thorough beasts. The excellent and very amiable Duke of Weimar welcomed him wonderfully; but in an instant he became jealous of Goethe and Wieland, who were under the Count's protection. He declaimed against them and against the literature of the country which he did not, and could not, know. At Berlin, he declaimed against the ignorance, the superstition and the knavery of the Hebrews to whom I had addressed him, drawing meanwhile, for the money they claimed of him, bills of exchange on the Count who laughed, paid, and embraced him when he returned. Casanova laughed, wept, and told him that God had ordered him to make this trip of six weeks, to leave without speaking of it, and to return to his chamber at Dux. Enchanted at seeing us again, he agreeably related to us all the misfortunes which had tried him and to which his susceptibility gave the name of humiliations. "I am proud", he said, "because I am nothing. . . ." Eight days after his return, what new troubles! Everyone

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had been served strawberries before him, and none remained for him."

The Prince de Ligne, although he was Casanova's sincere friend and admirer, gives a rather sombre picture of Casanova's life at Dux: "It must not be imagined that he was satisfied to live quietly in the refuge provided him through the kindness of Waldstein. That was not within his nature. Not a day passed without trouble; something was certain to be wrong with the coffee, the milk, the dish of macaroni, which he required each day. There were always quarrels in the house. The cook had ruined his *polenta,* the coachman had given him a bad driver to bring him to see me, the dogs had barked all night, there had been more guests than usual and he had found it necessary to eat at a side table. Some hunting-horn had tormented his ear with its blasts; the priest had been trying to convert him; Count Waldstein had not anticipated his morning greeting; the servant had delayed with his wine; he had not been introduced to some distinguished personage who had come to see the lance which had pierced the side of the great Waldstein; the Count had lent a book with-

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out telling him; a groom had not touched his hat to him; his German speech had been misunderstood; he had become angry and people had laughed at him."

Like Count Waldstein, however, the Prince de Ligne made the widest allowances, understanding the chafing of Casanova's restless spirit. "Casanova has a mind without an equal, from which each word is extraordinary and each thought a book."

On the 16th December, he wrote Casanova: "One is never old with your heart, your genius and your stomach."

Casanova's own comment on his trip away from Dux will be found in the Memoirs (X, 3). "Two years ago, I set out for Hamburg, but my good genius made me return to Dux. What had I to do at Hamburg?"

On the 10th December, Casanova's brother Giovanni (Jean) died. He was the Director of the Academy of Painting at Dresden. Apparently the two brothers could not remain friends. Giovanni left two daughters, Teresa and Augusta, and two sons, Carlo and Lorenzo. While he was unable to remain friendly with his brother, Casanova apparently wished to be of assistance to his nieces,

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who were not in the best of circumstances, and he exchanged a number of letters with Teresa after her father's death.

On the occasion of Teresa Casanova's visit to Vienna in 1792, Princess Clary, oldest sister of the Prince de Ligne, wrote of her: "She is charming in every way, pretty as love, always amiable; she has had great success. Prince Kaunitz loves her to the point of madness."

In a letter of the 25th April 1796, Teresa assured her "very amiable and very dear uncle" that the cautions, which occupied three-fourths of his letter, were unnecessary; and compared him with his brother Francois, to the injury of the latter. On the 5th May, Teresa wrote: "Before thanking you for your charming letter, my very kind uncle, I should announce the issue of our pension of one hundred and sixty crowns a year, which is to say, eighty crowns apiece; I am well satisfied for I did not hope to receive so much." In the same letter, Teresa spoke of seeing much of a "charming man", Don Antonio, who was no other than the rascally adventurer Don Antonio della Croce with whom Casanova had been acquainted since 1753

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(III, 14, etc.), who assisted Casanova in losing a thousand sequins at Milan in 1763 (VIII, 8), who in 1767, at Spa, following financial reverses, abandoned his pregnant mistress to the charge of Casanova (XI, 2), and who in August 1795, wrote to Casanova "Your letter gave me great pleasure as the sweet souvenir of our old friendship, unique and faithful over a period of fifty years."

It is probably that, at this time, Casanova visited Dresden and Berlin also. In his letter "To Leonard Snetlage", he writes: " 'That which proves that revolution should arrive', a profound thinker said to me in Berlin, last year, 'is that it has arrived.' "

On the 1st March, 1798, Carlo Angiolini, the son of Maria Maddalena, Casanova's sister, wrote to Casanova: "This evening, Teresa will marry M. le Chambellan de Veisnicht (Von Wessenig) whom you know well." This desirable marriage received the approval of Francesco also. Teresa, as the Baroness Wessenig, occupied a prominent social position at Dresden. She died in 1842.

Between the 13th February and the 6th December 1796, Casanova engaged in a correspondence with Mlle. Henriette de

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Schuckmann who was visiting at Bayreuth. This Henriette (unfortunately not the Henriette of the Memoirs whose forty letters to Casanova (XI, 10) apparently have not been located) had visited the library at Dux in the summer of 1786. "I was with the Chamberlain Freiberg, and I was greatly moved, as much by your conversation as by your kindness which provided me with a beautiful edition of *Metastasio*, elegantly bound in red morocco." Finding herself at Bayreuth in an enforced idleness and wishing a stimulant, wishing also to borrow some books, she wrote Casanova, under the auspices of Count Koenig, a mutual friend, the 13th February 1786, recalling herself to his memory. Casanova responded to her overtures and five of her letters were preserved at Dux. On the 28th May, Henriette wrote:

"But certainly, my good friend, your letters have given me the greatest pleasure, and it is with a rising satisfaction that I pore over all you say to me. I love, I esteem, I cherish your frankness. . . I understand you perfectly and I love to distraction the

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lively and energetic manner with which you express yourself."

On the 30th September, she wrote: "You will read today, if you please, a weary letter; for your silence, Monsieur, has given me humors. A promise is a debt, and in your last letter you promised to write me at least a dozen pages. I have every right to call you a bad debtor; I could summon you before a court of justice; but all these acts of vengeance would not repair the loss which I have endured through my hope and my fruitless waiting. . . It is your punishment to read this trivial page; but although my head is empty, my heart is not so, and it holds for you a very living friendship."

In March 1797, this Henriette went to Lausanne and in May from there to her father's home at Mecklenburg.

IV. Correspondence With J. F. Opiz.

On the 27th July 1792, Casanova wrote M. Opiz that he had finished the twelfth volume of his Memoirs, with his age at forty-seven years (1772). "Our late friend, the worthy Count Max Josef Lamberg," he added, "could not bear the idea of my burning my Memoirs, and expecting to survive me, had persuaded me to send him the first four volumes. But now there is no longer any question that his good soul has left his organs. Three weeks ago I wept for his death, all the more so as he would still be living if he had listened to me. (VIII, 1). I am, perhaps, the only one who knows the truth. He who slew him was the surgeon Fenchter at Cremsir, who applied thirty-six mercurial plasters on a gland in his left groin which was swollen but not by the pox, as I am sure by the description he gave me of the cause of the swelling. The mercury mounted to his esophagus and, being able to swallow neither solids nor fluids, he died the 23d June of positive famine. . . The interest of the bungling surgeon is to say that he died of the pox. This is not true, I beg you to give the lie to anyone you hear saying it I have before my eyes 460 of his letters over which I weep and which I will burn. I have asked Count Leopold to burn mine, which he had saved, and I hope that he will please me by doing it. I have survived all my true friends. *'Tempus abire mihi est'* Horace says to me.

"Returning to my 'Memoirs' . . . I am a detestable man; but I do not care about having it known, and I do not aspire to the honor of the detestation of posterity. My work is full of excellent moral instructions. But to what good, if the charming descriptions of my offences excite the readers more to action than to repentance? Furthermore, knowing readers would divine the names of all the women and of the men, which I have masked, whose transgressions are unknown to the world, my indiscretion would injure them, they would cry out against my perfidy, even though every word of my history were true . . . Tell me yourself whether or not I should burn my work? I am curious to have your advice."

On the 6th May 1793, Casanova wrote Opiz: "The letter of recommendation you ask of me to the professor my brother for your younger son, honors me; and there is no doubt that, having for you all the estimation your qualities merit, I should send

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it to you immediately. But this cannot be. And here is the reason. My brother is my enemy; he has given me sure indications of it and it appears that his hate will not cease until I no longer exist. I hope that he may long survive me and be happy. This desire is my only apology."

"The epigraph of the little work which I would give to the public," Casanova wrote the 23d August 1793, "is *In pondere et mensura.* It is concerned with gravity and measure. I would demonstrate not only that the course of the stars is irregular but also that it is susceptible only to approximate measures and that consequently we must join physical and moral calculations in establishing celestial movements. For I prove that all fixed axes must have a necessarily irregular movement of oscillation, from which comes a variation in all the necessary curves of the planets which compose their eccentricities and their orbits. I demonstrate that light has neither body nor spirit; I demonstrate that it comes in an instant from its respective star; I demonstrate the impossibility of many parallaxes and the useless-

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ness of many others. I criticize not only Tiko-Brahi, but also Kepler and Newton. . .

"I wish to send you my manuscript and give you the trouble of publishing it with my name at Prague or elsewhere. . . I will sell it to the printer or to yourself for fifty florins and twenty-five copies on fine paper when it is printed."

But Opiz replied:

"As the father of a family, I do not feel myself authorized to dispose of my revenues on the impulse of my fancy or as my heart suggests . . . and no offer of yours could make me a book-seller"

As M. Adnesse remarks, this shows plainly enough that Opiz, for all his interest in Casanova, had not the qualities of true friendship.

On the 6th September 1793, Casanova wrote:

"I will have my *Reveries* printed at Dresden, and I will be pleased to send you a copy. I laughed a little at your fear that I would take offense because you did not want my manuscript by sending me the ridiculous sum I named to you. This refusal, my dear friend, did not offend me. On the

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contrary it was useful as an aid in knowing character. Add to this that in making the offer I thought to make you a gift. Fear nothing from the event. Your system of economy will never interfere with either my proceedings or my doctrines; and I am in no need of begging you, for I think that your action followed only your inclination and consequently your greatest pleasure."

On the insistence of Opiz, Casanova continued his correspondence, but he passed over nothing more, neither in exact quotations from Latin authors, nor solecisms, nor lame reasonings. He even reproached him for his poor writing and did not cease joking at the philanthropic and amiable sentiments Opiz loved to parade while at the same time keeping his purse-strings tight. A number of quarreling letters followed, after which the correspondence came to an end. One of Casanova's last letters, that of the 2d February 1794, concludes: "One day, M. de Bragadin said to me: 'Jacques, be careful never to convince a quibbler, for he will become your enemy.' After this wise advice I avoided syllogism, which tended

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toward conviction. But in spite of this you have become my enemy. . ."

Among Casanova's MSS at Dux was one giving his final comment on his relations with Opiz. Accusing Opiz of bringing about a quarrel, Casanova nevertheless admits that he himself may not be blameless, but lays this to his carelessness. "I have a bad habit," he writes, "of not reading over my letters. If, in re-reading those I wrote to M. Opiz, I had found them bitter, I would have burned them." Probably Casanova struck the root of the matter in his remark, "Perfect accord is the first charm of a reciprocal friendship." The two men were primarily of so different a temperament, that they apparently could not long agree even on subjects on which they were most in accord.

The complete correspondence is of very considerable interest.

V. Publications.

In 1786, Casanova published *Le soliloque d'un penseur*, in which he speaks of Saint-Germain and of Cagliostro. On the 23d De-

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cember 1792, Zaguri wrote Casanova that Cagliostro was in prison at San Leo. "Twenty years ago, I told Cagliostro not to set his foot in Rome, and if he had followed this advice he would not have died miserably in a Roman prison." (XII, 9).

In January 1788, appeared '*Icosameron*" a romance in five volumes, dedicated to Count Waldstein, which he describes as "translated from the English." This fanciful romance, which included philosophic and theological discussions, was the original work of Casanova and not a translation. It was criticized in 1789 by a literary journal at Jena. Preserved at Dux were several manuscripts with variants of *Icosameron* and also an unpublished reply to the criticism.

In 1788 Casanova published the history of his famous flight from The Leads. An article on this book appeared in the German Litteratur-Zeitung, 29th June 1789. "As soon as the history was published and while it was exciting much interest among us and among our neighbors, it was seen that other attempts at flight from prisons would make their appearance. The subject in itself is captivating; all prisoners awake our compas-

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sion, particularly when they are enclosed in a severe prison and are possibly innocent. . . The history with which we are concerned has all the appearances of truth; many Venetians have testified to it, and the principal character, M. Casanova, brother of the celebrated painter, actually lives at Dux in Bohemia where the Count Waldstein has established him as guardian of his important library."

In July 1789 there was discovered, among the papers of the Bastille, the letter which Casanova wrote from Augsburg in May 1767 to Prince Charles of Courlande on the subject of fabricating gold. Carra published this letter at once in Volume III of his *Mémoires authentiques et historiques sur la Bastille.* Casanova kept a copy of this letter and includes it in the Memoirs. (XI, 1).

In October 1789, Casanova wrote M. Opiz that he was writing to a professor of mathematics (M. Lagrange) at Paris, a long letter in Italian, on the duplication of the cube, which he wished to publish. In August 1790, Casanova published his *Solution du Problème Déliaque démontrée* and *Deux*

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corollaires à la duplication de hexaèdre. On the subject of his pretended solution of this problem in speculative mathematics, Casanova engaged with M. Opiz in a heated technical discussion between the 16th September and 1st November 1790. Casanova sought vainly to convince Opiz of the correctness of his solution. Finally, M. Opiz, tired of the polemics, announced that he was leaving on a six-week tour of inspection and that he would not be able to occupy himself with the duplication of the cube for some time to come. On the 1st November, Casanova wished him a pleasant journey and advised him to guard against the cold because "health is the soul of life."

In 1797, appeared the last book published during Casanova's lifetime, a small work entitled: *A Leonard Snetlage, docteur en droit de l'Université de Goettingue, Jacques Casanova, docteur en droit de l'Université de Padoue.* This was a careful criticism of the neologisms introduced into French by the Revolution. In reference to Casanova's title of "Doctor", researches by M. Favoro at the University of Padoua had failed to establish this claim, although, in the Memoirs (I, 4)

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Casanova had written: "I remained at Padoua long enough to prepare myself for the Doctor's degree, which I intended to take the following year." M. Adnesse remarked: "With this devil of a man, it is always prudent to look twice before peremtorily questioning the truth of his statement." And in fact, the record of Casanova's matriculation was discovered by Signor Bruno Brunelli and announced in the Literary Supplement of "*Figaro*", the 1st September 1923.

VI. Summary of My Life.

The 2d November, 1797, Cecilia Roggendorff wrote to Casanova: "By the way, how do you call yourself, by your baptismal name? On what day and in what year were you born? You may laugh, if you wish, at my questions, but I command you to satisfy me . . ." To this request, Casanova responded with:

"*Summary of My Life*:—My mother

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brought me into the world at Venice on the 2d April, Easter day of the year 1725. She had, the night before, a strong desire for crawfish. I am very fond of them.

"At baptism, I was named Jacques-Jerome. I was an idiot until I was eight and a half years old. After having had a hemorrhage for three months, I was taken to Padua, where, cured of my imbecility, I applied myself to study and, at the age of sixteen years I was made a doctor and given the habit of a priest so that I might go seek my fortune at Rome.

"At Rome, the daughter of my French instructor was the cause of my being dismissed by my patron, Cardinal Aquaviva.

"At the age of eighteen years, I entered the military service of my country, and I went to Constantinople. Two years afterward, having returned to Venice, I left the profession of honor and, taking the bit in my teeth, embraced the wretched profession of a violinist. I horrified my friends, but this did not last for very long.

"At the age of twenty-one years, one of the highest nobles of Venice adopted me as his son, and, having become rich, I went

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to see Italy, France, Germany and Vienna where I knew Count Roggendorff. I returned to Venice, where, two years later, the State Inquisitors of Venice, for just and wise reasons, imprisoned me under The Leads.

"This was the state prison, from which no one had ever escaped, but, with the aid of God, I took flight at the end of fifteen months and went to Paris. In two years, my affairs prospered so well that I became worth a million, but, all the same, I went bankrupt. I made money in Holland, suffered misfortune in Stuttgart, was received with honors in Switzerland, visited M. de Voltaire, adventured in Genoa, Marseilles, Florence and in Rome where the Pope Rezzonico, a Venetian, made me a Chevalier of Saint-Jean-Latran and an apostolic protonotary. This was in the year 1760.

"In the same year I found good fortune at Naples; at Florence I carried off a girl; and, the following year, I was to attend the Congress at Augsburg, charged with a commission from the King of Portugal. The Congress did not meet there and, after the publication of peace, I passed on into England, which great misfortunes caused me to

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leave in the following year, 1764. I avoided the gibbet which, however, should not have dishonored me as I should only have been hung. In the same year I searched in vain for fortune at Berlin and at Petersburg, but I found it at Warsaw in the following year. Nine months afterwards, I lost it through being embroiled in a pistol duel with General Braniki; I pierced his abdomen but in eight months he was well again and I was very much pleased. He was a brave man. Obliged to leave Poland, I returned to Paris in 1767, but a *lettre de cachet* obliged me to leave and I went to Spain where I met with great misfortunes. I committed the crime of making nocturnal visits to the mistress of the *vice-roi*, who was a great scoundrel.

"At the frontiers of Spain, I escaped from assassins only to suffer, at Aix, in Provence, an illness which took me to the edge of the grave, after spitting blood for eighteen months.

"In the year 1769, I published my Defense of the Government of Venice, in three large volumes, written against Amelot de la Houssaie.

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"In the following year the English Minister at the Court of Turin sent me, well recommended, to Leghorn. I wished to go to Constantinople with the Russian fleet, but as Admiral Orlof, would not meet my conditions, I retraced my steps and went to Rome under the pontificate of Ganganelli.

"A happy love affair made me leave Rome and go to Naples and, three months later, an unhappy love made me return to Rome. I had measured swords for the third time with Count Medini who died four years ago at London, in prison for his debts.

"Having considerable money, I went to Florence, where, during the Christmas Festival, the Archduke Leopold, the Emperor who died four or five years ago, ordered me to leave his dominions within three days. I had a mistress who, by my advice, became Marquise de * * * at Bologna.

"Weary of running about Europe, I determined to solicit mercy from the Venetian State Inquisitors. For this purpose, I established myself at Trieste where, two years later, I obtained it. This was the 14th September 1774. My return to Venice after

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nineteen years was the most pleasant moment of my life.

"In 1782, I became embroiled with the entire body of the Venetian nobility. At the beginning of 1783, I voluntarily left the ungrateful country and went to Vienna. Six months later I went to Paris with the intention of establishing myself there, but my brother, who had lived there for twenty-six years, made me forget my interests in favor of his. I rescued him from the hands of his wife and took him to Vienna where Prince Kaunitz engaged him to establish himself. He is still there, older than I am by two years.

"I placed myself in the service of M. Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador, to write dispatches. Two years later, he died in my arms, killed by the gout which mounted into his chest. I then set out for Berlin in the hope of securing a position with the Academy, but, half way there, Count Waldstein stopped me at Teplitz and led me to Dux where I still am and where, according to all appearances, I will die.

"This is the only summary of my life

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which I have written, and I permit any use of it which may be desired.

"Non erubesco evangelium.

"This 17th November 1797.

Jacques Casanova."

In reference to Casanova's ironic remark about his escape from England, see his conversation, on the subject of "dishonor", with Sir Augustus Hervey at London in 1763. (IX, 7).

VII. Last Days at Dux.

Scattered through the Memoirs are many of Casanova's thoughts about his old age. Some were possibly incorporated in the original text, others possibly added when he revised the text in 1797. These vary from resignation to bitterness, doubtless depending on Casanova's state of mind at the moment he wrote them.

"Now that I am seventy-two years old, I believe myself no longer susceptible of such

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follies. But alas! that is the very thing which causes me to be miserable." (I, 3). "I hate old age which offers only what I already know, unless I should take up a gazette." (I, 7). "Age has calmed my passions by rendering them powerless, but my heart has not grown old and my memory has kept all the freshness of youth." (II, 10). "No, I have not forgotten her (Henriette); for even now, when my head is covered with white hair, the recollection of her is still a source of happiness for my heart." (III, 3). "A scene which, even now, excites my mirth." (III, 5). "Age, that cruel and unavoidable disease, compels me to be in good health, in spite of myself." (III, 9). "Now that I am but the shadow of the once brilliant Casanova, I love to chatter." (III, 16). "Now that age has whitened my hair and deadened the ardor of my senses, my imagination does not take such a high flight and I think differently." (IV, 3). "What embitters my old age is that, having a heart as warm as ever, I have no longer the strength necessary to secure a single day as blissful as those which I owed to this charming girl." (IV, 6). "When

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I recall these events, I grow young again and feel once more the delights of youth, despite the long years which separate me from that happy time." (V, 5). "Now that I am getting into my dotage, I look on the dark side of everything. I am invited to a wedding and see nought but gloom; and, witnessing the coronation of Leopold II, at Prague, I say to myself, *Nolo coronari.* Cursed old age, thou art only worthy of dwelling in hell." (VI, 6). "The longer I live, the more interest I take in my papers. They are the treasure which attaches me to life and makes death more hateful still." (VI, 8).

And so on, through the Memoirs, Casanova supplies his own picture, knowing very well that the end, even of his cherished memories, is not far distant.

In 1797, Casanova relates an amusing, but irritating incident, which resulted in the loss of the first three chapters of Volume II of the Memoirs through the carelessness of a servant girl at Dux who took the papers "old, written upon, covered with scribbling and erasures," for "her own purposes," thus necessitating a re-writing "which I

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must now abridge" of these chapters. Thirty years before, Casanova would doubtless have made love to the girl and all would have been forgiven. But, alas for the "hateful old age" permitting no relief except irritation and impotent anger!

On the 1st August, 1797, Cecilia Roggendorff, the daughter of the Count Roggendorff (printed Roquendorf) whom Casanova had met at Vienna in 1753, wrote: "You tell me in one of your letters that, at your death, you will leave me, by your will, your Memoirs which occupy twelve volumes." At this time, Casanova was revising, or had completed his revision of, the twelve volumes. In July 1792, as mentioned above, Casanova wrote Opiz that he had arrived at the twelfth volume. In Volume 4 of the Memoirs themselves (IV, 5) we read, ". . . the various adventures which, at the age of seventy-two years, impel me to write these Memoirs. . .", written probably during a revision of this volume in 1797. At the beginning of one of the two chapters of Volume XII, which were missing until discovered by Mr. Symons at Dux in 1899, we read: "When I left Venice in the year 1783,

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God should have sent me to Rome, or to Naples, or to Sicily, or to Parma, where my old age, according to all appearances, might have been happy. My genius, who is always right, led me to Paris so that I might see my brother Francois, who had run into debt and who was at that moment going to the Temple. I do not care whether or not he owes me his regeneration, but I am glad to have affected it. If he had recognized me in it, I should have felt myself repaid; but I prefer that he should carry on his shoulders, the burden of the debt which, from time to time, should feel heavy to him. He deserves no greater punishment. Today, in the seventy-third year of my life, my only desire is to live in peace and far from anyone who might imagine himself as having rights over my moral liberty, for it is impossible for this imagination to be unaccompanied by a kind of tyranny."

Early in February, 1798, Casanova was taken sick with a very grave bladder trouble of which he died after suffering for three and a half months. On the 16th February, Zaguri wrote: "I note with the greatest sorrow the blow which has afflicted you." On

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the 31st March, after having consulted with a Prussian doctor, Zaguri sent a box of medicines; and he wrote frequently until the end.

On the 20th April, Elisa von der Recke, whom Casanova had met, some years before, at the chateau of the Prince de Ligne at Teplitz, having returned to Teplitz, wrote: "Your letter, my friend, has deeply affected me. Although myself ill, the first fair day which permits me to go out will find me at your side." On the 27th, Elisa, still bedridden, wrote that the Count de Montboisier and his wife were looking forward to visiting Casanova. On the 6th May she wrote, regretting that she was unable to send some crawfish soup, but that the rivers were too high for the peasants to secure the crawfish. "The Montboisier family, Milady Clark, my children and myself have all made vows for your recovery." On the 8th, she sent bouillon and madeira.

On the 4th June, 1798, Casanova died. His nephew, Carlo Angiolini was with him at the time. He was buried in the churchyard of Santa Barbara at Dux. The exact location of his grave is uncertain, but a tab-

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let, placed against the outside wall of the church reads:

†

JAKOB
CASANOVA

Venedig 1725
Dux 1798

"I enjoyed her love, I was pleased with her caresses, and put away all ideas of the dreadful future, which has only one certainty—death, ultima linea rerum."

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